

National Forum for Guidance in Education, Career and Employment

Mission Statement

Adopted by the Initiative for a German National Guidance Forum on 5 December 2006

The National Guidance Forum is an independent network in which all institutions and organisations, relevant research and training institutions for guidance practitioners, governmental authorities and non-governmental agencies dealing with or offering or financing guidance and counselling as well as organisations of guidance users and consumers can collaborate. The Forum deals with guidance provided for individuals in education, vocational training and employment sectors. Psychotherapeutic and business consultancy of companies or organisations do not belong to the areas of activities of the National Forum.

The Forum understands itself as a platform of all stakeholders and actors in this area providing an opportunity for an exchange of knowledge and experience across all institutional sectors, for the discussion of common concerns and projects, and for the achievement of common aims.

Aims of the National Forum

- General aim of the National Forum is to promote the professional delivery of guidance in education, vocational training and employment sectors in Germany, to give stimulation for the (further)development of guidance services which meet the different needs of the users, to draft guidelines for quality and quality assurance, and to influence all partners to accepting and recognising them.
- Based on the EU Council Resolution on guidance throughout life¹ and with reference to the results of the various studies of OECD, EU and the World Bank² the Forum intends to contribute with its activities to the professional development of the guidance field in Germany. The work of the National Forum is guided by the definition of guidance of the European Union³ and takes account of internationally accepted Ethical Standards and Competencies for Practitioners⁴ while respecting the specific profiles of services and institutions in the different sectors.
- The National Forum intends to signal the importance of educational and vocational guidance for the development of skills and competencies of the individual as well as of the human capital of the society. Modern societies and the global economy depend for their well being on the mobilisation of the talents and strengths of their members. Guidance assists in discovering and developing these talents and strengths and thus contributes to the improvement of competitiveness, of economic wealth and social integration.
- The National Forum promotes all developments and activities integral to good and comprehensive guidance

¹ EU Resolution of the Council on Strengthening of Policies, Systems and Practices of Lifelong Guidance, 24.August 2004 (EU Document 928604 EDUC 89 SOC 234)

² CEDEFOP 2004, Synthesis Report by Ronald Sultana

³ "In the context of lifelong learning, guidance refers to a range of activities that enables citizens of any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competencies 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 competencies are learned and/or used." (EU Document 928604 EDUC 89 SOC 234)

⁴ IAEVG Ethical Standards 1995; IAEVG Paris Declaration 2001; IAEVG International Competencies 2003

- to enhance autonomous initiative, responsibility of the self and the competence of an individual to manage one's own education and career;
- to promote and increase the educational potential of individuals and their abilities to participate in social life and labour market;
- to maintain and improve the employability of individuals;
- to support citizens in using their basic legal rights according the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany, especially the right of free development of the individual, of free choice of a career and employment, and to stimulate equal opportunities.

In doing so the active participation of the user in the guidance process is indispensable for the individual success and the social benefit of guidance.

- The National Forum is convinced that it is the task of public policy makers within the governmental education, labour market and social policies to set up an adequate framework for structuring an adequate and high quality guidance service in education, vocational training and employment sectors. Through its activities the Forum intends to support the responsible authorities in the Federation and the Federal States and in other public bodies in achieving these tasks. Thereby the Forum stands for the preservation of plurality and competition within the guidance scene. However, to guarantee transparency of and easy access to guidance services the Forum considers that better networking and co-ordination among actors in the different areas of guidance is indispensable.
- In Germany guidance is in general only offered at points of transitions (at the choice of initial training, education and studies, during unemployment and for decisions to further training). But the implementation of a strategy of lifelong learning needs a continuous and co-ordinated system of guidance services.

Fields of actions of the National Forum are in particular

- to facilitate access to quality guidance for all citizens who are in need of it through transparency and networking of guidance services and their development;
- to undertake advocacy particularly for special groups with special guidance needs (migrants; persons with disabilities; persons who wish to return to employment; older workers; disadvantaged youth with limited training and employment possibilities);
- to develop and promote the use of a range of methods according to different guidance areas and user needs, including ICT, stand alone instruments and self-use material;
- to develop guidelines for quality standards in guidance delivery and for the qualification of guidance personnel and to promote their use to the relevant actors;
- to assure the expectations and needs of the users and consumers and to increase the efficiency and efficacy of meeting their needs through the development of appropriate instruments for regular evaluation and quality control of guidance with special attention to be paid to the needs of the social partners;
- to contribute to the professional development of guidance through initiatives to promote relevant research, training and counsellor education, and through the development of comprehensive systems of information and communication for counsellors across all sectors.

To succeed in these aims the National Forum will elaborate a concrete program of actions in close collaboration with all who are responsible for guidance in governmental policy and in society. In doing so it will use European and international co-operation in the field of guidance for the improvement of guidance in Germany.

(Translated into English by Bernhard Jenschke)