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# A Comparative Analysis of Validation of Prior Learning in Europe

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## Introduction

In this chapter, we compare policy designs that have adopted different concepts of (under)achievement and lifelong learning. We focus on the differences between Austria, Finland and Germany, on the one hand, and Italy, Portugal and Spain, on the other.<sup>1</sup> In addition, we explore how prior learning validation schemes define learning outcomes in the latter group.

We consider policy design to be a significant process for analysing learning outcomes of young and adult learners who are involved in different kinds of education and training offers. Policy design contributes to ‘improving the search for, and generation of, policy alternatives [that] will lead to more effective and successful policies’ (Sidney, 2007, p. 80). The prevailing policy design of adult learning in the European Union (EU) draws on benchmarks and indicators (Grek, 2010) as well as on wide negotiation among several policy actors (Milana, 2022).

This chapter is based on qualitative research, taking an interpretative approach, as it describes and compares key features of policy design in the selected countries (Boeren, 2018; Egetenmeyer, 2016; Fejes & Nylander, 2015; Lichtman, 2023). A theoretical section posits the key research question and sets the context for analysis of the content (Bowen, 2009) of the official presentation in the EURYDICE database of the lifelong learning policies of Austria, Finland, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain. Austria, Finland and Germany have consolidated institutional systems which integrate such validation schemes with vocational education and training (VET) and, in recent decades, Italy, Portugal and Spain have approved laws that attempt to emulate such integration. We

therefore review the legislation and the literature on learning outcomes and validation of prior learning in Italy, Portugal and Spain. The challenges entailed in this transfer of policy from some member states of the EU to others are, thus, highlighted.

## Adult learning systems and learning outcomes

Mainstream understandings of education policy assume that standardized tests provide significant measures of learning outcomes everywhere (see the introduction of this volume). However, the scholarship on VET and adult education has, reiteratively, argued that the resultant data does not fully capture the contribution of education to human autonomy (Boyadjeva & Trichkova, 2018; Jarvis, 2009). This literature has also observed that disparate institutional regimes mediate the impacts of adult education and learning on both learning outcomes and individual autonomy (Desjardins & Rubenson, 2013; Parreira do Amaral, Kovacheva & Rambla, 2020). Significantly, VET and adult education are considered means by which to foster individual autonomy in Nordic countries; compensate for social exclusion in Southwestern countries; distribute school leavers in a rank of occupations in Central European countries; and foster work readiness in Anglo-Saxon countries (Chevalier, 2016; Walther, 2017). In these different institutional regimes, learning is held to play different roles in the organization of workplaces, both among firms and among countries (Lundvall & Rasmussen, 2016).

In this chapter, we explore the potential of the schemes that validate prior learning to strengthen the learning outcomes of the adult population in the six countries under examination. When we compare certain aspects of learning outcomes across the six countries (Table 5.1), we can see that Italy and Spain have higher proportions of low-performing populations in both lower secondary education and skills. Portugal reproduces the same pattern in lower secondary education but surpasses the other two countries in digital skills and the size of the population with a low educational level is much smaller in Austria, Finland and Germany. These disparities suggest our examination may be revealing.

In this analysis, rather than taking countries as the units of analysis (Verdier, 2018), the chapter tracks the implementation of a specific policy aimed at inducing adults to participate in education (Desjardins & Ioannidou, 2020).

**Table 5.1** Population with low ISCED level and individuals with low digital skills.

	<b>Less than lower secondary education (ISCED 0–2), % of individuals from 15 to 64 years old (2022)</b>	<b>Individuals who have low overall digital skills, % of individuals (2019)</b>
EU	24.90	27.82
Germany	23.00	22.49
Spain	37.70	31.49
Italy	38.80	31.52
Austria	18.60	20.93
Portugal	39.60	22.44
Finland	18.10	18.58

Source: EUROSTAT.

Although Austria, Finland and Germany design these schemes differently, we gather these countries together as a single type comprising cases of lengthy periods of institutionalized validation. We compare them to Italy, Portugal and Spain on these grounds. Then, we spell out the particularities of new designs in the latter country group.

## Official definitions of learning outcomes

Every year, all the EU member states claim their reforms comply with the European Council's (2016; 2020; 2022) recommendations to establish skilling pathways, promote individual learning accounts and strengthen resilience in evolving markets and societies. However, the European Skills Index by CEDEFOP (2023) reveals significant disparities. This weighted index considers academic achievement in school, early school leaving, participation in the labour force, unemployment, overqualification and low-waged workers. While the benchmark is a score of 100 per cent, Italy, Portugal and Spain do not achieve a 50 per cent mark. A comparative reading of the national accounts of lifelong learning provides a relevant illustration of commonalities and contrasts.<sup>2</sup>

EURYDICE collects official descriptions of education and training systems that facilitate comparability across the European Union. Austria, Finland and Germany include explicit statements on the goals of lifelong learning in their reports for EURYDICE. Since 2020, Austria has implemented a multi-

dimensional concept that articulates guidance with work-based learning, transparent standards and incentives to participation. Thus, the official description of education and training conveys a qualified rationale that considers both several ingredients and the links between them.

The Austrian LLL:2020 strategy is based on five guidelines which complement each other. These are: (1) Life stage orientation (2) Placing focus on learners (3) Lifelong guidance (4) Competence orientation (5) Promotion of participation with incentive and support measures.

(European Commission, 2023)

Albeit similar, the Finnish report on lifelong learning adds an important justification. Certainly, the prevailing approach of legislation, validation schemes and flexible pathways puts in place a similar system of interlinked components systematically avoiding dead-ends which could induce early leaving from education and training. However, in Finland, VET and adult learning and education are not so tightly coupled with work. Social cohesion, equity, social conditions and multi-culturalism have become key priorities as well.

[In Finland] The main objectives of adult education policy are ensuring the availability and competence of the labour force. The objectives should support efforts to extend working life, raise the employment rate, improve productivity, implement the conditions for lifelong learning and enhance multiculturalism.

(European Commission, 2023)

In Germany, the Länder are the main educational authorities. EURYDICE summarizes the commonalities between their policies by highlighting common foci on needs, flexibility and quality amid exchanges between several stakeholders.

[In Germany] Continuing education and training offers enable needs-based and flexible learning. The Länder ensure good framework conditions for this and support quality development. In addition, the Länder, together with the Federation and the partners in the national networks, take measures to ensure basic education for all.

(European Commission, 2023)

In contrast, Italy and Spain recently introduced legislative reforms in response to the demands of information that EURYDICE has addressed to all the EU member states. In essence, the content of recently approved laws in both countries describes their concepts of lifelong learning.

[In Italy] Law no. 92/2012 [and] Decree 13/2013, laid down the general dispositions on the national system of certification of competences. The aim of these dispositions is to make arise and develop professional competences non-formally and informally acquired, and to promote professional and geographical mobility, to facilitate the contact between labour supply and demand, to increase the transparency of learning and the recognition of certifications at national and European level. At regional level, the VET system (Sistema di istruzione e formazione professionale – IeFP) leads to qualifications and competences that are spendable in the labour market.

(EURYDICE, 2023)

[In Spain] Everyone must have the possibility of training throughout life, within and outside the educational system, in order to acquire, update, complete or expand their abilities, knowledge, skills, aptitudes and competencies for their personal development and professional.

(EURYDICE, 2023)

Since 2005, Portugal's adult education policies have put lifelong learning high on the agenda. Although the structural adjustment policies imposed by the EU, the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the right-wing government discontinued the New Opportunities Programme between 2012 and 2015, the adult education policy got a boost in 2016 with the creation of the *Qualifica* Programme. This programme signalled a political commitment to improving the population's school certification and professional qualification (called qualification in adult education policy discourses) when low-and medium-qualified jobs and employability levels of adults are at stake:

[In Portugal] The *Qualifica* Programme is a programme directed at adults showing incomplete education and training paths; it aims at increasing the qualification levels of adults, favouring the progression of the population qualification and the improvement of individuals employability.

(Portugal, 2023)

The programme expects to increase the traditionally low levels of skills and professional qualification in the country (EURYDICE, 2023).

## Recognition of prior learning in Italy

Qualification frameworks and recognition of prior learning are burning issues in Italy. The Law 92/2012 and the Legislative Decree 13/2013 established that

the ‘entitling bodies’ would be the Ministry of Education and universities for school and university qualifications, the regions for VET qualifications, the Ministry of Economic Development – UE Policies Department for regulated professions, and the Ministry of Labour for non-regulated professions (Perulli, 2019). Accordingly, the Provincial Centres for Adult Education (*Centri provinciali per l’istruzione degli adulti*, CPIA) defined a framework for validation of competencies of formal, non-formal and informal learning.<sup>3</sup> The CPIAs are autonomous education institutions organized in local networks, providing courses that are open to people aged sixteen years and above. There are around 130 CPIAs in Italy, offering education courses to approximately 197,000 students in the school year 2020/21 (OECD, 2021).

CPIAs deliver upskilling programmes for the employed, training and job search for the unemployed as well as opportunities for early school leavers and many immigrants to improve learning outcomes. In CPIAs, adult learners can learn the basics of the Italian language but also reach lower and upper secondary education and general and vocational credentials. Besides individual interviews, teachers assess a portfolio wherein each candidate compiles descriptions of previous jobs, academic diplomas and any relevant certificates (e.g. participation in workshops, training, volunteer activities).

The OECD (2021) has observed important setbacks in this scheme. First, diverging sectoral and regional approaches have disrupted attempts to establish a common ground for the recognition of prior learning. Since the ministries of education and employment, the regions, the schools and the universities define learning outcomes according to diverging educational principles (Frontini & Psifidou, 2015), Italy’s providers of training must cope with unarticulated lists of learning outcomes (CEDEFOP, 2013, p. 132). Although the central and the regional governments have agreed to commission the National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies to outline the processes, tasks, products and services of twenty-four professional economic sectors in the Atlas of Work and Qualifications (*Atlante del Lavoro e delle Qualificazioni*),<sup>4</sup> the more deprived regions are unable to deliver robust employment services to the large shares of long-term unemployed populations in their territories (Bonacci, 2018).

Second, in the last decade, several studies have reported a series of practices that maintain the old focus on written examinations (Frontini & Psifidou, 2015; Perulli, 2019). Teachers – instead of individuals themselves – manage the newly established individual learning accounts (*Libretto formativo del Cittadino*).<sup>5</sup> Teachers have become tutors without the necessary experience in tutoring. Companies aggravate the problem to the extent that their human

resource procedures typically overlook the outputs of validation when recruiting their staff.

Third, the Italian strategy and policy on the validation of prior learning has almost exclusively responded to employability purposes (Perulli, 2019). Such strategy embraces the entire span of people's life through the recognition of competencies as an 'individual right' as established by the Law 92/2012 (Boffo & Formenti, 2022; Palumbo & Proietti, 2022; Palumbo & Startari, 2017). This approach has become a currency that everyone can use for mobility (within and outside the respective company), requalification and relocation. Thus, learning is understood as the ability to constantly strengthen and reaffirm one's personal and work identity (Ruiap, 2012, pp. 3–4).

In essence, to harmonize different concepts of competence, skill, training and assessment, the stakeholders of the recognition of prior learning have generated 'collections of points' that transmit poor information to employers and adult learners themselves (Palumbo & Startari, 2011, pp. 111, 124). Despite high expectations for the reform (Bonacci, 2018), formal qualifications are still the main criterion to estimate prior learning.

## Recognition of prior learning in Portugal

In Portugal, validation of non-formal and informal learning has been a significant offer of the existing adult education and training policy. After 2000, following the EU guidelines for adult learning policy, Portugal has expanded recognition of prior learning (*Reconhecimento, Validação e Certificação de Competências*) to non-formal and informal learning.<sup>6</sup>

The main goal of the recognition of non-formal and informal learning is to develop a set of procedures which allow adults (aged eighteen years or older) to get school education certifications (up to twelve years of compulsory education) and professional qualifications up to levels four and five of the national and European qualification frameworks. Therefore, the validation of non-formal and informal learning assists adult learners (employed or unemployed) to get a school certification or a professional qualification, as long as they are enrolled in the recognition of prior learning offer provided by local adult learning centres (*Centros Qualifica*).<sup>7</sup> The main purpose is to 'increase education and training certification and qualification rates of the Portuguese population and improve employability' (ANQEP, 2023a) and to prepare human resources for economic development and labour market insertion/maintenance



of workers (Lima & Guimarães, 2011). By these means, the Portuguese adult education and training policy fulfils the EU guidelines for lifelong and adult learning. These guidelines assume adult education is a social and economic policy in which 'educational fairness' consists of all adults acquiring marketable skills and benefitting from labour market opportunities (Barros, 2018; Waller et al., 2015, p. 619). Such policy also frames the approach of developing a human resources management strategy (Lima & Guimarães, 2011) re-establishing the relationship between education, work and socio-economic development (Milana, 2012).

Validation starts with awareness-raising, information, advice and guidance of adult learners willing to get a school certificate and/or a professional qualification. Practitioners who work with adult learners are hired following certain qualification requirements. These practitioners identify and document prior learning following the standards of key competencies and support adult learners in writing a learning portfolio (Guimarães, 2019).

Several standards of key competencies developed in formal, non-formal and informal learning settings (ANQ, 2006; ANQEP, 2021) allow the validation of non-formal and informal learning. These standards assume that competence is 'a combination of abilities, knowledge, aptitudes adequate to deal with specific situations, requiring also the "disposition to" and "the knowledge how" to learn' (ANQ, 2006, p. 82). A key competence is an 'articulated set, transferable and multi-functional set, of knowledge, abilities indispensable to the individual fulfilment and development, to social inclusion and employment' including knowledge and skills to be used in 'the practice of full citizenship, for more demanding employability and an effective participation in lifelong learning' (ANQEP, 2021, p. 5). The procedure is based on a wide understanding of knowledge (even if allowing a certification equivalent to a school education diploma) directed to be used effectively in everyday life contexts and following several domains, such as culture, language and communication; digital competencies; society, maths, science and technology; citizenship and employability/professionality; and personal, social and learning competencies (ANQ, 2006; ANQEP, 2021).

Key competence standards set the criteria to achieve a professional qualification in more than forty professional domains. In connection with the national catalogue of qualifications and the national and the European qualification frameworks, the validation of non-formal and informal learning may involve a wide range of learning outcomes. These are based on knowledge, aptitudes and attitudes depending on the professional domain to which the

professional qualification is related to (ANQEP, 2023b). Due to this connection, learning outcomes established in the referred standards of competencies are characterized by complexity. They follow a holistic and transversal approach when it comes to understanding recognition of prior learning as an offer, based on a social and economic policy (Barros, 2018), fostering a human resources management strategy (Lima & Guimarães, 2011).

A challenge lies in the discontinuous social recognition of adult education and training policy over the last twenty years. While socialist governments in Portugal have stressed the significance of this issue and provided funding, human resources and other facilities to its rectification, right-wing governments have often privileged formal, second-chance education – thus setting aside the recognition of prior learning and the validation of non-formal and informal learning. A second challenge relates to biases in the definition of the key competencies. Many standards exclusively assess employment-related knowledge and skills at the expense of collective learning of civic and political values (Lima & Guimarães, 2011, 2015). Institutional itineraries pose a third challenge whereby the validation of non-formal and informal learning does not allow direct progression to higher education of adult learners with a school certification: those with a secondary school education certificate face an institutional barrier in admission to higher education programmes. In contrast to flexible approaches elsewhere, in Portugal, these adult candidates to higher education must either apply to a specific ‘Older than 23’ (in Portuguese: *Maiores de 23*) programme or sit for the national exams together with recent, much younger graduates of secondary education. This constraint faced by adult learners willing to join higher education reveals the still low visibility and social recognition of the achievement of learning outcomes through validation of non-formal and informal learning.

## Recognition of prior learning in Spain

In Spain, recognition of prior learning is a shared responsibility of the central and regional employment departments and educational authorities. Adult Training Centres deliver the curriculum of compulsory education and academic upper-secondary education to adults. Educators in Adult Training Centres and VET programmes are considered ordinary teachers but the role of the professionals in charge of career guidance and recognition of prior learning has remained undefined so far.

School-based VET has attracted adult students since 2000. Previously, VET was a low-prestige track for underperforming young people who were enrolled in a very narrow set of specialities. Few trades offered courses awarding prestigious credentials for further employment regardless of age. Since the 1990s, comprehensive, lower secondary education is compulsory for all students until their sixteenth birthday. Over time, both the absolute intake of VET schools and the representation of adult students have gradually increased (CaixaBank, 2024; Merino, 2013). In recent decades, the central and regional public employment services have run a wide array of months-long, vocational training programmes that target unemployed and low-skilled adult learners. Firms, chambers of commerce and professional bodies also train people for specific occupations. Since active labour market policies are the responsibility of local governments, public employment services have remained weak in middle-sized towns and rural areas.

The indirectly elected, long-standing, supra-municipal bodies (*Diputacions*) have become second-level support units which have managed public employment services in large areas with a scarce population (Garrell, Vives & Salvado, 2000). At first, these policies simply delivered short-term training on the grounds that low educational level was the main cause of unemployment. Adult education was, accordingly, subordinated to the employment policies which were expected to fix educational and labour market problems in the short term. On these grounds, the regional governments have assigned formal responsibility either to education or social welfare departments – depending on several political hazards such as the official name of instruction or education departments; the former largely excludes schools for adults. Besides, since public employment services underwent funding cuts due to austerity measures adopted in response to the economic recessions of 1993 and 2008, the offer of programmes has tended to diminish precisely at times when unemployment climbs (Lope Peña, 2013).

In the early 2000s, recognition of prior learning conducing to secondary education diplomas, as well as to access to higher education, was introduced. An official qualification framework was established in 2002 for all providers of education and training to harmonize their programmes, although full equivalence remains problematic. Since then, regional public employment services can issue occupational certificates which bestow adult learners with official authorization to undertake specific professional responsibilities. The regional educational authorities must organize appropriate examinations to deliver the diploma of basic secondary education. Also, universities are required

to consider the professional experience of bachelor's degree applicants who are above certain age thresholds (Vale, 2019).

The resulting arrangements privileged assessment and recognition of compulsory secondary education diplomas, partial recognition of VET programmes and access to higher education. However, identification and documentation have remained underdeveloped except for a few small initiatives. Although private sector stakeholders are not authorized to officially validate skills by themselves, companies and non-profits can request national or regional labour authorities to issue a public call; either to tackle skills shortages of certain companies and sectors or to cater to groups at risk of exclusion from the labour market. For example, some employer boards and trade unions have used their legal capacity to require labour authorities to call for exams that validate skills for certain economic sectors. Some non-profit organizations have also implemented the capacity to certify transversal skills that the Volunteering Act attributes to them. The Spanish Red Cross and the Catholic Caritas have been very active in this field (Vale, 2019).

Recently, the 2022 VET Act designed a common framework which sets equivalences between decisions of validation, occupational certificates, secondary education diplomas and partial recognition of the training units leading to VET diplomas (Government of Spain, 2022). In these terms, a new objective consists of encouraging the middle-aged population with a secondary education degree to apply for occupational certificates that deliver partial recognition of VET diplomas. Since many young people in the 1980s and 1990s did not seek VET degrees, which were, at the time, low-prestige, large numbers of these cohorts only have general secondary education certificates. Boosting the validation of prior learning might help reach European benchmarks in the coming years.

Nevertheless, an array of hurdles has hampered the implementation of the validation procedures. Funding shortcomings and misunderstandings between educational and employment authorities have reiteratively disrupted the bridges between the school academic years and the training opportunities delivered by the public employment service. One-size-fits-all solutions typically overlook the needs of the groups that are more directly affected by social vulnerability. Active welfare has not been connected to active labour market policies, including validation of the prior knowledge of societies' worst-off (Chisvert-Tarazona et al., 2019).

Despite expanding enrolment and legal reforms, practitioners are generally sceptical about the potential of Spain's validation schemes. Most do not believe

authorities are going to honour the promises conveyed by the recent law, not least because the measures that were introduced two decades ago have not been fully implemented. In addition, both human resources experts and many workers blame validation schemes for neglecting small and medium enterprises. In their view, the regulations rely on actions requiring the institutional capacity of big companies. Many young adults and long-term unemployed adults lack support and guidance during their personal transitions between leaving the family home, searching for jobs and undertaking education and training. Administrative problems and severe socio-economic circumstances often leave the worst-off out of the range of standard upskilling programmes (Chisvert-Tarazona et al., 2019).

## Conclusion

In the EU, the policy designs of compulsory, vocational, adult and higher education have converged into a common framework which prioritizes learning outcomes. This chapter looked at EURDYDICE's (2023) descriptions of lifelong learning across member states of the EU to compare six selected countries and reviewed literature on the validation of prior learning in Italy, Portugal and Spain.

We conclude that Austria, Finland and Germany have elaborated full-fledged narratives of lifelong learning programmes. In Austria and Germany, these prioritize employability; in Finland, they consider social empowerment. In contrast, Italy and Spain have responded to the inquiries of EURDYDICE (2020) with lists of legal reforms that will, allegedly, develop lifelong learning in the two countries. Although its rationale is not as systematic as the rationales of Austria, Finland and Germany, Portugal has responded to EURDYDICE with a qualified picture on ongoing changes towards the generalization of a national scheme which validates the prior learning of many adults.

A close examination of Italy, Portugal and Spain sheds some light on the ongoing reforms in these countries. Although several governments have attempted to design an encompassing scheme, each of the three countries has followed an idiosyncratic sequence of change in the last decades. Italy introduced a qualifications framework as a response to the structural adjustment required by the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund in 2010. That reform led different ministries and levels of government to adopt their own criteria, thus requiring further harmonization.

Portugal has implemented a policy that, even with some intermittences, facilitates access to adult learning programmes through the local adult learning centres. Despite unstable political support, this policy has underpinned a statistical trend towards improving learning outcomes in the last twenty years. In Spain, a sequence of legal innovation started in the mid-2000s but those schemes were not fully implemented. Although recent reforms have set very ambitious goals, many professionals are sceptical because previous reforms failed to deliver.

The introduction of this volume argues that policymakers often adopt one-size-fits-all definitions of learning outcomes which can render statistical data meaningless without considering the context. Our analysis, based on consulted documentation and literature, supports this thesis with several points. First, while some EU member states have developed clear definitions of learning during and after compulsory education, others struggle with these concepts. Second, even among countries with official definitions, there is disagreement on the importance of learning for employment and empowerment. Third, although European institutions' recommendations have prompted Italy, Portugal and Spain to expand schemes for validating prior learning among adults, the implementation of these reforms has been uneven. For instance, Portugal has successfully validated a significant number of individuals, whereas Italy and Spain continue to face major obstacles.

Ultimately, the concept of prior learning is not converging across these six countries. In addition to the varying emphasis on job-seeking and personal development in Central European and Nordic countries, another difference is that prior learning has become a tangible asset for many people in these countries, as it has in Portugal. However, it remains an opaque, bureaucratic procedure in Italy and Spain.

## Notes

- 1 This study draws on the research project *Constructing Learning Outcomes in Europe: A Multi-Level Analysis of (Under)Achievement in the Life Course* (CLEAR) is exploring the factors that affect the quality of learning outcomes across European regions. It is conducted between 2022 and 2025 in eight EU countries, including Austria, Finland, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain as well as Bulgaria and Greece (for more information, please visit: <https://clear-horizon.eu/>; the project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation funding programme under Grant Agreement No. 101061155).

- 2 Drawing on a long tradition of public policies and social pacts between employers, trade unions and authorities, Austria, Germany and Finland have implemented wide apprenticeship schemes, career guidance and skills services since the 1970s. In the early 2000s, Italy, Portugal and Spain started to design institutional regimes that emulate these older arrangements.
- 3 The recognition of competencies by the CPIA is regulated by the Decree of the President of the Republic n. 263/2012 (Gazzetta Ufficiale, 2012), and it has been further operationalized by the practical guidelines included in the Ministerial Decree of 12 March 2015 (Gazzetta Ufficiale, 2015).
- 4 Atlante del Lavoro e delle Qualificazioni. Atlante del Lavoro. <http://atlantelavoro.inapp.org/>
- 5 The translation of *Libretto formativo del Cittadino* may vary. For example, in French it can be translated as *livret formatif du citoyen* or *livret des expériences du citoyen*; in English, Citizen Training Booklet or National Portfolio of Competences; in Portuguese, *Portfolio de Competências-Chave*.
- 6 During many months of the Covid pandemic, validation of non-formal and informal learning took place online. For more information, see [https://www.anqep.gov.pt/np4?newsId=24&fileName=PA\\_2022\\_ANQEP\\_15Dez2021\\_VF.pdf](https://www.anqep.gov.pt/np4?newsId=24&fileName=PA_2022_ANQEP_15Dez2021_VF.pdf). In present times, validation takes place mostly face-to-face; online activities are being held for occasions when face-to-face is not possible.
- 7 These centres are located in formal education and training institutions, such as schools, VET centres and in profit-making institutions (devoted to VET or enterprises willing to develop validation of non-formal and informal learning) and in non-governmental/civil society organizations. For more information, see <https://www.qualifica.gov.pt/#/pesquisaCentros>.

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