

GECS PEER EXPERT GROUP
**THEMATIC
REPORT 2**

IAG – Services and
Competences in Digital
Transition



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1. Introduction

In the 'First Thematic Report', the Expert Group discussed already the Cedefop Competencies 2009¹ and concluded, that there is a requirement to review these 19 competences - even they still work - due to the different policy landscape with impact on career guidance and IAG services². At the fourth meeting of the Expert Group in Rome (20 June 2023) it was decided to dedicate the Second Thematic Report to this issue. Therefore, the second thematic report reflects these 19 competences developed by Cedefop (2009) without claiming to question them, but contributing with ideas on how they could be further developed or completed in the light of today's societal conditions affecting the competences of IAG - services and practitioners.

On the one hand, the partners of the GeGS project have deliberately chosen this approach of the 19 Cedefop Competencies and continue to stand behind this strategy - they are and remain the basis of the curriculum of the GeGS project. On the other hand, in the course of the project, a discussion developed in the Expert Group about the extent to which these 19 competences are still up-to-date and correspond to the current framework conditions, tasks and requirements of IAG practitioners.

Therefore, this report is about the Cedefop competences 2009 and suggestions for further development of these competences in the light of the general trends and changes in the society, which have taken place since then.

This leads to the following structure of this report:

Under the second chapter, the 19 Cedefop competences are listed again briefly, without going into the extensive derivation and competence framework as set out in Cedefop 2009.

In the third chapter, we reflect the Cedefop Competencies 2009 on basis of general societal changes in Europe.

In chapter 3.1., without claiming to be exhaustive, we will first look at general social, labour market and VET-related developments over the last decade or since 2009 and explain how they have affected the IAG services and the practical work of those working in these services.

¹ "Professionalising career guidance – Practitioner competences and qualification routes in Europe, Cedefop 2009, in the following "Cedefop study" <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/5193>

² First Thematic Report of the GeGS Expert Group, p. 11/ 12: "The question was raised whether the Cedefop Competencies, stemming from 2009, are somewhat outdated and, at worst, obsolete at times. Today, there is a radically different policy landscape in the EU in VET and in IAG services"

In chapter 3.2, we then present some new, further developed or modified competences that can be derived from the developments described above. These are of a general nature and go far beyond the digital competences highlighted in the GeGS project. This exercise is more a brainstorming session of the GeGS Expert Group and does of course not substitute a systematic revision of the Cedefop competences 2009 but can rather be seen as suggestions for a further development of the competence framework, which will then be systematically developed further by Cedefop.

Remains to be mentioned that the expert group is aware about other competence frameworks and contributions at European level in addition to the Cedefop competence framework, which is not subject of this short report so as not to overload this document.

2. Starting Point: The 19 Cedefop Competencies 2009

The first component of the GeGS project, the case study training framework, is predominantly based on 19 Good E-Guidance Stories³ and each of these case studies is related to one of the 19 Cedefop competences, published in 2009⁴, as a result of a comprehensive European – wide comparative study. These competences are embedded in a highly elaborated competence framework, that aims at improving the professional development of guidance practitioners. A starting point of the Cedefop study, which is – according to the GeGS project - still valid today, is that there is a high need for training in career guidance skills.

The following is not intended to deal scientifically with Cedefop's comprehensive study 2009. However, for the purposes of this thematic report of the Expert Group, it makes sense to recall the 19 competences themselves.

These 19 competences are embedded in a competence framework⁵ for career guidance practitioners that comprises three sections:

- 1) foundation competences,
- 2) client-interaction competences, and
- 3) supporting competences (see p. 75/ 76).

³ Partly developed in former projects since 2014

⁴ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/5193>

⁵ "This competence framework for career guidance practitioners is intended to offer a generic description which incorporates all the activities needed to deliver career guidance as defined in the OECD review of career guidance and public policy (OECD, 2004). The purpose of the competence framework is to provide a working tool to support guidance practitioners and policy-makers in developing national and sectoral frameworks, quality-assurance tools and professional standards. It provides the starting point for development and experimentation in Member States, and can be enhanced through cooperative projects to test its validity further and to design methods for its use". (p. 74)

Figure 2. **The competence framework**

PRACTITIONER SKILLS AND VALUES	1	FOUNDATION COMPETENCES
	1.1	Ethical practice
	1.2	Recognise and respond to clients' diverse needs
	1.3	Integrate theory and research into practice
	1.4	Develop one's own capabilities and understand any limitations
	1.5	Communication and facilitation skills
	1.6	Information and computer technologies
WORKING WITH CLIENTS	2	CLIENT-INTERACTION COMPETENCES
	2.1	Undertake career development activities
	2.2	Enable access to information
	2.3	Conduct and enable assessment
	2.4	Develop and deliver career learning programmes
	2.5	Make referrals and provide advocacy
	2.6	Facilitate entry into learning and work
SYSTEMS AND NETWORKS	3	SUPPORTING COMPETENCES
	3.1	Manage opportunity information services
	3.2	Operate within networks and build partnerships
	3.3	Manage own caseload and maintain user records
	3.4	Design strategies for career development
	3.5	Engage with stakeholders
	3.6	Engage in research and evaluation
	3.7	Update own skills and knowledge

New Developments in Cedefop and exchange with GeGS project/ other competence frameworks

Cedefop itself is going to renew its Competence Study from 2009 and refers in a newer study explicitly to it⁶. Moreover, Cedefops “Briefing note – A fresh look at guidance practitioner professionalism”⁷ offers new insights into how countries are modernising their career guidance and services. This paper includes refreshed definitions of practitioner`s role and competences, including digital competences. One conclusion in the “Briefing note” is that there is a need to redefine and, to a degree, mainstream guidance practitioners` occupational profiles and to offer them reskilling and upskilling options (p. 1).

In this briefing note a current guidance practitioner`s competence portfolio has been described in six new developed competence fields. These are (in brief):

- (1) comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge of the field of work, including career theories and good level of digital skills (and other),
- (2) mastering the latest guidance techniques, including remote settings, blended approaches (and other),
- (3) advanced and client-oriented written and oral communication skills,
- (4) knowledge of screening and assessment methods, to identify client needs and to refer them to services,
- (5) ability to work strategically within a set of cooperating community services, including outreach services,
- (6) high level of psychological, social and emotional skills and the capacity to adhere to ethical practices according to professional standards⁸.

Cedefop has also set up a “CareersNet” of independent specialists with recognised expertise in lifelong guidance and career development across the EU and beyond⁹. Another network, that Cedefop recommends to the GeGS project, is the `International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance` (IAEVG), a network for exchange and advocating for guidance. It is a global community of educational, vocational and career guidance counsellors, service providers, teachers, researchers and policy makers promoting the role of guidance in improving lives¹⁰. IAEVG developed an internationally recognised competence framework in 2018¹¹, which already reflects more the technological transformation and how it affects practitioners` work.

⁶ See Cedefop et al. (2021). *Digital transitions in lifelong guidance: rethinking careers practitioner professionalism: a CareersNet expert collection*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop working paper; No 2. and [Digital transitions in lifelong guidance: rethinking careers practitioner professionalism | Cedefop \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁷ Cedefop (2021). A fresh look at guidance practitioner professionalism. *Cedefop briefing note*, December 2021, [Briefing note - A fresh look at guidance practitioner professionalism | Cedefop \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁸ [A fresh look at guidance practitioner professionalism \(europa.eu\)](#), p.2

⁹ [A fresh look at guidance practitioner professionalism \(europa.eu\)](#), p.1

¹⁰ <https://iaevg.com/>

¹¹ <https://iaevg.com/competencies>

With regard to the newer documents, we can conclude that Cedefop also believes that the 2009 skills portfolio needs to be revised and that Cedefop is in the process of doing so. The GeGS Expert Group has started an exchange with Cedefop in this topic and will continue with this.

3. Reflection of the Cedefop Competencies 2009 on basis of general societal changes in Europe

3.1. Comments on the major (societal, technological) changes since 2009 and impact on IAG Services

The leitmotiv of this decade is transition. We live in times of accelerated change. Since the publication of the Cedefop study in 2009, there have been societal, labour market, VET, employment, and technological changes (and partly disruptions) that affect the situation of IAG services and practitioners today. Some of these will be briefly discussed below - without claiming to be exhaustive.

A) General Trends with impact on Labour Market and VET

Climate Change and Green Transition

Climate change has accelerated during the last decade and the effects are being felt worldwide and in Europe in a threatening way. In particular, the younger generation is affected and partly active in combatting climate change ('Fridays for Future'). On European Level the 'Green Deal' is the most relevant strategy¹². In terms of jobs, most researchers agree that the green transition and investments in the green economy will likely have substantial net positive impacts on the economy and jobs¹³. Green policies can achieve job creation in a number of 'green' economic sectors and through a transition of the economy towards more labour - intensive services sectors.

Impact on IAG Services/ practitioners:

For IAG practitioners, it means that on the one hand they are dealing more often with young people who are more aware of climate change and its consequences, understandably perhaps have stronger fears than previous generations, in the best case actively engaged in addressing climate change. The IAG practitioner has to be aware of these individual fears and preferences and take them into account along the counselling process, thus adding a new aspect to the competence of recognizing and responding to clients' diverse needs. On the other hand, (not only) young people have the great opportunity to select between different jobs in the green economy¹⁴. The IAG - practitioner can give them orientation to find such jobs or the necessary skills and qualifications required for this. To this end, the practitioner needs an in-depth understanding in this diverse and dynamic field, which adds new tasks to the management of opportunity information services and the updating of own skills and knowledge.

¹² https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

¹³ For instance: <https://www.ajhssr.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/V22603183199.pdf>

¹⁴ such as environmental scientist, solar installer, jobs in green construction, in electric vehicles, in wind energy, energy efficiency and so on

Digital Transformation

Digital transformation is one of the main challenges in our societies and results in fundamental changes by integration of digital technology into all areas of a business and beyond. It is also a cultural shift and change in the mind-set of people.

Impact on IAG Services/ practitioners:

In terms of IAG services, it means more digitised forms and tools of consulting - strengthened by the COVID pandemic - and the competence on side of IAG practitioners to manage that. These obviously include information and computer technologies, but also new communication and facilitation skills and a clear understanding of the clients' diverse needs. It enables people with mobility limitations and other groups low – threshold access to IAG services¹⁵. At the same time, it excludes people who do not have access or do not know the basics of digital communication¹⁶. It does not replace face-to-face meetings, but it is a good supplement or alternative to them.

Demographic Change

The demographic change has a powerful impact on Europe`s economies, citizens and government systems, amongst other on the labour market and on employment. As Europe`s working population is shrinking less people are available on the labour market¹⁷. This means in response that more people should be activated (older people, women, young people, migrants/ refugees, people with disabilities) and the technological and skills development has to be reinforced¹⁸.

Impact on IAG Services/ practitioners

For IAG – services it means that more job offers are available (see also below) than in former times and that they should be able to find access to groups on the labour market, who can be activated additionally. In order to reach these groups, additional communication skills might be necessary. Also, they have to do with a new generation, pursuing different ambitions than their predecessors, for example a better work-life balance (see also characteristics of `Generation z`¹⁹). In the context of IAG service, this might require a higher diversification of counselling as well as career development processes.

¹⁵ for instance, counselling refugees via messenger services, digital language and translation tools

¹⁶ See also First Thematic Report of the GeGS Expert Group

¹⁷ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/impact-demographic-change-europe_en#demographic-trends

¹⁸ On basis of the European Councils conclusions in June 2023 the European Commission recently put forward a toolbox to support Member States in addressing demographic challenges. One of four pillars is to support and empower younger generations to thrive, develop their skills, facilitate their access to the labour market and to affordable housing.

https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/impact-demographic-change-europe_en#demography-toolbox

¹⁹ for instance, <https://blog.gwi.com/marketing/generation-z-characteristics/> or

<https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-e&q=Characteristics+of+generation+Z>

Automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Automation is both a job creator and destroyer at the same time. It is not appropriate at this point to engage in the long-standing and ongoing debate about whether automation, robotisation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) contribute more to job destruction or job creation.

The main keyword that most researchers can currently agree on here is again transformation: activities in existing occupations are rapidly changing, some occupations are disappearing, and new ones are emerging. All this is happening at great speed. AI is not only changing activities in production, industries or the trades. `Generative AI` is also changing the activities of `middle-class`- professions, for instance, of journalists, lawyers, scientists, in creative industries or in the health sector.

Impact on IAG Services/ practitioners:

For IAG services, this means that guidance at transitions of individuals, changing from one job to another, or the adaptation of skills and qualifications to new types of activities are becoming more important. The technical tools available for IAG services are also more and more influenced by AI. An example is the Jobiri platform²⁰, used and tested in component 2 of the GeGS project.

Technological Advancements

Technological advancement is the generation or discovery of knowledge that advances the understanding of science or technology. Technological changes have accelerated enormously in the last decade and are having a massive impact on European businesses companies and citizens in general.

Technological Advancements in Education and Training

The rise of e-learning platforms (Udemy, Coursera, edX) and online educational resources has transformed how individuals access learning and skill development. Moreover, the trend towards bite-sized learning modules allows for flexible skill acquisition. The same applies for social media platforms (LinkedIn, Monster, Stepstone, for instance), which are more and more used by job seekers and IAG practitioners.

Impact on IAG Services/ practitioners:

IAG services must guide clients on selecting appropriate courses that align with their career goals and skill requirements and should be required to help clients integrate these microlearning opportunities into their professional development plans. To this end, IAG practitioners first need the information and computer competences to use and evaluate the existing training opportunities themselves. Second, they need to identify clients' needs and limitations with respect to using these tools. It might even be necessary to include aspects of digital education into the field of activity of IAG practitioners so that they can enable clients to use the technological tools that are most beneficial for them.

Skilled Labour Shortage and Employee-oriented Labour Market

Labour shortages exist in various sectors and occupations across all skills levels and are set to increase in Europe²¹, driven by the creation of new jobs and the need to replace workers who retire. Europe-wide employers have difficulties to recruit, retain and attract workers.

²⁰ <https://www.jobiri.com/en/>

²¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_3704

Vice versa, job seekers have great opportunities and a high degree of choice on the labour market if they have the appropriate qualifications and skills. However, also low-skilled jobs are available.

Impact on IAG Services/ practitioners:

For IAG practitioners it means, that they must thoroughly manage opportunity information services in order to have an overview of the diverse offers, especially of the local and regional, but also of the national and Europe-wide labour market. Also, high labour demand provides work opportunities even for persons who lack the necessary qualifications yet, so that competences such as VET counselling as well as designing strategies and processes for upskilling and reskilling is gaining importance.

Enhancing Job Mobility in Europe²²

The EU aims to increase labour mobility through initiatives such as ‘matchmaking’ between job – seekers and employers²³. Young people in Europe are more mobile than former generations. This opens more opportunities for intra EU – labour mobility for young people by taking part in seminars, training courses, contact-making events and study visits or a job shadowing period abroad in an organisation active in the youth field.

Impact on IAG Services/ practitioners:

IAG services can support this trend, for instance, by knowing EU programmes, institutions and organisations which can support mobility and to advice young people in this respect. In order to provide counselling in this context, IAG practitioners need thorough insights in the diverse opportunities of transnational labour mobility, which adds new tasks to the management of opportunity information services and the updating of own skills and knowledge.

Gig Economy and Freelancing Trends

The rise of gig work and freelancing among youths has created a more fluid job market. Platforms like Upwork, Fiverr and Freelancer have made it easier for individuals to find freelance work.

Impact on IAG Services/ practitioners:

IAG practitioners need to be adapt at advising clients on navigating these non-traditional career paths, including issues related to self-employment, contract work, financial planning, health insurance options, strategies for sustainable freelancing and portfolio careers.

Energy Supply Crisis, Cost-of-Living Crisis, rising Inflation

High energy costs and inflation rates mainly affect the poorer part of the population which has great problems to finance its livelihood.

Impact on IAG Services/ practitioners:

For IAG, this means, for example, that they need to know about the social support systems in their region and country and build up a network for referral counselling, e.g. for debt counselling.

²² <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&furtherNews=yes&newsId=10545&langId=en>

²³ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/labour-mobility/>

Rising Inequality

Income and wealth inequality has risen in many countries in recent decades, also in Europe. If social and economic inequality increases in a society, there is a risk of social tensions and division as well as for populism.

Impact on IAG Services/ practitioners:

For IAG practitioners it means that they have to do more with poor households and individuals and that they need special competences to deal with, e.g. by providing referrals. Also, IAG counselling should focus on reskilling and upskilling, since a higher level of qualification usually leads to a higher income, thus reducing inequality.

Remote work - More Working from Home

According to Eurostat, 12.3% of people aged between 15 and 64 were working remotely by May 2021. This shows a 140% increase compared to figures before the pandemic²⁴. (Britain and Germany had the biggest shares of remote workers in Europe by March 2022²⁵).

Impact on IAG Services/ practitioners:

For IAG services, increasing remote work has a meaning in terms of access and counselling features, as mentioned above, more digitised and online counselling to complement face-to-face counselling.

B) Special vulnerable and/ or disadvantaged Groups

Youth Unemployment and NEETS development

Fortunately, there is a positive trend in the area of youth unemployment in Europe compared to 2009: In 2022, 4.48 million young people aged 15 to 29 years were unemployed in the EU, representing 6.3% of the total population of the same age. Looking at the long-term trend, this share in 2022 marks a historic low since 2009 (9.0%)²⁶. Youth unemployment fell from 16.7% in 2021 to 14.5% in 2022 but remains a major challenge²⁷.

The quantitative development of the NEETs (young people neither in employment nor in education or training) can be seen in the same way - with some fluctuations, due to the pandemic: For the age group 15 – 29 (target group of GeGS) the share of NEETs was 11,7% in 2022 and lower than before the pandemic²⁸.

²⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/de/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20221108-1>

²⁵ <https://zoetalentsolutions.com/remote-work-statistics-europe/>

²⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/DDN-20230524-1>

²⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_3704

²⁸ After the financial crisis in 2008 the share of NEETS still rose. It peaked in 2013 and after that the proportion of NEETs continuously decreased until 2019. During the COVID – 19 pandemic the number rose again. In contrast, the share of NEETs decreased considerably in 2021 and 2022 compared to 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Statistics_on_young_people_neither_in_employment_nor_in_education_or_training

The long-term unemployment rate (out of work longer than 12 months) in Europe value in 2021 is 39%²⁹, younger people are less affected (21,5%, age group 15 – 24 years). However, we have to consider the drop-out rate: Drop-out rates in VET are high throughout most European countries³⁰, the same applies for early school-leaving.

Impact on IAG Services/ practitioners:

For IAG – services this requires more focus on professional orientation, how young people can achieve better access to (initial) VET and the labour market and how they can be integrated into working life as sustainably or stably as possible. Counselling on tailor made qualification measures, skills development or on-the-job qualification is also gaining in importance.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

In 2022, 881 220 first-time asylum seekers applied for international protection in the EU, up by 64% compared with 2021, progressing in 2023. (Germany, France, Spain and Austria – main countries of destination for first-time asylum applicants in the EU in 2022³¹). Moreover, in October 2023 more than eight million refugees from Ukraine have been registered in Europe, most of them in Germany (1.094m) and in Poland (959 tsd)³². In addition, different legal bases and conditions apply to asylum seekers and people from Ukraine and it is not easy for IAG practitioners to navigate through that.

Impact on IAG Services/ practitioners

IAG services in Europe have been increasingly taking care of refugees and migrants since 2015/ 2016 at the latest and have been supported by European, national, regional and local policies. They respond, for instance, with outreach measures, recruit counsellors who come from the countries of origin and offer their services in the languages of the most common countries of origin. A major challenge is to empathise with the other cultures and to take traumatic experiences of refugees into account, i.e. also to recognise the limits of one's own counselling work.

Increasing Mental Health Problems

Mental health has become a major issue of public health, and economic and social concern across the whole of the EU. Young people have been disproportionately affected: half of all young Europeans report poor mental health, and depression among them has more than doubled. This is significantly higher than the general population. According to the 2022 'Health at a Glance' report, almost one in two young Europeans (15 - 24 year olds) have unmet mental healthcare needs, and in several EU countries the share of young people (aged 18 to 29) reporting symptoms of depression more than doubled during the pandemic³³.

²⁹ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/skills-intelligence/long-term-unemployment-rate?year=2021&country=EU#1>

³⁰ for instance in Netherlands, where 2021/2022 more than 30.000 young learners left initial VET prematurely – the highest number in 10 years <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news/netherlands-record-number-dropouts-dutch-vet>

³¹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum_statistics&oldid=558844

³² <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1356654/umfrage/anzahl-ukrainischer-fluechtlinge-in-den-eu-staaten/>

³³ <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-e&q=Mental+health+problems+young+people+Europe.>

OECD data also shows a dramatic increase in anxiety and depression during the COVID-19 pandemic.³⁴

Impact on IAG Services/ practitioners:

IAGs must be prepared to deal with more young people with mental disorders than in the past. They need to be able to recognise if there are psychological problems that need to be treated by a psychologist or therapist.

Disabled Young People

Even if there has been an overall improvement in the employment situation of persons with disabilities in the EU (given the increase in employment rates), they still remain among the most disadvantaged groups as regards employment. This phenomenon considerably affects the EU's social integration ability and economic growth.³⁵ In 2022, the European Commission presented its 'Disability Employment Package' to improve labour market outcomes for persons with disability and ensure better inclusion³⁶. The package is part of the European 'Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021 – 2020'³⁷. Persons with disabilities still face considerable barriers and have a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion. However, there is also a great labour market potential in this group.

Impact on IAG Services/ practitioners

Practitioners must be sensitive to the special needs of people with disabilities and their integration into the labour market. Ideally, they themselves employ people with disabilities as part of IAG services, who can better advise other people with disabilities in the sense of peer counselling.

Gender and LGBTQ+

Not to forget that there is also a rapid development in gender issues and promoting gender equality and a much more visible development and awareness on the queer LGBTQ+ community.

Impact on IAG Services/ practitioners:

For IAG practitioners it means that they have to work gender sensitive and that they need to acquire the competences to do so. Furthermore, they need to adapt to working more with people who have different gender identities. This aspect should resonate in the context of ethical practice.

3.2 Some Ideas on changed, new or further developed Competences

Based on the general trends described above, we can already identify some novel or further developed competences for IAG services and practitioners. In addition, for this chapter, we used the views and perspectives of practitioners who had been involved in the GeGS project and the evaluation up to that point.

³⁴ <https://www.euronews.com/next/2023/09/09/europes-mental-health-crisis-in-data-which-country-uses-the-most-antidepressants>

³⁵

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/651932/EPRS_BRI\(2020\)651932_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/651932/EPRS_BRI(2020)651932_EN.pdf)

³⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1597&langId=en>

³⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1484>

Approximately 150 practitioners involved in local and international workshops, both in-person and online, participating in group activities of local Community of Practice, and in the survey for the evaluation of the experimentation. (The order of this list does not imply a ranking).

Ethical Dimension

IAG practitioners should have the clear orientation of tolerance and democracy, diversity and inclusion, of anti-racism, against xenophobia, anti – semitism and islamophobia, or – in short - intercultural competences and a democratic mindset. This is not new, but the intensified communication on social media, times of populism, fake news, hate speech and conspiracy theories makes it necessary to highlight this ethical competence.

Special Knowledge of Green Jobs and the European Labour Market

The `new labour market` is more diverse with a lot of new kind of occupations. It is not easy to keep track of this. The IAG practitioner needs access to job offers and appropriate platforms. Special knowledge in green jobs is also needed. To promote European mobility, the knowledge of the European labour market and respective programmes and organisations/ institutions is essential.

Working with Employers

Whereas many job advisers are focused on the jobseekers and their situation, today it is more and more necessary to know and contact simultaneously the potential employers in the local area or region (or beyond) and to identify their requirements for a job (see also `Job Broker` ERASMUS+ project³⁸).

Openness to Change

Due to the different changes in the society, facing the different crisis and the changes on the labour market it is important that the guidance practitioners are open to these changes in a double sense: permanent development and learning in terms of own capacities and skills, openness to the `new generation`, their features and needs.

Gender Sensitivity

Gender sensitivity means the systematic perception, consideration and reflection of the different life situations and conditions of the genders³⁹. This competence is crucial and gains more importance. Amongst other, the still existing `gender gap` in many areas in terms of participation, access, rights, remuneration or benefits requires this competence.

Bringing together Job Counselling and Skills Development

Until now, a distinction has often been made between job counselling and lifelong learning guidance. However, these two activities are closely related, because sustainable job placement usually requires the adaptation of qualifications or skills development.

³⁸ <https://www.job-brokers.eu/de/> und <https://www.gsub.de/internationale-projekte/job-broker-cqjb>

³⁹ <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-e&q=was+ist+gendersensible+Beratung>

Dealing with Mental Health Problems and Persons with Disabilities

IAG practitioners are confronted with increasing mental health problems of young people. Again, it is important to know one's own limitations and to build up a network with psychologists and/ or psychotherapists. IAG services should also hire persons with disabilities, who are best placed to advise and support such people.

Digital (online) Counselling and Guidance

This is in the core of the GeGS project⁴⁰. IAG practitioners need to learn and to use appropriate communication tools. This is not only a technological issue but also a change in mentality and needs to be flanked by systemic and participatory training opportunities on digital and IAG competences (main GeGS hypothesis): Practitioners need the confidence to deal creatively with the opportunities digital tools provide. The GeGS project has shown that an interactive training approach can stimulate this creative approach to digital tools. However, to become fully at ease with these tools requires (time for) independent experimentation with digital options and possibilities. Seen the scope and complexity of the digital transformation it is fair to say that this goes beyond IAG competences but practitioners need to be trained in digital competences as for example along the EU DigComp 2.2 framework⁴¹, as it was already planned and successfully implemented in the GeGS approach.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The GeGS project by itself does promote the digitising of IAG services. With the Jobiri Platform (Component and Field Trial 2), Artificial Intelligence will be introduced as a tool for career guidance. More generally speaking, AI is going to be of enormous importance in IAG services, using it in an integrated way in the delivery of digital guidance (chatbots and so on). Beyond basic digital literacy, IAG practitioners can strongly benefit to be proficient in using advanced technologies, including AI tools and data analytics software, while enhancing their counselling capabilities.

Outreach Activities

"Go where the people are" – this is not new as an IAG strategy, but due to the increase of hard-to-reach groups, such as different groups of refugees and migrants, it is more necessary than in former times.

Job Transition Counselling – from old Job to new Job

European economies face simultaneously job losses and job creation. The transfer from one job to another and the adaptation to new activities in given jobs are crucial. In IAG counselling, this requires high proficiency in designing career and learning paths adjusted to an individual's personal situation and preferences.

⁴⁰ The specific objectives of GeGS are (a) Enhance the culture shift in IAG for VET modernisation by co-creation of a comprehensive training measure for IAG practitioners leading to effective e-services and (b) plan, test and the adaptation and introduction of an AI based, digital IAG technology... (Source: Full description of the GeGS project, p. 72)

⁴¹ <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC128415>

Activation of potential Job Seekers

Due to the massive labour shortages on the European labour market, a core competence is to activate groups who can potentially take up work (women, migrants, young people, older people, people with disabilities). To this end, IAG needs to provide very specific and ever more diversified and personalized guidance service.

Build Networks for Referral Advice

It is an important skill to know one`s own limits. The IAG – practitioners need to refer to other counselling services or institutions, because she or he cannot deliver all specialist services.

4. Conclusions

In this report, we have tried to identify some new or further developed competences compared to the Cedefop 2009 competences, which we have derived from societal changes and developments in labour market and VET policies of the last decade and today. The next logical step could now be to compare these competences in detail with the CEDEFOP 2009 competences or to classify them in the corresponding competence framework. However, we are convinced that this would be the wrong approach. The first step would be to draw up a new or revised competency framework on the basis of more recent empirical surveys/ data and, if necessary, a new comparative study between European member states, as was the case in Cedefop 2009. However, this would go far beyond the scope of this report.

We hope that with this report we have made a small contribution to how the competences of IAG services and practitioners have developed against the background of social and labour market policy as well as VET-specific developments in recent years.

Appendix

List of major (societal, technological) changes since 2009

A)	General Trends with Impact on Labour Market and VET
1	Climate change and Green Transition
2	Digital Transformation
3	Demographic Change
4	Automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI)
5	Skilled Labour – Shortage and Employee-oriented Labour Market
6	Enhancing Job Mobility in Europe
7	Technological Advancements (in Education and Training)
8	Gig Economy and Freelancing Trends
9	Energy Crisis, Cost-of-Living Crisis, rising Inflation
10	Rising Inequality
12	Remote Work – more Working from Home
B)	Special vulnerable and/ or disadvantaged Groups
13	Youth Unemployment and NEETS development
14	Refugees and Asylum Seekers
15	Disabled Young People
16	Increasing Mental Health Problems
17	Gender and LGBTQ+

List of (new, further developed) Competences of IAG Practitioners

1	Ethical Dimension
2	Special Knowledge of Green Jobs and the European Labour Market
3	Working with Employers
4	Openness to Change
5	Gender Sensitivity
6	Bringing together Job Counselling and Skills Development
7	Dealing with Mental Health Problems and Persons with Disabilities
8	Digital (online) Counselling and Guidance
9	Artificial Intelligence (AI)
10	Outreach Activities
11	Job Transition Counselling – from old Job to new Job
12	Activation of Potential Job Seekers
13	Build Networks for Referral Advice

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