

# NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 02 / March

in the news / editorial

## APELE STORIES

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



### In the news / in evidence



**APELE STORY N.1**  
**DAVIDE** living in a remote geographical area in Italy

<https://youtu.be/co2KPd6Rzps>



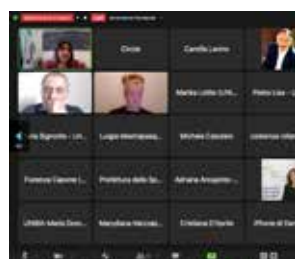
**APELE STORY N.2**  
**ALEHANDRO** from Syria living in Copenhagen, Denmark

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPylrvnb4ss>



**APELE STORY N.3**  
**SVETLANA** from Moldova living in Bari, Italy

<https://youtu.be/z3A2IEwBCg>



**4.1 IO5 METHODOLOGY**  
**4.2 APELE workshop**  
**4.3 Scientific publication**  
**4.4 New! Steps forward in Iceland**

### Summary / Apele insight

- |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p><b>1</b> 4.1 Report on the methodology for the recognition of prior learning</p> <p>Read the summary description</p> | <p><b>2</b> 4.2 APELE WORKSHOP hosted by the MEPs Chiara Gemma and Brando Benifei</p> <p>Read the summary description</p> | <p><b>3</b> 4.3 APELE Scientific paper</p> <p>Read the summary description</p> | <p><b>4</b> 4.4 NEW! Steps forward in Iceland</p> <p>Read the summary description</p> |
|---|---|--|---|

# Intellectual Output 5 /



## Methodology for the Recognition of Prior Learning

4.1

The overall aim of IO 5 is to provide a methodological framework and guidelines for the implementation of the recognition of the prior learning outcomes of the target groups and specifically those with fewer opportunities including migrants. The development of the methodological framework has been built on the results of the findings of the intellectual outputs (IOs) elaborated by the partners of the present consortium. A 17 points framework was set and the pilot procedure took place in all partners organizations. The framework is available for future stakeholders.

The piloting implemented by the partner universities aimed at specifying the methodology for recognition of prior learning taking into account the different legal frameworks and using portfolios as an evaluation tool, in order to enhance access to higher education for those having fewer formal qualifications. The comparative analysis of the methodology a portfolio. However, there are no specific provisions for information on the validation process due to deficiencies in the legislative framework and, thus, not incorporated into the validation process. Furthermore, specific references in the NQF for the validation of non-formal learning, as well as for the qualifications obtained through this type of validation are not presented in the case of Greece and Italy. Due to legislative framework restrictions, there are no specific procedures in the partner countries for setting and agreeing on commonal guidelines for the recognition of prior learning in the different settings of the partners allow us to conclude the following:

Concerning validation arrangements,

Methodological Framework	
<b>1. Validation arrangements</b>	1. Are there validation arrangements for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in your country to recognise prior learning for admission to higher education (HE)?
<b>2. Validation strategies</b>	1. Are there validation strategies, i.e., legal framework or policies that establish validation initiatives for the recognition of prior learning to access HE?
<b>3. Pilot a validation initiative and integrate it into the strategy for recognition of prior learning</b>	1. If your university is piloting a validation initiative, what does it take to integrate into the strategy for recognition of prior learning? 2. What are the legal and administrative requirements, i.e., law, ministerial decision, university decision to define the competent departments?
<b>4. Validation outputs</b>	1. Do validation arrangements define validation outputs? 2. If so, do they provide an award of full formal qualifications, of parts of qualifications in the form of credits, modules or exemptions, or non-formal qualifications? 3. If not, what validation outputs would be most appropriate for your university?
<b>5. Four stages of validation</b>	1. Do validation arrangements define or need to define all four stages of validation, i.e., identification, documentation assessment and certification? 2. Do some stages of validation need to be more emphasised than others in certain areas?
<b>6. Involvement of stakeholders</b>	1. Is the involvement of all relevant stakeholders ensured in validation initiatives? 2. Is there a need to involve different types of stakeholders in different validation functions?
<b>7. Funding sources</b>	1. What funding sources are available or needed for validation?
<b>8. Accessibility to guidance and counselling</b>	1. Is guidance and counselling readily accessible in your university? 2. Which department of the university is responsible for ensuring access to information, guidance and counselling? 3. How regularly is information, guidance and advice provided at your university?
<b>9. Information and guidance on benefits, opportunities and validation procedures</b>	

the system in Denmark and Iceland provides the legal basis that allows universities to admit individuals with fewer qualifications. The key to validation arrangements is the evaluation of individuals' corresponding a portfolio. However, there are no specific provisions for information on the validation process due to deficiencies in the legislative framework and, thus, not incorporated into the validation process. Furthermore, specific references in

the NQF for the validation of non-formal learning, as well as for the qualifications obtained through this type of validation are not presented in the case of Greece and Italy. Due to legislative framework restrictions, there are no specific procedures in the partner countries for setting and agreeing on common validation standards. skills in accordance with the university's qualification requirements or faculty criteria. On the other hand, Greece and Italy do not have in



# Intellectual Output 5 /



4.1

## Methodology for the Recognition of Prior Learning

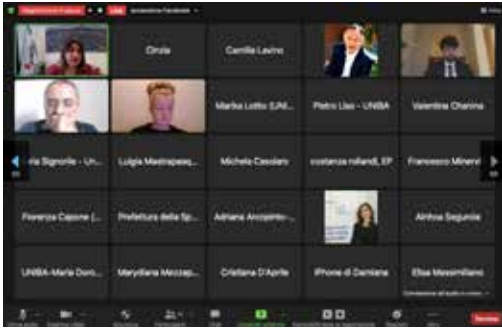
1. What should be the aim and content of information, guidance and counselling?
2. To what extent is information, guidance and counselling incorporated into the validation process?
3. Are there specific provisions on how to provide information, guidance and advice on the validation process, opportunities and benefits to candidates?
4. Who is providing information, guidance and counselling to applicants for validation at your university?
<b>10. Links of validation arrangements with NQF</b>
1. How and to extent, the NQF in your country provides reference for validation of non-formal learning?
2. Which qualifications in the NQF can be obtained through validation of non-formal learning?
3. Are links of validations arrangements with NQF sufficiently clear?
4. If not, what you should be done to ensure the links of validation with NQF?
<b>11. Compliance of validated qualifications with agreed standards</b>
1. Is the validation process based on uniform, predefined and commonly agreed standards?
2. Is the validation process based on the standards set in educational curricula and/or occupational profiles?
3. Is there a specific procedure for setting and agreeing validation standards at your university?
<b>12. Professional competences of validation practitioners</b>
1. What are or should be the profile, qualifications and professional competences of validation practitioners?
2. Are there specific requirements for the participation of academics, experts or other members of the university in validation procedures?
3. Are there any provisions, possibilities or forms of entitlement to professional training for validation practitioners?
<b>13. Transparent quality assurance measures</b>
1. Has your university established its own quality assurance procedure on validation?
2. Can the existing quality assurance framework be applied to validation?
3. Do you think that specific quality assurance settings would be more appropriate to validate prior learning?
<b>14. Synergies between validation and credit systems</b>
1. How can your university establish synergies between validation and credit systems?
<b>15. Use of validation by groups with fewer opportunities</b>
1. What validation initiatives will you design at your university based on the needs analysis of the target groups related to the recognition process?
2. What type of skills and which target groups will you address with the envisaged validation initiative?
3. What are the validation stages and procedures you intend to apply at your university?
4. How do you plan to scale-up this validation initiative and ingrate it into the strategy for recognition of prior learning for people with fewer opportunities?
<b>16. Skills audits</b>
1. Do you think that skills audits could be a useful tool for upskilling pathway of people with fewer opportunities?
<b>17. Transparency tools</b>
1. Which transparency tools do you think would be more appropriate to address the needs of the target group with fewer opportunities?
2. Could you prepare your own list of transparency tools indicating which aspect of the learning experience they capture?
3. Could you specify the steps of the validation process based on the transparency tools you have chosen?

place the necessary legal regulations that could allow the recognition of prior learning for access to higher education. Yet, the pilot phase in Greece showed that internal procedures in universities can be commonly agreed upon, using NQF as the reference measure for the recognition of prior learning. Moreover, guidance and consulting services or existing public and institutional practices in Italy can encourage the recognition of prior learning even if they are not institutionalized validation practices.

In general, there are no specific validation strategies that could establish initiatives for the recognition of prior learning to access higher education. An exception is made in the case of Denmark, where HEIs determine the criteria and use the quota 2 systems through which applicants can be admitted in higher education. Another exception can be found in Italy, where informal prior learning can be recognized by the Regions through specific procedures. Greece and Iceland do not have formal validation strategies except an evaluation framework that could use respectively either NQF as a measure or specific criteria for admission to study programs.

The legal and administrative requirements for integrating a validation initiative into a prior learning recognition strategy are more clearly defined in the case of Denmark and Iceland. In both countries, universities have the autonomy to set their own rules and criteria for the evaluation, recognition, and admission of the individuals who have the skills corresponding to the university requirements. In Greece and Italy, existing legal provisions define strictly the rules of access to higher education

# Workshop /



4.2

## Workshop: Access to University Studies for People with Fewer Opportunities

(including migrants) through the recognition of experiential and prior learning in European countries.

for those with formal qualifications. Therefore, specific legal requirements need to be promoted in order to institutionalize the existing pilot initiatives or practices of evaluation, validation, and recognition of prior learning for those with fewer formal qualifications.

In Denmark, Greece, and Iceland, the absence of legal provisions and formal validation strategies does not allow the promotion of validation arrangements and the definition of validation outputs. In Italy, formal and informal learning validation arrangements are provided at the regional level and allow individuals to take high school exams and, if successful, to enroll in higher education. However, validation arrangements at the university level are limited to the recognition of course credits.

During the pilot process, not all stages of validation could be applied with the exception of Greece and Italy. Moreover, it was not possible for the majority of the partners to ensure the involvement of all relevant stakeholders at this stage of the pilot validation procedure. All partners agree that information, guidance, and counselling should guide and assist the candidates in identifying, recording, and self-evaluating their qualifications, in order to build validation standards.

**SOFIA KASOLA**  
Researcher,  
University of Patras (EL)



On March 16 2022 an online workshop was organised in the framework of the APELE (Accreditation of prior experiential learning in European Universities) project, with the participation of team members and of Italian Members of the European Parliament and of the Permanent Representation of Italy to the EU.

The workshop was an opportunity to disseminate the results of the project and advocate with Italian policymakers the need to provide adequate pathways for easy access to higher education across borders, in order to support students and all those who have followed a different pathway in their wish to continue their studies. Today the results of the project appear absolutely relevant in the face of the current and future challenges – in terms of integration in the years to come of a large number of refugees – that the war in Ukraine poses.

Prof. Markus Meckl from the University of Akureyri opened the workshop by offering an overview of the framework, importance, and novelty of the APELE project. Prof. Silvia Adamo, from the University of Copenhagen, discussed the legislative and factual barriers that hamper access to university studies for people with fewer opportunities,

offering a perspective on the organization of the Danish university admission. From the University of Bari, Prof. Rosa Gallelli introduced the educational situation of migrants in the Apulia region, followed by an intervention of Dr. Pasquale Renna, who talked about the initiative and potential of portfolios as pedagogical tools which could broaden the access to higher education. The final scientific remarks were offered by Monica Amari, President of the ARMES Project, who spoke about the inquiry carried out in the Ligurian Vara valley, as an example of an area where the APELE initiatives could provide a much-needed boost for the educational opportunities of people living in this rural region of Italy, as in other European rural regions.

The workshop was joined by Chiara Gemma, Member of the European Parliament (Movimento 5 Stelle, Italy) and afterwards by MEP Brando Benifei (Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats) and the last intervention was done by Tiberino Schmidin, Education and Culture Coordinator, Permanent Representation of Italy to the EU, who talked about the perspectives of possible legislative interventions in Italy.

**SILVIA ADAMO**  
Faculty of Law,  
University of Copenhagen (DK)

# Publication / NEWS from Iceland



## APELE scientific publication by Sofia Kasola and Thanassis Karalis

4.3

## Steps forward in Iceland

4.4

The results from IO3, focusing on the suggested method of assessing prior experiential learning were published in the International Journal of Education and Social Science Research (IJESSR), Volume 5, Issue 2, March-April 2022.

The paper included the conclusions mentioning that as adults, they strongly advocate for diversity from teacher-centered standards where assessment should not be a written test but a practical type of assessment like on-site observation, practice exams simulation with work samples. The type of assessment should be adapted each time both to the needs of the participants and to the object of the learning outcomes, while practical types of assessment enable candidates to express their full potential.

### Link to the paper

<https://ijessr.com/link4.php?id=586>



## Welcoming steps forward

The matriculation examination has long been regarded as the main admission requirement for universities in Iceland. In the recent years the University of Akureyri has been very strict on these requirements. Since the start of the APELE project steps have been taken forward increased equality in education in Iceland. Important one is the change on law on admission requirements in universities in Iceland, where not only matriculation exam but all other final examination of the third aptitude level are now accepted for admission. This change equalizes the opportunities and position of students who have completed a matriculation examination and those that have completed art, technology, and vocational studies to enter university. We are happy to say that the University of Akureyri will start a piloting project at the department of School of Humanities and Social Sciences in the spring of 2022 in the following study programs, social sciences, media studies and modern studies. The faculty will enroll new students who do not meet the general admission requirements, but the faculty considers having equally good preparation for starting studies in these study programs based on their exper-

ience amongst other things. This is a pilot project for one year and those applicants who do not meet the general admission requirements will be required to submit a personal portfolio with their application. The applicants will be valued based on their personal portfolio and other documents that they may submit additionally.

Experts on each of the three study programs, office director of School of Humanities and Social Sciences, representative from the Office of Student Counselling and the project manager of the APELE project will work on the preparation of an evaluation framework and evaluate the applications that come in the application period March 2022 to June 2022.

The faculty decided to split the accreditation process into two steps in the first years, first piloting the admission for people with fewer opportunities and if this is done successfully, the faculty will also develop on the basis of the outcome of APELE accreditation of prior learning. This piloting process is a good opportunity for the university to establish and develop an initiative for further recognition of prior learning to access higher education in Iceland.

**On behalf of the Icelandic team of APELE Anna Karen Úlfarsdóttir master's student in research-related master's program at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Akureyri.**

