

was made to the personality of career professionals and its impact on the quality of career services. Clear priorities for the training of career guidance counsellors were that **initial and ongoing training are prerequisites for competent practice**, and that training needs to be **research-based and multi-disciplinary** in its nature. Thus, it was acknowledged that adequate competence of practitioners need to be secured. However, delegates also stressed that alternative pathways must be open for people to practice as career professionals. Particularly for those practicing already, but lacking formal training, adequate systems are needed to **accredit prior learning of informal and non-formal nature**. Finally, participants stated the need to differentiate between the competences needed for **different types of career services**: One uniform competence profile for career professionals is seen as too tight, when some services require less developed competences, while others require highly developed skills.

3. Next, it was stressed that coherent guidance systems are needed, which integrate different types of career professionals and career services. Not only "full professionals" (career guidance counsellors) are needed, but also community workers, teachers etc. There are all kinds of different roles and missions of different kinds of professionals with different specializations, which need to be linked coherently. In this light, some participants voiced doubts about constricting the relevant professional field to (career) "counselling", but to use broader and more inclusive concepts like "lifelong guidance" or "career development" to coin the profession. Important questions were raised:

- If we need to prepare all people for continuous professional development, why is career development not a unique school subject?
- How do we deal with passive attitudes towards career development, which still prevail in many cultures?
- How do we reconcile policy-decisions about who needs guidance? For instance, what about countries, where career services are only offered to young people?

4. An important task for the development of coherent guidance systems will be to improve how existing services and professionals cooperate, and to identify and overcome gaps (e.g. in the availability of services or the responsibilities of service providers). Several groups suggested to review the role of career guidance and counselling as a "networked profession". In order to fill the gap of service coordination and multi-professional cooperation, career professionals must also see it as part of their role to change systems proactively and to give feedback to other actors. It was pointed out that 'change' should be embraced by career professionals: instead of them viewing themselves as victims of change, they need to (be able to) influence how things are changing. Simultaneously, some delegates stressed that the career profession needed to keep its focus on supporting individuals, and that "social engineering" couldn't be part of the package.

5. Next, the participants have pronounced the need for **research to build an evidence base** which informs policy (e.g. in setting up and maintaining coherent guidance systems) and practice (e.g. through the initial and continuous training of professionals). Particularly evidence on the effectiveness of career guidance and counselling is seen as a prerequisite to acquire sufficient funding for services by some participants. Participants have stressed that this need implies both empirical research and the development of theory. Theories and approaches have to move with the rapidly changing world, which calls for continuous efforts to actualize the findings of research. It is mentioned that "talking back to policy and management" isn't as easy for professionals of career guidance and counselling, as for other types of professionals, due to their dependency on public funding. In relation to this problem, the responsibility of research and training institutions is stressed to actively lobby for services and guidance systems, which are fit for purpose. However, some participants also pointed out to the need for career professionals to engage more actively in retrieving evidence for the effectiveness of their practice.

From Canterbury with Love. Summary of the evaluation postcards from NICE summit



by Inge van der Putten

Participants at the Canterbury Summit certainly remember they received a postcard to return to the organisation at the end of our work with their comments. Considering participants' comments, some reflections are briefly provided in this article.

What was mostly appreciated at this European Summit was that different professionals with different visions on career issues spoke a common language in designing a mission for the future. And by doing so, shared help, projects and ideas about the future of career guidance and counselling. This is especially important with the existing on-going changes in the European labour market. Participants were happy to see that initiatives at the EU level are on the right track and are being supported by effective research. Practice, policy and research were felt to be in good hands.

The presentations were alternated with interaction in groups. This was highly appreciated and is also highly desired for the coming event in Bratislava.

Some participants recognized they had difficulties with the speed and the length of some presentations because of their moderate level of the English language. If, on one hand, these participants are aware to have a translator for every language is too expensive, on the other hand, a recommendation came out that could be considered in future meetings. Sharing handouts of the presentations beforehand is suggested to help everyone to join the (lively) discussions.

Most people were pleased with the academic orientation of the summit. It was very interesting to hear about the various research projects that are going on in Europe. Some participants proposed to invite employers and maybe even clients to the next summit. In that way, we might be able to create some “constructive conflict”: apart from some groups, people were generally holding the same side and shared their points of views. If we could look at the issues from more and different angles, it would perhaps help us to move forward in a more efficient way. It was also suggested to involve more private sector counselling organisations in the future, who could bring in an additional perspective to the focus on social inclusion and education, and promote the value of career guidance and counselling for high potentials and enterprises, as well.

Another summit in the future, with a broader group of participants, would be welcomed to exchange ideas about the different levels (i.e. political frameworks of our work, methods, partners, challenges of today and tomorrow) of career guidance and counselling.

With a broader group, we would also have more input on the question how many levels of competences are required and what the best name of our profession would be: A couple of participants argued that “counselling” doesn’t quite seem to cover what we are doing!

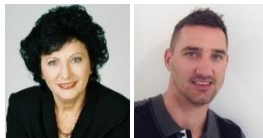
Also, a few request were made:

- Could a list of all participants be given to us before the start of the summit?
- Especially for new participants, some introduction on the NICE network is wanted.
- Would it be possible to have some handouts ready at the start?

No less important of course were the many compliments for the organising committee, for facilitating the event in such a splendid way, combining business with pleasure and allowing us enough time for socializing and networking.

Thanks once again team Canterbury!

Sixth NICE Conference in Bratislava



By *Laura Gressnerová and Ivan Prelovský*

The [Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava](#), a modern European educational and research institution, the largest and most significant university of technology in the Slovak Republic is pleased to host this conference.

The conference will begin on May 28, 2015 at 9:00 o'clock and end on May 30 at 14:00 o'clock. We have already prepared a great programme for the event and made all necessary arrangements to welcome us as their guests in a warm and comfortable atmosphere.

[Bratislava](#), a modern city with a rich cultural Heritage, is the capital city of the Slovak Republic. It is situated in the South-West of Slovakia on both banks of the Danube River.

Some highlights:

- Endorsement of the European Competence Standards for the Academic Training of Career Professionals
- Keynote: Prof Tristram Hooley (Derby, UK) on “The Evidence-Base of Lifelong Guidance”
- Keynote: Prof Maria Eduarda Duarte (Lisbon, Portugal) on “Innovation in Career Counselling; Myths and Realities”
- Parallel Symposia on Innovation in the Training of Career Professionals, Research around Guidance for Youth Employment, and Doctoral Training in Career Guidance and Counselling
- ESVDC Award and General Assembly 2015
- Gala Dinner at the Castle Restaurant with Slovak Folk Music and Dance Performances
- Workshops on peer-learning and mobility for the collaborative development of degree programmes and international exchange
- Foundation of NICE as an open network of degree programmes in career guidance and counselling

