

Euroguidance Cross Border Seminar

„Guidance in Vocational Education and Training“

3-5 June 2025 in Zagreb, Croatia

Compendium



TABLE OF CONTENTS



1. FOREWORD	3
2. PRESENTATION.....	4
3. PLENARY SESSIONS	5
<i>Breaking the Myth: The Importance of Career Guidance in VET Schools.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Vocational School Selection in Croatia: Challenges and Support.....</i>	<i>5</i>
4. PANEL.....	6
5. WORKSHOPS.....	7
Austria	7
<i>Talent to Expert: How Partnerships & Next-Gen Jobs Transform Career Guidance.....</i>	<i>7</i>
Croatia.....	8
<i>Gender Stereotypes and Career Choices: Why Interests Don't Tell the Whole Story.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Promoting VET through Stakeholder Cooperation</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Beyond the Track: Why Vocational Students Still Need Career Guidance.....</i>	<i>11</i>
Czechia.....	13
<i>It's Better for Two or How to Start Career Counselling at School</i>	<i>13</i>
Germany.....	14
<i>Creating Opportunities with German Education System – Knowledge That Makes a Difference.....</i>	<i>14</i>
Hungary.....	16
<i>Career Orientation and Innovation: We Accompany You from Kindergarten to University</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Career Guidance Curriculum for Secondary School Students</i>	<i>18</i>
Latvia	19
<i>Soft Skills Development Using Gaming Method.....</i>	<i>19</i>
Poland	20
<i>Applying the FRIS® Thinking Styles in Career Counselling Practice.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Future-Ready Career Counselling: Interactive Tools for Vocational School Advisors</i>	<i>21</i>
Portugal.....	22
<i>Linking Young People to the Labour Market: Collaborative Approaches in Career Development and Guidance</i>	<i>22</i>
Serbia.....	24
<i>Science for Girls' Empowerment</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Connecting to a Career</i>	<i>25</i>
Slovakia.....	26
<i>How Can We Encourage Girls and Women into STEM?.....</i>	<i>26</i>
Slovenia	28
<i>Personalised Support for NEETs: Best Practices & Insights.....</i>	<i>28</i>
6. EXPERT PROFILES	31
Presenter	31
Keynote speakers.....	31
Panel leader.....	32
Panellists.....	32
Workshop leaders	34
7. PUBLICATION DETAILS	38

FOREWORD



Euroguidance **Cross Border Seminar** (CBS) is one of the international professional development initiatives of the Euroguidance Network. Launched in 2005, the seminar today serves as a platform for exchanging knowledge, experiences and innovative practices in career guidance and counselling. Originally initiated by Euroguidance Centres from Austria, Czechia and Slovakia, the seminar now includes participation from 11 European countries¹, with one country hosting the seminar each year. The countries are represented with national delegations of practitioners, experts and policy-makers, all of whom contribute to the seminar's content and quality.

This year's Euroguidance Cross Border Seminar was held on 3 - 5 June 2025 in Zagreb, Croatia, with the topic of "Guidance in Vocational Education and Training (VET)". Considering the unique context of vocational schools where students had already embarked on their desired career path, the goal of the seminar was to address a very unique set of challenges for the provision of career guidance in VET.

The choice of topic was closely aligned with current policy developments and priorities of the European Commission, particularly those outlined in the **European Skills Agenda**, the **Council Recommendation on Vocational Education and Training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience** (2020) and the **European Education Area** objectives, which emphasise modernising VET systems, improving career guidance and strengthening links between education and the labour market.

At the same time, the seminar theme was inspired and further supported by the findings of a recent Croatian national study on guidance in VET schools, in which practitioners highlighted the need for stronger collaboration between schools and external stakeholders, as well as for high-quality professional development opportunities for teachers and career counsellors.

The two-day programme was designed to create a layered perspective on career guidance in VET, from national to European levels. The seminar programme featured keynote speeches from Croatian experts from the University of Zagreb and the "Ivo Pilar" Institute of Social Sciences. Panel discussion, a new edition to the programme, featured insights from representatives from a variety of relevant international institutions, including the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP). Special contribution to the seminar was also made by experts from the relevant Croatian institutions, including the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth, the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts and the University of Rijeka, who delivered workshops and presentations.

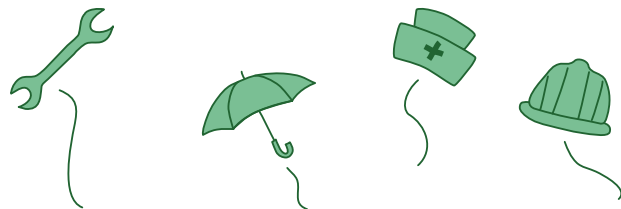
At the heart of the seminar were the 16 diverse workshops covering a broad spectrum of relevant topics, such as encouraging girls to pursue careers in STEM, connecting young people with the labour market, providing personalised career guidance, addressing gender stereotypes in career choices, and using interactive tools in counselling and developing students' soft skills.

This compendium includes short excerpts from plenary sessions, the panel discussion and the seminar workshops. It offers useful highlights for participants, but also for anyone else interested in the topic. We hope the readers will discover ideas and inspiration they can apply in their own work. The publication is also available at www.euroguidance.eu.

For more information, presentations, and photo and video material of the CBS 2025, please visit: <https://cbs.ampeu.hr/>

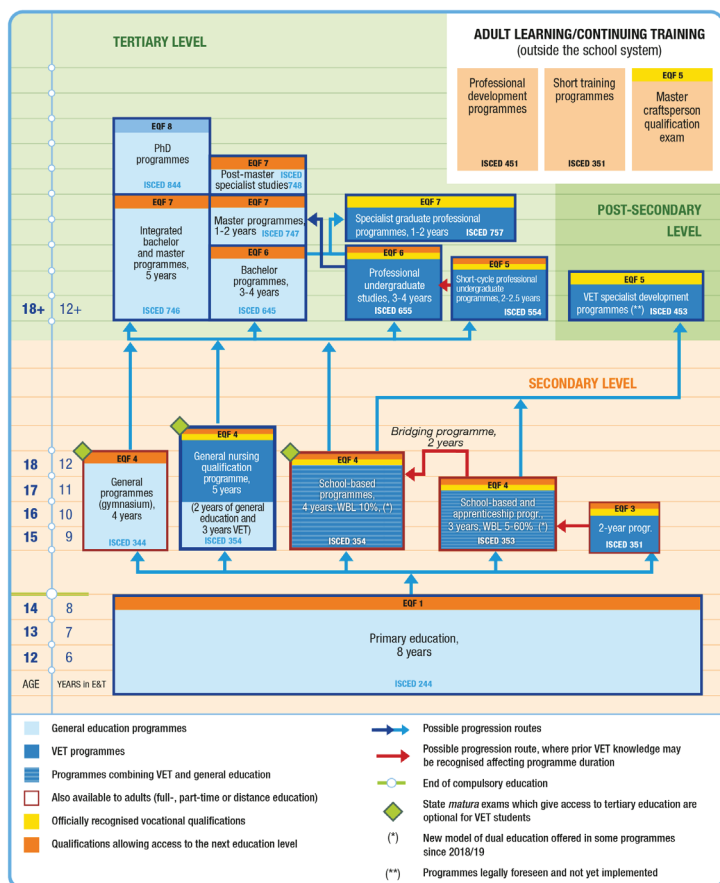
Euroguidance Croatia and the participating Euroguidance centres from Austria, Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia would like to thank all the authors who have contributed their expertise to this compendium.

¹ Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia.



Overview of the Croatian VET system

Andreja Uroić Landekić (Ministry of Science, Education and Youth, Croatia)

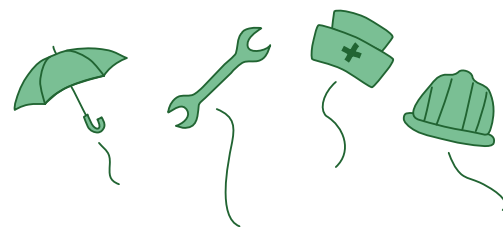


NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Cedefop, & Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETA). (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe – Croatia: system description. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2024). Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database – detailed VET system descriptions [Database]. www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/croatia-43

The presentation highlighted the national perspective on the education system in the Republic of Croatia, with a focus on recent developments in vocational education and training, including investments and key reform priorities. It highlighted the strong position of VET within the Croatian education system, as the majority of secondary students, about 69%, are enrolled in VET schools. The presented analytics supported the crucial role of vocational education in preparing young people for the labour market and meeting the evolving needs of the economy. The speech further highlighted ongoing efforts to enhance the quality and relevance of VET through the implementation of new curriculum and provision of support to VET schools for their implementation, aligned with labour market needs. The presentation also addressed the enhancement of regional centres of competence through networking with partner institutions, businesses, and EU institutions.





Breaking the Myth: The Importance of Career Guidance in VET Schools

Maja Parmač Kovačić, PhD (Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia)

The plenary session challenged the long-standing myth that career guidance is unnecessary in VET schools, clearly demonstrating the vital role it plays in shaping the future of students.

It was shown that, contrary to popular belief, VET often serves as a crucial stepping stone, with statistics showing that a significant percentage of VET students continue their education after school graduation. The speaker underlined that many students enter VET schools at a young age, when they may lack the maturity to make fully informed decisions about their future careers. Moreover, individuals evolve, and their interests and aspirations can change over time. As a result, traditional career guidance, which is based on supporting students in choosing the right path for further education and future professions, remains highly important in these settings.

In addition, the session stressed that VET students also require another dimension of career guidance that prepares them for the world of work, particularly for those who may not pursue further studies. This includes opportunities such as employer visits, networking experiences and instruction in job search skills and entrepreneurial skills. By connecting students with real-world organisations and fostering professional networks, career guidance can enhance their readiness for the workforce and empower them to navigate their future careers successfully.

Overall, the plenary session emphasised the critical role of comprehensive career guidance in VET. By addressing both the importance of informed decision-making regarding further education and the preparation of students for professional life, it effectively dispelled the myth that career guidance is unnecessary in VET.

Vocational School Selection in Croatia: Challenges and Support

Toni Babarović, PhD & Iva Šverko, PhD (Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences, Zagreb, Croatia)

The plenary session connected research findings with practical application in the context of VET selection in Croatia. It drew upon research investigating the factors that influence adolescents' career choices, including the significance of vocational interests, the developmental aspects of career maturity and the pervasive impact of gender stereotypes.

The research presented indicated that low congruence between interests and chosen programmes, inadequate career maturity and gender-biased perceptions of abilities can lead to suboptimal educational and career outcomes. In response, the session showcased evidence-based practices and interventions designed to support students in navigating these challenges. Examples included the implementation of career development programmes in schools, the use of online career counselling resources, as well as strategies for mitigating the effects of gender stereotypes through educational initiatives and awareness campaigns. By integrating research insights with practical tools and strategies, the session highlighted ways to strengthen career guidance and support systems, ultimately contributing to more effective VET school selection and promoting positive career development among young people.



The panel discussed how modern careers are increasingly characterised by flexibility and mobility, lifelong learning, non-standard work contracts, rapid emergence of new professions and the disappearance of traditional career paths. In this context, the speakers underlined that career counselling and guidance have become lifelong necessities for the working population.

Despite this reality, a persistent myth remains – that career guidance ends with the selection of a VET school. The panel directly challenged this misconception. Drawing on their extensive professional experience with VET students, the panellists shared valuable insights and practices, underscoring the enduring importance of career guidance in supporting both educational progression and long-term career development.

Panel moderator:

- Darja Maslić Seršić, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Croatia

Participants:

- Cynthia Harrison Villalba, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training - CEDEFOP
- Birgit Tschense, International Services (Federal Employment Agency), Germany
- Lisa Fasching, Federation of Austrian Industries, Styria, Austria
- Zsanett Imre, Székesfehérvár Centre of Vocational Training, Hungary
- Luka Kamenov, "Ruđer Bošković" Technical School, Zagreb, Croatia





AUSTRIA

Talent to Expert: How Partnerships & Next-Gen Jobs Transform Career Guidance

Lisa Fasching, Federation of Austrian Industries, Styria

The workshop focused on current developments, challenges, and innovative approaches in vocational guidance – particularly in the context of partnerships between education and business – and on how next-generation job expectations are reshaping the way guidance is delivered. The aim was to present a range of diverse, practical examples and reflections that could be adapted to other national or regional systems.

The session began with an overview of the Austrian school system. One of its defining features is the early differentiation of educational pathways. After four years of primary school, children – typically around the age of ten – must choose between academic and compulsory secondary school types. This early decision has a significant impact on their entire educational and vocational trajectory. While the system offers various options, it also places considerable responsibility on young people and their families at a very early stage.

Vocational guidance in Austria is uneven and largely shaped by regional dynamics. As a result, the quality and accessibility of guidance vary across the country. In some regions, strong partnerships between schools, businesses, and other institutions ensure well-developed programmes; in others, resources and structures are more limited.

A key factor in successful guidance is the support system surrounding young people. Teachers often play a central role in helping students explore career options. Their engagement is essential, and many contribute valuable insights and motivation. To further strengthen this role, initiatives have been developed to connect teachers with the business world – for example, through company visits or dialogue formats – which help broaden their perspectives and deepen their understanding of workplace realities.

Parents are also key partners in the guidance process. Their experience and perspective can offer an important orientation for their children. Recognising this, many initiatives aim to involve parents more closely in vocational information events or decision-making processes. However, participation levels vary, and there is still potential to create more inclusive formats that reach families from diverse backgrounds and regions.

The role of industry in vocational guidance has grown significantly in recent years. Companies are not only future employers but also key educational partners. Through their involvement, they offer young people valuable real-world insights, hands-on experiences, and authentic encounters with professional environments. Many industries have developed tailored outreach initiatives – such as in-house training days, apprentices serving as ambassadors in schools, or collaborative student projects – which allow young people to explore career paths in a practical way. These efforts not only help students make more informed choices but also enhance the visibility and attractiveness of technical and industrial careers.

Several innovative Austrian initiatives were presented as examples of successful practice. One such project is “Technic and Innovation”, a new elective subject launching as a pilot in 2025/26. It offers students the chance to engage with innovation and technology through a structured programme involving classroom instruction, company visits, and university experiences. Another example is “Fascination Technology”, in which student teams work on technical projects supported by industry mentors and present their work at a public challenge event. This fosters teamwork, creativity, and a concrete understanding of technical professions.

The “Experience Economy” project offers guided company tours designed to be accessible and engaging. Professionals help translate technical content into stories and experiences that resonate with young audiences. These tours not only increase transparency but also help improve the image of professions that are often underestimated or misunderstood.

Austria's dual education system and apprenticeship model were also key topics. Despite demographic challenges and a cultural shift toward academic education, apprenticeships remain a central pathway into the workforce. New hybrid models – such as combining apprenticeships with academic study – are becoming increasingly popular and well-received by employers. These approaches offer flexibility and respond to the evolving needs of both learners and businesses. The example of “EuroSkills”, the European competition for skilled trades, highlighted how vocational excellence can be publicly celebrated and made visible.

Another key focus of the workshop was the changing world of work and young people's expectations. While technological change creates new career opportunities, many traditional roles struggle to attract interest. At the same time, today's youth are looking for more than just job security. They want meaningful work, a sense of belonging, opportunities for personal development, and a good work-life balance.

It was emphasised that companies should involve young people directly in shaping communication and recruitment strategies. Asking apprentices how they would approach future candidates, or involving them in representing the company at events, can enhance both internal engagement and external outreach. Furthermore, there is a noticeable shift away from job titles and formal qualifications toward a focus on skills and competencies. Employers are increasingly interested in what a candidate can do, rather than what certificates they hold. This shift requires guidance systems that help young people identify, develop, and articulate their practical abilities.

Throughout the workshop, participants were invited to discuss specific topics in small groups after each section. The open and honest exchange of ideas added significant value beyond the presentation content.

In conclusion, the workshop highlighted the importance of starting vocational guidance early and involving all relevant stakeholders – schools, families, employers, and policymakers. Stereotypes about “male” and “female” careers often take hold alarmingly early, typically around the age of ten, and can become deeply rooted without early and inclusive career exploration. Strong partnerships, coordinated efforts, and a shared sense of responsibility are essential for building guidance systems that serve all young people equitably.

CROATIA

Gender Stereotypes and Career Choices: Why Interests Don't Tell the Whole Story

Mirta Blažev, Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar

1. Aim and content of the workshop

The workshop explored how gender stereotypes shape the educational and professional aspirations of students in secondary vocational schools. The content was structured around interactive activities, group discussions, and practical tasks designed to raise awareness and encourage critical thinking about gender stereotypes. Participants examined how these social norms affect young people's sense of self and their educational and career choices, while also reflecting on their personal experiences with gender-related expectations.

The workshop included three main group activities. To begin, participants were introduced to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model as a framework for identifying and illustrating the various factors that shape students' gender beliefs and career interests within their school environments, from the most immediate influences to broader societal factors. Using this model, they analysed real-life examples of gender stereotype sources in three types of vocational programmes: majority-male, majority-female, and gender-balanced. Building on this, in the second activity, participants examined how the gender-related influences they identified might affect students' academic, career, psychological, and social development. They discussed both the positive and negative potential outcomes of these influences. Finally, in the third activity, participants worked in groups to design a practical school-based intervention aimed at reducing the impact of gender stereotypes. Each group described the proposed intervention's main features, its potential strengths and challenges, and the outcomes that would indicate its success.

2. Key outcomes and insights

The workshop revealed several important insights. One of the most significant was participants' increased awareness and recognition of gender stereotypes. They reflected on how these stereotypes are often subtle, internalised from an early age, and continuously reinforced through socialisation. Participants noted that stereotypes are not fixed; they adapt to different contexts, which makes them more difficult to identify and challenge.

Using the ecological systems model, participants identified a complex web of institutional and social influences that shape gender beliefs and career decisions. These influences extend beyond the immediate environment to include not only parents, teachers, and peers, but also school policies, school climate and (social) media. Participants shared concrete examples, such as "the math teacher says boys are better at math" or "TV ads show only women cooking," to illustrate how these influences operate in everyday life.

The discussions highlighted the profound impact of gender stereotypes on students' aspirations, self-confidence, and perceived career opportunities. Although girls and boys are equally capable, societal expectations and perceived norms shape their career interests and choices. This dynamic contributes to the persistent gender imbalance in certain fields, such as STEM or care-related professions.

Finally, the workshop emphasised the potential for empowerment and change. While many students are already on gendered educational paths by the time they reach secondary school, there remains considerable opportunity for reflection and intervention. Educators and professionals can play a crucial role in broadening students' understanding of gender equality through the language they use, the skills they help students develop, the expectations they set, and the spaces they create for open dialogue.

3. Main conclusions

The workshop highlighted that gender stereotypes are subtle, persistent and influential. Stereotypes about gender roles and abilities remain deeply embedded in society and continue to shape students' career choices, often limiting the possibilities for both girls and boys. These stereotypes can restrict aspirations and contribute to gender imbalances in various professional fields.

A key conclusion was that intervention is both possible and necessary. Even at the secondary school level, educators and professionals can make a meaningful difference by challenging gender stereotypes, addressing specific skill gaps that students may face as a result of internalised stereotypes, as well as fostering critical thinking, providing diverse role models, and creating inclusive environments where all students feel supported in pursuing their interests.

The discussions also emphasised that tailored strategies are needed. The impact of gender stereotypes varies depending on the context – whether students are in majority-male, majority-female, or gender-balanced programmes. As a result, approaches to addressing these stereotypes should be adapted to fit the specific setting and needs of each group.

Finally, the workshop underscored that challenging gender stereotypes is a collective responsibility. It requires ongoing effort and collaboration among educators, students, families, and the wider community to create lasting change and promote gender equality in education and beyond.

4. References and resources for further reading

To support further exploration of the themes discussed, the following references and resources are recommended:

- Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (2006). The bioecological model of human development. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology: Theoretical Models of Human Development* (6th ed., Vol. 1, pp. 793–828). Wiley.
- Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Motivational beliefs, values, and goals. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, 109–132. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135153>
- European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). *Resources and data on gender equality in education and employment*. <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index>
- Korlat, S., Schultes, M.-T., Schober, B., Spiel, C., & Kollmayer, M. (2023). Gender typicality and prestige of occupational aspirations in adolescents: The relevance of agency and communion. *Journal of Career Development*, 50(2), 405–424. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08948453221100744>

- Stoet, G., & Geary, D. C. (2022). Sex differences in adolescents' occupational aspirations: Variations across time and place. *PLoS ONE*, 17(1), e0262078. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0262078>
- Su, R., Rounds, J., & Armstrong, P. I. (2009). Men and things, women and people: A meta-analysis of sex differences in interests. *Psychological Bulletin*, 135(6), 859–884. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017364>
- UNESCO. (2021). *Cracking the code: Girls' and women's education in STEM*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000253479>

Promoting VET through Stakeholder Cooperation

Mirela Franović and Zoran Varga, The Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts (HOK)

1. Aim and content of the workshop

The aim of the workshop titled “Promoting VET through stakeholders’ cooperation” was to raise awareness about and strengthen cooperation between key stakeholders in VET – schools, companies, mentors, and career guidance professionals – with the goal of improving the quality, relevance and visibility of VET for students. It promoted different tools for cooperation within VET.

Content Overview:

- Introduction of the Erasmus+ project *Joint Mentorship: Better Cooperation for Better VET*, including key goals, partners, and activities.
- Theoretical exploration of the benefits and challenges of school-company cooperation in VET.
- Good practice examples of successful collaboration between schools and companies, especially regarding promotional activities and career guidance in VET.
- An interactive group session to share experiences, generate ideas and propose practical solutions for improving cooperation in VET.
- Presentation of tools, templates and resources to support the implementation of collaborative initiatives in participants’ local contexts.
- Concluding reflections, Q&A and a call to action for applying lessons learned.

2. Key outcomes and insights

Participants have:

- Gained **practical insight** into how collaboration between schools and the business sector enhances the quality of VET and its appeal to young people.
- Gained **insight into the role of mentors** as both educators and ambassadors of VET, and how their empowerment can significantly affect students’ choice of occupation.
- Gained **insight into real-life examples** of effective stakeholder cooperation, focusing on promotional activities and career guidance.
- **Identified challenges** encountered in VET collaboration (projects) and discovered solutions developed during the Erasmus+ *Joint Mentorship* project and solutions developed in local contexts.
- **Co-created and presented ideas** for improving cooperation and engaging employers more actively in career guidance.
- **Access to ready-to-use resources**, including model documents and guidelines for initiating and maintaining partnerships.

3. Main conclusions

- **Stakeholder cooperation is essential** to the success of VET systems, both in terms of quality and public perception. It ensures alignment with labour market needs and supports informed career choices among youth.
- **Mentors from industry play a critical role** in bridging the gap between theory and practice. Their training and involvement must be systematic, supported and recognised.
- **Promotion of VET requires joint stakeholder effort**, particularly in reaching young people and parents with accurate, inspiring messages about vocational career opportunities.
- **Practical tools and simple frameworks** (like MoUs and cooperation guidelines) can significantly ease the process of building and sustaining partnerships, especially on local and regional levels.
- **Workshops like this** foster community learning, spark new collaboration ideas and support the transfer of European project results into everyday practice.

4. References and resources for further reading

Project Materials and Outputs:

- Erasmus+ Project: *Joint Mentorship – Better Cooperation for Better VET* (2022–2025)
(Check the official project website <https://e-mentor.eu/> for additional information)

Key Documents and Templates Shared in the Workshop:

- Presentation
- Model Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for school-business cooperation
- Steps for cooperation

Beyond the Track: Why Vocational Students Still Need Career Guidance

Kornelija Mrnjaus, University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

1. Aim and content of the workshop

The aim of the workshop was to discuss whether vocational students need career guidance and to promote the idea that, despite the widespread assumption that they have already chosen their profession, they still need career guidance.

The workshop began with a brief introduction of the participants and a discussion about terminology. We came to the conclusion that there was no agreement on the terminology used. Very often, different terms (e.g. vocational guidance, professional guidance, professional orientation, career guidance...) were used to describe the same activity. In Croatia, the term "professional guidance" is used most frequently. Participants from other countries stated that the same term is also most commonly used in their countries.

The very similar descriptions of the terms vocational guidance and career guidance make it difficult to say which term is more appropriate. Since the description of career guidance is more general and includes all elements that are important for making an informed career decision, this term will be used in this workshop.

The short theoretical introduction was followed by group work. The participants discussed in small groups whether vocational students need career guidance, what their organisation does in terms of career guidance for vocational students and what recommendations they have for career guidance for vocational students. The results of the group work were presented during the workshop.

The discussion in the small groups followed the presentation of the legal and strategic framework as well as the main actors and responsible institutions for career guidance in Croatia.

To support the idea of why secondary school students (including vocational students) need career guidance, the results of a study on career decisions in the last year of secondary school were presented (Babarović and Šverko, 2017). The results show that it is difficult for the majority of secondary school students to make a career decision. When choosing a career, students most often use friends, peers, parents and websites, finding websites, parents, siblings and friends and peers the most useful. It is very telling that the least useful sources of information from the students' perspective are those related to school. Students lack knowledge about themselves, about the world of work and about decision-making processes. This is particularly pronounced among students with poorer academic performance and lower socio-economic status.

Taking into account the key aspects of career guidance (e.g. self-assessment, making informed decisions), the above results show us that secondary school students still need career guidance.

After the groups had presented what their organisations do in terms of career guidance for vocational students, the results of a survey on career guidance in secondary vocational schools in Croatia were presented. Of the 144 schools, 114 stated that their school provides career guidance for students. They most often introduce career guidance in the 4th grade, alone or in cooperation with another professional, experts from the Croatian Employment Service, CISOK and faculty representatives. The most frequently used career guidance activities are informing students about the possibilities of continuing their education and entering the labour market, as well as individual counselling of students. The career guidance activities that are never or very rarely used are career guidance activities for students with poorer academic performance and career guidance activities for students with low socio-economic status. According to Babarović and Šverko (2017), these are the groups that need career counselling the most. The reasons why they rarely or never provide career guidance are the excessive amount of different work tasks of professional associates, the lack of tests and tools, the lack of knowledge and training about career guidance, the lack of interest of students in career guidance and the lack of time and staff. The results show that career guidance is more likely to be provided by professional associates who have more years of experience, work in schools offering four-year programmes and consider themselves more competent.

2. Key outcomes and insights

The workshop participants agree that vocational students need career guidance. The organisations in which they work are involved in various activities and projects on career guidance for vocational students. They also stated that we need a more systematic approach, more co-operation and education, structure and planning.

The workshop participants recommended that career guidance should be more about the practice and the person and less about policy, that it should be more personalised, that cooperation between sectors should be developed and that the mentoring system should be strengthened.

3. Main conclusions

The workshop ended with recommendations on what we can do to help students make informed career decisions and improve career guidance activities in vocational schools.

We can and should help students to get to know themselves, to crystallise their professional self-image, to develop career maturity, to develop decision-making skills, to learn to take responsibility, and to develop strategies to deal with possible failures (not achieving set goals).

We should provide students with relevant information (career guidance tools, CISOK, online career guidance questionnaires, career guidance handbooks, etc.), individual and group counselling, workshops (e.g. active job search, CV writing, job interview preparation), involve parents (as they have a great influence on their children's career decisions) and train career counsellors.

4. References and resources for further reading

- Babarović, T., Šverko, I. (2017), *Profesionalno usmjeravanje u osnovnim i srednjim školama iz perspektive učenika*, PROGRAM ERASMUS+ (2014. - 2020.). Zagreb: Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes.
- Vignjević Korotaj, B., Mrnjaus, K., Vukelić, N. (2024). *Profesionalno usmjeravanje učenika u srednjim strukovnim školama - perspektiva stručnih suradnika*. Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes.
- Vignjević Korotaj, B., Mrnjaus, K., Vukelić, N. (2024). *Profesionalno usmjeravanje učenika u srednjim strukovnim školama - perspektiva strukovnih nastavnika*. Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes.
- Šarić, T. (ur.) (2012). *Kojim putem krenuti. Publikacija o profesionalnom usmjeravanju u Republici Hrvatskoj*. Zagreb: Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes.
- Act on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools.

CZECHIA

It's Better for Two or How to Start Career Counselling at School

Zuzana Adamová and Miroslava Smutná, Obchodní akademie a vyšší odborná škola Brno, Kotlářská, příspěvková organizace

1. Aim and content of the workshop

The aim of our workshop was to encourage participants to reflect on the potential of *collaboration* – particularly in pairs – when starting or developing career counselling programmes in schools. Drawing from our own experience working as a tandem in a Czech upper-secondary school, we offered participants tools, structures, and reflective prompts to help them initiate or improve their own approaches.

The workshop was interactive and discussion-based. Participants engaged in:

- A **Four Corners activity** to reflect on personal collaboration styles and their school context.
- A **tandem work model** presentation, including guiding principles such as mutual trust, clear communication, and shared reflection.
- Sharing **practical tools** (Google Workspace, shared calendars, etc.) that support cooperation.
- A **mental networking activity** using visual aids (cards) to identify potential allies and resources in their own institutions.
- An **exit pass** where participants wrote a short personal message summarising what inspired them and what they might apply in their own setting.

We framed the workshop with the philosophical question posed by Gauguin: *Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?* – applying it to both personal professional identity and career education itself.

2. Key outcomes and insights

- **Collaboration in pairs (tandem work)** can bring emotional support, continuity, and innovation to career counselling.
- Honest, open **communication and regular reflection** are essential for tandem success and burnout prevention.
- Many participants realised that **career counselling doesn't have to be a solo effort** – small partnerships can create scalable change.

- **Tools matter:** a shared digital environment can significantly ease teamwork.
- The workshop revealed a strong need for **peer networks** and time for **structured sharing**, even across borders.

3. Main conclusions

- Starting or improving career counselling is easier and more effective with a partner: **“It’s better for two.”**
- Schools need to build **cultures of cooperation**, where collaboration is supported, valued, and expected – not just left to chance.
- Simple methods such as regular check-ins, shared planning tools, and joint reflection **can transform daily work** and create lasting impact.
- **Empathy, structure, and humour** are just as important as strategy.

4. References and resources for further reading

- *Start iD* – Czech national e-portfolio platform: <https://startid.cz>
- @duo_karierko – Our Instagram account where we share everyday insights and practices
- Koucký, J. (2020). *Career Guidance in the Czech Republic*. Prague: NUOV.
- Google Workspace tools (Drive, Docs, Calendar) and Trello – recommended for internal team collaboration
- For inspiration: Gauguin, P. (1897). *D’où venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous?* (painting)

GERMANY

Creating Opportunities with German Education System – Knowledge That Makes a Difference

Mara Kuhn, Federal Employment Agency of Germany

1. Aim and content of the workshop

The workshop “Creating Opportunities with the German Education System – Knowledge That Makes a Difference” aimed to provide participants with a structured overview of the German vocational education system. The focus was on the question of what training pathways are available to young people and what structural features contribute to their successful participation. Particular attention was given to the combination of theory and practice – especially through dual training, where learners are integrated into operational processes and gain practical, real-work experience.

The session began with an introduction to the German school system, particularly the distribution of pupils across Hauptschule, Realschule, and Gymnasium. It then moved on to the various pathways available after lower secondary education and the Abitur. Programmes such as the Pre-Vocational Training Scheme (BvB), Entry Qualification Programme (EQ), as well as school-based and dual apprenticeships were presented. Emphasis was placed on the key role of companies in the dual system – through in-house workshops and close cooperation with vocational schools. The workshop also addressed support programmes such as training in external institutions (BaE) and theory-reduced vocational training for people with special needs. These options enable young people with additional support needs to earn full vocational qualifications.

The final part of the input section introduced dual and triple-track study programmes, which combine academic and practical components – mainly targeting students with higher education entrance qualifications who wish to remain connected to the world of work.

2. Key outcomes and insights

The group tasks centred on comparing the German vocational education system with participants' national contexts. The groups worked on four core training pathways – school-based training, dual vocational training, dual study, and triple-track programmes – and discussed their duration, entry requirements, theory-practice ratio, funding structures, EQF level, and employment prospects.

Strong interest emerged in models that combine education and training in companies. The dual system, dual study programmes, and especially the triple-track approach attracted significant attention, as they were largely unfamiliar to many participants. By contrast, school-based training was already well known, which naturally shifted focus toward less familiar formats.

In the second interactive segment, participants examined the network of institutions involved in supporting young people on their vocational paths in Germany. Key actors included:

- The Federal Employment Agency's career counselling service, which is firmly embedded in schools and also supports apprentices during training.
- School-business partnerships, offering students early insights into the working world through internships and collaborative projects.
- Chambers of Commerce and Crafts, responsible for exam administration, curriculum development, and the ongoing modernisation of training profiles.
- Universities, which use initiatives such as talent scouting to reach students from non-academic backgrounds and enable access to higher education.

Participants engaged closely with the diversity of actors involved and reflected on parallels and differences in their own national systems. It became clear how varied institutional responsibilities and stakeholder roles can be across different educational contexts.

3. Main conclusions

The workshop highlighted that Germany's vocational education system offers a broad range of pathways – especially for students with lower and intermediate school qualifications. At the same time, it provides attractive options for young people with a university entrance qualification who are looking to combine academic learning with practical work experience, such as through dual or triple-track study programmes.

A key theme was the early contact that students in Germany have with the working world. This often starts while they are still in school, through mandatory internships or career orientation programmes. For students leaving school at the age of 15 or 16, these experiences are crucial in shaping their decisions – even if internships can only offer a limited glimpse into real working life.

This is where dual vocational training builds on that foundation. It deepens the connection to the workplace and integrates apprentices directly into company structures. Over an extended period, they acquire hands-on skills and gain a realistic understanding of work, supported by structured theoretical education in vocational schools.

The discussions during the workshop demonstrated how valuable structured exchange about educational systems can be in developing new perspectives. A sincere thank-you to all participants for the enriching exchange.

HUNGARY

Career Orientation and Innovation: We Accompany You from Kindergarten to University

Zsanett Imre, Székesfehérvár Centre of Vocational Training

1. Aim and content of the workshop

This workshop aimed to present our career guidance system and methods in Székesfehérvár VET Centre, with a special emphasis on early and engaging practices that support students in making better educational choices – starting as early as kindergarten and continuing through primary and secondary school.

We began the session with a brief overview of the Hungarian career guidance framework, including how it is implemented nationally. Then, we zoomed in on our local approach in Székesfehérvár, particularly within our Vocational Education and Training (VET) Centre.

One of the major challenges we face is that many students do not fully understand what to expect in VET schools. As a result, dropout rates remain high. Often, students choose a school or a vocational path based on vague interests or social influences, rather than a clear understanding of their skills, values, or what a given programme involves.

This misalignment is often due to limited self-awareness. That is why our system emphasises early career orientation, aiming to help children gradually develop a better understanding of themselves and the world of work.

To support this, I introduced one of our key tools: a career guidance board game designed to spark self-reflection, discussion, and teamwork among primary school students. Rather than presenting the game in theory, I invited participants to experience it firsthand. After the system overview, we dove into several interactive activities from the game – each designed to introduce children to workplace roles, environments, personal values, and interests in an age-appropriate, engaging way.

The game is built to be flexible. Whether you have a few hours or a full semester, it can be adjusted to fit different age groups, session lengths, and learning environments. We also discussed how the game has been used successfully in a variety of school settings and how it can be tailored to different teaching styles.

As a closing activity, the workshop concluded with a group project. Each team was asked to choose a sector and design a fictional company or business employing 50 people. They then had to define the roles within the company and describe the skills, soft skills, and attitudes required for each position. Finally, teams presented their ideas to the group. This task served to integrate the knowledge and insights gained throughout the workshop and mirrored the kind of reflection and planning we aim to inspire in students themselves.

2. Key outcomes and insights

The workshop was both hands-on and eye-opening. Participants were highly engaged, and the playful activities naturally encouraged teamwork, creativity, and reflection – the same outcomes we aim to achieve with students.

Here are some of the key insights we gained:

- **Play is powerful.** The interactive format lowered barriers and made it easy for participants to engage in conversations about personal traits, work values, and future possibilities – topics that can otherwise feel abstract or intimidating.
- **Teamwork strengthens learning.** Many of the game elements rely on group decision-making and peer discussion. This mirrors real-life workplace dynamics and helps children practice collaboration and communication while also learning from each other.

- **Self-awareness is essential.** One of the main causes of mismatched school choices is a lack of understanding about personal strengths and preferences. Our board game helps students begin that inner exploration early, in a supportive and age-appropriate way.
- **Expectations vs. reality in VET education.** Many students enter vocational pathways with only a surface-level understanding of the field. Guidance tools like ours help bridge the gap between student perceptions and the reality of certain professions or learning paths.
- **Flexibility matters.** The game's ability to be adapted for different ages, group sizes, and timeframes was a highlight for many. Whether used in a short workshop or across a semester, it remains effective.
- **Valuable feedback from educators.** Participants' questions and insights revealed areas where the game's instructions and tasks could be better clarified. In particular, they requested more concrete examples and alternative ways to adjust activities based on time constraints and age groups. Their feedback underlined the need for refining our wording, adding more adaptation tips, and expanding our support materials to make the toolkit even more accessible for a wider range of users.
- **Project-based learning reinforces insights.** The final group activity – developing a fictional company – helped consolidate what participants learned about career roles, skill identification, and the interconnectedness of soft and hard skills. It illustrated how early orientation can eventually lead to more concrete planning and realistic expectations.

3. Main conclusions

The session reinforced several important takeaways about modern career guidance:

- **Start early and build gradually.** Career decisions should not come as a surprise in the student's final school years. By starting in primary school, students can grow in their self-awareness and decision-making confidence over time.
- **Tools must be engaging and meaningful.** Games and other experiential methods make career guidance more than just information-sharing – they create memorable, impactful learning experiences.
- **Real-life preparation is key.** Career guidance should help students not only choose a path that interests them but also understand what it realistically involves and whether it matches their abilities and values.
- **Preventing dropouts starts with better decisions.** Many early school leavers might have made different choices if they had clearer guidance at the primary level. Encouraging better-aligned school choices can reduce frustration and disengagement later on.
- **Career guidance is a lifelong process.** Our guidance system does not stop when students enter high school. As we grow, mature, and face new challenges, our understanding of ourselves and our options evolves. That is why we aim to provide continuous, age-appropriate support throughout a student's entire educational journey – from kindergarten to university.
- **Educator feedback is crucial.** Workshops like this provide essential insight into how our tools are understood and applied. This feedback loop helps us refine our materials, improve our training resources, and ultimately make our career guidance system more effective and inclusive.

4. References and resources for further reading

Currently, our materials are available in Hungarian only, but the following sites offer more details about our programmes, tools, and career guidance strategies:

- **SZFSZC Career Guidance Portal** Includes downloadable activities, methodology, and best practices for career orientation. <https://palyaorientacio.szfszc.hu/>
- **KARRlerkapu – Interactive Career Portal** Designed for students to explore careers and education paths aligned with their interests and strengths. <https://palyara.hu/karrierkapu/>

We hope to offer English-language versions in the future as interest in our methods grows internationally.

Career Guidance Curriculum for Secondary School Students

Gergely Kiss, Miénk a Pálya Alapítvány

The MAP Foundation aims to develop a career guidance curriculum to help young people who are about to make a career choice and career decision to make a career choice and career decision.

The approach focuses on the problem that young people facing a career choice know very few career options, and what they think they know, they usually have a very superficial knowledge of those options. When we ask students in a school what kind of professional they would like to talk to on a career guidance day, the students interviewed mention about the same 120-150 career opportunities in each secondary school.

- a) The content of the curriculum allows students to process the career opportunities in a structured and systematic way. The structured format will help youngsters to easily compare different occupations.
- b) The content of the curriculum provides a detailed introduction to well-known, little-known or unknown careers, including occupations that can be linked to secondary or tertiary education.
- c) The descriptions and video content of careers are written in the language of secondary school students, with explanations of unfamiliar concepts.
- d) The video content aims to support processing and motivate young people to explore possibilities they are not familiar with, taking into account their content consumption habits. On social media platforms, the short formats of the video content are suitable to put career opportunities in front of the eyes of young people who are presented in the curriculum.
- e) The activities in the curricular content can be used in class or as stand-alone activities.
- f) The processing of the curriculum is supported by a self-reflecting worksheet, which, on the one hand, supports the students in their self-study and, on the other hand, helps them to formulate questions and to take action by planning the following steps.
- g) A collection of questions and a collection of links in the curriculum support formulating further questions and gathering further information.
- h) For individual and small group work in the classroom, teachers are provided with a short methodological guide to help them facilitate their students. Prior to the career guidance days, students can prepare themselves for a meeting with a specific professional by collecting their questions in advance, based on the curriculum content. If a school is located in a region where it is difficult to reach professionals, teachers can set up a classroom on the career guidance day where they can give out parts of the curriculum to students in small groups.
- i) The curriculum content can be similarly used in schools in theme weeks as well, like sustainability, financial, and digital theme weeks.
- j) We plan to link descriptions and video content, which are checked by guidance professionals, with an AI-driven chatbot that provides age-appropriate answers and shows relevant and useful content to students. Furthermore, a chatbot can ask questions to encourage the young person to work out and take steps that are relevant to their career choice.

We hope that the curriculum will be a useful tool for parents, teachers and career guidance professionals as well who want to support career choices and further education decisions of students aged 12-18.

A major challenge for the introduction of the curriculum is that the school curriculum is very rigid and it is difficult to find a place for career studies. Understandably, teachers are reluctant to devote their time to career education, and it would be very important to devote time to this topic in class. Unfortunately, there are very few teachers specialising in career guidance who have the necessary professional knowledge to guide young people. It is not at all easy for teachers to orient young people in the absence of knowledge of the labour market and, unfortunately, there are very few tools that can be used to carry out career guidance work.

In view of this, the use of the guidance curriculum system in schools has been designed in such a way that teachers who do not have specific knowledge can use the system well and that they can experience the use of the curriculum as a relief rather than as an additional compulsory task.

Soft Skills Development Using Gaming Method

Solveiga Keistere, Riga State Technical School

From June 3 to 6, 2025, Riga State Technical School career counsellor Solveiga Keistere participated in the Euroguidance Cross Border Seminar (CBS 2025), which this year took place in Zagreb, Croatia. The seminar gathered career support professionals from eleven European countries, offering a diverse programme that included panel discussions, plenary sessions, and thematic workshops.

During the thematic workshop “Soft Skills Development Using Gaming Method”, Solveiga Keistere presented a career support tool – a game developed within the framework of the Erasmus+ KA2 Project “Tools and techniques for a better choice of profession” No. 2023-2-LV01-KA210-VET-000174014. The career choice game “Your Choice – That’s You” is designed as a career support tool to help both young people and adults understand how values and choices influence decision-making and career choices. The game is available in [Latvian](#) and [English](#), in both electronic and print versions. It serves as a practical tool for use in schools and individual counselling sessions. Workshop participants were actively involved in the activity, analysing their experiences and how the method could be integrated into the learning process and career counselling for various age groups. The workshop received positive feedback, highlighting the importance of creative approaches in modern career support.

Additionally, several content-rich workshops were attended: “Linking Young People to the Labour Market” (Portugal) emphasised the role of cooperation between schools and employers; “Science for Girls’ Empowerment” (Serbia) provided inspiration for promoting gender balance in STEM fields; and “Applying the FRIS® Thinking Styles in Career Counselling” (Poland) offered practical insights into using thinking styles in the counselling process.

Participation in CBS 2025 was a significant contribution to professional and intercultural development, as well as an opportunity to strengthen Latvia’s role as an active participant in the European career education space. Representing Riga State Technical School at such a high-level event was both an honour and an inspiration for future development.

POLAND

Applying the FRIS® Thinking Styles in Career Counselling Practice

Sylwia Korycka-Fortuna, Foundation for the Development of the Education System, Europass and Euroguidance Centre Poland

Why Thinking Style Matters

Thinking style is not personality, intelligence, or temperament. It's the way people interpret unfamiliar situations, process information, and make decisions when no prior experience offers a clear path. And when it comes to career choices – often complex, uncertain, and emotionally charged – thinking style becomes central.

Some clients are planners. Others dive in and learn by doing. Some need space to dream; others seek emotional support first. If we fail to recognise these differences, even the best advice can fall flat.

Tools for Understanding, Not Labelling

Our goal as counsellors isn't to diagnose or classify. It's to understand. Thinking styles give us a language to describe the diversity of approaches without judgment. When we meet a client who feels stuck or overwhelmed, recognising how they approach problems gives us insight into why they may be struggling.

These patterns aren't weaknesses. They're cognitive maps. When we read them correctly, we can align our strategy: offering data to the analytical, space to the dreamers, structure to the doers, and empathy to the relational.

What We Explored in the Workshop

The session included individual and group reflection, practical exercises, and role-play designed to immerse participants in different ways of thinking.

A standout moment came during a group debrief when a participant shared: "I realised I often push my clients toward clarity and action too soon. Some just need time to imagine and feel safe first."

Inclusive Guidance Starts with Cognitive Diversity

Career counselling is increasingly about personalisation. Guidance becomes more inclusive and effective when we account for cognitive preferences, decision-making pace, emotional readiness, and approach to risk and uncertainty.

It also pushes us as advisors to expand our own flexibility. To move between data and imagination, structure and empathy.

Reflection: What Surprised Us

Two reflection rounds offered rich insights. Some recurring takeaways included:

- "I never realised how often I dismiss dreaming as 'unrealistic.'"
- "My strength is structure – but I need to offer more emotional space."
- "A client's silence doesn't always mean resistance. It might mean they're still processing."

Looking Ahead: Rethinking Our Role

This session was not about mastering a new tool or adopting a specific model. It was about rethinking our stance as career professionals.

As counsellors, we often feel pressure to provide solutions. But what if our first job is not to offer answers – but to understand how our client reaches them?

Further Exploration

For those wishing to explore this topic in more depth:

- FRIS® thinking style model: www.fris.pl
- Cognitive styles in educational psychology (e.g. Riding & Cheema)
- Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory

Final Thought

In the words of Polish polar explorer Marek Kamiński: "We weren't born to become someone else."

Career guidance isn't about pushing people toward predefined paths. It's about helping them recognise – and trust – their own way of thinking.

Let's meet clients not where we are, but where they are. That's where the real journey begins.

Future-Ready Career Counselling: Interactive Tools for Vocational School Advisors

Marlena Pujza-Kunikowska, Europass & Euroguidance Ambassador

Imagine playing Jenga and learning about career choices at the same time. Sounds odd? Maybe. But at the Cross-Border Seminar in Zagreb, it proved to be a fun and eye-opening method to empower career counsellors with creative strategies for engaging young people. As the Europass & Euroguidance Ambassador from Poland, I had the pleasure of leading a workshop titled *"Future-Ready Career Counselling: Interactive Tools for Vocational School Advisors."* It was more than just a presentation – it was a full sensory, team-based experience filled with colour, laughter, reflection, and discovery.

Learning by Doing

At the heart of the workshop was the principle of **active education**. We didn't just talk about tools; we played, tested, created, and collaborated. Participants stepped into the shoes of their students, trying out modern, interactive resources that support vocational guidance through experience rather than theory.

Tools That Inspired

The session introduced a variety of hands-on tools and platforms – some well-known, others pleasantly surprising. We explored:

- **Career Jenga** – A twist on the classic game where each block comes with a career-related question or challenge.
- **Kahoot!** – Although familiar to some, it turned out to be new for many participants. We built our own quiz, proving how easy it is to customise learning.
- **Career Taboo** – A word game that challenges players to describe professions without using the most

obvious terms.

- **Actionbound** – This app lets you create digital scavenger hunts. We imagined how it could turn any school or city into an interactive guidance trail.
- **Genially, Wordwall, Quizlet, Baamboozle** – Interactive platforms for gamified content.
- **Gimkit and Seppo** – Tools for group challenges and quizzes that push engagement to the next level.

We also took a look at personality tests like **16personalities** and **Colour Code**, and found resources on sites like **TeachersPayTeachers**, **Twinkl**, and **WeAreTeachers.com** that offer endless inspiration for career-related content.

Why Does This Matter?

Vocational counsellors today face the task of guiding students toward careers that may not even exist yet. That's why future-ready career education must be **dynamic, personalised, and fun**. When students feel seen, involved, and curious, guidance becomes something they look forward to – not avoid.

From Poland to the World

As an experienced youth worker in the non-formal education sector, career coach, TSR psychotherapist in training, and mentor developing forest coaching & wellbeing practices, I believe that growth happens when education reaches both the **mind and the heart**. Through international collaboration, like this seminar in Zagreb, we can bring that philosophy to life across borders. If you're a counsellor, teacher, or youth worker, don't be afraid to mix play with purpose. The next generation deserves creative, compassionate, and courageous guidance. You can create teaching tools with almost everything around you!

PORTUGAL

Linking Young People to the Labour Market: Collaborative Approaches in Career Development and Guidance

Isabel Quirino, Psychology and Guidance Service – Poeta Antonio Aleixo Secondary School, Portimão

Linking young people to the labour market and youth preparation to work is consensually identified as a fundamental dimension of the intervention in the field of career development and guidance. In recent years, collaborative approaches have been gaining relevance in these domains. Collaborative approaches are those interventions that value the specific contribution of different partners and, simultaneously, the contribution that results from the interaction between partners – assuming that working together produces better results than the simple sum of the results that could be produced by each of the partners by themselves. Implementing collaborative approaches involves clearly identifying the issue that we want to solve and clearly identifying the partners that can be interested in solving the same issue. It also involves clearly identifying the contributions that each partner can make and how they will collaborate.

In the workshop, after a brief characterisation of the Portuguese IVET system and of career services in the educational context in Portugal, different projects implemented at Agrupamento de Escolas Poeta António Aleixo were presented to illustrate the advantages and the challenges of collaborative approaches. The projects presented were framed within the legal regulations of IVET in Portugal, namely legal regulations related to curriculum flexibility. The projects concerned career interventions whose objectives link IVET students to the labour market and promote their preparation for work, involving close collaboration among career practitioners,

IVET teachers and companies:

Are you ready to work with us? - In this project, tourism IVET students learned how to apply for job offers by participating in real job interview activities that were prepared and conducted by human resources professionals from international tourism companies operating at the local level. Those job interviews took place in a local auditorium in the city, as a way to give visibility and to value IVET pathways in the community. Partners: career practitioners, IVET teachers, and companies.

The mini pallet processing company - This project was implemented to promote workability competences and career readiness of SEN students who attended IVET courses. It was designed based on Junior Achievement's The Company programme, having as starting point the need to ensure personalised learning pathways for the students. Partners: career practitioners, SEN teachers, IVET teachers, and companies.

Project Job Shadowing: Do you want to know a career? - To provide experiences that give people access to information about different occupations and careers is an enormous challenge in a changing world. In the Project Job Shadowing, IVET students participated in job shadowing experiential activities as a way to develop decision-making skills through the exploration of the world of work. Partners: career practitioners, IVET teachers, alumni, universities, and companies.

During the project's presentation, participants were invited to reflect on the advantages and the challenges of collaborative approaches in career intervention. The main advantage highlighted was the improvement of the world of work knowledge and career readiness of IVET students. It was also highlighted that collaborative approaches can improve the career practitioners and IVET teachers' world of work knowledge, which can contribute to improving the way both perform their specific professional tasks in IVET – e.g. information about the world of work, decision-making support, curriculum development, students' motivation for learning. Simultaneously, companies can learn about differentiated profiles of IVET students and differentiated pathways of education and training, which can allow companies to develop personalised plans for youth onboarding in school to work transition. Companies can also better realise that they can have an active role in the initial preparation and qualification of youth for work.

What is the main challenge in collaborative approaches? Building trust relationships among partners, namely career practitioners, IVET teachers and companies, which will allow all partners to communicate and work together to a common goal: linking young people to the labour market and ensuring a better preparation of youth for work.

SERBIA

Science for Girls' Empowerment

Natalia Budinski, Petro Kuzmjak school

The *Science for Girls Empowerment* workshop was designed as an educational initiative to encourage educators to empower girls to explore science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) with confidence and curiosity. The workshop was interactive, engaging, and grounded in real-life examples from my practice. Through storytelling, role models, and creative exploration, participants examined both the visible and hidden factors that affect women's participation in STEM.

Women bring diverse perspectives, creativity, and unique problem-solving approaches, which are essential for innovation and scientific discovery. However, according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), less than 30% of the world's researchers are women. To truly reduce the gender gap, it's not enough to focus only on numbers. We must address qualitative barriers: stereotypes, lack of mentorship, inadequate access to STEM education, and systemic bias. These challenges often lead to the "leaky pipeline" phenomenon, where women leave scientific careers at a higher rate than men.

The workshop focused on key components: showcasing success stories of women scientists and innovators and real-life examples from my own practices such as "Math Teacher for a Day", "Insight to STEM Jobs at the Science Technology Park in Belgrade", "STEM Girls Party" and "3D Printing as a Dream Job of a Girl", "Money and Math Make the Financial World Go Around", and gender roles in unexpected areas such as "Jobs for Girls in Agriculture" or "Hidden Brilliance: Women in Mathematics" to show that science can be playful, practical, and personal. These activities led to significant outcomes such as improved understanding of gender equality in science and increased awareness of available career paths and role models, but also stronger peer support and a sense of belonging in science.

Empowering girls means informing them, listening to them, and building pathways that make STEM welcoming and visible. By sharing successful models, such as the *Science for Girls Empowerment* workshop, we help build a foundation for inclusive and sustainable innovation in education. These models can be adapted across different learning contexts, ensuring that girls have the opportunity to explore, create, and lead.

References

- UNESCO Women in Science Campaign: <https://www.unesco.org/en/days/women-girls-science>
- UNESCO Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality): <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>
- European Schoolnet STEM Discovery Campaign: <https://www.scientix.eu/campaigns/sdc/sdc25>

Connecting to a Career

Nataša Jankulovski and Svetlana Petrović, Elementary Music School "Predrag Milošević", Knjaževac

1. Aim and content of the workshop

The workshop "Connecting to a Career" was designed to empower high school students to explore career opportunities, challenge gender stereotypes in professions, and develop key soft skills. Through dynamic and student-centred activities such as icebreakers, group tasks, role play, career research, and direct interaction with professionals, participants were encouraged to reflect on their strengths, values, and aspirations. This workshop also reached the adult population through specially designed activities tailored to their needs, with the goal of empowering each individual on their personal career journey.

2. Key outcomes and insights

Students enhanced their understanding of various career paths and educational options. By participating in tasks like the "Career Code" activities, "Selfie Entrepreneur" project, and a live panel with professionals from diverse fields, they improved communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and self-presentation skills. Importantly, they discovered that success in a profession depends on skills and motivation, not gender or money. When it comes to career guidance workshops for adults, special emphasis is placed on their life experience, which can be a valuable resource for further career development.

3. Main conclusions

Career education should be interactive and connected to real-life experiences. Direct engagement with professionals provides students with valuable insights into the realities of work and inspires them to take ownership of their career journey. Building bridges between schools and the labour market is essential for meaningful guidance. Strengthening self-confidence, recognising, and building on individual strengths are key steps toward successful career planning and growth.

4. References and resources for further reading

- <https://obrazovanje.rs/> – Educational opportunities
- <https://karijera.bos.rs/> – BOŠ Karijera Portal – Career tests and resources
- "Connecting to a Career" <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AsU84-le937j5EUDYFEzbWrpDe8oQLvg/view>
- "Selfie Entrepreneur" – student project website www.selfieentrepreneur.weebly.com

SLOVAKIA

How Can We Encourage Girls and Women into STEM?

Zuzana Sotáková, Ženský algoritmus / Female Algorithm

1. Aim and content of the workshop

The workshop, “How Can We Encourage Girls and Women into STEM?”, aimed to address the significant underrepresentation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields, particularly in Slovakia and across Europe. **Zuzana Sotáková**, CEO of **Ženský algoritmus**, an NGO based in Slovakia, emphasised the organisation’s core vision that women should equally shape the technological future, recognising that the current gender gap limits innovation, diversity of thought, and economic opportunity.

The session was designed to equip career advisors with practical, research-based strategies that can be immediately integrated into their practice to guide girls and women towards high-potential STEM careers.

The content of the workshop explored several critical areas:

- **The Case for Women in STEM:** The aim was to explain how STEM drives innovation, shapes industries, and solves global challenges, and why diverse perspectives – especially women’s voices and talents – are essential for balanced, inclusive progress. Yet, across Europe – and especially in Slovakia – women remain underrepresented in STEM. In Slovakia, women make up only **16% of ICT professionals**, and many girls still do not see STEM as a viable or welcoming career path.
- **Understanding the Barriers:** The workshop delved into the multitude of obstacles **women** face at different life stages when considering or pursuing STEM. These include gender stereotypes, a lack of relatable role models, self-doubt, biases in hiring and promotion, the impact of career breaks (for example, due to maternity leave or caregiver obligations), and insufficient flexibility and support.
- Specific perceptions that deter **girls** from tech fields, such as concerns about difficulty, lack of programming experience, and insufficient self-confidence, were presented. These insights were grounded in an internal survey conducted by Ženský algoritmus in 2023–2025 among over 750 girls aged 13–19 from eastern Slovakia. The survey identified key perceived barriers, including poor knowledge of mathematics, limited information about study or career opportunities, and the absence of female role models in IT in their environment.
- **Effective Strategies and Best Practices:** Drawing on successful initiatives from Ženský algoritmus, proven approaches were shared to spark interest and build confidence. Key programmes and tools presented included:
 - **Early Intervention Programmes:** The workshop showcased initiatives like Summer Coding Camps for teenage girls, the XX Factor online IT and digital skills club, and European Girls and Women in ICT Day events, all designed to create safe, supportive spaces and build early, positive experiences with technology.
 - **Role Models and Real-World Exposure:** The workshop emphasised the critical role of real female role models through programmes like Inspiring Girls Slovakia and Inspiring Jobs company visits, which help break stereotypes and broaden career horizons. The organisation also piloted Tech. Ship, providing paid technical internships for high school girls.
 - **Career Guidance Tools:** In-house built resources such as StudiumSTEM.sk (a national database of STEM schools) and the online course “Find yourself in STEM” were presented as vital tools for career advisors to help girls make informed study choices.
 - **Enabling Women to Thrive:** For women at different career stages, Ženský algoritmus provides programmes like Skill-In (technical competencies), Back In Business (re-entering workforce after maternity leave), Elements of AI (foundational AI knowledge), Ready To Lead Academy (leadership skills), and Jumpstart (career switching into tech). The underlying principles for success in these programmes include prioritising confidence-building, focusing on practical digital skills, providing relatable role models, creating supportive learning environments, making career pathways visible, and offering flexibility.

- **The “Pitch Perfect” Game:** This was a central, interactive activity designed to boost creativity, teamwork, and pitching skills. Participants experienced generating quick ideas for products or services to meet specific target group needs, acting as both startup founders and investors. Rounds are short and dynamic, with 5 minutes to develop an idea and 2 minutes to pitch it. Making it freely available and highly adaptable for fostering entrepreneurial thinking and presentation skills in both youth and adults. A key purpose of Pitch Perfect is to demonstrate that even individuals who initially believe they are “not creative” can generate innovative ideas under time pressure in a supportive, fun team environment.

2. Key outcomes and insights

The workshop successfully conveyed that career advisors are key players in fostering an inclusive technological future. Participants gained an understanding of the multifaceted barriers women face in STEM and were provided with actionable strategies to make a real impact.

Specific outcomes highlighted:

- The “Pitch Perfect” – an interactive **game-based learning activity**, proved highly effective; participants discovered their own creativity and capability, finding the experience fun and insightful.
- Data from Ženský algoritmus’s programmes underscore their impact: for instance, 94% of Summer Coding Camp participants left more motivated for technical studies, and 90% of Tech.Ship interns felt more confident to start an IT career.
- Overall, since 2020, Ženský algoritmus has educated over 16,000 people (95% women and girls), delivered 65+ projects, and earned multiple awards, demonstrating significant national and international impact.

Key insights emphasised throughout the workshop included:

- Confidence is paramount: Many women hesitate not due to ability, but due to confidence gaps, making confidence-building a crucial first step.
- Role models matter: Girls need to “see it to believe it”; connecting them with diverse female role models breaks stereotypes and broadens horizons.
- Safe, supportive spaces: Environments like workshops, camps, and peer groups reduce fear and increase motivation for exploration.
- Practical skills and visible pathways: Focus on usable digital skills and clearly link STEM learning to real job opportunities and career progression.
- It’s about choice, not obligation: The ultimate goal is not to make every girl an engineer, but to empower every girl with the choice to pursue a STEM career.

3. Main conclusions

The workshop concluded that a systematic, long-term approach is essential to overcome the barriers women face in STEM. Career advisors have a powerful role in this by:

- Actively promoting diverse role models and creating opportunities for girls to interact with them
- Fostering safe and supportive environments where girls can explore STEM without apprehension
- Showcasing modern and accessible technologies, illustrating the broad and creative nature of current tech fields
- Building early, positive experiences with technology to spark interest and open minds
- Making clear career pathways visible, connecting educational choices to real-world job opportunities through internships, visits, and stories
- Prioritising confidence-building at every stage of career guidance
- Leveraging interactive tools like the Pitch Perfect game to make learning engaging and impactful

By implementing these strategies, career advisors can significantly contribute to unlocking the career potential of women and girls in technology and management, ensuring a more inclusive and innovative future.

4. References and resources for further reading

- Ženský algoritmus Website: zenskyalgoritmus.sk
- Ženský algoritmus on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/zensky-algoritmus>
- StudiumSTEM.sk (National STEM Schools Database in Slovakia): <https://www.studiumstem.sk>
- Pitch Perfect Game (Free Download): <https://shop.playiversity.co/product/pitch-perfect-print-to-play-edition>
- Inspiring Girls Slovakia (an initiative to connect role models with schools in Slovakia): <https://www.inspiring-girls.sk>
- Inspiring Girls International (a global initiative within 40 countries in the world): <https://inspiring-girls.com>

SLOVENIA

Personalised Support for NEETs: Best Practices & Insights

Mateja Pačnik Kolenc, Employment Service of Slovenia

Young people not in education, employment, or training (NEETs) were the main focus of this interactive workshop. The workshop of CBS introduced an overview of the NEET situation in Europe, including relevant statistics and specific information for Slovenia. Participants explored the different subgroups of NEETs and discussed how removed from the labour market they are. This was an excellent opportunity for a dialogue and exchange of perspectives among participating guidance practitioners from CBS countries.

Workshop objectives were to:

- Encourage Self-reflection on professional roles as career counsellors.
- Provide data and insights on NEETs in Europe and Slovenia.
- Understand diversity among NEETs (subgroups and their distance from the labour market) and exchange perspectives.
- Introduce the Interreg @Work4NEETs project and showcase Slovenian good practices on personalised support.
- Brainstorm possible solutions for NEET-specific cases.

The Interreg @Work4NEETs project aims to support NEETs to access meaningful opportunities in the labour market or continue their education. The project aims to identify and exchange good practices to improve existing policy tools that support NEETs in accessing meaningful opportunities to enhance their skills and secure suitable employment across seven European regions: Malta (lead partner), Croatia, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Romania, and Slovenia. The partnership brings together Public Employment Services, Labour Ministries, Regional Administrations and Local Administration Associations.

The project collects good practices from various areas of working with NEETs in participating countries. So far, best practices about data collection, profiling, personalised support for NEETs, work exposure, follow-up services, and matching NEET competences with labour market demands.

The following Slovenian good practices about personalised support for NEETs were presented.

The first practice is the **EURES National Mobility Scheme** (2016–2022). Its aim was to support NEETs up to the age of 35 in gaining relevant work experience abroad with full mentor support. The programme applied a 6-month mentoring model, structured into three stages:

- **Stage 1:** Preparation for mobility and activation (2 months)
- **Stage 2:** Mobility in another EU country with work-related experience (70 days)
- **Stage 3:** Follow-up activities, evaluation, and reintegration (1–2 months)

Key goals of the programme included:

- Gaining relevant work experience
- Developing social skills
- Supporting personal growth
- Facilitating employment

After concluding the programme, 86 % of participants secured employment within 6 months after completing the programme. Today, the scheme continues under the ALMA Initiative (Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve).

The second practice, **Project Learning for Young Adults** (PLYA), was developed by the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Adult Education. This personalised, holistic support programme helps young adults (aged 15 – 29) resume education, build life skills, and enhance employability. Special attention is given to vulnerable NEET groups, including long-term unemployed, early school leavers, migrants, and young people with mental health challenges. Participants can take part for up to 10 months. The programme is currently implemented in 12 organisations across Slovenia, cofinanced by European Social Funds and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Employment Service of Slovenia is responsible for monitoring the programme's implementation and its financial management.

Main goals of PLYA:

- ✓ Supporting the formation of professional identity
- ✓ Developing key skills (social skills, self-awareness, empowerment, and resilience)
- ✓ Encouraging active participation and inclusion through mentorship
- ✓ Applying a holistic, person-centred approach

PLYA applies four different methods:

- ✓ **Personal learning projects** – Individually tailored learning focused on education and personal development.
- ✓ **Common learning projects** – Group projects that build practical skills and contribute to the local community.
- ✓ **Activities of interest** – Engaging workshops in music, cooking, technology, and more.
- ✓ **Production work** – Practical hands-on experience in various occupational fields.

After concluding the programme, 83 % of participants reported positive changes in their lives.

The final good practice presented was the **Hackathon** (part of the Nekstep project), implemented by the Adult Education Centre Koper. The aim was to engage groups of young people in solving real-life challenges posed by local employers. Three companies presented their workplace challenges to young participants, who were then divided into teams to brainstorm and develop potential solutions. Each group prepared and presented their ideas to the companies.

The winning team proposed a digital solution to improve the construction process for a local company. The company implemented parts of the proposal and invited the team to collaborate on future projects.

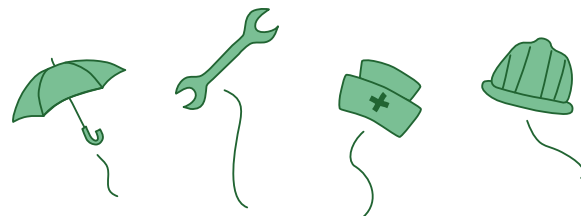
The workshop concluded with group work, during which participants analysed case studies, brainstormed ideas for cross-institutional collaboration, and developed targeted action plans to support NEETs. Throughout the process, they gained practical insights and tools to enhance their career counselling practices by learning from real-world experiences and proven approaches.

Key outcomes and insights highlight the importance of providing personalised and tailored support. Social inclusion projects require significant time and financial resources, and outcomes may be modest due to the vulnerability of the target group. Effective cross-sectoral cooperation is key to achieving meaningful and sustainable results.

In conclusion, open dialogue, reflection, and solution seeking across countries and stakeholders are essential. Each case is unique, and diverse perspectives enrich both understanding and approach. Continuous dialogue helps in generating new ideas and strengthening the support system for NEETs.

References and resources:

- CEDEFOP (2. 4. 2025). VET Toolkit for empowering NEETS. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/neets>
- Interreg Europe (2. 4. 2025). atWork4NEETs – Increasing Work prospects of NEETs through capacity building and improved policy measures. <https://www.interregeurope.eu/atwork4neets>
- Zavod republike Slovenije za zaposlovanje (24. 6. 2025). Zbirka dobrih praks @Work4NEETs*. <https://www.ess.gov.si/partnerji/projektno-sodelovanje/projekt-interregwork4neets/zbirka-dobrih-praks-work4neets/> *good practices are in English



Presenter



Andreja Uroić Landekić

Andreja Uroić Landekić is Head of the Department for the Promotion of Vocational Education at the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth in Croatia. She has extensive experience in vocational education policy, curriculum development and cooperation with European institutions. As a collaborator of the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes, she participates in the development of the Europass Certificate Supplement and other initiatives supporting quality and transparency in VET.

Keynote speakers



Toni Babarović

Toni Babarović is a senior scientific advisor at the "Ivo Pilar" Institute of Social Sciences and a full professor at the University of Zagreb, Croatia. His research spans vocational and work psychology, educational psychology and quality of life. He has published over 40 peer-reviewed articles and 13 book chapters, as well as more than 120 conference papers, contributing extensively to these fields. He teaches courses on statistics and psychometrics at the University of Zagreb and work and organisational psychology at the University of Split.



Maja Parmač Kovačić

Maja Parmač Kovačić is an associate professor at the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb. She teaches several courses in the area of work and organisational psychology at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral levels. She designed and teaches the course entitled Theory and Practice of Career Guidance, which is conducted at the graduate level of Psychology.

One of her primary professional interests revolves around career counselling and career development. She has conducted numerous lectures and workshops in this field. To date, she has co-authored a book and published a substantial body of research papers, some of which have been featured in globally recognised journals (e.g., International Journal of Selection and Assessment, Journal of Personality Assessment, Journal of Personnel Psychology, Current Psychology). Moreover, she has designed and adapted various measurement tools and actively participated in numerous international scientific and professional conferences.



Iva Šverko

Iva Šverko is a senior scientific advisor at the "Ivo Pilar" Institute of Social Sciences in Zagreb and a full professor at the University of Zagreb, Croatia. She was the principal investigator and team member in several research projects addressing career choice and development in adolescence and has published her findings in more than 50 articles and book chapters. She teaches courses on career psychology at the University of Zagreb and on work and organisational psychology at the University of Split.

Panel leader



Darja Maslić Seršić

Darja Maslić Seršić is a Professor of Psychology at the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. She teaches courses in Research Methods, Organisational Psychology, Occupational Health Psychology and Vocational Behaviour. Her research interests lie in the field of Work and Organisational Psychology, with a focus on work-related well-being, work motivation and adaptive career behaviour. In collaboration with the Croatian Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes, she has been leading lifelong learning courses in career counselling for education professionals for over a decade.

Panellists



Cynthia Harrison Villalba

Cynthia Harrison is a policy officer at CEDEFOP's Department of VET and Skills, in the area of learning and employability. She is responsible for the strand of work on policy and systems development in lifelong guidance and coordinates CareersNet. Her work has involved collaboration on common policy frameworks and guidelines in education and training, most recently, in the field of lifelong guidance. Her VET supporting policies team colleagues specialise in validation of informal and non-formal learning, financing, and statistics in adult learning/VET and who all engage in cooperation with networks, policy stakeholders and experts towards developing tools, resources and building evidence to strengthen policies and systems development. Her academic background includes postgraduate studies in international and comparative education policy and sociology, also engaging in mixed-method research on civic competences and career aspirations, including collaboration on a composite indicator. She has also worked in the adult learning and youth sectors.



Birgit Tschense

Birgit Tschense's path into career guidance began with her academic background in German studies, journalism, media, and political science in Bamberg and Düsseldorf. Early professional experience in journalism and market research provided her with valuable insights into communication and societal trends. Since 2002, she has worked as a studies and career counsellor at the Federal Employment Agency in Düsseldorf, where she supports individuals in navigating their educational and professional paths. Over the years, she has expanded her expertise through various roles: as a Training Expert (2013), Eurodesk Mobility Advisor (2014), University Lecturer (2017), and EURES Advisor (2022). In 2023, she joined the Euroguidance network at ZAV Bonn, where she continues to contribute to international guidance and mobility strategies.



Lisa Fasching

Lisa Fasching's professional journey in education policy began during her academic studies in (international) law. This interest grew as she worked as a seminar trainer and ambassador for career orientation, supporting young people in their career decisions in collaboration with industrial companies. She now focuses on education, labour policy, and international relations, working at the intersection of law, economics, and education. She manages projects, contributes to policy development, and collaborates with regional and national stakeholders. As a member of various advisory committees, she actively shapes education and career orientation strategies, fostering innovative, interdisciplinary approaches that connect education with the requirements of the economy.



Zsanett Imre

Zsanett Imre is a dedicated education professional with a background in teaching and school administration. She began her career as an ESL teacher, focusing on communication and student engagement. Since 2020, Zsanett has been teaching in a Vocational Education and Training (VET) school, where she has gained valuable experience in supporting students as they prepare for careers in various industries. In 2024, she was appointed Deputy Principal, a role in which she leads academic initiatives and supports institutional development. Her responsibilities also include event organisation and career orientation, where she helps students explore and pursue their career pathways. With her combined experience in teaching, leadership, and career guidance, Zsanett continues to make a significant impact on the educational and professional success of her students.



Luka Kamenov

After graduating in Psychology from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, in 2020, Luka Kamenov began his professional career as a school psychologist at OŠ Ivana Grandje, Soblinec Elementary School, and later worked as an expert advisor at the Croatian Employment Service. He has a strong background in counselling, career development, and assessment, and is skilled in providing effective support to individuals seeking employment and career advancement. He is currently employed at *Tehnička škola Ruđera Boškovića*, a vocational school in Zagreb, where he works as a school psychologist. His work combines expertise in both developmental (school) and organisational (work) psychology, with a focus on education, guidance, and counselling for students.

Workshop leaders



Zuzana Adamová

Zuzana Adamová is a teacher, career guidance coordinator and member of the school guidance centre team. She has been awarded the National Career Guidance Award in 2024.



Mirta Blažev

Dr. Mirta Blažev is a psychologist and research associate at the Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar in Zagreb, Croatia, as well as an integrative psychotherapist. Her research focuses on gender differences, gender stereotypes, gender roles, and the sociocultural influences that shape student development and aspirations. She examines how these factors impact educational and career outcomes, as well as the mental health of young people.



Natalia Budinski

Natalija Budinski is a mathematics teacher working in primary and secondary education. In addition to that, she established an organisation that works on promoting education in rural areas and to vulnerable groups, where she led numerous projects dedicated to empowering girls and young women to pursue their future careers in STEM. Her projects have been recognised and awarded by the National Euroguidance Centre. Natalija's field of interest also includes digital literacy and safety, media literacy, and the ethical use of AI. She has received many educational awards and scholarships, including recognition as one of the 300 most innovative Microsoft teachers in the world and the Best Digital Change Maker by All Digital initiative, as well as a Fulbright scholarship and a Nobel Prize Teacher summit scholarship. She published about forty papers in international educational journals.



Lisa Fasching

Lisa Fasching's professional journey in education policy began during her academic studies in (international) law. This interest grew as she worked as a seminar trainer and ambassador for career orientation, supporting young people in their career decisions in collaboration with industrial companies. She now focuses on education, labour policy, and international relations, working at the intersection of law, economics, and education. She manages projects, contributes to policy development, and collaborates with regional and national stakeholders. As a member of various advisory committees, she actively shapes education and career orientation strategies, fostering innovative, interdisciplinary approaches that connect education with the requirements of the economy.



Mirela Franović

Mirela Franović is an advisor for education at the Department for Education of the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts. She has extensive experience in VET for trade and craft professions, where cooperation between different stakeholders is a key prerequisite for better alignment of VET to labour market needs. Promoting trade and craft professions and their career opportunities among youth, in cooperation with other VET stakeholders, is one of the important activities she has been working on in the Chamber. With her first master's degree in foreign languages, she has recently completed a Master of Science programme in Vocational Education and Innovation at the Technical University of Munich. She is also a member of the CEDEFOP community of apprenticeship experts.



Zsanett Imre

Zsanett Imre is a dedicated education professional with a background in teaching and school administration. She began her career as an ESL teacher, focusing on communication and student engagement. Since 2020, Zsanett has been teaching in a Vocational Education and Training (VET) school, where she has gained valuable experience in supporting students as they prepare for careers in various industries. In 2024, she was appointed Deputy Principal, a role in which she leads academic initiatives and supports institutional development. Her responsibilities also include event organisation and career orientation, where she helps students explore and pursue their career pathways. With her combined experience in teaching, leadership, and career guidance, Zsanett continues to make a significant impact on the educational and professional success of her students.



Nataša Jankuloski

Nataša Jankuloski works as a teacher of economics and tourism subjects at the secondary VET school in Knjaževac as well as a coordinator of the school's guidance team and project team. She is the author of numerous articles published in professional journals and one of the co-authors of a teacher's handbook on career guidance and counselling. She has successfully led 3 online seminars for teachers and participated in conferences and workshops, and is an active guidance practitioner, recognised through several awards.



Gergely Kiss

Gergely Kiss is a career guidance counsellor, professional manager of the MAP Foundation and a qualified human resources counsellor. His focus is on supporting secondary school students in their career choices as a counsellor and trainer. He also supports students in vocational education in group sessions to develop their skills and career choices in the labour market. Under his guidance, MAP Foundation developed a career guidance programme for secondary schools and curricula on sustainability and environmental careers. Both projects won the Hungarian Euroguidance Career Guidance Award in 2022 and in 2024, respectively.



Solveiga Keistere

Solveiga Keistere, the author of the career choice game "Your Choice – That's You", has been working in the vocational education system for more than 15 years. For the past 5 years, she has been managing the career education centre at the largest vocational education school in Latvia. She holds a master's degree in career education.



Sylwia Korycka-Fortuna

Career Consultant with over 6 years of hands-on experience supporting individuals through career changes, job searches, and vocational planning. I work with diverse clients – from managers and professionals to students and individuals returning to the job market – helping them navigate transitions with confidence. Drawing on a solid coaching background (ICF ACC) and diagnostic certifications (FRIS®, Career Direct®), I tailor my approach to each client's unique thinking and action style. I have conducted over 300 one-on-one career coaching processes and facilitated 1000+ hours of group workshops in schools, businesses, and international settings. My work includes creating and delivering career orientation programmes, leading job interview simulations, and coaching clients in personal branding and job application strategies. I also regularly design and host training for career advisors, sharing practical methods and tools. With 17 years in the corporate sector and a deep understanding of labour market expectations, I bridge strategic insight with empathetic support to guide clients through meaningful career decisions. My facilitation style is active, structured, and human-centred – focused on quality, clarity, and real-life outcomes.



Mara Kuhn

Trained as an office communications clerk, Mara Kuhn studied at the Federal Employment Agency's University of Applied Sciences in the field of employment-oriented counselling and case management. She joined the Federal Employment Agency in 2015 and has worked as a guidance counsellor for young people aged 15 to 25. She also served as a project employee at the headquarters of the Federal Employment Agency in the area of media conception. She is a multiple-time Academia participant and an active volunteer in the field of sports.



Kornelija Mrnjaus

Kornelija Mrnjaus is a full professor at the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Education. She teaches a class on career guidance as part of the University Degree Programme in Pedagogy. She has conducted several research studies and published scientific papers on career guidance.



Mateja Pačnik Kolenc

Mateja Pačnik Kolenc holds a Master's Degree in cultural studies and currently works as a project manager of the Interreg@Work4NEETs project at the Employment Service of Slovenia. She has rich experience in career counselling for long-term unemployed and youth work, where she volunteered for many years.



Svetlana Petrović

Svetlana Petrović is a professional associate – pedagogue, with experience in primary, secondary vocational, and music schools. She is a specialist in mediation, a trainer in communication skills and relaxation techniques. For the past 13 years, she has been engaged in career guidance and counselling. Author and facilitator of accredited seminars for education professionals, including training sessions at the National Academy for Public Administration.



Marlena Pujśza-Kunikowska

Marlena Pujśza-Kunikowska is a career advisor, educator and the recipient of the 2020 Eduinspirator award in the youth sector (national level). She has experience in vocational counselling, youth empowerment and non-formal education. She specialises in career guidance, mobility programmes, and developing innovative educational tools to support young people's professional growth and skills development.



Isabel Quirino

Isabel Quirino is a psychologist specialised in Educational Psychology (1990) and holding a Master's Degree in Vocational Development (2010), both from the University of Coimbra, Portugal. Since 1990, she has been working in secondary schools with general and IVET courses, mostly doing career guidance. She is currently based at a secondary school in Portimão, Portugal. Throughout her career, she has been involved in vocational training activities for youth and adults, working in diverse contexts with special populations, i.e. the unemployed, individuals with special needs and low-income youth and adults. She has extensive experience in professional development training activities for teachers. In recent years, she has implemented several projects for IVET students within the school context, using cross-sectoral approaches and experiential methodologies. Most of these projects were promoted with strong involvement of educational teams – teachers and educational staff – as well as from community partners, including representatives from municipalities, companies and youth organisations. Most recently, she coordinated two Erasmus+ projects

in the VET sector, aimed at promoting school capacity to use curriculum flexibility in IVET as a means to enhance the potential of all IVET students and, simultaneously, to match the skills needed at the local and regional level.



Miroslava Smutná

Miroslava Smutná is a teacher, career guidance coordinator and member of the school guidance centre team. She has been awarded the National Career Guidance Award in 2024.



Zuzana Sotáková

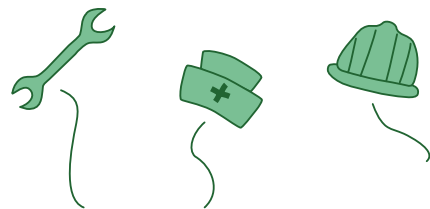
Zuzana Sotáková is the co-founder and director of Ženský algoritmus (Female Algorithm), a Slovak NGO dedicated to breaking down barriers for women in STEM. For the past five years, the organisation has focused on unlocking the career potential of women and girls in technology and management in Slovakia. Through interactive programmes, digital skills training, career counselling, role model presentations, and real-world projects, they help participants gain skills, build confidence, and create supportive networks. These initiatives complement each other, recognising that choosing a career in STEM is a long journey. Zuzana and her ICT-experienced team help women and girls discover STEM careers and studies, even when they hadn't considered them before, with many success stories of participants transitioning into or pursuing STEM fields.



Zoran Varga

Zoran Varga is an advisor for education at the Department for Education of the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts. He has 9 years of experience in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) and crafts sector, with the main objective to improve the VET quality and partnership cooperation. His main interests include policy lobbying, project implementation and a steadfast commitment to promoting the value of apprenticeship and VET. Also, he has a keen interest in digital and green policies, especially in the crafts sector, and is dedicated to facilitating strong labour market partnerships to foster high-quality apprenticeships in the work-based environments of the future.

PUBLICATION DETAILS



Publication: Euroguidance Cross Border Seminar 2025: Compendium of Articles

Online edition

Publisher: Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes

For the Publisher: Antonija Gladović, Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes

ISBN number: 978-953-8160-30-1

Coordinating country: Croatia

Coordinators: Mia Trcol; Meri Vesanović – Euroguidance Croatia

Participating countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine

The Euroguidance Network is a collaborative network of national resource and information centres dedicated to enhancing career guidance systems across Europe. Operating in EU and EEA member states, as well as candidate countries, Euroguidance serves guidance practitioners and policymakers in both the education and employment sectors.

With a strong commitment to fostering a European dimension in lifelong guidance, Euroguidance focuses on three core objectives: supporting the professional development of guidance practitioners, raising awareness of international mobility benefits, and facilitating information exchange on European guidance practices. While activities vary by country, the network consistently works towards strengthening national guidance systems through international cooperation, training events and study visits.

Another important aspect of Euroguidance's work is promoting high-quality information on lifelong guidance and mobility. This includes collecting and sharing knowledge on international study and work opportunities, education and training systems across Europe, and innovative projects in the field. By fostering collaboration among stakeholders and providing essential resources, Euroguidance plays a vital role in advancing guidance practices and supporting mobility for learning purposes.

Euroguidance Croatia

Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes

Frankopanska 26, 10000 Zagreb

euroguidance@ampeu.hr

www.ampeu.hr

www.euroguidance.eu

Zagreb, 2025



euro | guidance



AGENCY FOR
MOBILITY AND
EU PROGRAMMES



Co-funded by
the European Union

