



**European Competence Standards  
for the  
Academic Training of Career  
Professionals**

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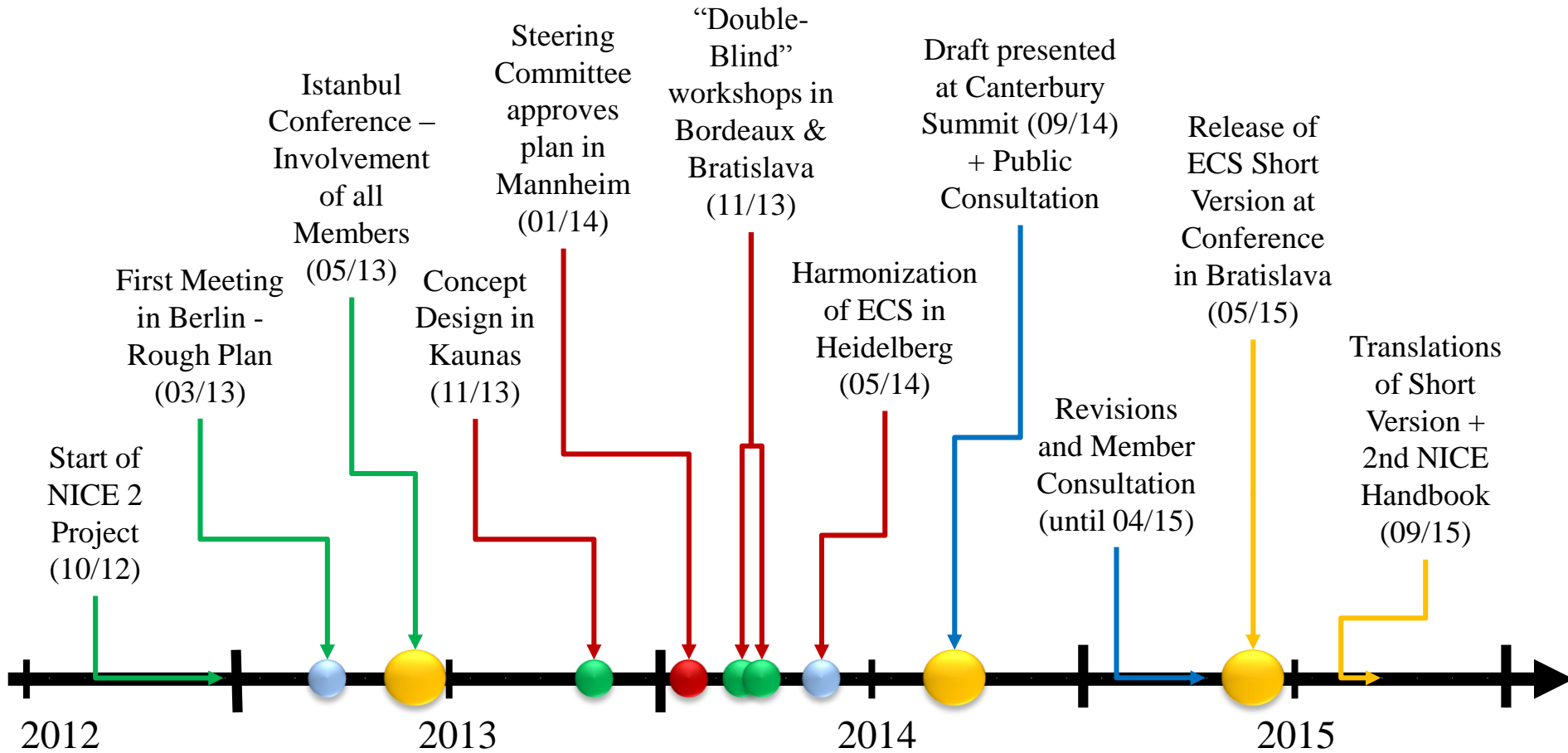
NETWORK FOR INNOVATION IN CAREER GUIDANCE & COUNSELLING IN EUROPE

- Help to **establish career guidance and counselling** as a recognized profession around Europe; a common **professional identity** of career professionals
- **Assure the competence** of career professionals around Europe, including people in supportive roles, as well as the **quality of (initial + further) training**
- Support the **mutual recognition of qualifications** and the **recognition of prior learning** in the field of career guidance and counselling, and **improve basis for international cooperation** and mobility in training and practice



- We need a **comprehensive and concise statement** about the **core tasks** of career professionals, which can be communicated well to lay-persons → what should people be able to expect from every person called a “career guidance and counselling practitioner”?
- We need a system which can offer a **sensible differentiation** between fully dedicated “career professionals”, people dealing with career-related questions as part of other roles, and people in “specialist positions”
- We need a **transparent and coherent framework** of **measurable** competence levels to assure quality and increase comparability
- The competences need to be **meaningful** in relation to the most central professional challenges related to the career profession and focus on **performance** in dealing with such challenges





A combination of different types of career services is needed, in order to satisfy the needs of all citizens appropriately.

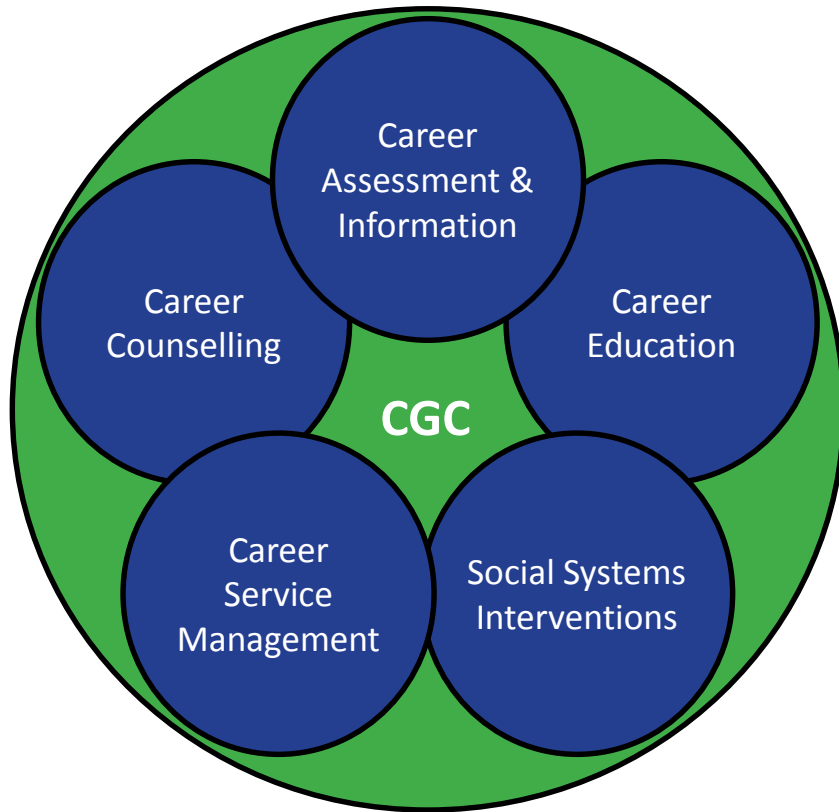


We distinguish between two aspects in our basic framework:

5 Professional Roles\* which Career Professionals work in:



6 Domains of Competence\*\* which they need for this:



*\*The Professional Roles together represent the central activities of career services and career professionals.*

*\*\*Competences are measurable learning-outcomes relating to the performance of professional functions; hence we don't speak of "core competences" anymore, but of competence domains.*



Following Jenny Moon (2002), the competence standards are composed of **three parts**.

**The first two of them refer to the general activity:**

1. An **action verb** that describes *what a person should be able to do*
2. A number of words that indicate *how the person performs this task/activity*

**The third part refers to the required quality level (standard) of the performed activity:**

3. A number of words that indicate the *conditions under which the activity is performed and/or which measurable outcomes are required* (e.g. quality indicators, expectations of clients, superiors, complexity of a problem etc.)

**The quality of competence definitions relies on:**

- Focusing on the most challenging and important components of an activity (relevant!)
- Only describing aspects, which can be observed as behaviours (measurable!)



*CGC Practitioner / Career Counselling Competence No. 1:*

**1. Observable action (verb + clearly defined description and reference)**

“Conclude a client’s main reason for seeking support

in an empathic and respectful way,

based on a client-centred interview.”

**2. Quality criteria for the communication of the conclusion**

**3. Quality criterion concerning conditions of conclusion**





*CGC Practitioner / Career Assessment and Information Competence No. 1:*

“Assess informational needs of clients

regarding their interests and competences, the relevant labour market, and features of vocational and educational systems

to confront informational problems such as

information overflow, stereotypes, disinformation and lack of information.”

**1. Observable activity**

**2. Quality criteria concerning the areas of knowledge, which a professional must consider**

**2. Quality criterion concerning the purpose of the assessment and necessary consequences**

**3. Quality criteria concerning informational problems which a professional must be able to detect**



NICE pronounces the need for Career Advisors, CGC Practitioners and CGC Specialists to engage in **specialized academic training as an entry requirement** for their type of practice in career guidance and counselling.

## Competence Level Analysis (based on European Qualifications Framework EQF):

The majority of competence standards for **CGC Practitioners relates to EQF Level 7** (Postgraduate Degrees / Masters Degrees), which reflects following aspects:

- **Integration of knowledge from different fields**
- **Development of strategic approaches for dealing with complex, unpredictable work or study contexts**
- **Specialized problem-solving skills to develop new knowledge and procedures**



A few examples:

## 1. Integration of knowledge from different fields:

- Relevance of personal/ psychological motives and factors,
- Relevance of social influences (family, friends, community, religion)
- Consideration of the economic and institutional environment

## 2. Strategic approaches for dealing with complex, unpredictable work or study contexts:

- Clients face multi-faceted problems and a high level of uncertainty,
- Need to develop broad goals and strategies together with clients

## 3. Specialized problem-solving skills to develop new knowledge and procedures:

- Supporting people in transforming their behaviours
- Facilitating difficult processes of learning and problem-solving



Based on our assessment, we recommend:

- **EQF 6 or 7 for training of Career Advisors**
  - as part of or in addition to degree programmes in diverse disciplines (e.g. Teacher Training);
  - Lowest: short-cycle training at EQF 5
- **EQF 7 for training of CGC Practitioners**
  - full degree programmes in career guidance and counselling (Master/ Postgraduate)
  - at the lowest through full, multidisciplinary Bachelor programmes (EQF 6)
- **EQF 8 for training of CGC Specialists**
  - e.g. as part of structured doctoral training (PhD)
  - Lowest: specialized Postgraduate and Masters programmes (EQF 7)
- **All three types of actors should engage in continuous professional development**
- **Reflected practice should be a prerequisite in qualification of each group**



The European Competence Standards (ECS) will only become established as “real standards”, if they are implemented widely across Europe.

Implementing the ECS in degree programmes will...

- **Unveil deficiencies of the model**

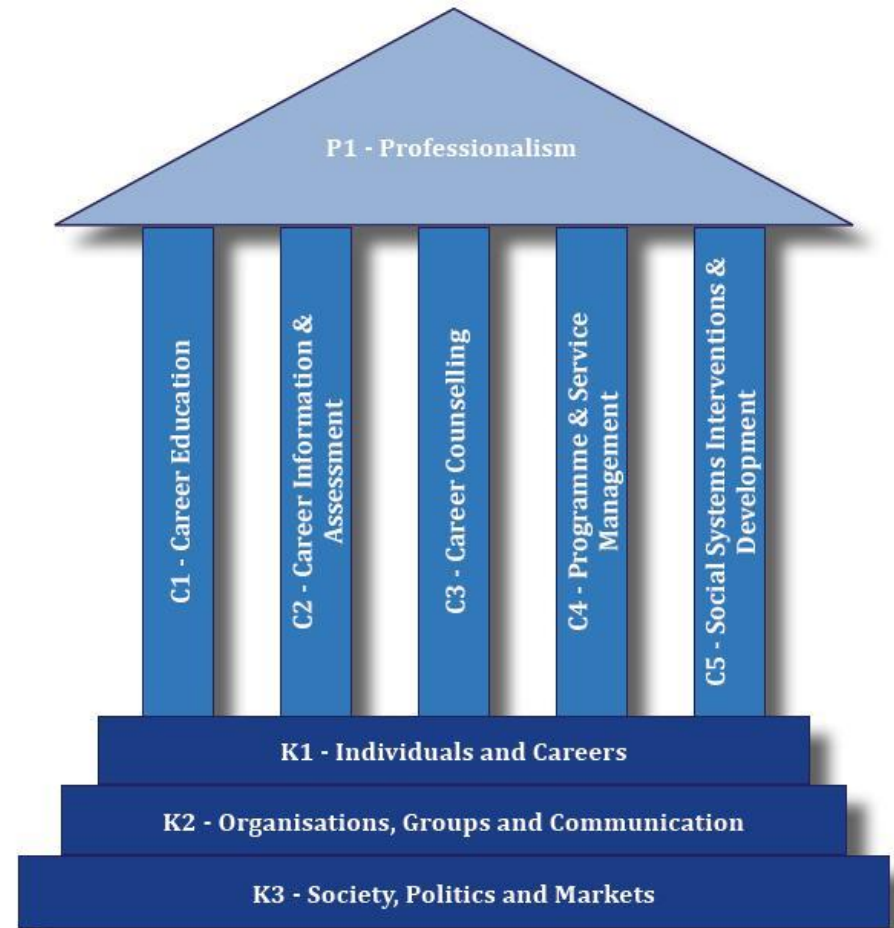
- Implementation needs to be analysed for learning
- Adaptation of the ECS into local contexts will be challenging and require interpretation
- Regular revisions of the ECS will be necessary

- **Need to be accompanied by further activities**

- Peer-learning for quality development of degree programmes
- Systematic evaluation of degree programmes
- Cooperation with national bodies concerned with qualification and training of career professionals
- Competences need to be validated with career services providers (enterprises)



- The **Short Version of the ECS** will be translated into a large number of European languages in the next months
- The **2<sup>nd</sup> NICE Handbook** will be published in 2015, explaining the ECS and their application in detail
- For the definition of more detailed, competence-based learning outcomes, we recommend the **NICE Curriculum**, which can be found in the NICE Handbook (2012) at <http://www.nice-network.eu/382.html> in English, French, German and Spanish (Chapter 5) – soon also in Turkish!



Graph: Modules of the NICE Curriculum (2012)



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- **All of the 83 NICE colleagues** who contributed to the development of the ECS at our conferences, workshops, meetings and internal discussions and consultations
- **The numerous stakeholders** from all around Europe who participated at the Canterbury Summit in September 2014 and/or contributed to our public consultation on the ECS
- **The coordinators of the ECS development:** Kestutis Pukelis, Jacques Pouyaud, Jukka Lerkkanen and Johannes Katsarov

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*Thank you very much  
for your attention!*

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