

Lifelong Guidance Conference: 13 - 14 June 2016

Bas Derks, deputy director VET of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
(13 June 2016)

Welcome

- Welcome in Haarlem and the Netherlands; old medieval town; gives a glimpse of our country
- Welcome to the representatives of the EU member states, especially the members of the European Lifelong Guidance Network ELGPN who have developed relevant policy instruments on LLG and finished their activities in the end of 2015. This conference is in a way the continuation of ELGPN networking and activities in Europe.
- Welcome also to all other -most Dutch- representatives, who are involved in issues regarding Lifelong Guidance in the Netherlands, in different areas: the Ministries of Social affairs and Education, the Public Employment Service, the Municipalities, the Regional Training Centers who work with the employers and Regional Learning and Working services.
- With this conference the Dutch Ministry wants to proceed in a the tradition of a two year European conference on lifelong guidance policy to maintain and strengthen the international cooperation in this field.
- During its EU Presidency, the Netherlands has focused on issues as:
 - How can we better align the education system with the labour market?
 - What kinds of knowledge and skills do students and citizens need in a changing society?
 - What role can education and youth work play in integrating migrants and refugees?
 - How can youth work help combat violent extremism among young people?
 - How can we initiate a structured dialogue between member states on the theme of 'Enabling all young people to engage in a diverse, connected and inclusive Europe – Ready for Life, Ready for Society'?
 - What do lifelong learning and internationalization mean in practice?
- In our Conference Skills for a lifetime, 'towards a future proof VET' in February we discussed on:
 - excellence and flexible solutions in a changing labour market;
 - lifelong learning and employability and
 - mobility in and outside Europe
- The focus now is on Lifelong Guidance and the guidance services needed for realizing a lifelong guidance policy. This Lifelong Guidance Conference is the tailpiece.
- The overarching theme is the cross-sectoral and regional cooperation in career services between education and labour market in all kinds of combinations. In these cooperation's career guidance and career services are essential tools to deal with the problems we are facing in Europe and to realize our ambitions on policy issues as economic growth, employability and social inclusion.
- As many people as possible should be given the opportunity to pursue lifelong learning, regardless of their age or background. This needs close cooperation of relevant stakeholders in the region between municipalities, schools, labour market organizations.
- Today we hope you will be inspired by the contribution of several countries who will share their experience on how to support Lifelong Learning with Lifelong Guidance service.
- I wish you all an interesting conference under the guidance of Deirdre Hughes our chairman today and tomorrow.