

# A REVIEW OF NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine

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# PREFACE

The European Training Foundation (ETF) is a European Union Agency that supports countries outside the EU in improving their human capital development in the context of European Union (EU) external relations policies. Currently, the ETF cooperates at country and regional level with the countries of the EU Neighbourhood and Enlargement regions and in Central Asia, as well as contributing to the EU's external policies and programmes at Pan-African level.

The ETF contributes to the development of human capital in 29 partner countries by providing advice and support to the countries themselves and to the EU Delegations on reforming education, training and employment policies and systems. This contributes to social wellbeing, stability and prosperity in the countries surrounding the European Union.

## **Review of the state of career development support systems in Eastern European countries**

Education, training and labour market systems are being increasingly challenged by global developments such as new and rapidly changing technologies, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, demographic changes and climate change. All these have a profound impact on the lives of individuals and on society. The development of technology, especially information and communication technology (ICT), has boosted economic globalisation and opened new opportunities for people, but also new risks, as has the green transition. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated and increased existing developments and challenges.

Amidst these developments with uncertain outcomes, some things are for sure: firstly, a fast-evolving world and a changing labour market require individuals to become real lifelong learners, to acquire new competences to cope with change and to adapt and further develop existing competences, secondly, there is a growing demand for valid information on the changing labour markets and future prospects. The latter goes hand in hand with a growing need to support people in managing their more frequent and complex transitions within and between education and work.

In this context, there is a greater need than ever for career development support. At the same time, career development support – that is, lifelong career guidance and, in particular, career education and career development support for workers – itself faces challenges in adapting to the new circumstances. Changes in delivering and developing the innovation capacity of career development support services are required to achieve a deeper impact and empower individuals to manage their own career paths. Technology is already having an impact on traditional services, and the concept of career management skills is increasingly gaining ground, not only in Europe but also on other continents.

In order to, first, help countries respond to the twin green and digital transitions and recover from COVID-19, and to tackle regional specificities such as the brain drain, and to, secondly, inform national policy, practice and future EU and ETF activities, the ETF researched national career development support systems in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine. Moldova was reviewed by the ETF partner, the International Labour Organisation (ILO 2021b)<sup>1</sup>, as was Armenia (to a limited extent; to ensure an equal holistic review, ETF conduct another analysis). Moldova is therefore not covered in this ETF synthesis report. For the four countries reviewed, the ETF also developed a regional synthesis report. The national reports served as the source for preparing the regional synthesis report, which aims to provide a clear and concise outline of the state of the national career development support systems in the four covered countries, and to summarise key recommendations for developing the systems further.

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<sup>1</sup> See [https://www.ilo.org/skills/areas/skills-policies-and-systems/WCMS\\_835223/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/skills/areas/skills-policies-and-systems/WCMS_835223/lang--en/index.htm)

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The national reports are already used to guide the EU's EU4Youth programmes and other EU and ETF activities. This creates a starting point for closer cooperation between the ETF and partner countries in this area.

Special thanks also goes to external peer reviewer Ronald Sultana, and to ETF internal peer reviewers and colleagues Cristina Mereuta, Cristiana Burzio, Margareta Nikolovska, Filippo Del Ninno, Timo Kuusela, Franca Crestani, Susanne Nielsen, Fabio Nascimbeni, Marie Dorleans and Manuela Prina. The report was coordinated, supervised and finalised by Florian Kadletz (ETF).

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This synthesis brings together insights from the ETF country review reports covering Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine. The country reports were drawn up in a participatory process using desk research, interviews and consultation and validation meetings with all the relevant national stakeholders, from ministries to members of civil society, practitioners, social partners and donors. COVID-19 restrictions limited this exchange to online meetings and interviews. The synthesis report is a result of this process, and aims to support policy developments in the field of lifelong career guidance policies, systems and services at regional, country and sector level. Its findings and recommendations will also guide European Union (EU) programmes like EU4Youth and other stakeholder activities.

The *Recovery, Resilience and Reform: post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities*<sup>2</sup> include five long-term objectives, among which are I) resilient, sustainable, and integrated economies and V) resilient, gender equal, fair and inclusive societies. The further development of these countries' career development policies, systems and services could contribute towards achieving these long-term strategic objectives as career development contributes to social inclusion, lifelong learning and progress towards decent jobs.

Career guidance policy development, system development and service development have become increasingly important with increasing globalisation, as the technological level of society and production has risen, and as global value chains have become ever more important. The unfavourable dependency ratio (the aging population) in the four countries (except in Azerbaijan), as well as the need for a more carbon-free energy mix, puts career guidance at the centre of public policy interest.

The unique European concept (EC, 2004) of lifelong guidance (LLG) pulls together career guidance with an economically active lifespan and active citizenship through the promotion of lifelong learning (LLL) and lifewide learning (LWL). Further design and development of all-age, accessible career guidance services have therefore become more relevant in public policy design, including education, labour market and social policy aspects.

Since the early 2000s, international standardised assessments in the field of educational policy have been significant, (e.g. OECD PISA) and different global/regional, human/educational development policies have been formulated (for example: the OECD Skills Strategy, OECD, 2019; the European Skills Agenda<sup>3</sup> or European Education Area; and, at global level, the UN SDGs). The current EU Skills Strategy is about i) competitiveness and sustainability, ii) social fairness and iii) resilience.

This is where career guidance – as a public service – plays an increasingly important role as it contributes to these high-level policy goals and to economic, social and educational outcomes. Career guidance also has an impact on individuals, families and communities (ELGPN, 2015b) as it supports work-life balance, well-being (Litchfield, Cooper, Hancock and Watt, 2016) and subjective identification with jobs and occupations in countries of origin and in countries of emigration. In this capacity, it contributes to the maintenance and renewal of the division of labour in any society. This is primarily important for the specialisation of different work-related activities in a society (ILO, 2021) and also for increasing work productivity (ILO, 2022). In both of these areas, career guidance has an important role to play (Watts and Dent, 2006).

Global research into the role of career guidance started in the late 1990s. In the early 2000s, the OECD launched a series of research activities (OECD, 2004) to map and understand the role of career guidance and counselling as a policy and a system-level building block in modern skills strategies. The World Bank and UNESCO (2002) also supported this approach and financed additional studies. Before the 2004 enlargement of the EU, the ETF (2003) made a significant

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<sup>2</sup> Joint Communication 'Reinforcing Resilience - an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all', adopted on 18 March 2020

<sup>3</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223&langId=en>



contribution to exploring and understanding the career guidance system of the 11 acceding countries. The contribution of the ILO (2006) highlighted the role of career guidance in low-income and middle-income countries. The EU Council Resolution (2004) introduced a new term, lifelong guidance (LLG), to provide a similar policy structure to the already existing concept of lifelong learning.

Building on a recent ETF/ILO report outlining a methodology for developing career development support systems (ETF/ILO, 2021), reviews of national systems were carried out. The current synthesis paper looks at five key areas: coordination, access to services, funding, quality assurance and use of technology. The key inputs were the country reviews prepared by national experts.

## Key findings

### Coordination, legislation

Legislation on career guidance has been in place in the countries concerned since the late 2000s to early 2010s. Apart from legislation, several policy papers and strategies have been adopted in the field. In Ukraine, a coordinative council was in place between 2009 and 2019; in Armenia a national career development institute was established and is still functioning.

However, based on the country reports, a **coherent, clear-cut, cross-institutional action plan** in the field may provide an additional boost for the development of career guidance systems and services. Such an action plan would need to address access to and quality of career guidance services in different sectors such as the school system, vocational education and training, the public employment service, higher education and social inclusion services. It would require a more even distribution of career staff and career tools among the different institutions involved, and professional training for service delivery staff. The type of coordination, either in the form of a cross-ministerial body, a forum, a memorandum of co-operation, a dedicated national institution or similar arrangement, may be less important than the mandate of such a cooperation or ensuring clear control, monitoring and evaluation of the service across various sectors. Furthermore, these synergetic policy actions, the professional identity and resilience of the institutions and staff involved and the effectiveness and efficiency of services could be reinforced.

### Quality and training of professionals

Training of professionals and other staff such as social workers, employment service case managers and teachers has already started in the countries. This ongoing work could be further consolidated and standardised based on existing global and European competency frameworks for guidance professionals (NICE, 2016; IAEVG, 2003; CEDEFOP, 2009). The training of professionals, **including basic standards of ethics, has a significant impact on the quality assurance of such services.**

### Funding

Not surprisingly, funding of career guidance services is the weakest link in the four countries covered by this report. Either the career guidance services budget is part of an institutional budget or these budgets are wrapped in project spending. **This situation makes it hard to quantify the annual budget of career guidance services** in these countries. Of course, these four countries are not alone in this situation, as this is very often the case among the EU countries too. **A concept note and an action plan on how to map the budget of guidance services may lead to a more conscious service design.** The return on investment may then be calculated for both decision makers and the wider public.

### Monitoring & evaluation (M&E)

Some M&E activities were reported in the country papers, most of which are interconnected with institutional agendas, e.g. preventing early dropouts from schools or from the VET system, or monitoring jobseekers placed by state employment services. These activities are valid institutional or

sectoral policy targets where career guidance has a pivotal role to play in service delivery. This information is all relevant, but **the development of an M&E cross-institutional meta framework** for the different career guidance services could be prioritised. **This would give a general overview of the volume of career guidance services in certain countries.**

It is also **important to further study and analyse the available reports on the monitoring and evaluation of career guidance services.** Due to the complex impact (social, educational, employment) of career guidance, monitoring and evaluation is not a simple task. It is usually embedded in other activities such as placement of jobseekers via wage subsidies or extra tutoring in school, etc.

### **Access to career guidance services**

The four EaP countries have been constantly developing their career guidance capacities in the school system, youth services, vocational and higher education and the state/public employment services. However, based on the country reports, these capacities need to be further reinforced and restructured (for instance, by developing better targeted outreach services for NEET and for working age adults) in order to meet demand.

### **Integrative role of ICT in guidance**

In modern societies, ICT plays an integrative role in service design and delivery. In all four countries, several ICT developments were reported, although most of them remain sectoral or project driven. **The development of a national guidance website** (even more applicable for relatively small countries such as Armenia and Georgia) could act as an integrator for career information, professionals and ultimately end users. It would reduce maintenance costs, improve cost efficiency and act as a good promotional and communication platform.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

In modern societies, the role of **human capital** has turned into a crucial issue. Human capital is not only about supporting **economic growth and labour market prosperity**, but is also interconnected with **way of life, quality of life and social inclusion**.

People have a longer life expectancy than ever before in human history. The **way we live is becoming more and more complex with globalisation and technological changes, while the transformative impact of humanity simultaneously prevails**. This complexity is combined with increasingly larger numbers of people choosing to migrate for labour or security reasons, including from the countries covered in this report.

These ‘happenstances’ are shaping individual careers and career opportunities for families, communities and societies. Career paths are much less straightforward, pre-defined or clear for individuals than previously. The opportunities also come with new risks, such as the issue of poorly integrated new entries in the labour market, lack of job security or inadequate access to training and retraining during people’s working life.

**Career transition** is one of the most recurring concepts in the literature on modern labour markets. It relates to the changing nature of work and the new shape of the labour market. The Bureau of Labour Statistics counted 12 job/career changes during the lifespan of the average worker in the USA in 2017 (BLS, 2017). EU figures have been catching up, and in the United Kingdom an average worker has six different types of job throughout their working life<sup>4</sup>. Career paths are becoming more fluid; the traditional three-stage model of education, employment and retirement is dead and we now live in a multi-stage model with several transitions<sup>5</sup> (OECD, 2020).

In the modern world, the focus has been shifting from lifetime employment and social security towards lifetime support for possible **career transitions and the security of these transitions** (ILO, 2016). States (or public policies) should support citizens during such transition phases. This requires innovation in career guidance so that it remains effective (ETF, 2020). The European concept of flexicurity also plays an important part in the design and development of career guidance policies and systems (Sultana, 2013). Career guidance as a labour market service supports the development of this policy structure.

A **job or an occupation also defines a living standard**. Therefore, talking about careers goes beyond the scope of the labour market and connects LLG with wider social, cultural and even health issues.

The concept of transitional labour markets (TLM; Brzinsky-Fay, 2010) describes these changes because of the new labour market segmentation and polarisation with the emerging share of the precariat, the phenomena of automation, urbanisation and increased geographical mobility. “Full employment” always reflected the idea that all persons should have the right to earn a decent living through their own work. It is this connotation of social integration by full participation in the working life that makes full employment still powerful as a regulatory idea’ (Schmid,1998).

Lifelong **guidance** (LLG) has been emerging within EU policy discussions as part of the answer to the new social, economic and cultural challenges. It is defined as ‘A range of activities that enables citizens of any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used’ (Council of the European Union, 2008).

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ukcbc.ac.uk/average-worker-uk-statistics/>

<sup>5</sup> https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/237dd702-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/237dd702-en\"/>section-d1e1394

LLG, in parallel with lifelong learning, is also a building block for the new global and European policymaking processes based on sustainable development goals (SDGs), in which productivity, sustainability and quality of life are all incorporated as different indicators but are common building blocks for coherent policy design and governance.

In this paper, **four out of the six Eastern Partnership countries' lifelong (career) guidance policies, systems and services have been reviewed**, with the aim of providing a comprehensive description of the career guidance systems in these countries, as well as pinpointing opportunities for improvement.

April, 2022

## 2. RETHINKING CAREER DEVELOPMENT<sup>6</sup>

Demographic change, new ways of working, internationalisation, migration for employment and security reasons and the reconfiguration of work have profound implications for society and the skills that the labour market needs. These changes also have an impact on the concept of a 'career'. Instead of a 'job for life', a career can be defined as an individual life path with multiple transitions in learning, work and other settings where individual capacities and competences are learned and/or used. This implies that education and learning is no longer simply about the transition to adulthood but increasingly involves lifelong learning within and across countries.

The ILO's Commission for the Future of Work calls on the use of technology to support decent work opportunities, through a human-centred agenda that puts workers' rights and the needs, aspirations, and rights of all people at the heart of economic social and environmental policies (ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019). The commission also recognises that employment is key to social integration, while providing individuals with dignity and purpose. Although technology provides considerable employment opportunities for young people in both developing and developed countries, many young people are starting their careers in a less secure employment environment than the previous generation (Global Commission on the Future of Work, ILO 2019). In some cases, this is regarded as a technological change disruption.

The increasing complexity of the world of work has implications for how the individual experiences transitions (Cedefop, 2016) and for the level of support they need in entering and re-entering in the labour market. According to ETF/UNICEF (2020), OECD (2020b) and ILO (2020), CEDEFOP et al., the lockdown measures during the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on business activities in different sectors, widened inequality, disrupted education and undermined confidence in the future. On the skills supply side, those who lost their jobs need to upskill or retrain to find work. On the demand side, along with the adoption of digital technologies, there is an increasing demand for high-level skills. During the recovery, career guidance and career development can enhance re-employment and longer-term labour market engagement, for example by supporting individuals in their efforts to retrain, find new jobs or develop new businesses (ILO/ETF, 2021). From the migration angle, the UN Global Compact for Orderly and Safe Migration, signed in 2018, called for career guidance to play a role. This Global Compact clearly addresses skills and employability of migrants as a central area of concern, in particular objective 18: *Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences* and objective 1: *Include skills dimension in data collection*.

Wider policy interest in career development has emerged from a series of international reviews on the organisation, management and delivery of career services and the contribution of career development to wider policy goals in education and the labour market. The first global OECD 14-country career guidance review in 2000 (OECD, 2004a) was followed by parallel reviews using the same or slightly modified instruments (Sultana, 2004; Watts & Fretwell, 2004; Zelloth, 2009). The reviews and subsequent recommendations have acted as catalyst for structured collaborative initiatives between international organisations. The OECD and the European Commission produced a handbook (OECD 2004b) for policymakers, and a similar handbook (ILO 2006) for low-income and middle-income countries was published by the ILO. The recommendations were elaborated on further at eight International Symposia on Career Development and Public Policy (Watts, Bezanson and McCarthy, 2014). The symposia communiqués have summarised the progress made in participating countries, with subsequent recommendations for further national initiatives. The international reviews have also generated a comprehensive methodology and criteria for benchmarking and assessing career development policy implementation (McCarthy and Borbély-Pecze, 2021).

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<sup>6</sup> This chapter draws on the ILO synthesis report, with the joint ETF-ILO approach to system reviews: [https://www.ilo.org/skills/areas/skills-policies-and-systems/WCMS\\_834868/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/skills/areas/skills-policies-and-systems/WCMS_834868/lang--en/index.htm)

In July 2021, the Inter-Agency Working Group on Career Guidance (WGCG), with members from six international organisations, published a joint statement on the importance of investing in career development. It stated that career development plays an essential part in helping people of all ages and backgrounds to navigate future working life. Investments in career development can be expected to provide positive economic, educational and social returns for individuals and for society (Cedefop et al., 2021).

### 3. CONTEXT FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AND LINKS WITH LIFELONG LEARNING

The policy rationale behind the further development of career guidance systems and services is always linked to socio-economic factors. Over the last two years, long-term processes as well as unexpected and unforeseen events have shaped the daily reality of the four countries covered by this report. Based on the country reviews, the key socio-economic drivers were as set out below.

- The **demographic challenge**: the significant **increase of the dependency ratio** and the shrinking population; only Azerbaijan stands out with its positive balance. The humanitarian crisis caused by the war in Ukraine with significant outflows of growing numbers of refugees and displaced people.
- Three of these countries (Azerbaijan, Armenia and Ukraine) have a **high human development index (HDI)**, and Georgia is in the very high HDI group. This indicates the further potential development of life expectancy and development of the economy, although a high HDI does not fully correspond with citizens' wellbeing, and Ukraine faces obvious economic challenges due to the armed conflict.
- The **COVID-19 pandemic** hit these countries hard in 2020-2021, with the 'flattening of the curve' restrictive measures, flattening the economy and the labour markets too.
- Overall **unemployment and informal employment** remain unsolved issues, although they affect the four countries differently. Georgia and Armenia are the most affected. The high level of **youth unemployment** is a common issue as well.
- Need to support career (re)planning for **internally displaced people (IDPs)**, economic migrants and refugees (both outflows and inflows) and **young war veterans** as common issue.
- Need to develop a new, *more sustainable energy mix and moving the green economy forward* are related to **upskilling, reskilling and occupational mobility**, in which career guidance plays a role.

Two dominant policy philosophies have a strong influence on the countries analysed. One is the UN/ILO (and other UN agencies such as the IOM, UNESCO, etc.) in a global context and the other is the EU policy framework. These influences meet and mix with Soviet policy-thinking, which dominated the region until the 1990s, in the frame of national initiatives and donor interventions (e.g. bilateral co-operation such as GIZ, Korean, Turkish or several Arab countries' aid programmes). The current career guidance policy framework in the countries analysed is the result of proposals from different donor initiatives from varying cultures. The formulation of national/regional policy frameworks is always a living and open-ended process. In a modern, globalised world, career development policies are also subject to policy lending, borrowing and transferring processes (Sultana, 2009). In terms of a European analysis, two dominant players and their respective strategies are worth mentioning: first, the European Union has been working on its own lifelong guidance policy framework for one and a half decades (2004); second, the ILO Convention (C142, 1975) on human resource development as an original global convention refers to the role of vocational guidance.

#### 3.1 Human development

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a global framework for policy design and development. The policy framework of the UN SDGs has also been used in policy design by the European Union. The Joint Research Centre of the EU previously highlighted SGD-based



policy design as a possible solution for a new operational method for identifying trade-offs and co-benefits in a systemic way (Miloa & Borchardt & Buscaglia, 2019).

SGD-based policy design is highly relevant for a field such as lifelong guidance, which is a cross-cutting policy topic by nature. Each SDG target highlights the policy objectives most closely linked to lifelong guidance, such as education, life and employment indicators.

The four countries reviewed represent very highly developed (Georgia) and highly developed countries. This indicates that the maturity of the economies and the labour markets of these countries could benefit from more functional lifelong learning and guidance systems, as more skilled labour and educated citizens will be needed.

**Table 1 – Key SDG figures in the four countries**

			SDG3	SDG4.3	SDG4.4	SDG8.5		
		Human development index (HDI)	Life expectancy at birth	Expected years of schooling	Mean years of schooling	Gross national income (GNI) per capita	GNI per capita rank minus HDI rank	HDI rank (2020)
HDI rank (2018)	Country	Value	(years)	(years)	(years)	(2017 PPP \$)		
81	Armenia	0.776	75.1	13.1	11.3	13 894	9	72
88	Azerbaijan	0.756	73.0	12.9	10.6	13 784	3	88
61	Georgia	0.812	73.8	15.3	13.1	14 429	22	63
74	Ukraine	0.779	72.1	15.1	11.4	13 216	19	78

(Source: UNDP Human Development Report <https://hdr.undp.org/en/content/download-data> last accessed 29/03/2022)

## 3.2 Pandemic

The pandemic had and is still having an impact on the labour markets and the quality of life. The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a global emergency on 30 January 2020. In order to ‘flatten the curve’, governments enforced border shutdowns, travel restrictions and quarantines in the world’s largest economies, sparking fears of an impending economic crisis and recession. In an attempt to understand the turmoil this has created in the economy, we summarise the effect of COVID-19 on individual aspects of the world economy, focusing on primary sectors including industries involved in the extraction of raw materials, secondary sectors involved in the production of finished products and tertiary sectors including all service provision industries (Maria Nicola, Zaid Alsafi, Catrin Sohrabi, Ahmed Kerwan, Ahmed Al-Jabir, Christos Iosifidis, Maliha Agha and Riaz Agha, 2020). In the EaP countries, the pre-COVID-19 labour market and educational situation can be seen based on the 2019 statistical dataset. The trend-breaking years were 2020-2021 due to the pandemic. 2022, a year of hopeful recovery, was overshadowed by the Russian-Ukrainian conflict that erupted at the end of February 2022.



### 3.3 Demographic challenge

The demographic challenges of the four countries are different. Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia are facing a population decline. Out of the four countries, Azerbaijan is the only one where the population has not been shrinking (WB, 2022).

**Table 2 – Population dynamics in the four countries (2000-2020)**

Country	Population		Average annual population growth %	Population age composition			Dependency ratio		Crude death rate	Crude birth rate
	millions			Age 0-14	Age 15-64	Age 65+	young	old		
	2000	2020	2000-2020	%	%	%	% of working-age population	% of working-age population	per 1 000 people	per 1 000 people
	2000	2020	2000-2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2019	2019
Armenia	3.1	3.0	-0.2	21	67	12	31	18	10	14
Azerbaijan	8.0	10.1	1.1	24	70	7	34	10	6	14
Georgia	4.1	3.7	-0.5	20	65	15	31	24	13	13
Ukraine	49.2	44.1	-0.5	16	67	17	24	25	15	8

(Source: World Bank World Development Indicators <http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/2.1#> )

In addition to the low birth-rates, Georgia and Armenia have seen a population decline since they became independent after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 2010, the population of Georgia was estimated at 4.7 million, a decline of 20 % since independence. Likewise, the population of Armenia declined by almost one million (approximately 25 %) (ETF, 2013).

More than 6 million refugees have left Ukraine, while an estimated 8 million people had been displaced within the country as IDPs by 3 April 2022. Approximately one quarter of the country's total population had left their homes in Ukraine by 20 March 2022 (OCHA)<sup>7</sup>.

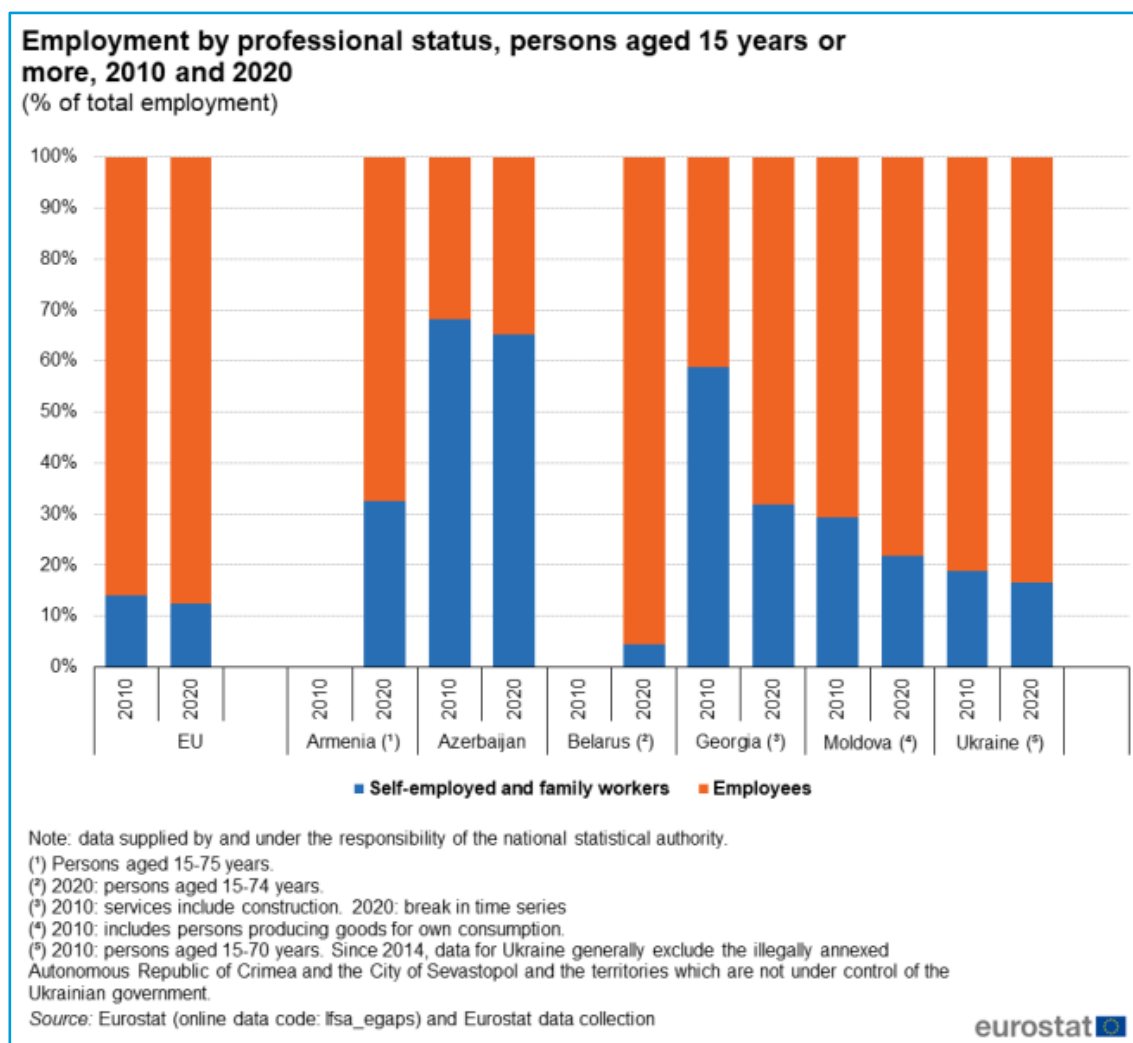
### 3.4 Unemployment, labour market participation and NEET

Combating unemployment is a strategic objective of the four countries. However, the current landscapes are different. The total employment rate is high in Azerbaijan, at 65.8 % in 2020 (much higher for men (73.7 %) than for women (59.0 %), ETF, 2021b), but of course the pandemic has had an effect. Between 2019 and 2020, unemployment increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic and youth unemployment (15-29 years) has remained relatively high at 11.2 %.

Azerbaijan recorded a relatively low unemployment rate over the period 2010-2020. From 2010 to 2014, the unemployment rate declined to 4.9 %, following which it was relatively stable until 2019. An increase of 2.4 percentage points led to the 2020 unemployment rate being the highest of the period, at 7.2 %. Similarly, the unemployment rate in Georgia fell each year to a period low in 2019. An increase of 6.9 percentage points left the 2020 unemployment rate at 18.5 %, the period high. A break in the time series may have influenced the 2020 data. The overall unemployment level was higher in Georgia than other ENP-East countries, apart from Armenia (Eurostat, 2020).

<sup>7</sup> [https://data.humdata.org/visualization/ukraine-humanitarian-operations/?ga1&qclid=Cj0KCQjw4PKTBhD8ARIsAHChzRLl6zPAzzHVumBh51CkNwX1BnjKH49EsZ1idmRds1kT7ycgLHytzhqaAlpcEALw\\_wcB](https://data.humdata.org/visualization/ukraine-humanitarian-operations/?ga1&qclid=Cj0KCQjw4PKTBhD8ARIsAHChzRLl6zPAzzHVumBh51CkNwX1BnjKH49EsZ1idmRds1kT7ycgLHytzhqaAlpcEALw_wcB)

Chart 1 – Employment by professional status (Eurostat, 2020)



In all four countries, **rural unemployment** has remained an unsolved issue. In Armenia, agriculture contracted for the sixth straight year, reflecting unreformed land markets (WB, 2022b). This is particularly relevant for Georgia and Armenia because of their geographical location surrounded by mountains.

Youth unemployment is one of the burning policy issues, more so in Armenia and Georgia and less in Ukraine and Azerbaijan. In Armenia, youth unemployment was at 33.3 % for women and 31.6 % for men, while in Georgia it was at 38.2 % and 40.1 % respectively (Eurostat, 2020)<sup>8</sup>. High NEET rates in these countries, especially in Georgia and Armenia (ETF KIESE, 2021), are challenging school-to-work transitions and suggest the necessary development of a more effective drop-out prevention. The NEET as an additional indicator for capturing figures on young people who are not in employment, education, or training first emerged in the United Kingdom in the late 1980s as an alternative way of categorising young people (O'Reilly, Leschke, Ortlieb et. al., 2019). Using career education as a special school-based format of career guidance could bridge some of the social and labour market gaps (OECD, 2010).

The high **level of self-employed and family workers** in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia still suggests that there is a huge informal economy.

<sup>8</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=European\\_Neighbourhood\\_Policy\\_-\\_East\\_-\\_labour\\_market\\_statistics&oldid=538904](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=European_Neighbourhood_Policy_-_East_-_labour_market_statistics&oldid=538904)

**Table 3 – Unemployment in the four countries (2015-2020)**

Country	Unemployment, male (% of male labour force) (modelled ILO estimate)		Unemployment, female (% of female labour force) (modelled ILO estimate)		Unemployment, youth male (% of male labour force ages 15-24) (modelled ILO estimate)		Unemployment, youth female (% of female labour force ages 15-24) (modelled ILO estimate)		Unemployment with basic education (% of total labour force with basic education)	Unemployment with intermediate education (% of total labour force with intermediate education)	Unemployment with advanced education (% of total labour force with advanced education)	NEET rate (15-24)	Incident of over education <sup>9</sup>
	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015-20	2015-20	2015-20	2020	2019
Armenia	17.4	17.7	19.3	20.3	28.0	29.0	36.7	39.8	21.0	19.4	16.8	23.9	30.6
Azerbaijan	4.1	4.0	5.9	5.7	11.3	11.3	15.6	15.4	..	..	..	n/a	n/a
Georgia	18.7	12.8	13.9	10.2	34.8	28.6	39.5	32.2	11.3	11.8	11.3	28.5	25.9
Ukraine	10.1	8.5	8.1	7.9	5.1	5.3	8.7	13.4	1.2	3.7	3.8	15.5	21.5

(Source: World Bank World Development Indicators, last update by WB 16/12/2021 <http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/2.5#> ) and ETF (2021) KIESE [https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-11/kiese\\_2021.pdf](https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-11/kiese_2021.pdf) (last accessed 13/05/2022)

<sup>9</sup> The over-educated are those usually holding jobs for which the modal value in a job/occupation distribution in their country is typically below their (ISCED) level of education. Also known as the ‘empirical method’, the ETF estimations are based on a modal educational level (i.e. that identified most frequently) in a given occupational ISCO-08 group in each country, using the most detailed level information available (i.e. ISCO-08 1/2/3 digit-level data).

In recent years Georgia has continuously improved the business environment for all enterprises (including SMEs) by simplifying administrative regulations, reducing the tax burden, fighting corruption, facilitating free trade, promoting privatisation and initiating a policy partnership platform to build a **national lifelong entrepreneurial learning concept**. The World Bank's Doing Business assessment of 2020 ranked Georgia 7th out of 190 countries.

Lastly, **labour migration** is still a very relevant issue. It can be seen in the context of the level of remittances, which have a great fiscal impact in Armenia, Georgia and also Ukraine. In the case of Ukraine, migration reduces the labour supply on the Ukrainian labour market and hence the potential output. The stock of emigrant workers is estimated to be between 2.2 and 2.7 million, equivalent to 13-16 % of total employment (EC, SSSU, 2020). The current war in Ukraine has already affected 6.5 million<sup>10</sup> as internally displaced people (IDPs), and according to the IOM, 4.5 million Ukrainian had left the country by 16 March 2022. Altogether, more than 10 million people are already thought to have fled their homes in Ukraine because of the invasion, according to the United Nations. This is one-fifth or close to a quarter of the total population.

According to World Bank calculations, inflows of remittances represented more than 10 % of GDP in 29 countries around the world, including seven European Neighbourhood countries: Armenia, Georgia, Jordan, Lebanon, Moldova, Ukraine (WB, 2021).

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.iom.int/news/almost-65-million-people-internally-displaced-ukraine-iom>

## 4. POLICY FRAMEWORKS – THE BACKBONE OF NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Policy design in the four countries covered by this report has been greatly influenced by the European Union over the last one and a half decades. In the case of Armenia, the establishment of a national career guidance support system began in 2012. The establishment (Robertson & Melkumyan, 2021) or reestablishment of career guidance services as part of educational and labour market institutional reforms were the consequences of the 2007/08 financial crisis and a partial departure from neoliberal policies. The same process could be observed in neighbouring Georgia, where a Professional Consultation and Career Planning (PCCP) concept paper was approved by the Georgian Government in 2014. Ukraine also approved its state public career guidance system concept in 2008. Azerbaijan has been following an integrative route and has added the strategic role of career guidance services under overarching, high-level policy documents such as ‘Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development’ (2021).

From **Ukraine’s** perspective, the **labour market and skills development** seems to be a stronger policy rationale than cultural and educational elements, as standard curricula do not provide career development support in the educational process. Based on the key Ukrainian policy document:

The State system for public career guidance (17 September 2008 # 842), that is the key legislation on the national career development system, defines the term ‘career guidance’ as a scientifically-based system of interrelated economic, social, medical, psychological and pedagogical measures. Its aim is to activate the process of professional self-determination and the realisation of an individual’s ability to work, and to identify abilities, interests, opportunities and other factors influencing career choices or changes in labour activity.

**Armenian** reference documents, such as ‘Concept for the Development of a Career Guidance System for 2012-2015’, highlight the role of **professional orientation and vocational guidance**, which are previously used terms in the field. However, the main text refers to the OECD definition (2004) of career development as follows: “career guidance” is a type of service aimed at helping persons, regardless of age and at any time throughout their life, to make decisions related to education, training and occupation, and to manage their career’ (translated from the Armenian text<sup>11</sup>). Although several government agencies and sectoral fields, such as the public employment service or the school system, are mentioned in the document, the cross-cutting policy and overarching system development elements of career development are not highlighted. It is important to mention that Armenia set up a Methodological Centre for Career Guidance which, despite the limited resources, is potentially there to coordinate not only the service, but also system developments. It is interesting to mention that during the socialist years from 1968/71 until the mid-1980’s, the country had a very similar national methodological centre. This type of solution was not rare under the socialist system (Borbély-Pecze, Hloušková and Šprlák, 2021).

Career guidance as a national policy is integrated into lifelong learning and national employment strategies in **Azerbaijan**. In the education system, insufficient attention is paid to measures that assist learners in acquiring career management skills (CMS). Career education is undervalued, while it should be seen as a set of preventive measures for reducing the number of dropouts and young people at risk and the number of people not in employment, education or training (NEET). Lifelong guidance as an umbrella policy concept that brings together different human development sectors of the government seems to be missing in Azerbaijan.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.irtek.am/views/act.aspx?aid=68214>

A unified policy language around career guidance development has also been missing in **Georgia**. The loan translation, without any cultural adaptation, of the different terms has created some instability around the definition of career guidance in these countries. This is an open issue in all four EaP countries. There is a clear need for them to develop their own definition of career guidance, while there are many references that can be used, such as from the European lifelong guidance glossary (EC, 2004), or the USA workforce development (ACS, 2017), with terms like job coaching and mentoring being more popular, or the Indian Jiva/livelihood planning (Arulmani, 2009, Sultana, ed. 2017).

The Georgian government concept from the 2010s is **Professional Consultation and Career Planning** (PCCP) but other terms have also been used. As both Georgia and Armenia have unique languages with special alphabets, even with the English translation it is hard to guess the exact meaning of the terms used. However, it is clear that in **Georgia, different terms have been used** in higher education, in the newly established employment support services and in the school system.

The **use of IT solutions** is project/institution-specific and often leads to possible parallel developments. The EU lifelong guidance cross-policy and integrated cross-sectoral system level concept is not reflected in the strategy papers of the four countries. Lifelong guidance – as an umbrella term which provides a framework for policy guidance, system and service development – has a robust potential for the countries analysed.

## 5. COORDINATION AND COOPERATION MECHANISMS

Governments always think in terms of sectoral governance policies and implementation systems. There is no country where each sector has its own line ministry or own institutional **system**. Thus, there are several important social and economic issues that do not have their own institutions or ministries, but which can only be considered via cross-sectoral, cross-ministerial or cross-institutional cooperation and coordination. By their nature, lifelong guidance and career development through a lifespan are a typical policy subject for cross-cutting or horizontal policy design and development. Their content spreads over several policy fields (such as labour market development, culture and education, social policy, etc.) and are the responsibilities of different line ministries in different countries. Cross-cutting policy objectives are defined as horizontal issues, policy issues which challenge organisations at the same level of government, transcend organisational boundaries and policy sectors and fields, and have an impact on multiple processes (Molenveld, 2016). Cross-cutting policy design goes beyond the boundaries of organisations and government policy implementation bodies and creates uncertainty. The coordination of such a policy is complex and scattered across different areas, including the school system, employment, **young people** and social services, as well as local communities.

Firstly, such coordination initiatives are set up to bundle together all the information necessary to approach the policy issue. Secondly, they stimulate innovative practices because they bring together people with different expertise and know-how, from different professions, in a way that reduces substantive uncertainty. Thirdly, they aim to diminish inconsistencies between organisational policies and regulation, which reduces strategic uncertainty. This is done through addressing issues univocally, with, for instance, coherent programmes. Fourthly, they are established to improve service delivery, create a seamless service or to offer clients and citizens one-stop-shops (single-point-of-contact) or one integrated approach. Last but not least, they aim to use resources efficiently and effectively by removing overlaps, lacunae and redundancies (Molenveld, 2016 p. 19).

### 5.1 Concepts, legislation and strategy

**Ukraine** has had a strategy in the field since 2008, the Concept of the State System for Public Career Guidance. In 2018, the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine ‘approving the action plan for the implementation of the concept of the state public career guidance system’ (4 July 2018 # 469-r) was adopted. This document set out the coordination and cooperation mechanism for career guidance.

In **Armenia**, a systematic conceptual development began in 2012. The basic idea was to ‘*create the opportunity for a free and conscious choice of professional activity, which corresponds to the interests, needs and particular characteristics of the person, as well as the demand for qualified, competitive human resources in the labour market, throughout that person’s life*’. The main national institution for the development of this system is the Methodological Centre for Professional Orientation (formerly the Methodological Centre for Career Guidance), with currently only 10 employees.

In **Georgia**, both the employment strategy and action plans for further development of the educational system contain elements related to career guidance, although none of these can be considered as a national career guidance strategy or legislation. The Labour Market and Employment Promotion Strategy 2018-2023 provides for some actions by the newly established state employment agency (through the Employment Promotion Law of Georgia 2020). The draft Strategy for the Development of the Professional Orientation, Consultation and Career Planning System in Formal Education (2021-2025) describes development plans in the educational sector.



In **Azerbaijan**, state and non-state stakeholders cooperate through planned, regular and ad hoc meetings, bringing together stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Economy, the State Employment Agency and other relevant ministries, employers and entrepreneurs' confederations, trade unions, local executive and self-governing bodies. By 2025, according to the plans of the Ministry of Education, all general schools will be capable of handling career education effectively and supporting the country's VET system.

## 5.2 National institutions

In **Armenia**, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MoESCS) are the key ministries in charge of the career guidance system. The Career Guidance and Capacity Development (CGCD) Centre under the MoLSA is the key policy implementation body.

In the other three countries, different national institutions under the **ministries for labour and ministries for education and for young people** are responsible for policy implementation. In some cases, ministries for economies or special ministries, for example for internally displaced people (in Georgia) or for war-veterans (in Ukraine, **Georgia**) also have some related activities in their portfolios. In most cases, the policy design and policy implementation elements and responsibilities are mixed under different institutional settings.

In **Ukraine**, according to the 2008 legislation: the Ministry of Economy provides career guidance for all social groups in the unemployed and employed able-bodied population; the Ministry of Social Policy provides career guidance for all those who need social protection; the Ministry of Education and Science provides career guidance for preschool and school-age, vocational and higher education students; the Ministry of Youth and Sports provides career guidance for young people; the Ministry of Health provides career guidance for people with persistent physical disorders; the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Internal Affairs provide career guidance for conscripts, servicemen and people discharged from military service; the Ministry of Justice provides career guidance for prisoners in penitentiary institutions. The delivery system for career guidance services has been developed according to the portfolios of the different ministries.

The state/**public employment services** were very clearly identified as the key institution for career guidance policy implementation in all the four countries.

## 5.3 Cooperation modalities: Forum, Council, Memorandum

In **Ukraine** between 2009 and 2019, an Advisory Board to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine coordinated the Council of Public Career Guidance. The Chair of the Council is the Minister of Economy, and other members are deputies of the Minister of Economy, the Minister of Education and Science, the Minister of Youth and Sports, the Director of the State Employment Centre, the Academic Secretary of the National Academy of Educational Sciences, and public sector representatives (trade unions and their associations, employers' associations and non-governmental associations and organisations). To introduce effective cooperation mechanisms in the field of career guidance for young people, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Social Policy and the State Employment Service (central office) signed a Memorandum of Cooperation on 3 June 2019.



### Advisory body to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the Council of Public Career Guidance (2009-2019)

The Council's main tasks are to:

- comprehensively study problematic issues and the development of proposals for public career guidance based on the results of the analysis of the activities of ministries and other central executive bodies, national trade unions, their associations, national public organisations and national employers' associations;
- promote the coordination of central and local authorities' executive powers and their interaction with local authorities' self-government and parties in social dialogue;
- develop proposals and recommendations for raising the professional orientation level of the population, and legal, financial, logistical, personnel, scientific, methodological and information support therefor;
- participate in determining the priorities of fundamental and applied research on public career guidance;
- ensure a systematic analysis of legislation on public career guidance, determine the main directions for its improvement and draft legislation on these issues;
- promote the study, generalisation and dissemination of relevant national and international experience;
- develop proposals for international development cooperation aimed at improving the state public career guidance system.

The Council has the right to:

- receive information necessary to perform the tasks assigned to it, in the prescribed manner, from central and local executive authorities, enterprises, institutions and organisations;
- form permanent and temporary working groups, committees involving central and local executive bodies, local authorities, enterprises, institutions and organisations, trade unions, their associations, public organisations and associations, employers' organisations and their associations, research institutions and independent experts;
- submit to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine proposals developed on the results of their work to address current issues related to the functioning of the state public career guidance system;
- organise and hold conferences, symposiums, seminars and meetings on issues within its competence.

Source: [Ukrainian National Report for the ETF February 2022](#)

**Armenia** also had an inter-systemic cooperation at national level from 2013 to 2017, through the activities of the Methodological Council. This Council was established to support the work of the CGCD Centre. The Council, created by order of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, consisted of representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports and the Ministry of Economy, several research institutions and the Republican Union of Employers.

**Georgia** has no cross-cutting policy council or forum in this field, although the newly established public employment service has its own tripartite advisory council and, in the field of education policy,

different modernisation projects have advisory boards which may include career guidance related issues.

In **Azerbaijan**, there is currently no systemic and coherent communication and coordination mechanism in place among the responsible bodies.

At the time of writing, in the first half of 2022, the four reviewed countries all have different emerging practices which are usually delivered via the traditional sectoral policy institutions; they are not yet in line with the concept of cross-policy design and would need stronger support for planning and implementation. However, the EaP regional EU policy initiative for youth, EU4Youth<sup>12</sup>, creates a platform for co-operation and coordination between different government bodies, employers' associations and NGOs. Other donor activities, such as those run by GIZ, USAID and others, have similar but mainly project-based effects.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/stay-informed/projects/eu4youth>

## 6. MAIN SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

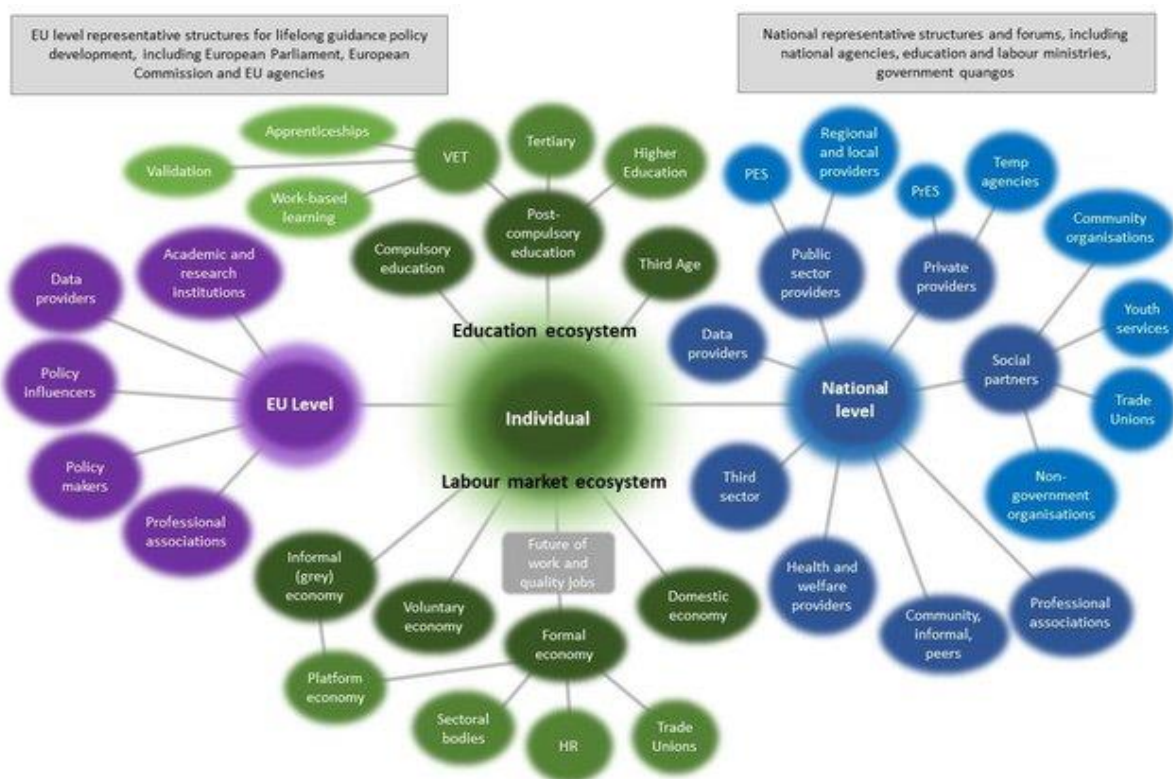
Career guidance services function in different policy fields under different institutional rules and cultures. The business cards of career guidance professionals display varying professional titles, ranging from adviser, coach and mentor to consultant or counsellor. Most of the countries do not have a stand-alone career guidance service. Instead, career services are integrated under different institutions' activity plans, including the public employment service, higher education institutions, schools, adult and vocational education or social inclusion services.

**Lifelong guidance services** include self-help, brief, staff-assisted and individual case-managed services to help citizens make informed and meaningful decisions about occupational, educational, training, employment and life management choices. These services are delivered face-to-face (individual and group) or online or over the telephone' (ELGPN, 2015 p. 15).

This also means that in order to review career guidance services, we need to look first at the institutional framework, then at the services offered by the organisations in charge and finally at the individual activities/measures. This cross-policy, cross-institutional framework makes the review of lifelong guidance services more demanding than in policy fields where the public policy implementation body can be easily identified. To identify career guidance services, an analysis has to consider:

- institutional settings,
- types of services provided,
- actual service activities (measures).

**Figure 1 – Lifelong guidance as an ecosystem around individuals**



(Source: Barnes et al., 2020)

Career guidance services and measures in most users' cases lead to a mixture of social (including educational) and labour market related outcomes and outputs.

## 6.1 Ukraine

The Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Employment via the State Employment Service and the Ministry of Youth and Sport are all active players in the field of career guidance service design and provision in Ukraine.

The main career development services and activities currently **have two institutional hubs in Ukraine**: the **State Employment Service** (in 95 city centres with 429 branches) and the **guidance centres** (142 locations available) **within the vocational education system**. The national youth policy is also active, partly due to EU4Youth<sup>13</sup> project opportunities but also with other national and international initiatives. In the school system, special attention is given to grades 8, 9, 10 and 11, with no general career teaching in the lower years of school or preschool. Based on the national report, the choice of school is the main area of focus of school-based guidance services. However, there are some new initiatives for providing lower years with career education. EU4Skills experts contributed to the development of a new educational model for 5-6 grade subjects and the national government approved a school curriculum agenda to be put in place by 2029. During the first half of 2022, it is hard to predict the possible effects of these initiatives. From 2021 onwards, there have also been plans to open career centres in vocational education institutions. Modern web platforms such as <https://www.kariera.in.ua>, part of the EU4Youth initiative, or YouTube are nowadays also widely used to reach out potential users of the services.

### Choose the profession of your dreams in Ukraine

'Choose the profession of your dreams' is free for all users and includes five steps for student success: Step 1. Career guidance testing. Step 2: Career counselling based on using inverted call centre technology. Step 3. Video lessons on current labour market trends and practical advice on how to write a CV, prepare for an interview, etc., with the help of multimedia courses in the international format SCORM. Step 4. Online tours of leading companies in Ukraine. Step 5. Multimedia courses on the 100 top professions: general information about the profession, salary, prospects, number of vacancies, necessary skills, which educational institutions prepare students for the professions. The launch of the project information campaign was combined with 50 video lessons, 30 online tours of top Ukrainian companies, 70 multimedia courses on modern professions (together with international and Ukrainian employers and specialised universities and vocational schools). Within just 3 months of the project starting, more than 8 000 career tests and 2 000 career consultations were conducted, and more than 1 million high school students, parents and teachers visited the project platform. The project is planned to be developed further until 2023, with coverage gradually extended, in addition to schoolchildren, to 10 million Ukrainians, including students at vocational schools and higher education institutions, students and adults (aged 22+) who want to find the profession of their dreams. In the project, the first national lesson on career guidance was held on 12 October 2021 and attracted more than 500 000 viewers from 15 000 schools, breaking the national record for the largest lesson.

Source: Ukraine national report: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vM6pu3pbMqA&t=746s>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/stay-informed/projects/eu4youth>

Psychometric testing is an important element of the service, while the lifelong career pathway service elements are less visible. Most of the services are designed either to support actual decision-making (in the school system) or activate inactive groups (such as unemployed persons or NEETs). There is limited evidence that career guidance services are understood as preventive measures for career planning and as support services to encourage lifelong employability.

## 6.2 Armenia

A national survey has recently been conducted in Armenia. Based on the results, a detailed service landscape can be observed.

**In Armenia, one-third of general schools have trained career teachers**, who are trained by the Career Guidance and Capacity Development Centre (CGCD). Only 21.4% of Armenian schools currently provide career education in grades 8 to 11. It is carried out within the framework of career guidance clubs in accordance with the prescribed curriculum, and represents one academic hour per week.

Career education was introduced in **grades 8 to 11 as a compulsory club**. In elementary and basic education levels, career learning is integrated into existing subjects, namely 'Myself and the world around me' in elementary schools and 'Social science' in middle schools.

The methodology is based on: identifying the student's personal qualities, preferences and interests; developing key competencies; transferring information; providing knowledge on professions; and identifying the content of various subjects from the point of view of the occupations. Professional orientation activities at school start with students in the 7th grade (ILO, 2022c). The recommended time for dedicating to the career guidance programme is **34 hours per school year** (once per week), and in grade 11, 15 hours for the addition of individual career path research.

Access to remotely provided and **digital services in Armenia is still limited**. Before the outbreak of COVID-19, almost no institution had ever conducted distance learning activities and lacked the necessary experience.

In the country's **96 VET institutions, students have access** to career guidance and career education services. The services include providing training for the development of career management skills, individual counselling, organising internships, work-based learning, and creating relations with the regional employment centre. Career practitioners in the VET institutions keep individual records of the students based on the methodological guidelines of the CGCD.

The CGCD has designed and provided **10 modules for career guidance to practitioners**: Career management, Self-assessment, Communication skills, Entrepreneurship skills, Leadership and management, Lifelong learning in career development, How to write a successful CV, Self-presentation, Main competences for competitiveness in the labour market and Job interviews. 97.34 % of all VET graduates from 2018 to 2020 benefitted from different career guidance services during their studies.

In **higher education, institutional career guidance centres** are responsible for guiding students, but students need to actively contact the centre to receive its services. Based on the country review, data on the volume and nature of services is limited.

**The inactive population, unemployed persons and NEETs** could benefit from the recently restructured **State Employment Agency and the 49 local offices of the Unified Social Service**. According to the Armenian ETF country report (ETF, 2022), in Armenia approximately 40 % of the labour force are estimated to work in the informal economy, which contributes to 36 % of Armenia's GDP (ETF, 2021). There are **no dedicated studies** on career development support and career guidance programmes and initiatives **for private-sector workers** in Armenia.

## 6.3 Azerbaijan

In Azerbaijan, the **state employment agency (SEA)** plays a central role in career guidance service provision, serving both adults and pupils. The SEA organises visits to general education institutions at least once a month. In 2020, a new professional guideline was issued for SEA school activities.

In parallel with the SEA school-based activities, the Ministry of Education also provides career guidance services in general education schools. For these purposes, the **Education Institute under the Ministry of Education has developed a methodological tool for career guidance practitioners** and is carrying out online and offline training for practitioners (mainly school psychologists) from 4 100 schools in Azerbaijan.

In recent years (since 2018), new services have also been established. The first **Youth Development and Career Centre** opened in November 2018 under the Youth Foundation of the Republic of Azerbaijan; currently there are 52 centres operational. The **DOST**<sup>14</sup>, Agency for Sustainable and Operative Social Provision, was launched as a service in 2018 and currently there are five centres, partly also covering career guidance as a service.

### Rules for implementation of career guidance services in general education institutions by the State Employment Agency of Azerbaijan (2020)

- Inform students about the required knowledge, skills and competencies in professions and specialties.
- Develop students' ability to use knowledge, skills and competencies in the process of choosing a specialty and profession.
- Direct students in the choice of relevant specialties and professions in accordance with their interests, skills, abilities and personal qualities and provide them with professional advice.
- Implement information on ensuring the connection between education and labour market for the development of human capital and ensure the transition from education to the labour market.
- Assist in the formation of the minimum skills required to start employment.
- Inform students about career planning and lifelong learning opportunities.
- Instil basic entrepreneurial skills in students and encourage them to create their own jobs in the future.
- Develop basic knowledge and skills related to vocational education in the general educational level of students by giving them a free choice in career planning.

Source: Azerbaijan National Report for the ETF, February 2022

The law on **vocational education** does not mention career guidance services, but various activities are carried out in this area. In the 2020-2024 period, development projects in vocational education also target career services in VET. In higher education, 10 institutions maintain career guidance centres. These services mainly help with drafting CVs, communication with potential employers and the state employment service, and developing a group of alumni.

<sup>14</sup> <http://dost.gov.az/en/>



## 6.4 Georgia

Georgia has had an approved concept of professional consultation standards since 2014 (Professional Consultation and Career Planning System and Professional Consultation and Career Planning Standards) for a lifelong career development service, although this does not mean that career guidance services are very sophisticated.

In the Georgian **school system**, career education is limited. Head teachers introduce the basic concept of the labour market, but career education is not a subject in the curriculum. Teachers do not have access to support materials, although some of them were developed under international donor initiatives. Secondary schools normally do not provide career guidance services to students and their parents, nor do they have staff responsible for career guidance.

In **higher education** institutions, career development support services are **integrated into universities' electronic management systems**, in which students can create CVs, access career and training information and apply for vacancies. Career management specialists provide individual and group consultations aimed at developing career management skills.

In the employment and social inclusion sector, the **State Employment Support Agency (SESA)** has been providing some career guidance services for the unemployed. The modern, European-style profiling, segmentation and employment consultation protocols were introduced under the previous state institution, the Social Service Agency. The Worknet.ge website has been serving employers and jobseekers over the last decade. Under the SESA, customers' traffic was also reported, e.g. in 2021 approximately 4 000 clients received individual employment/career counselling. The Agency is also responsible for job and career fairs. Since SESA is not part of the Social Service Agency, it only has seven regional offices and is unable to provide sufficient outreach and services to its clients.

Concerning professional standards, the most developed service is the Myprofession.gov.ge website, which is administered by the **Youth Agency**. This website provides modern career/occupational video clips and online self-support career tools. Details regarding the physical service infrastructure and the number of trained staff behind the website are, however, unclear.

## 7. FUNDING MECHANISMS

Ensuring adequate funding of career guidance is a pre-requisite and a key factor in the success of the creation, sustainability and further development of such services (ELGPN, 2015). By their very nature, career guidance systems and services are both public and private services. The benefits of such services can therefore be identified at individual, household or group level, as well as from the perspective of society in general and the labour market. Some of the benefits are even intergenerational, so investment may have benefits for future generations. Investing in career development always creates increased employability, and it is also an investment in enculturation and socialisation (Made, 1963). It is almost impossible to separate the two. The human capital investment argument has more often been used in policy discussions and career development as it has a unique role to play not only in terms of skills and knowledge, but in the attitudes of citizens and workers, which are important for ensuring job tasks or civic duties are carried out.

The State, through public employment services or educational services in particular, provides these services to companies and for individuals. This provision greatly depends on the benefits that each of these customers may obtain from career guidance services but also on the actual financing capacity. Therefore, the development and the maintenance of career guidance services usually generate professional and political debates in every country. Usually, the outcomes of these discussions are very similar to the discussions about the general school system, about higher education or labour market incentives. Children, teenagers and young adults should receive career education as a public service. In adulthood, career guidance is more often seen as a private service, for competing in the labour market. As a recent OECD study (OECD, 2021) pointed out, adult guidance services are usually financed by a mixture of individuals, employers and government resources. However, states have often financed access to career guidance services for different vulnerable groups (low-skilled adults, IDPs, minorities, parents with young children, inactive, inhabitants of rural areas, those in need of retraining/reskilling etc.).

Career guidance activities and products can be funded in a number of ways: direct funding of services by central government or through the relevant government agencies (such as in the education and employment sectors); devolved public funding to regions or municipalities or institutions; funding raised in regions and municipalities; public subcontracting of services to private, non-profit and voluntary organisations; market-based provision for which individuals pay privately; employer and trade union contributions; a mix of the above (ELGPN, 2015). It is usually a challenging task to identify the right way of handling budgets for career guidance services. However, different solutions have been found in many countries, ranging from individual learning accounts and providing vouchers for career guidance sessions to state/self-government funded counselling.

### 7.1 Budgetary funding

As in the OECD (OECD, 2021) countries, the public bodies responsible for the career guidance services budget are the Ministries of Education, Ministries of Labour and the Public Employment Services.

In **Ukraine**, the State Unemployment Insurance Fund and the Fund for Social Protection of the Disabled both partly pay for the career guidance service under the State Employment Agency. In the Ukrainian education system, state funds are very limited. EU funds (such as EU4Skills) and other international donor activities are therefore the main financial sources for service development and maintenance.

**Armenian** state regulations are unique in the EaP countries as, since 2013, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has been receiving funds under the 'Provision of Career Guidance Methodology and Human Resource Training' programme. The budget allocated to the CGCD over the last three years is about AMD 24 million (about EUR 43 400). Under the budget line of the Ministry of Education,



Science, Culture and Sports, each VET centre has a career practitioner. Under the current budget developments for 2021-26, the youth policy (proposed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports) will also allocate a budget for career guidance. In the formal education system and social services, career guidance is provided free of charge. The CGCD plans to train professionals, although there are budgetary and human resource constraints.

**Table 4 – Main budget headings in the different countries**

Budget headings	Education	Employment	Youth Policy
<b>Armenia</b>	The Career Guidance and Capacity Development Centre has its own budget, plus each VET Centre has a paid careers professional.	The budget for the state employment agency contains career guidance services.	ad hoc, donor driven
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	ad hoc, donor driven	The budget for the state employment agency contains career guidance services.	ad hoc, donor driven
<b>Georgia</b>	ad hoc, donor driven	The budget for the state employment agency contains career guidance services.	ad hoc, donor driven
<b>Ukraine</b>	ad hoc, donor driven	The budget for the state employment agency contains career guidance services.	ad hoc, donor driven

Table source: National Reports, February 2022

In **Azerbaijan**, the state employment agency – via the unemployment fund – is the biggest provider; however, career counselling is not the main objective of such services. According to the Law on the Budget for the Unemployment Insurance Fund for 2022, the amount allocated to career guidance stayed the same and AZN 2 000 000 (EUR 1 133 529 on 13 May 2022) was allocated to the career guidance services. This is 1.1 % of the unemployment insurance fund's total budget.

In **Georgia**, budgetary figures are only available for the country's public employment service. These budget lines are cumulated figures for active labour market measures and the maintenance of the public employment service, and as such it is therefore impossible to make an estimation of the career services budget.

Career guidance funding tends to come much more from employment policies than from the educational field in these four countries, which is mainly due to the institutionalised budget of the public employment services. Meanwhile, it is rather ad hoc and donor-driven in the young people and education sector. The amount of private funding is unclear. The maintenance of career guidance services is strongly connected with donor activities.

## 8. MEASURES FOR ENABLING AND ENHANCING ACCESS TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Access to government services is of general public interest in every modern country. However, career guidance services, according to their different (social, economic/labour market and educational) outcomes are public and also private services. This means that at certain times during citizens' lifespans they should have free access to them (e.g. career education), but also there are life situations (e.g. moving from one well-paid job to another) that these services may be purchased from the market. The 'citizen lifespan' approach does not provide enough information for decision-makers concerning whether a free-of-charge or paid service should be used to access career guidance services. We need to take into consideration the vulnerability level of users, including their distance from the labour market, the level of social inclusion of the household and several other cases where a modern welfare state usually guarantees free access to these services. Moreover, the outcomes of career guidance services are also linked with identity, culture, and active citizenship, and hence have several horizontal effects.

Access is defined as the means and conditions by which citizens can engage with lifelong guidance services, tools and resources, and participate in career development activities over their lifespan to enable them to make meaningful learning, career and work choices and to develop career management skills. Career guidance services include self-help, brief, staff-assisted and individual case-managed services to help citizens make informed and meaningful decisions about occupational, educational, training, employment and life management choices. These services are delivered face-to-face (individual and group) or remotely online or by telephone. Career resources include assessments and information that are designed to help individuals clarify what they know about themselves, their options, and their approach to decision making. Service-delivery tools help citizens use career resources in a way that is appropriate for their needs (ELGPN, 2015).

### 8.1 Lack of cumulated service figures

The lack of cumulative figures on the users of the different career guidance services is common to the four country reviews. Most of the sectoral statistical information (e.g. employment agencies, higher education career centres, VET, etc.) is cumulated based on the use of other types of services (e.g. job placement, VET training, etc.), where career services are also included. This is a common phenomenon in most of the countries and not only applicable to the EaP region, as career guidance services are rarely offered as a stand-alone service. Currently in the four countries we have no information about the total number of career guidance professionals in the sectors mentioned or about the total number of end users at national level.

The country reports did not provide data about the number of end users (for instance, for individual counselling sessions, group sessions, online sessions, career fairs, outreach activities, etc.). Some of this administrative or customer service data certainly exists in the IT systems of the labour office or the individual educational institutions, but this information was omitted from the country reports.

### 8.2 Online access

In recent years, online delivery has become dominant for career guidance services, among other services. The COVID-19 pandemic has encouraged most service providers and professionals to go online. In **Ukraine**, both the public employment service and educational providers have expanded their online presence. During the pandemic restrictions, VET schools intensified their career guidance work in the media (press, radio, internet, outdoor advertising and television), providing information about

educational institutions, careers and admission conditions. They also used Facebook, the Instagram accounts of institutions' employees and advertising billboards. In **Georgia**, both the state employment agency and the youth agency have been developing online career guidance tools. In **Azerbaijan**, the state employment agency launched new websites during the pandemic – the 'Alo Career' and 'Bacar' projects to reach citizens online. In **Armenia**, the MoESCS, in cooperation with the CGCD, has developed virtual career education lessons, which were broadcast on public television. Online career guidance activities and webinars have also been conducted by career guidance practitioners for TVET students and jobseekers.

### 8.3 State/Public Employment Services

The four countries' state/public employment services are still the backbone of access to adult career guidance services. The public employment services' role in delivering career guidance services has a long history (Sultana and Watts, 2006), but the preventive role of such services (supporting job-to-job changes) is still underdeveloped (Borbély-Pecze, 2019). These agencies benefit from different types of donor support, which has allowed them to expand their service capacities. Outreach work (e.g. with NEETs) is still an issue for the four agencies. For example, in **Georgia**, after a long debate the public employment agency was reformed recently as the State Employment Support Agency, with fewer branches than they had under the Social Service Agency. This created a new, unsolved issue of access as the former employment support structure was made up of 69 territorial Social Service Agency offices. The limited number of offices may reduce the outreach of services, particularly in rural areas, so the population's access to services can be an issue. In **Azerbaijan**, 22 offices of the state employment agency and five DOST offices cover all the regions of the country. The State Employment Service (SES) of **Ukraine** provides career guidance services for all social groups, with a special focus on people with disabilities (a special training course is available for the SES experts as part of the inclusive labour market for employment). The Unified Social Services (USS) in **Armenia** have introduced career guidance services in the regional USS centres. In the newly created system, the key issues are: the involvement of career guidance specialists; training; continuous development of skills; and providing a methodology in close cooperation with CGCD.

### 8.4 Access to guidance within the educational sector

Based on the country reviews, career guidance services are present in the different sub-sectoral fields of education (e.g. schools, VET, higher education, adult education) but information about client traffic data is less easy to assess than within the public employment services, which is also due to the different nature of the two policy fields. In **Armenia**, the CGCD has been accumulating some statistical data, but this relates more to the amount of professional training than users' access to school or adult career guidance services. The CGCD trained 900 professionals from 2013 until 2020 in Armenia, but it is unclear how many of those professionals provided career guidance services over those years. A recent survey among young people (Badurashvili et al, 2019) shows the lack of access to career services in the educational system in **Georgia**. In **Azerbaijan**, high-level training for school professionals has been carried out recently. The Education Institute under the Ministry of Education has developed a methodological tool for career guidance practitioners and is carrying out online and offline training for practitioners (mainly school psychologists) from 4 100 schools in Azerbaijan. In **Ukraine**, regional forums called 'Business–Youth: the WOW', are a platform between businesses and schools for cooperation. The pact involves 700 partnerships between the business and education sector.

## 9. USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

In modern societies, information and communication technology (ICT) plays an integrative role in society in general, and in companies, families and individuals. A description of government services necessarily includes the use of ICT: 'As ICT affects everyday lives, it also impacts macroeconomic growth, which in turn further affects society by enabling infrastructure and standard of living improvements' (Roztocki, Soja and Weistroffer, 2019).

ICT in lifelong guidance refers to the products, infrastructure and electronic content that enhance policy and system development for lifelong guidance and the delivery of lifelong guidance services, resources and tools. It covers how interactive services, resources and tools are designed and developed for citizens, how citizens use them, and how such use in turn reshapes the design. It also refers to the digital competency required to use ICT in a lifelong guidance context.

- ICT supports a **citizen-centred approach** to making all public services, including lifelong guidance services, resources and tools, more accessible to citizens.
- ICT has the potential to act as an **integrative factor** in lifelong guidance policy development.
- Citizen behaviour change: ICT products, infrastructure, and **electronic content have changed the behavioural pattern of citizens.** (ELPGN, 2015).

ICT also has the potential to widen the use of self-help career development tools (career questionnaires and quizzes, occupational videos, for example) but can also strengthen the role of volunteers and volunteer support groups in the field of career development. There are successful cases (in Estonia and Singapore) where the use of an integrated ICT strategy in government led to a better functioning skills system. A further important issue is technological synergy (OECD/Watts, 2001), which in modern terms means a multi-channelling approach (MCM).

**Multi-channel** refers to the use of several media channels for spreading communication messages, including email, social media, print, mobiles, display ads, television, radio and more. Leveraging multiple channels allows brands to interact with their customers across multiple touchpoints for a more comprehensive campaign. An even more mature type of service delivery management would be **omnichannel**, an integrated approach between multiple channels of communication. In recent years, many career guidance services have employed this strategic channel management (by way of example: Tööttukasse<sup>15</sup>, the Estonian Public Employment Service; or the integrated Educational and Career Guidance Service of Singapore<sup>16</sup>).

The development of integrated, single-sign-on (SSO) service management is not an easy task even in the for-profit sector. Most of the commercial banks are still working on this development by integrating the client's portfolio, access to the consultant and the approach via different channels into a single system that is also secure against cyber-attacks. From the perspective of government services, this is not an easy task either. As many career guidance services are cross-sectoral and lifelong in their nature, linking all the relevant career guidance tools, self-help support, a personalised lifelong career portfolio and the different service providers into a single system is even more challenging. Proper integration also requires a similar service philosophy and for the different stakeholders to have a compatible integration vision (Kettunen & Sampson, 2019). The Finnish Ohjaamo<sup>17</sup> centres for people under the age of 30 try to provide this approach in person.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.tootukassa.ee/et>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/ecg>

<sup>17</sup> <https://ohjaamot.fi/>

## 9.1 Online career tools of the employment agencies

The **Ukrainian** public employment service (State Employment Service, SES) developed a system for registering citizens in the employment service through the public services portal 'DIYA'. By the end of October 2020, almost 180 000 people had participated in over 221 000 webinars on general employment, job searches, CV writing, interviews with employers and online skills development using digital technologies. In online format, employment centres provided over 374 000 information services on career guidance and employment, and about 240 000 individual career consultations. The SES now also has online career counselling services and provides access to labour market information (LMI) online.

In **Azerbaijan**, the employment agency also provides online career services. 'Alo career' is a Zoom platform-based service for online individual counselling. The 'Bacar' (learn a skill) platform also offers career information and self-help elements. The career guidance component of the project includes information about occupations, vocational diagnostics and support for making career choices.

Under the **Armenian** employment policy, a new Electronic Labour Exchange (e-borsa) information system has been launched recently. The system, among other processes, will also provide online career guidance services for young people and jobseekers, using innovative technologies.

In **Georgia**, [www.worknet.ge](http://www.worknet.ge) is the online matching and employment counselling portal of the Georgian Public Employment Services, SESA. More recently, a labour market information website was also launched. This platform ([www.lmis.gov.ge](http://www.lmis.gov.ge)) aims to provide up-to-date and comprehensive labour market information.

## 9.2 Online career tools within the education sector

Systematic online career platform developments were not reported from **Ukraine**, however there are various ongoing projects. For example, 'Choose the profession of your dreams' has a strong online presence, including occupational videos and career competitions and talent shows via online streaming or via YouTube recording.

Digital technologies are not yet widely embedded in career development support services and processes in **Armenia**. Digital career guidance testing tools developed by the CGCD Centre are available on the Centre's website at [www.mycareer.am](http://www.mycareer.am). Video materials with innovative virtual reality technology have been developed with the support of GIZ to present careers in the hotel industry within the framework of career education. The Edu2Work platform was created in 2019 as part of the 'From Education to Work' programme implemented by the National Innovation Centre for Sustainable Development Goals in cooperation with the Public Policy Institute.

For the **Georgian** vocational education system, the [www.vet.ge](http://www.vet.ge) website provides information and search functionalities for beneficiaries on short-term and long-term vocational programmes. The most professionalised solution is the [Myprofession.gov.ge](http://Myprofession.gov.ge) website, which is administered by the Youth Agency, and is so far the best career counselling resource that targets young people. The service provided by the website is, however, currently limited to information on some professions/groups of professions, self-assessment tests and career management skills information.

### **Edu2Work platform as a possible career information provision tool**

1. Students and career centre professionals can use the Edu2Work platform to understand labour market trends, find the career that best suits them and identify the most in-demand professions and skills.
2. Policymakers and researchers can use this AI-based platform to see in real time the overall picture of the labour market segment reflected in online announcements, track labour market changes over time across regions, identify the most sought-after occupations and skills by employers, develop policies and target investment opportunities in different areas.
3. Universities and other educational institutions can use the platform to identify the most demanding jobs, track changes in the labour market at all skill levels, assess the relevance of their curricula, adapt them to labour market requirements, develop curricula based on data provided by employers and guide students.

Source: [Armenian National Report, February 2022](#)



## 10. QUALITY OF PROVISION OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SERVICES WITHIN A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

There are several reasons for quality assurance (QA). Firstly, it protects the user of the service – all citizens, including those who use and those do not use career guidance. Secondly, QA is there to protect the professional, those who provide services for end users. Thirdly, QA is needed to develop and reinforce institutional capacities for widening access to and quality of career guidance. Finally, QA provides a systematic, unified service delivery with integrated monitoring and evaluation (M&E) allowing providers of such services, and users such as individuals, families, communities and companies, to receive structured, comparable feedback. This evidence and feedback is an important consideration when choosing the next service. This is how the QA loop, or the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PCDA) cycle, is closed before continuing with the next case.

Policy is prone to exogenous factors and its effects are never entirely predictable, which puts a premium on ‘adopt-and-adapt’. Administrations should focus on high-level objectives and always keep them in sight but remain ready to respond to events as they arise and willing to adjust short-term operational goals and activities accordingly (EC, 2015).

In this chapter, five elements of current career guidance services will be reviewed: a) staffing; b) professional standards; c) information provision; d) career tools; and e) monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the services.

The handbook of the European Lifelong Guidance Network (ELGPN, 2015b) listed five key elements of QA and M&E: a) Practitioner competence; b) Citizen/user involvement; c) Service provision and Improvement; d) Cost benefits to governments; and e) Cost benefits to individuals. More recently CEDEFOP (2022) pointed out that diverse methodologies are used and that data is collected across sectors and at different levels in career guidance services and settings. Therefore, the development of a comprehensive **QA and M&E structure is only possible via a cross-cutting policy approach**.

Clearly, in many sub-segments of a career guidance system, common global or EU standards do not yet exist. E.g., for more than ten years now (CEDEFOP, 2009) within the European Union, professionals agreed that a year-long academic training is a minimum requirement for a trained career professional. Currently, due to digitalisation (CEDEFOP, 2021) and several non-formal ways of learning (such as access to microcredentials, several other ways of online learning), this statement is under reconsideration and the professional validation of previous skills and experiences of professionals is a more targeted area of interest. However, professionally trained practitioners are at the heart of ensuring quality in career guidance services.

### 10.1 Staffing

In **Ukraine**, teachers, youth workers and the staff of the State Employment Service (SES) provide career information, guidance and counselling. The number of professionals in the education and youth sectors is uncertain (in December 2021, the SES reported 2 156 career advisors and 808 specialised career advisors). Most of them provide career guidance services, including informing people about the labour market and the world of work, career counselling (assistance in professional self-determination), developing career management skills (job search and employability skills development, seminars and training courses on soft skills), searching for personnel for employers, and supervising school practitioners (mostly school psychologists). The SES has an in-house training institution. School staff usually receive support from the SES counsellors. VET and Youth Centres also have staff who provide career guidance.

In **Armenia**, career consultants at VET Centres have a detailed job description. In the school system, career education is carried out by the school's deputy head, the organiser of school educational activities, the social pedagogue or the psychologist, whose job descriptions have a separate career guidance function. Social inclusion services and the labour administration underwent a reform in 2021, and the USS currently has a separate subdivision for Labour Force Development and Career Guidance, with nine new staff members.

In the formal education and social service systems of Armenia, the initial and continuous training of career guidance specialists is carried out by the CGCD Centre. Following an optimisation in 2018, the Centre's staff has 10 specialists out of a total of 12 staff. The tasks are carried out by two divisions: methodology and training; and information-analytics. The methodology and training division is responsible for methodology, developing training programmes and training supervision; the information-analytics division is responsible for gathering information about the labour market, education, professions and occupations, establishing relations with partners like employers, and raising public awareness.

In **Azerbaijan**, the Ministry of Education recently trained 4 100 school professionals/ teachers; services are provided by school psychologists and career guidance coordinators in full-time positions. The State Employment Agency Vocational Training Department has five employees, and the 22 employment centres all provide career guidance. The staff of the local centres receive on-the-job training.

### **JOB PROFILE OF THE VET INSTITUTION'S CAREER UNIT COORDINATOR (CAREER CONSULTANT) IN ARMENIA**

The Consultant ensures the provision of career guidance services to students, under three main areas:

- a. Information: providing accurate and up-to-date information to the students on career opportunities (professions, vocational training institutions, occupations, workplaces, etc.), progression routes, choices, where to find help and how to access it.
- b. Advice: providing advice through activities that help young people to gather, understand and interpret information and apply it to their own situation.
- c. Guidance: providing impartial guidance and professional support to help young people understand themselves and their needs, overcome barriers, resolve conflicts, develop new perspectives and make progress.

#### **Qualification**

The Consultant must have a higher education qualification, preferably as a psychologist, psychologist-pedagogue or social worker, and have an excellent command of Armenian.

Source: [Armenian National Report, February 2022](#)

## **10.2 Professional standards**

Currently, there are no professional standards for career guidance professionals in **Ukraine**; rather, there are different protocols that are applicable for psychologists, social pedagogues, employment counsellors and other branches of professionals. Appropriate training for career counsellors and social psychologists is available in the postgraduate pedagogical education institutes. The National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Educational Sciences both provide in-service training and professional materials for counsellors. The Ukrainian public employment agency's SES Institute of Personnel Training offers career guidance providers a wide range of training options, professional training courses and webinars every year. In 2020, the Ukrainian Association of Career Guidance and



Educational Advice initiated the development of the occupational standard for all sectors. This is still in the drafting phase.

**Armenia** has no unified professional standard for practitioners either. However, primary and secondary schools, VET institutions and the Unified Social Service (USS) regional centres indicate as an important precondition that these specialists must be trained by the CGCD Centre, with an appropriate methodology and programme. The methodologies to develop the competencies of the career guidance professionals are based on the framework of International Competencies for Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioners, approved by the General Assembly of the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) in Berne in 2003. The duration of the training programme is 40 hours, after which the specialists at the CGCD Centre continue to provide professional advice and methodological support.

### State standards for effective professional consultation and career planning services (PCCP) in Georgia

The state standards for effective professional consultation and career planning services (PCCP) and sub-standards for the PCCP services for jobseekers were approved in 2015. The standards provide the description of the PCCP services, details on coordination between different actors, the information base, as well as human, material/technical, methodological resource requirements and monitoring of the services.

PCCP services are defined as career planning and professional consultation services and are provided by employment services, and by educational and youth organisations in cooperation with employment services, to different target groups.

Source: Georgian National Report, February 2022

**Georgia** has a state standard for effective professional consultation and career planning services (PCCP), and sub-standards for the PCCP services for jobseekers were approved in 2015 within the employment sector. The standards provide a description of the PCCP services, details on coordination between different actors, the information base, as well as human, material/technical, methodological resource requirements and monitoring of the services. The standards also specify qualification requirements and provide that career counsellors should have a higher education qualification in social sciences and three years of work experience in the relevant sphere, and should undertake special professional training in career counselling.

In **Azerbaijan**, currently there is no higher education programme for career professionals. Short training courses are provided by the state employment agency. The Education Institute under the Ministry of Education has developed a methodological tool for career guidance practitioners (for all pillars of general education) and provides online and offline training for practitioners (mainly school psychologists).

## 10.3 Career information provision

Career guidance services must always rely on high-quality, standardised, up-to-date and reliable information. Information in career guidance services has different elements, such as: a) information about the labour market and occupations; b) learning opportunities and the education system; c) information about personal skills, attitudes, values and lifestyles associated with learning pathways towards particular careers and occupations. Often, career information is exclusively mentioned as labour market intelligence (LMI) – including skills forecasts and trend analysis – but in real terms career information covers a wider scope than only the labour market. Career information is also about

social integration, roles in life and lifestyles in certain communities, societies, often in rural and mountain areas. States have a special monopoly on such information, meaning that a well-functioning, integrated, user-friendly, all-age career information service as a building block for career services is the main responsibility of a state administration. Asymmetric information is usually a key issue in career choices and career development, and therefore is an essential element of career guidance services.

The four country reviews have collected limited evidence about the quality of integrated career information systems, but some data is available for LMI. In **Ukraine**, the Institute of Professional Qualifications develops professional standards. The state employment agency is responsible for various labour-market-related information, together with the state statistical office. According to the report, an integrated LMI system which can support career guidance services needs to be developed in the future.

The CGCD Centre in **Armenia** plays an important role in ensuring the quality of career information. It suggests a methodology according to different users and age groups (such as schoolchildren, youth and adults) and their social status (jobseekers, long-term unemployed and others) and functional assessment (people with disabilities). Integrated career information, including LMI, remains a challenge. Information on the forecasted demand for occupations, professions and labour market skills remains an issue for career guidance professionals. There is no unified information platform from which verified career information can be retrieved. There are more than 10 different job vacancy platforms, including [www.staff.am](http://www.staff.am) and [www.jobs.am](http://www.jobs.am).

The same situation is applicable in **Georgia**. Career information is limited and not provided in a user-friendly format. Labour market information is collected by the labour market information statistical unit of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, and partly by the public employment service. Career information is partly published on the state employment agency website, [www.worknet.ge](http://www.worknet.ge), and also on a dedicated LMI website under the URL [www.lmis.gov.ge](http://www.lmis.gov.ge).

In **Azerbaijan**, information and intelligence to support career development is delivered by the National Skills Observatory (NSO).

### National Skills Observatory (NSO) of Azerbaijan

The maximum number of staff at the Observatory is 70 employees, and there are currently 54 employees working there. The NSO works under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population.

The NSO implements the following ongoing activities in the field of the labour market.

- On-the-job training based on international experience, analysis of internship mechanisms and preparation of proposals, study of the possibility of applying the 'dual education' system.
- Analysis of the characteristics of the national labour market for pandemic and post-pandemic periods.
- Analysis of statistics relating to the able-bodied inactive population and preparation of proposals on their involvement in the labour market.
- Preparation of proposals for improving the vocational education system, secondary specialisation and higher education in accordance with the requirements of the 'National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning'.
- Analysis of issues relating to the effective use of human capital in Azerbaijan and preparation of proposals for the next 5 years.

Source: National Report of Azerbaijan, February 2022

## 10.4 Career tools

Career planning tools are documents, textbooks, worksheets, questionnaires, quizzes and procedures or practices used to develop the best optimal career choices for an individual. Career tools are available online and in person. Nowadays, online tools are more widely used than paper-based solutions.

Career tests can be of two different types: psychological tests and self-exploration-based questionnaires/career quizzes. They are quite similar and often the questions are alike, but the way they are used is very different. The evaluation of the psychological test performed by a psychologist (preferably from the field of vocational/career psychology) and the responses are not made public to users. In contrast, the evaluation of questionnaires is public and open to users. These days, career/employment centres tend to use questionnaires rather than tests. In some countries, however, psychologists are in the second or third service line and use testing when there is a clear sign of a lack of self-assessment ability.

In all the countries, there is more than one body responsible for developing and maintaining career tools. From the users' perspective, different platforms provide different pieces of information, with no one single LMI database behind them. The US-government-maintained O\*NET<sup>18</sup> system still provides the best international benchmark, where the Department of Labour, Employment and Training has been maintaining a single-entry website that includes all the relevant information under one roof.

In **Ukraine**, the state employment service (SES) maintains its own system. The SES uses psycho-diagnostic testing for career self-determination in the school system too. The youth policy and the VET system have also been using different career tools.

The main player supporting the implementation of tools in the state system in **Armenia** is the CGCD Centre, which operates under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The main goals and objectives of the CGCD Centre are to provide career guidance models and methodologies, practitioner training and supervision of trained specialists. The Armenian HR Association has developed the 'zoom in!' programme, which is designed based on the 'DISC' (dominance, influence, steadiness and conscientiousness) model of personality types and the past-present-future approach in facilitation. It aims to help teenagers explore different opportunities in various fields.

In **Azerbaijan**, the state employment agency (SEA) is a major user of career tools. The SEA's career tool 'Bacar' is an online platform with three components: training on self-employment and electronic processes in the selection of career pathways; online career guidance and vocational training using special innovative approaches (online tests); and simulators.

**Georgian** career tools remain under the domain of four public bodies. The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development is responsible for the LMI website. The state employment agency runs the WorkNet website. The Youth Agency's previously developed system includes career questionnaires and occupational folders available under the domain of [My.profession.gov.ge](http://My.profession.gov.ge). Lastly, the [www.vet.ge](http://www.vet.ge) website is administered by the Ministry of Education and Sciences, providing information and search functionalities for beneficiaries on short-term and long-term vocational programmes.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.onetonline.org/>

### Myprofession.gov.ge Georgia

The Myprofession.gov.ge website is administered by the Youth Agency as a career counselling/guidance resource targeting young people. The website is currently limited to information on some professions/groups of professions but includes self-assessment tests/questionnaires and career management skills information. The Youth Agency has plans to further develop the portal but faces a challenge in providing labour information unless the LMIS and worknet.ge services make such information available in a user-friendly way.

Source: Georgia national report, February 2022

## 10.5 Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Every government activity requires control, monitoring and evaluation functionalities, and career guidance systems and services are no exception. Still, in most countries career guidance systems and services have no integrated financial control or M&E systems. This is partly because of the cross-cutting, horizontal policy nature of such systems and services but also because of the integrated and complex effects and outcomes of such services. Robertson (2021) categorises the relevant types of outcomes as: economic, educational, psychological and social. European countries are still working on an overarching framework for the monitoring and evaluation of lifelong guidance systems and services (CEDFOP, 2022). On the other hand, from a scientific perspective, it is not an easy task to separate the effects, i.e. outcomes, of career guidance services from different but associated activities such as education and training or labour market policy active measures.

The Ministry of Economy in **Ukraine** monitors the implementation of the state public career guidance system concept on a yearly basis. The concept has associated action plans. The state employment agency (SES) also has an in-house professional and financial control and monitoring system in place. Since 2020, the State Scientific Institution 'Institute of Educational Analytics' has been regularly conducting evaluation studies to assess the effectiveness of career guidance in formal education.

In **Armenia**, VET institutions have a separate toolkit for monitoring career guidance services; accordingly, a career guidance database of students has been established for tracing graduates. The most recent career guidance monitoring indicators for alumni are provided by the CGCD Centre. The overall investment in primary and secondary schools is still in progress, so the monitoring data is not yet complete. Information on the activities of the career centres in higher education institutions has been collected from each institution for the purposes of this review report.

**Table 5 – Recent career guidance monitoring of VET graduates in Armenia**

	2018-2019	2019-2020	Total
2019 number of VET graduates	7 418	11 000	18 418
of whom: received career guidance services in 2019	7 218	10 711	17 929
Total (%)	97.30	97.37	97.34

Table source: Armenian National Report, February 2022

An implementation and monitoring plan was developed in **Azerbaijan**. The 'National System of Career Guidance and Counselling in Azerbaijan' was developed by the EU-funded 'Support for the implementation of NQF in Azerbaijan' project (from 23 January 2018 to 22 October 2020). The project recommended the cooperation of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population for strengthening quality assurance and evidence base in career guidance.

In **Georgia**, the Labour and Employment Strategy 2019-2023 provides a framework for monitoring and evaluation, and higher education institutes have been following the standard (ESG 2015)<sup>19</sup> of the European Higher Education Area<sup>20</sup>. The newly established state employment agency has data about serviced clients. However, in Azerbaijan and Georgia, there is as yet no monitoring and evaluation of career guidance services.

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<sup>19</sup> The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) provide the framework for internal and external quality assurance. They were adopted at the EHEA Ministerial Conference in 2015. <https://www.enqa.eu/esg-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance-in-the-european-higher-education-area/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.enqa.eu/esg-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance-in-the-european-higher-education-area/>

# 11. SERVICE GAPS, UNTAPPED POTENTIAL AND OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the four country reports, the following common service gaps have been identified and offer room for further discussion.

## 11.1 Comprehensive career education services in the school system

'The importance of career education has new dimensions in the context of lifelong learning. Human integration into society is a socially active and lifelong process.' (Dandara, 2014). The traditional approach of vocational guidance, where the professional model mainly referred to 'matching' a profession/occupation with individuals for a lifetime is no longer valid.

The updated European Union lifelong learning key competence framework (European Commission, 2019) defines personal, social, and learning to learn competence, which includes career management skills as a building block.

About a fifth of Armenian schools have been providing career education at grade 8 to 11 however only 900 professionals had been trained to do so. In Georgia there is no sign of systematic career education in place in the general school system. In Azerbaijan, the Education Institute under the Ministry of Education, together with the employment agency, provides career guidance in schools.

A comprehensive approach to career education, from preschool to secondary (end of compulsory schooling) has been missing from the four country papers. Through its national career guidance centre, Armenia has the methodological potential for this. In Ukraine, the VET centres are more developed in this direction than the school system. In all four countries, the public employment services also offer career education and information sessions but cannot replace the missing internal capacities of the education system.

A comprehensive career education service provision would mean that the learning outcomes for career education activities were defined for all types and levels of education. Pupils, students, teachers, other support staff and parents need adequate time to work on career development rather than just receiving occasional stimuli, as career education involves more of a pedagogical and learning process than a single-occasion information session or career assessment is able to provide. Career education activities need to be fully embedded within the school's functions.

A recent UNICEF & ETF (2021) report based on a survey of young people in Europe and Central Asia, including the four countries that have been analysed in this report, highlighted that '56.1 % of respondents said that school has prepared them for future studies or employment "a little" or "not at all".' This report also pointed out that young people 'lack reliable information and career guidance to help them make decisions, and their choices are often influenced by family, social, or gender expectations.'

## 11.2 Supporting school-to-work transition and NEETs

School-to-work transition (STW) and NEET (not in education, employment or training) prevention both receive considerable attention in the four countries. This is very much understandable as both issues are clearly linked with youth unemployment and the better functioning of the national labour markets and societies. Developments in the EU and programmes such as the EU4Youth also have these target groups in the spotlight. The NEET rates have been going down slightly in some countries (Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Armenia) or decreasing in Georgia over the last few years. NEET rates (WB, 2019) among women were still usually higher than NEET rates among young men.



It is worth paying particular attention to changes in each age group, as the original European Youth Guarantee policy initiative ((2013) was designed for 15-24 year olds, whereas the age range was subsequently extended up until 29 years and currently goes up until people aged 34. Moreover, based on the changes in European employment policy goals, nowadays 15-20 year olds are often excluded from statistical reporting as part of the labour force, because based on current EU employment targets these age groups should remain in the education system rather than be in the labour market.

**Table 6 – NEET rates in the four countries**

Country	Overall NEET rates (15-24 year olds)
Azerbaijan	NA
Armenia	23.9 % (2020)
Georgia	28.53 % (2020)
Ukraine	15.5 % (2020)
EU average	17.6 % (2020 Eurostat, 20–34-year-olds)

Table source: Eurostat, ETF KIESE (2021)

NEETs are a composite of different young people (Eurofound, 2021) with varying backgrounds (in terms of family responsibilities, short-term or long-term unemployed, degree of discouragement, etc.). A further understanding of these different barriers may lead to better designed programmes. Youth outreach work – including career guidance – is particularly important in three of the four countries (Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine) as their populations have been shrinking so they are still able to attract additional young workers. In Azerbaijan, working with youth is somewhat different as the county has and will continue to have a significantly younger population than the other three countries.

### 11.3 Widening access for adult guidance services

The country reviews provided fragmented evidence about the capacities of career guidance services. Providing career guidance services for the adult population was the weakest link (OECD, 2004) of service delivery in most of the OECD countries. Recent follow-up research (2021) in six OECD countries suggests that most frequently reported reasons for seeking career guidance are to receive help looking for jobs (32 %) and to learn about education and training options (25 %) (OECD, 2021). This means that the career development perspective of adult guidance services must concentrate on both areas; i) keeping or finding a job and ii) learning, relearning or upskilling for a career – especially given the changes in the labour market (digital and green transitions) and the increased need for upskilling/reskilling.

In the four countries, the state/public employment services were identified as the primary providers of adult career guidance services, which is also in line with international trends. The OECD (2021) study reported that approximately one-fifth of adult guidance services can be accessed through public employment services.

Based on user traffic numbers, current use of adult career guidance services is still limited. For example, the Georgian state employment agency reported approximate 4 300 cases, including both individual and group guidance (SESA, 2021). There were significantly bigger service numbers in Azerbaijan (134 760) and Ukraine (867 700). Of course, based on the population and the possible number of service users, numbers are only comparable between Georgia and Armenia as Azerbaijan is a more populated country and Ukraine is in a different sized group. Raw figures should therefore not be compared, but are only indicative. The last two years of the pandemic also demonstrated the vulnerability of face-to-face service delivery, even though this is still the primary service channel in



many countries. For example, in the six countries that were covered by a recent OECD review, in-person services still made up more than 60 % of the total service delivery OECD (2021).

**Table 7 – Access to adult career guidance services through public employment services**

Country	Client served (all type of guidance services)
Azerbaijan	134 760 (2019)
Armenia	12 710 (until October 2021)
Georgia	4 328 (2021)
Ukraine	867 700 (2021)

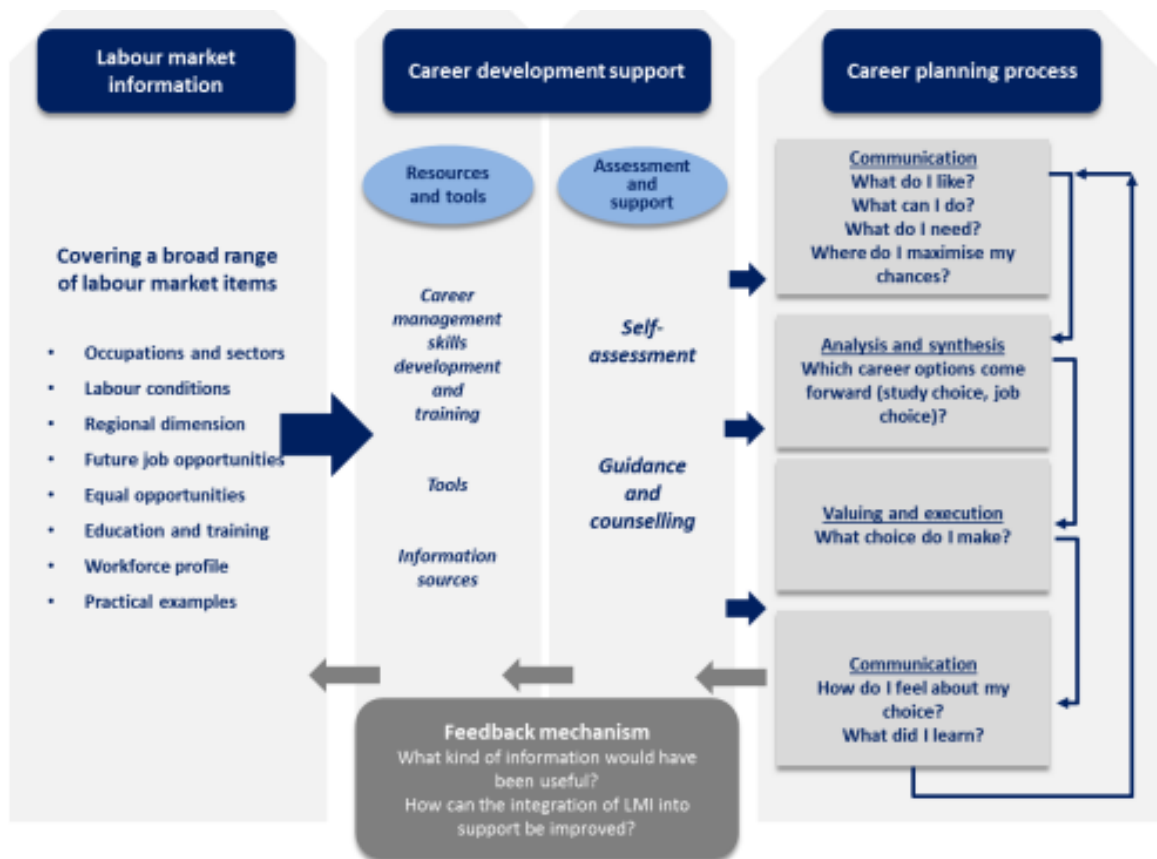
Table source: National Reports, February 2022

## 11.4 Developing an inclusive career information system

There is still a relatively long way to go, in all four countries, before all the relevant fields of career guidance information are integrated under a comprehensive, easy-to-use and all-age career information system. Steps have been taken in the right direction in all countries but the different sectoral systems (employment, education, school system or young people) usually remain segmented.

One possible way to compile the appropriate data would be to gather content from different data hosts/owners under a single domain, but this is an outdated technical solution. It also makes data maintenance challenging and there is always the risk of misinforming users with outdated or changed information. Moving from a career information system towards more integrated labour market intelligence means: *‘It is an adaptation, or interpretation of labour market information, a repackaging of graphs and statistics provided to the person seeking career information, advice, and guidance. Most career information is labour market intelligence, referring to labour market information that has been analysed and interpreted before presenting it to the public’* (CEDEFOP, 2016). Integrated career information systems have three key features: i) labour market intelligence; ii) career development support; and iii) career planning processes. It is also key to adapt information and make it accessible to clients’ needs (parents, students, etc.).

Chart 2 – Labour market (career) information on lifelong guidance



Source: CEDEFOP, 2016

## 11.5 Access to self-support tools in careering

Various government agencies and NGOs from different sectors have been developing different online tools in the four countries. However, these career development self-support tools are available mainly for user groups under different service categories (e.g. a youth portal was established mainly for young people in Georgia, employment services have been serving mainly jobseekers etc.). This silo approach hides the available self-help tools from different user groups and also makes development and maintenance more costly and less effective.

Modern lifelong guidance service provision is largely based on self-assessment, self-exploration and proactive individual career development. Online self-help tools need to be linked with peer support and access to professionalised career guidance services. It is rarely the case that online, self-support services stand isolated from other career guidance services. Peer groups have also been playing a more important role in career development than before. The effectiveness of self-help and peer support can be greatly improved if users have access to an appropriate quantity and quality of self-assessment tools, such as career questionnaires, career quizzes and online career games. It is even more effective if these tools are interconnected with different labour market intelligence datasets. Citizens need to be assured that: i) the questionnaire/quiz methodology will be continuously updated; and ii) the databases will be maintained by the government. The synergetic effect is in different fields: i) it makes the tools more accessible for users; ii) it therefore provides a wider access; iii) it also makes maintenance more cost effective; and iv) it makes the databases – coming from different branches of the government – more reliable and accurate.

## 11.6 Using the integrative, cross-cutting power of ICT

Technology has the potential to systematically embed or coordinate career guidance support in skills development, lifelong learning and employability measures in a seamless and user-friendly way (ILO, 2022). Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine have been using ICT mainly as a stand-alone tool in career guidance service delivery. In all these countries there are good examples of sectoral websites, but the ICT solutions usually either support service delivery in certain sectors (e.g. employment, VET) or are project driven. The real cross-cutting power of ICT is not yet used in career guidance service delivery in these countries.

The use of ICT in the governance process provides access to information and services for citizens at all ages during their lifespan and thus encourages citizens to participate in the administrative process. It works as the key to good governance by offering an effective, efficient, accountable and transparent administrative system, building on data maintained by various government institutions. The Youthpass<sup>21</sup> as a recognition tool for non-formal & informal learning under the EU4Youth project could be a possible future example for this approach in the EaP countries.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/>

## 12. THE WAY FORWARD – PRIORITY AREAS FOR SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

The chapter summarises the key priority areas for system development identified in the country reports and synthesises the way forward in the light of international lessons learnt.

The development of career support systems is in itself a learning process, in many different ways. First, it is primarily a social learning process, where careers are understood as the accumulation of human capital, where the interests of culture and economy meet. Secondly, it is also a policy learning process where education policy, youth policy, social policy and employment policy need to work together towards common, shared goals. Thirdly, it is a learning process in which the different needs of individuals, families and communities can be reconciled for sustainable career development. The common experience of the four countries analysed here is that over the last decade and a half or so, they have made significant steps towards developing their own national career development support systems. They also have in common that they still have a lot of work to do to achieve their goals and to strengthen support for individuals, communities and employers in building their careers and making transitions.

### 12.1 Legislation, coordination, policy and access

Legislation on lifelong guidance service has been in place in the four countries since the late 2000s or early 2010s. Apart from legislation, several policy papers and strategies have also been adopted in the field. In Ukraine, a coordinative council was used for many years; in Armenia, a national career development institute was established and is still functioning.

However, based on the country reports a **coherent, clear-cut cross-institutional action plan** in the field may provide additional boost for the development of career guidance systems and services. It would require a clear distribution of career staff and career tools among the different institutions involved, including the professional training of the service delivery staff. The type of coordination, which could be in the form of a cross-ministerial body, a forum, a memorandum of cooperation, a dedicated national institution or similar arrangement, may be less important than the mandate of such a cooperation or ensuring clear control, monitoring and evaluation of the service across various sectors. Via these synergetic policy actions, the professional identity and resilience of the institutions and staff involved could probably be reinforced, as could service quality and effectiveness.

At shop-floor level, the implementation of such policy aims work once the local staff (e.g. schoolteachers, state agency employment officers, youth workers, staff of the different NGOs, etc.) have a **clear and easy-to-use mission statement for the services**. Access to career guidance services is not only about the number of offices, websites or professionals that countries may be able to afford but also whether the individual is seen as the owner of his or her career who must make sovereign decisions.

**Table 8 – Way forward for career guidance system development in four EaP countries**

Country /start of the LLG system reform	Legislation & coordination	Career education	Competence framework/ training of professionals	Career information/ LMI	Funding	Cross-policy controlling, monitoring & evaluation	Integrate via ICT
Armenia (2012)	D	F	F	F	M	M	F
Azerbaijan (n/a)	D/F	F	F	F	M	M	F
Georgia (2014)	F	F/M	F	F	M	M	F
Ukraine (2008)	D/F	F	F	F	M	M	F

Table source: National Reports, February 2022

D = deployed / partly deployed

F = needs to be further developed or reengaged

M = almost missing

## Possible way forward

- Reviewing the national goals of the career guidance system under the current post-COVID structure with the involvement of all the relevant stakeholders is a first step.
- Defining the role of each stakeholder under this umbrella (cross-cutting) policy design.
- Revisiting and identifying the key action points based on the country reviews and the synthesis report.
- Prioritising according to available resources and policy goals (e.g. concentrating on the school system, or taking registered jobseekers or NEETs first, etc.).

## 12.2 Career education

**A well-established career education, covering all years of the school system, is an essential part of any career guidance system.** The country reviews stated that fully introducing career education in schools needs future action similar to that in Ukraine, where the new core curriculum will be deployed by 2025. Career education is not available at all in Georgia’s school system and only one quarter of students have access to career education in Armenia. Career education has often been replaced by career testing and one-off career fairs or factory visits during school time, whereas career education should be integrated into the school’s mission by integrating it into curricula, requiring hours dedicated by students but also teachers. Career management skills, which include life skills, cannot be developed through the course of a couple of hours of stand-alone activities or services.

### Possible way forward

- Career education in the school system is a pedagogical, learning process which includes several different activities. A concept note about school curricula and the role of career management skills, focusing on the needs of certain EaP countries, could be a starting point. Such a note would need to describe the learning objectives and expected learning outcomes, the timeframes needed to achieve them and the professional training of teachers and counsellors.
- Adjusting or developing the core curriculum and local curricula, textbooks and career education tasks for each year and each type of school. The multiple initiatives by donors in this area could provide a rich source of inspiration.

## 12.4 Competence framework, training of professionals

The development of a competence framework is a fundamental element for the professionalisation of career guidance. This process has already started in most of these countries. Armenia, for example, uses the IAEVG<sup>22</sup> global standards from 2003 and the relevant CEDEFOP (2009) publication. The second publication states that two academic semesters, **equal to 60 ECTS**, or about 1 800 learning hours, is a minimum requirement for a fully trained career guidance professional.

Training of professionals and other support staff (social workers, employment service case managers and teachers) have started already in the four countries. This ongoing work can be further consolidated and standardised. The training of professionals, **including basic standards of ethics, can have a significant impact on service delivery quality assurance.**

### Possible way forward

- Mapping the competences of staff currently working in the career guidance service provides an opportunity for recognition, validation and identifying gaps
- Using as a reference the global and European career guidance competency frameworks, it is worth developing a national consensus on the different competencies of counsellors to support different life situations. The work of the Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (NICE, Schiersmann et. al. 2016) may provide a good start for this action: European Competence Standards for the Academic Training of Career Practitioners.<sup>23</sup>

## 12.5 Career information

There can be no career guidance without reliable career information. This includes information about learning and working but also about people. All four countries have already separated career information services. Most of the websites and databases reported are under certain institutions or ministries, mainly developed as different products. **Integration of the information content of these systems under a single-sign-on (SSO) career information provision/website may provide better transparency, accuracy and even advertisement for career guidance services.**

### Possible way forward

- As a first step, it is worthwhile to assess the entire data set and its structure, which is valuable and usable for career guidance services. This may include a cross-horizontal, cross-institutional project which would also have a data analyst and an IT system / data developer element. Thus, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats can be identified as a basis for further service development.

## 12.6 Funding

Not surprisingly, funding of career guidance services is the weakest link in the four countries. The budget for career guidance services is either part of an institutional budget, or these budgets are wrapped in project spending. **This situation makes it hard to identify the annual budget of career guidance services** in these countries. Of course, the four EaP countries are not alone in this situation; this is very often the case in EU/OECD countries too.

**First, an annual draft budget plan for the funding needs of the career guidance services under different policy fields, in each institution,** needs to be drawn up, and then a budgetary plan for 3-5 years for mapping guidance services budgets may lead to a more conscious service design.

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<sup>22</sup> <https://iaevg.com/>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.nice-network.eu/pub>

The return on investment can subsequently be calculated for decision-makers and for the wider public. This leads straight to the next recommendation/action point on control, monitoring and evaluation

### Possible way forward

- By precisely defining career guidance service, service providers can be identified and a budget can be allocated to each career guidance activity. This allows the expenditure side of the services to be mapped and helps with financial control.

## 12.7 Monitoring and evaluation for continuous improvement

Some M&E activities were reported in the country papers, most interconnected with institutional agendas, e.g. preventing early dropouts from schools or from the VET system, or follow-up of jobseekers placed by the state employment services. These pieces of information are all relevant but **the development of a cross-institutional monitoring and evaluation meta framework** for the different career guidance service delivery may be useful. **This would give a general overview of the available career guidance services in certain countries.** Based on this information, access to the services as an issue can be further discussed.

It is also **important to further study and analyse the M&E of career guidance services**; due to the complex impact (social, educational employment) of career guidance, monitoring and evaluation is not a simple professional task. It is usually embedded in other activities such as placement of jobseekers via wage subsidies, or extra tutoring in school, etc. For the EaP countries, it would be relevant to adopt some type of impact assessment of career guidance services. The foundation of sustainable solutions to monitor and evaluate career guidance services may rest in the articulation of a vision for guidance system and services, and an understanding of what career guidance should entail in each context (CEDEFOP, 2022). This relates to what ETF/ILO proposes in their recent report (ETF/ILO, 2021): national reviews should result in the development of a theory of change, outlining a vision for system development.

### Possible way forward

- Develop a theory of change for the national career development support system, describing the desired impact, outcomes, rationales and assumptions, to outline how change comes into being against an overall objective.
- Monitor and, based on the monitoring results, evaluate career guidance services against social, labour market and educational policy goals as this could provide more robust evidence for the further development need of such systems and policies.
- Via the establishment of a national register of activities for each career guidance service type and provider, a blueprint, monitoring, and evaluation cross-institutional meta framework for the different career guidance service delivery could be created for use by all subsequent data providers.
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation cross-institutional meta framework for the different career guidance services.

## 12.8 Integrative role of ICT in guidance

In modern societies, ICT plays a key integrative role in service design and delivery. In all the four countries, several ICT developments were reported but most of them remain sectoral or project-driven. **The development of a national guidance website** (even more applicable for relatively small countries such as Armenia and Georgia) could act as an integrator for career information, but also for professional and end users. This would reduce the maintenance cost, improve cost efficiency and act as a good advertisement and communication platform.



## Possible way forward

- Develop technical reviews to explore the possibility of a unified online all-age career guidance service vision and presence, which should be complemented by surveys of trajectory information databases, and interoperability reviews of the different datasets under different ministerial and institutional domains.

## 13. CONCLUSIONS

The four countries are all under the Eastern Partnership (EaP) and therefore several EU policy initiatives (e.g. youth policy, building institutional capacity, reinforcing structural policy design and implementation) can be clearly identified from the country reviews. On the other hand, the global UN/ILO/IOM/UNICEF recommendations, such as the decent work agenda, are also having a significant effect. Most importantly, all these policy ideas are also blended with different donor activities and the local culture. The EU idea of a lifelong guidance policy, system and service development is present in all these countries but is more strongly focused on labour market inclusion and the productivity side of service delivery rather than the cultural and learning element of the concept.

Reforms of career guidance systems began approximately a decade ago in these countries, when the Eastern Partnership and – by accident – the second EU lifelong guidance resolutions were both signed in 2008. Fourteen years is definitely a short time in policy design and development. It is even shorter in a life of a society and public institutions. Time is also of the essence for turning policy downloaders and followers into countries with their own career guidance policies. Downloading and borrowing is a way of learning which can lead to adaptation and further along the line to the development of home-grown policies. The EU definition of lifelong guidance has an additional policy angle to career guidance as it connects lifelong learning with career development. Clearly in the EU, the definition of lifelong guidance not only encompasses the needs of the labour market or the different institutions but also the needs of citizens. The term means: *‘A range of activities that enables citizens of any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used’* (EC, 2004, ELGPN, 2012).

The countries covered by this report of course already have some type of legislation and institutional setting for the design and delivery of lifelong guidance. Most of them also have strategies around the concept. On the other hand, service delivery, access to services and the quality assurance of these services are rather weak in many sectors. Before the monitoring and evaluation culture can be further developed, a culture of cooperation and coordination that brings about joint strategic leadership needs to be widespread. This is not a simple task, as lifelong guidance services need to be followed up via different sectors and institutions. Therefore, reinforcing national and institutional professional capacities in the field of career guidance seems to be an essential step forward, in addition to setting up cooperation and coordination mechanisms.

The national reviews have been important for raising awareness about the key role of career development policies and career development delivery models in addressing the challenges posed by the development of labour markets, including digitalisation, globalisation, demographic changes, climate change and other global disruptions. The reviews have shown the importance of career development from early compulsory education to adulthood and onwards. They have identified individuals, families, communities, organisations and the wider society as beneficiaries of quality career services and the impact on educational, economic and social outcomes.

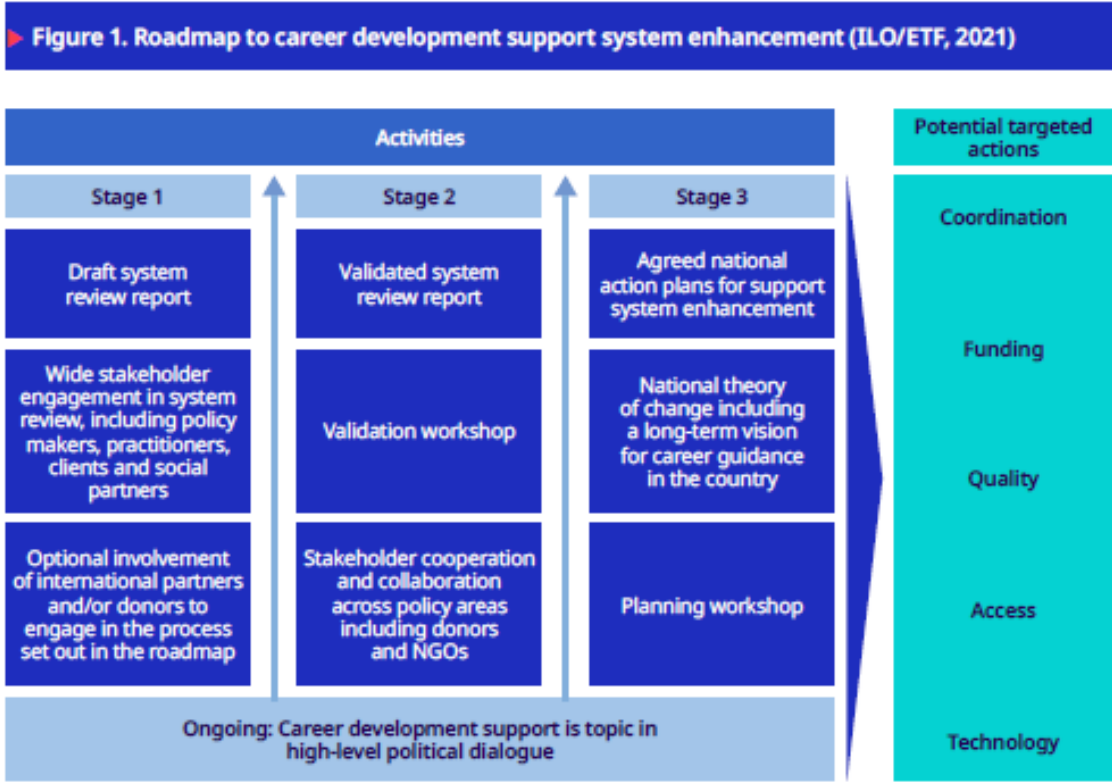
The reviews have brought together user groups, service providers, stakeholders and policymakers to generate insight into ways to develop national systems. Structured system descriptions, comprehensive data collection, interviews with stakeholders and validation of data enable participating countries to learn from other comparable countries, share good practices and promote subsequent mutual policy learning. Involvement in data collection and validation workshops with policymakers, stakeholders, service providers and user groups can be useful first steps for further structured dialogue leading to system and policy development.

These reviews build on the experiences of past international and European efforts to construct national career development systems and policies. The European Training Foundation and the ILO plan to continue their international cooperation by conducting further national reviews on career

development practices and policies and initiating a process which can be adapted to any context, including low-income and middle-income countries (ILO/ETF, 2021). The aim is to facilitate development as a participative process and create an evidence base for further developing coherent career services for all, in accordance with local contexts and conditions. The review process aims to promote a socially just framework that encourages an empowering social approach based on shared responsibilities rather than allocating full responsibility to individuals. The long-term goal is to rethink and strengthen the links between career development and lifelong learning to better ensure quality educational outcomes, and economic and social outcomes.

As suggested by the ETF and the ILO (ETF/ILO, 2021), the review process ideally ends with the participatory development of a theory of change and a related system development action plan on three levels: (i) system level; (ii) provider level; and (iii) practitioner level (see Figure 1). Such a process, building on the reviews conducted (stage 3), might be the joint activity that brings all stakeholders together, builds trust between each other and allows the important cooperation in the field to be enhanced.

**Figure 2 – Roadmap to career development support system enhancement (ILO/ETF, 2021)**



As regards the future socio-political and economic goals of the EaP countries, the development of a lifelong guidance system that can link policies and institutions through career development is a hidden treasure that deserves special attention. Reaching an appropriate energy mix, progressing towards a green economy and dealing with technological changes in society and production are challenges for which the population (schoolchildren and early leavers, people of working age in the formal labour market and the inactive population) must be prepared. Lifelong guidance policy provides a tool for this.

# GLOSSARY

Note: this glossary draws on the glossary of terms put together by the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN, 2014).

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Access to guidance	Conditions, circumstances or requirements (e.g. qualifications, education level, special needs, gender, age, etc.) governing admission to and participation in guidance activities, and/or the right to use guidance services or programmes.
Career	The interaction of work roles and other life roles over a person's lifespan, including how they balance paid and unpaid work, and their involvement in learning and education.
Career adviser / counsellor	Career advisers (or career counsellors in some countries) assist people in exploring, pursuing and attaining their career goals.
Career development	The lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure and transitions in order to move towards a personally determined and evolving future.
Career education	Programmes and activities of learning to help people develop the skills necessary to manage their career and life pathway. These include accessing and making effective use of career information and guidance.
Career guidance	A range of activities that enable citizens of any age, and at any point in their lives, to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make meaningful educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used.
Career information systems (CIS)	Systems, often computer-based or online but also in print, designed to aid an individual or a group in their choice of career, employment, occupation or work by gathering together, organising and providing information about specific occupations, professions or organisations, including descriptions of pay, conditions, training, qualifications and experience required.
Career management skills	A range of competences which provide structured ways for individuals (and groups) to gather, analyse, synthesise and organise their own career, educational and occupational information, as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions.
Coordination mechanisms	The coordination of lifelong guidance activities is likely to require a structure with operational powers and funding (and possibly a contract or legal mandate). The establishment of national forums is one method that has been used to encourage coordination of lifelong guidance activities. Coordination could also involve sharing responsibility for different activities in a careers programme.

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Distance guidance services	Guidance services that are provided remotely, for example by telephone, email or via the internet. The key feature is that the client and guidance worker are not in face-to-face contact and, in the case of automated internet guidance, no guidance worker is directly involved in the delivery of the guidance service.
e-guidance	Counselling or guidance that is delivered using ICT and which may or may not directly involve a guidance counsellor. Frequently used to describe the provision of information or the use of self-assessment tools and exercises via the internet.
Guidance systems	The way the delivery of guidance services has been designed and organised. This might be the approach a particular country or region has taken to organise guidance services or a particular way of delivering guidance, such as online or remotely.
Labour market information systems	Systems, mechanisms or processes for gathering, organising and providing information about the state of the labour market and/or professions and jobs. This includes recording changes taking place within the labour market, employment, jobs and professions.
Lifelong (career) guidance	A range of activities that enable citizens of any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used.

## ACRONYMS

ALMP	Active labour market policy
CMS	Career management skills
CG	Career guidance
CGCD	Career Guidance and Capacity Development Centre of Armenia
ETF.	European Training Foundation.
EaP	The Eastern Partnership of six partner countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
DOST	Agency for Sustainable and Operative Social Provision of Azerbaijan
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
IDP	Internally displaced people
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
HDI	Human Development Index
ICT	Information and communications technology
JRC	Joint Research Centre of the European Commission
IAEVG	International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of Armenia
MoESC	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Armenia
NEET	Young people who are not in employment, education or training
NICE	Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme

MCM	Multi-channelling
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
LLG	Lifelong guidance
LMI	Labour market information / Labour market intelligence
PCCP	Professional Consultation and Career Planning in Georgia
EUROSTAT	The Statistical Office of the European Union
ILO	International Labour Office
SSSU	State Statistic Service of Ukraine
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	State Employment Agency of Azerbaijan
SSO	Single-sign-on
SESA	State Employment Support Agency of Georgia
STW	School-to-work transition
VET	Vocational education and training
QA	Quality assurance



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