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# Overview of RPL's Role and Position within the EHEA

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Eesti tuleviku heaks

# What is RPL?



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- *‘The confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against predefined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard.’*
- Terminological challenge: RPL, APL, APEL, validation of non-formal and informal learning, but still same characteristics:
  - Identification of learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning.
  - Documentation of learning outcomes.
  - Assessment of learning outcomes.
  - Certification of the results of the assessment.

# Why talk about RPL?



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- Expansion and diversification of education and training policies.
- A need to provide more flexible pathways to education, especially for disadvantaged groups.
- Support mobility and lifelong learning within education/training and in the labour market.
- Achieve efficiency within education and training by helping to ensure that individuals are able to access tailored learning opportunities.
- Promote equal opportunities for individuals to achieve recognition for their skills and competences.
- RPL is essential part in Europe 2020 strategy to address skills shortages, facilitate mobility of labour and facilitate a better match between skills and labour demand in times of an ageing population.

# EU policies



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- Part of the European policy agenda since 2001 in regards to lifelong learning.
- **Processes** (Bologna and Copenhagen processes), **communiqués** (eg. Bruges and Leuven), **frameworks** (EQF), **tools** (Europass, Youthpass), credit transfer **systems** (ECTS, ECVET), common **principles** (European principles for validation of learning), **guidelines** (the European guidelines on validation), regular **stocktaking** (European Inventory on validation).

# Recommendation on validation



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Member States should have, **no later than 2018**, and in accordance with national circumstances and specificities, appropriate arrangements in place for the validation of non-formal and informal learning which enable individuals to:

- a) have knowledge, skills and competences validated which have been acquired through non-formal and informal learning, including - where applicable - via open educational resources;
  - b) obtain a full qualification, or - where applicable - part thereof, on the basis of validated non-formal and informal learning experiences.
- Regular stocktaking of developments of RPL in Member States through European Inventory.

# Why the recommendation?



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- Continuation of top-down approach to RPL developments.
- Despite on-going processes and existing tools and documents, the developments in RPL have been uneven, irregular and slow.
- Majority of EU Member States do not have a comprehensive validation system, leading to uneven accessibility of RPL across countries.

# Barriers to success



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- Different understanding of what is meant by RPL.
- ‘Traditionalist’ way of thinking – trust in traditions and culture of formal education, distrust towards non-formal and informal learning.
- Cost of the procedures- is RPL public or private responsibility?
- Lack of access to available information about recognition, especially for disadvantaged groups.
- Procedures are perceived as complex and time-consuming, often with uncertain results.
- Inclusion of stakeholders - lack of interest from employers, often due to fear of greater salary demands.

# Factors of success



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- Achieving the ‘mind shift’ – that learning can occur everywhere, not just in formal environment.
- Sufficient resources, both financial and human.
- Training and guidance for staff involved in RPL processes.
- Quality assurance to ensure trust in the system.
- Networking – sharing experience, practice and information.
- Cooperation and consultation between stakeholders.
- Usage of clear standards and qualification frameworks.
- Usage of well-developed competence-based assessment methodologies.



# Final messages



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- It's a long and bumpy road we're on – we have made progress, but there is much to do across Europe.
- The question is not the money, but rather the attitudes of the people and willingness to deal with the issue.
- Cooperation, information exchange and learning from mistakes can make implementing policies much easier.



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**Thank you!**

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