

Project Title: Social Literacy Training for Public Sector Staff

Project Acronym: SocLit

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WP: 2 – Framework Analysis

Current situation of social literacy in the countries of the partnership

Report

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Public services require a high level of teamwork and communication skills to enable them to meet public expectations. There is a growing awareness in government policies to promote community social learning which aim is to increase standards among public sector staff and to develop a range of teamwork, professional and personal life skills and method of instruction that are important for a career in the public services.

Social literacy is a person's ability to interact, maintain and build relationships with others. It involves knowing and being able to express one's own emotions successfully. Social literacy has also been called social intelligence or emotional literacy.

1.2. The SocLit Project

In our project, we will design an ICT based Toolbox for introducing social literacy into adult education and counselling. The primary target groups are therefore teachers, trainers, tutors and advisers (social workers, counsellors) working for staff training in the public sector, who themselves will become aware of the potentials of a comprehensive approach to promoting the emotional and social literacy and well-being of young adults. The final beneficiaries will be employees working in the public sector.

The project will refer specifically to the web 2.0 technologies and will develop tools for educators to introduce the steps to Social Literacy (Trying Your Best, Self-Control, Self-Control Time, Self Confidence, Responsibility/Consequences, Thinking/Problem-Solving, Cooperation, Conflict Resolution, Peacemaking, and Community Service) horizontally during their regular teaching and counselling activities. They will interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue and apply the project's user-generated content in real life and also in virtual learning environments.

The composition of the partnerships reflects the intention of the project to develop a holistic and a European approach. The consortium comprises a multidisciplinary team that includes, on the one hand, adult education specialists and educational research institutions across Europe, and on the other hand five European municipalities that show an ambitious interest in ameliorating their municipal services. Their collaboration in tandem teams, especially during the pilot tests, will ensure the practicability and feasibility of the outcomes.

In addition, the project will benefit from the participation of the Social and Emotional Learning Research Group (University of Illinois Chicago) as a "third country" partner. It is this group where social and emotional learning was "invented", and the project will gain from direct access to the latest developments in this field.



2. Social Literacy Competencies

2.1. Adult Education policy in each country

2.1.1. Austria: In recent years, "lifelong learning" has gained increasing importance. According to the European Council, its definition is "all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social or employment-related perspective." To measure the training and continuing education activities, the Federal office for statistics (Statistics Austria) has developed a structural indicator 'lifelong learning' that measures the proportion of participants in training and further education in the population aged 25 to 64 years. This Adult Education Survey is conducted every five years. The Adult Education Survey 2011/12 shows that in total, 45.5% of the population aged 25 to 64 years attended non-formal education (e.g. courses, seminars, workshops, lectures, private lessons), while 5.9% participated in formal education. It also shows a clear interrelation between the level of education achieved and the participation in adult learning. Whereas 68.9% of people with university degree (or similar education) attend further education activities, only 23.5% of individuals with compulsory schooling as highest level of formal education participate in adult education. In particular, the training activities in the form of courses and training have increased significantly in recent years. Some of the key factors influencing the willingness to educate oneself further are already existing basic training, higher levels of education and more frequent rate and associated training visits. The structural indicator "Lifelong Learning" showed for 2012 an annual average rate of 14.1% (comparative figures for 2011: EU-15: 10.1%, EU-27 8.9%). Around 10% of the total population aged 15 years participated in a professional or private course in the last 4 weeks prior to the survey.

2.1.2. Czech Republic: In the Czech Republic, adult education possibilities are wide and open in various fields, but from the general point of view it is a deeply neglected field. Not by the education providers, but by the wide public. There are several forms of education provided to adults. The first one is formal education – secondary education institutions (high schools) and tertiary education institutions (bachelor and master degrees). As the 2012 statistic shows in the first chart, only 10 % of the population aged 18-69 took part in formal education in 2011, of which 6 % were university studies. For the Social Literacy project the numbers of people participating in non-formal education would be more significant. From the Eurostat research it is obvious that only 11 % of all Czech population attended more than one educational event in last 12 months. Both the possibilities and will to reach further education are

growing, nevertheless, the inner motivation to study or raise their qualification is not very high in the country. From the not very high percentage of people who educate themselves regularly, the largest part prefers foreign languages courses. Generally, languages are the most common with the 16.5 percent of all non-formal educational activities. The other following fields of interest are business and law, technical sciences, medical and social care, IT skills, transport services, and humanities. The social literacy competencies would be considered a part of two fields mentioned – humanities and social care. Quite logically, communication and social interaction skills must be always included in the social and health care modules, however, the statistics do not provide information on this specific topic. The reasons of low interest in non-formal education are a longitudinal problem given both culturally and by the current economic situation. The process of transformation of formal education system in the Czech Republic after the change of political system proceeds rather slowly and breaking through the deeply rooted stereotypes and reluctance to undergo the process of education is very tough.

2.1.3. Italy: In Italy, as in Europe, ‘adult education’ means a series of activities aimed at cultural enrichment, requalification and professional mobility. All 16-year-olds who have not completed compulsory education are potential users of the School education for adults’ courses. These activities can be organized by a school in collaboration with local communities, also involving the labour market and the social partners at territorial level; they may be used to extend or integrate the education provided during compulsory schooling, or to replace compulsory education for early school leavers. These activities may include all what implies a personal cultural enrichment gained through either formal activities leading to obtain a study title, or activities just aimed at enriching the personal culture. In Italy the importance of Adult’s Education is a recent success which anyway hasn’t been completely acquired yet. Two main factors have led to a strong interest in this area of Education:

- The great economic development followed by the revolution of the production system, has made essential the acquisition of a new knowledge and working methods.
- The democratization of social life, to the extent that it is trying to reduce the cultural and educational differences still existing among human beings. The right of education for each person is strictly related to the right of equal opportunities. Before dealing with Adult’s Education in Italy, it is important to explain the relation between two concepts that are generally confused. Adult’s Education and Life Long Learning: the first one is just a part, even if very important, of Education which is seen in a permanent view.

The human being in this project is the main actor in his own education through the permanent interactions among his actions and thoughts. Lifelong Learning, far from limited during the school period, has to contain all life scales, all branches of knowledge and all practical cognitions that can be achieved through the different media, giving a contribute to the development forms of personality. The educational processes that follow children, young and adults during their life, have to be considered all in one, whatever their form may be. Adult's Education can only be considered strictly speaking as a subordinated and integrated phase of a project of Life Long Learning.

- 2.1.4. Slovakia: To speak about the formal education data in the country: 54% of adult population have a apprentice education and secondary school without leaving exam ("matura"), 36% of the adult population has achieved a secondary education with a leaving exam and almost 10% of the population has a university degree. Numbers rise effectively among the young generation cohorts 25-29 where almost half have a secondary education with a leaving exam and 17% achieved the university education (ŠÚ SR 2011). Data above describe characteristics of the people and the institutional providers. To picture better the situation of an adult education we have to search for more dimensions of an adult education issue. An important aspect of an education is quality and mechanisms of providing. System as described above has quite rigid offer of educational programmes for particular target group. The systemic change in Slovakia has influenced also the system of the adult education, thus there have been some attempts to create an effective accreditation system which is the base for the assuring normative aspect in free offer (disputed in the Act No.568/2009). Rigidness is not only imperfection of the Slovak system of adult education, the big problem remains the number of the adult learners being constantly under the European average (Eurostat report 2005). The research the Adult Education Survey showed that 45% of adults engage in various types of adult education (Country Report on the Action Plan on Adult Learning: Slovakia: 10). The biggest effort of the government, which can be seen in the Priorities of the Ministry of Education for the years 2006-2010 (Prioritné úlohy ministerstva školstva pre roky 2006-2010), is the effort to make the system more flexible for the new stakeholders and also the continuing process evaluation via accreditation reforms. An interesting trend in the educational policy mentioned in the Country Report On The Action Plan on Adult Learning: Slovakia (2011:18) is to ensure "the new literacy programs" aimed for the specific target groups lacking an adequate working habits . Marginalization of the adult education continues to be present in Slovakia. Consequence of the situation on the national level causes the big impact on the adult

educational policies in the country from the European Union and its funding of the educational innovations. To suite better new educational needs, traditional educational organization, Academia Istropolitana was in year 2010 transformed and renamed into the National Institute for the Lifelong Education (Národný ústav celoživotného vzdelávania). An organization performs direct transfer of the policies of the Ministry of Education, research, Science and Sport and the new policies of the European Commission. Among the tasks of the institution are creation and update of the National Qualification Framework, monitoring of educational needs, providing the tools and networks.

2.1.5. Germany: After the investigations of the Adult Education Survey (AES) regarding “Further education behaviour in Germany 2012”, further education participation in Germany is currently 49% and so at its highest level since 1979. The success can, above all, be ascribed to the increase of in-firm further education (69%). Even so, further education which is work-unrelated is at 18%, whereas individual work-related further education is only at 13%. The basic principles of adult education in Germany are a comprehensive educational provision for the population, emphasis on the quality of these possibilities and professionalization. The guiding principle for participation is voluntariness. Promotion and the creation of incentives for further education are therefore of great importance, as is also the idea of competition. The comprehensive educational network was especially achieved by the adult education centres, which are mostly promoted by the municipal authorities in order to cover public basic requirements. The further education field is to a great extent distinguished by plurality and competition of the sponsors and offers, the spectrum of providers in Germany is correspondingly widely diversified. Basically, a distinction can be made between public and private providers. Which courses and topics are highly frequented? Unfortunately, here it is only possible to give a statistically reliable answer through AES for further education activities of recognised educational institutions which also end with a certified graduation (ISCED). The subject area “Business, employment and law” ranks at the top with 33%. The area “Social competence and education” is on the decrease with 8%.

2.1.6. France: in France, Any person, young or adult, already in the world of work has the right to training, in the form of initial school or university education for pupils and students or on-going vocational training. Set up in its current form at the beginning of the 70s and extensively reformed since, on-going vocational training mobilises the State and regional councils as well as businesses, public and private training bodies, professional, union and family bodies. On-going vocational training is notable for its original structure,

placing particular importance on collective negotiation and including different gateways to training depending on the status of individuals. Measures relating to on-going vocational training are the result of initiatives from social partners in collective agreements, and the State in laws and decrees. Depending on their status and the specific training issues that individuals may encounter, social partners and the State have created and set up a range of measures: sandwich courses, individual training leave, professionalization contracts and periods as well as individual training rights. On-going vocational training is an important economic sector. Key players in the sector spent almost 30 billion Euros in 2008. There are three different types of training: Initial vocational training, and it concerns young people in school and university as well as apprentices; Apprenticeships, which aim is to give young people between 16 and 25 general, theoretical and practical training leading to qualifications ranging from the CAP/BEP (most often) to an engineering degree; On-going vocational training, which main aim is: to encourage workers' entry or re-entry into the workforce; to enable them to stay in work; to encourage their skills development and access to the various levels of professional qualifications; to contribute to economic and cultural development and social mobility.

- 2.1.7. Slovenia: Adult education has a long tradition in Slovenia. It has been integrated in our educational system and the consciousness of the society. Even though it has had its ups and downs throughout the history adult education has been present all along.

The field is regulated by the Adult Education Act which has also been a good basis for positive shifts in development of this particular field.

In the last decade Slovenia has been facing similar challenges than most other EU states have - it has been adjusting to demographic changes, facing structural changes in economy and globalization. Rapidly changing circumstances demand adequate responsiveness of educational system both at the level of education of young people and permanent education and training of adults in order to meet the needs of labour market.

In 2004, the Parliament of Slovenia adopted the national adult education programme entitled the Resolution on National Adult Education Programme in the Republic of Slovenia until 2010. The aim of this document was to systematically regulate the field of adult education in Slovenia which is defined as the integral part of the life-long learning process. In 2010, however, the Resolution came to an end and a new Resolution on National Adult Education Programme in the Republic of Slovenia until 2020 (hereinafter referred to as: Resolution 2012-2020) was adopted. The vision of the national adult education programme of the Resolution until 2012-2020 is the following: to enable equal opportunities for all Slovenian adult citizens

for quality education in all life periods encouraging especially the members of educationally deprived and other vulnerable groups.

The Resolution 2012-2020 is a strategic development document in which the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia defines public interest in the field of adult education, priority areas, activities necessary for the implementation of the programme and an approximate amount of public resources available. The Resolution 2012-2020 defines national educational policy and is at the same time the basis for concrete planning at national level in the form of annual adult education programmes which are adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia each year. It represents an instrument of systematic regulation in the field of adult education and supplements the Adult Education Act. The implementation of Resolution 2012-2020 falls under the responsibility of the Ministries responsible for the area of adult education that also receive national funding for this purpose as well as resources of the European Social Fund. The framework ministries for the implementation of Resolution 2012-2020 are the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs.

The Ministries are also responsible for the Annual Adult Education Programme of the Republic of Slovenia for 2013 which has been adopted in accordance with Resolution 2012-2020. The fundamental goals of the Programme are in line with the goals defined in the Resolution on National Adult Education Programme 2005-2010 which are:

- To improve general education of adults,
- To raise the education level with 12 years of successfully concluded education being the fundamental educational standard,
- To increase employment possibilities,
- To increase the opportunities for learning and participation in the educational process.

The 2013 Annual Adult Education Programme puts the biggest emphasis on the following activities:

- To encourage and include other ministries, local communities, social partners and civil society into the planning, investing and implementing of goals defined in Annual Adult Education Programme for 2013,
- To raise the educational level of the population by co-financing tuitions intended for individuals who are already employed to obtain occupational and secondary education and for the unemployed to obtain higher professional education,

- To improve professional skills of the unemployed in the framework of B2B education centres,
- To encourage adults to participate in education and learning with special emphasis on vulnerable groups of population,
- To develop the system of establishing and evaluating previously acquired knowledge,
- To train professional staff,
- To introduce the quality model to the organizations for adult education,
- To co-finance development activities,
- To implement activities the aim of which is to inform and give advice to adult population with regard to educational opportunities,
- To monitor and evaluate the programmes and the activities.

The programme sets out three priority areas for this year, namely:

1. The first priority area – general education and teaching of adults,
2. The second priority area – education in order to increase the educational level of the population,
3. The third priority area – education and training to meet the needs of the labour market.

Besides these national endeavours Slovenia also participates in the EU Lifelong Learning Programme which was adopted for the period 2007-2013. In the framework of this Programme Slovenia implements the Grundtvig programme which covers the educational needs of the staff involved in any form of adult education (formal, non-formal, ad-hoc) and the needs of organizations that implement, enable or organize such education.

2.2. Social Literacy competencies in education and trainings

- 2.2.1. Austria: All federal employees have to undergo an internal training to be prepared for the specific tasks of the various public services. Trainings include the multi-year trainings for administrative services as well as trainings to the executive officers in the police academies. The common aspect for all trainings is that they prepare for tasks in the Federal service and that have to be completed in the context of a service relationship. In addition, the federal government offers courses that qualify for work in the private sector. These courses are therefore not completed within the framework of a service contract. The federal government offers the practical training, legal internships, teaching practice and numerous apprenticeships. People who are in training receive a financial reward. Since 2004 exists the opportunity to complete an administrative internship in the federal public service. It concerns a training where trainees acquire work experience and complement and deepen their respective qualifications by appropriate practical work in the federal administration. This training can be considered an interface between education and subsequent professional practice, whether at the federal or another employer. The duration of this internship is limited to one year. It is open to people who have completed college or university, and to people who have completed high school graduates. Management trainees receive a contribution of 50 percent of the amount that a contract staff earns in the corresponding wage group. Condition for receiving management interns and management trainees only depends on the budgetary situation, in addition there are no restrictions. As per 31.12.2011, in the Federal services there worked 324 management trainees with a female share of 67 percent. 160 of the trainees already had a university education. Since 1.1.2012, unpaid internships are prohibited in the Federal service. The federal government has agreed to accelerate youth employment, to allow young people a smooth and skilled entrance into the workforce and to help them to create the best possible education and the best possible prospects. Apprenticeship training in the public sector constitutes an important pillar of the recruitment and training of young people and is a good way to start directly into working life after the end of compulsory education. Currently more than 1,300 apprentices are trained in the federal ministries and their subordinate agencies. Thus, the federal government is among the greatest instructors in Austria. Two thirds of the apprentices are administrative or tax assistants and assistants. In addition, there are still about 50 more interesting teaching professions such as: technical designers, chemical laboratory technology or aircraft engineering.
- The basic training is a mandatory training that all people who are in a public law or contractual service relationship with the Confederation have to

complete. The training phase is the acquisition of practical and theoretical knowledge. The practical training consists of training on the respective job place, including the so-called initial orientation.

The initial orientation begins with entering the service, and lasts two months. It includes the provision of those skills that are immediately necessary for the service. The first orientation precedes the theoretical training and job rotation. The Federal Academy of Public Administration (VAB) is the education and training institute for the staff of the Federal service. It is one of the largest professional training institutions in the country and the hub and the laboratory for new developments in public administration.

The VAB wants to practical and professional offers an important contribution to motivation and job satisfaction of employees in the public service.

- 2.2.2. Czech Republic: The offer of soft skills courses of various kinds is confusingly wide in the Czech Republic. On one hand, it provides a real chance to make a choice. On the other, it reduces the possibility to distinguish the different courses according to their actual quality. It needs to be pointed out that the expression “social literacy” as used in the European context is not spread in the Czech settings, hence speaking of the Czech situation “soft skills” will be used in the same meaning. Generally, two levels of organization of soft skills training can be differentiated. The free lancers are a rather wide group of training providers. There are several means by which they reach their potential clients. Firstly, they advertise their services through internet searchers and websites only. These trainers however rarely have tools to prove their quality. Recently, the social networks have brought a remarkable change in the education providers since they provide a very large set of tools to gain feedback and references. Several months ago a completely new phenomenon occurred in the Czech education offer. The web platform called NaucmeSe.cz (Let’s learn) represents a new concept of providing education. The authors say: “The conception is simple – anybody can teach anybody. No matter what their reached education degree, age or profession is. The price of each course is determined by the trainer according to the costs of the seminar, the topic and the level of his or her understanding of the topic.” (3) In here, the soft skills training are also offered, but usually more specifically focused (e.g. time management, presentation skills, GTD technique, communication competencies etc.). Such projects widen the approachability of soft skills training while still providing publicly visible feedback through comments of the attendants of the course and thus offer a simple and viable way to search such seminars.

There are dozens of education agencies that focus especially on soft skills (social literacy) trainings. Not all of them, however, may guarantee a good quality of the provided seminars.

It would require a deep and very wide analysis to evaluate the quality of all provided courses, because there are currently hundreds of them, but by a quick look it is possible to estimate how wide topic can be covered by a single one-day-long seminar, for instance. One must be careful when choosing a seminar not to get tricked into courses with low or none quality guarantee. For example, the 4-hour-long seminar on “Treating people” provided by one of the larger agencies could not be recommended by anybody who has any experience as an educator, since the topics is far too wide.

The summary report on adult education claims that “the teacher, trainers and lecturers are the basis of the quality of education, however, there are many cases in which the trainers are not educated properly, their level of qualification is minimal, they receive no evaluation or their working condition are insufficient.” (4) Which is obviously the worst risk within the field, because a low quality course means firstly a waste of time, money and energy, but also – more importantly – an even more rapid decrease of motivation to attend more education events.

- 2.2.3. Italy: The training system plays a key role for the Administration, who fosters employees in their personal and professional development, in order to experiment new working methodologies, putting the relationship with the citizens at the core of their daily activity. In this regard, to improve the quality of the front-office activities is an excellent challenge for two reasons:
- the complexity and wide range of the topics the personnel has to comply with in order to give correct and effective information to users,
 - to satisfy the requests coming from the citizens and to provide the right solutions needs the ability to “empathize” with them.
- 2.2.4. Slovakia: Social literacy is a concept moderately used in the educational theory but in spite of 1200 educational providers (Country Report On The Action Plan on Adult Learning: Slovakia 2011: 17) only few of them work with it. It is usual to operate with the ideas of the social literacy as the unifying concept to set the goals of the training of the organizations (Junior Achievement Slovakia, INEKO) or it is used as the guiding idea for the educators (Statpedu -The State Pedagogical Institute). There has not been any specific training which would use the concept and target the social literacy as such. According to the research which will be discussed later, the term is still gaining its space, though the vague idea of the concept is part of the innovative methods. It seems the concept is in the stage of being delivered to the educators on the theoretical base, mostly as a broader understanding of the literacy.

- 2.2.5. Germany: The choice of courses in the area of social competencies is high, varied and diversified, as is shown by the range of Social Literacy courses attended by the questioned Esslingen work force. In addition, the choice of courses spans over all forms of courses (seminars, training, learning by CD-ROM, online, certified training) and types of providers (universities, distance learning universities, private educational institutions, adult education centres, education organizations, companies ...). It is impossible to make a rough estimate of the courses. The quality of the courses depends on various factors and can most likely be determined through the kind of provider (see Chapter 1.2) and the proffered graduation or completion certificate. In addition, legally regulated minimum standards are required of the trainers and course instructors (training certificate). The three types of graduation are state graduation (e.g. catching up on the school-leaving certificate, certificates specific for further education (e.g. certificate systems like adult education centre, chambers, TELC) and graduation typical for organizations (often only of importance within an organization). With regard to the completion certificates, one can differentiate between: with a recognized certificate, with a certificate of attendance, without a certificate, with examination or without.

In the past years the informal, self-steered or self-organized learning forms have increasingly been accepted. Participation in informal vocational further education is much higher than with organized learning.

Social Literacy courses extend over the whole quality spectrum. One can choose from colleges and universities, distance learning courses to small private-sector providers and independent trainers at adult education centres. One of the superior, certified fields/with recognized completion certificate is, for example, the field of Mediation. However, Social Literacy certainly plays an important part in the uncertified and informal area.

- 2.2.6. France: Working on social skills has been a long term concern in the French education system, whether educating young adults or raising awareness of professional adults of lifelong education and training. Since 1960, those responsible for the educational and social sector have been considering a project to group training schools in the educational and social professions. In 1970, this interest was taken into account by the Health Ministry, which decided to set a training structure up in Bordeaux l' Institut Régional de Formation des Travailleurs Sociaux et de Recherche Sociale d'Aquitaine. (Regional training centre for Social Workers and Social Research) The project was financed in equal parts by the Health Ministry and the Caisse Nationale d'Allocations Familiale, the National Family Allowance Fund (building, equipment).

The establishment was inaugurated on 16 September 1974 by Mr. René Lenoir, Secretary of State for Social Action. The management association was presided over by Mr. Louis Picard, regional director of Social Security.

Three training centres and a social work skills improvement centre were brought together in this new establishment.

Other similar establishments were set up in France in following years, causing the State to create, by decree of 22 August 1986, Regional Social Work Institutes. The I.R.F.T.S.R.S.A., in accordance with this decree, then became the Institut Régional de Travail Social en Aquitaine. The Institut Régional du Travail Social Aquitaine is a higher education and research establishment for the professional sector, the tasks of which are defined by the ruling of 22 August 1986.

It therefore intervenes within the framework:

- of the initial training given to future social work professionals, preparing them for the various State diplomas;
- of advanced training given to social work executives;
- of on-going training given to social workers already in place.

As well as its training activities, the IRTS Aquitaine organises study days and events with key partners from the social sector, particularly the Social Work Forum which is held every three years.

Significant research activity leading to numerous publications makes the IRTS Aquitaine a player you can count on in renewing knowledge in the field of social action.

Through European programs or partnerships with abroad, the IRTS Aquitaine is also developing actions with a more international focus.

Finally, the IRTS Aquitaine has the task of regional management of VAE.

2.2.7. Slovenia: There are no courses in social literacy competencies available as part of formal education. However, there are courses in communication and social skills available as part of non-formal additional education and trainings.

Public administration: For example, the Administrative Academy of the Ministry of the Interior which is the central body providing further education and trainings for public staff offers a range of seminars each year. Among fifteen topics which are available this year there are several seminars which we consider interesting in the light of social literacy competencies. Under the thematic unit called Special knowledge and skills there are the following two seminars available among others: Mediation in public administration and Negotiation techniques.

The first of the two (Mediation in public administration) is intended especially for public staff occupying the highest positions in state administration and administrations of local communities and other groups in

public administration aspiring to develop quicker and more effective ways of dealing with conflict situations.

The content of the seminar:

- Concrete examples of conflict situations,
- Mediation – the effective strategy of managing conflicts,
- Principles of mediation in public administration,
- Use of mediation skills in public administration,
- Role play and analysis,
- Debate and conclusions.

The second one (Negotiation techniques) is also intended especially for public staff occupying the highest positions in state administration and administrations of local communities and other groups in public administration aspiring to develop quicker and more effective ways of dealing with conflict situations.

The content of this seminar is:

- preparing for negotiations (understanding the process of decision making and the theory of motives, the role of reason and emotions, self-analysis of personal characteristics),
- importance of the right information (planning the collection of information, raising questions, planning representations),
- communicating during negotiations (creating positive atmosphere, conscious listening, types of messages, oral and non-oral communication, intercultural difference in communication, self-analysis of one's own behaviour),
- negotiation strategies and techniques.

Under the second thematic unit Communication in public administration there are also three seminars which can be classified under social literacy, namely:

Personal skills in interpersonal relations: seminar with a workshop

The seminar is intended for groups in a specific work environment (inspectors, human resources managers etc.) and for other public staff that might be interested.

The participants of the seminar get acquainted with the following topics:

- Communication process and the rules of communication,
- Basic rules for receiving and sending a message,
- Communication styles and
- Rules of conveying and receiving a negative feedback message.

Skills in managing interpersonal conflicts: seminar with workshop

The seminar is intended for groups in a specific work environment (inspectors, human resources managers etc) and for other public staff that might be interested.

The participants of the seminar get acquainted with the following topics:

- Ways of solving conflict communication,
- Psychological games in communication;
- Interpersonal conflicts in the light of system of values and
- Strategies and techniques of solving conflicts in relation to the goals one has set.

Dealing with difficult customers: seminar with workshop

The seminar is intended for groups in a specific work environment (inspectors, human resources managers etc.) and for other public staff that might be interested.

The participants will get familiar with:

- Psychological games,
- Types of difficult clients and
- Strategies and techniques of communicating with such clients.

Health care: Since health care workers in public institutions are also considered public staff, at this point we would also like to mention a seminar in the field of social skills organized by the Medical Chamber of Slovenia this year:

How to effectively solve conflicts with patients

The aims of the seminars are as follows:

- Training of conflict solving strategies
- Confrontation with the opposing party
- Training of how to eliminate obstacles in reaching an agreement
- Demonstration and training of techniques of eliminating personal conflicts (with oneself).

Education: Ministry of Education Science and Sports is responsible for further education and trainings of those employed in the field of education and schooling. Among many others, the catalogue of further education and

training programmes for professionals in education and schooling lists also the following seminar which we consider is intended to improve social skills of the mentioned professionals:

Successful communication and conflict managing

The seminar is intended for teachers of elementary and secondary education who would like to build up foundations of good communication and conflict managing.

According to the catalogue the participants of the training will master the following skills after the training:

- they will know their role in communication,
- they will know communication process and the rules for good communication;
- they will know how to analyse the communication process and how to use different personal styles in order to contribute to successful communication,
- they will know how to use adequate conflict solving strategies in different situations.

Police: Police forces also fall within the category of public staff. Within the Police Academy which is responsible for the organization of education of police officers a Training Centre operates whose job is to provide further trainings and education. One of the tasks is also to develop social skills of those working at the Police. The Training Centre implements several programmes in the field of human rights protection, a programme for police officers working with multiethnic communities and 'train the trainer' courses. The trainings are designed in such a way that by knowing the communication process and managing stress in difficult situation police officers are taught how to respect and protect human dignity and ensure human rights for all.

2.3. Public staff in lifelong learning education

- 2.3.1. Czech Republic: According to the Law on Compulsory Education of Public Staff (2), the employees of public and local governments are obliged to continue the process of education after entering their working position in the field. There are three general areas on which the compulsory education is focused. The first and basic is preliminary education which includes the basics of public policy related competencies, IT skills and basic communication skills. This phase of education has to be completed within 3 months from entering the position and that would be the reason for this phase to be called “preliminary”. The second phase consists of “continuous education” and should provide the employees with higher specialization and deeper comprehension and higher skills in the areas mentioned in the paragraph of preliminary education. The third and crucial part is the “Specialized vocational competencies” that shall be guaranteed by the relevant governmental body and will be concluded in an obligatory exam. In case of failure in this exam, the member of the staff has to pay for every other attempt him or herself. All levels of education mentioned in this chapter are compulsory and the relevance of different courses for each person is decided by the head of the employing body. Every member of public staff is obliged to undergo minimum 18 work days of education within maximum 3 years after entering the working position. All public staff education is funded by the government, however, there is a limitation regarding the education providers – the education institution needs to be accredited by the Ministry of Education only.
- 2.3.2. Italy: The training office, mainly engaged in continuous training of the municipal employees, is composed of the following staff:
- 1 full-time accounting administrative officer (office manager);
 - 2 administrative assistants, one full-time and one part-time, working on the organization and implementation of all training activities.
- 2.3.3. Slovakia: Facing the challenges in the fast-changing world requires a continuous educational process. Thus, the stress of the education should not be put only on the new IT solutions, but also for the greatest value in the organization- the workforce. Public staff workers are the communicative force of the state. Governments should concentrate on creating such an administration, which is able to work effectively. Desirable result of the work is not only in the measurable results of the papers but more importantly in the mutual content of the worker and the client. Let 's take a closer look on the conditions of education for the public stuff workers in Slovakia. According to the data there were 348,425 public sector workers in the year 2011. Public

sector workers are not unified in any union, nor any other organization which apparently makes it harder for them to communicate their needs and interests. Crucial document is the law 400/2009 Z. z. according to the following amendments, where the public staff is subjected.

Public staff had to change crucial changes of democratization, introducing free competition and decentralization. Challenging the remnants of the previous social system had deeply influenced availability of the education for the public staff. Realization of the Conception of the Decentralization and the Modernization of the Public Administration 2001 (Konceptcia decentralizácie a modernizácie verejnej správy) and the project of The Decentralization of the Public Administration 2003-2006 (Decentralizácia verejnej správy 2003-2006).

A comparative context can be drawn from the OECD report. It states that Slovakia together with Germany are the only countries in OECD not having centralized human resources management body. HR perspective aims to enter the public bodies for better adjusted selection and direction of the workers. Slovakia also fails in setting the system to measure the effectiveness of the performance of the public workers. Its key role is thus in the setting the normative standards. Thus can be concluded as a missing conception of the public staff workers (OECD Government at a Glance 2011).

The key tool which allows more subjects to enter the educational process is the accreditation. The necessity of the tool lies in: creating comparative measure, need for assuring quality and accepting different providers of the education. The general idea is to create the educational process of the workers as part of the human resources. Report concludes the difficult task remains to assure that offices appoint the given number of resources for the education (stated as 1% of the all wage expenditure).

- 2.3.4. Germany: The principle of voluntariness also applies in the public sector. Permanent further education is not compulsory, but desirable, but also depends on the respective department, position, supervisors and the initiative of the individual. In Esslingen, the topic advanced training/ further education is at least established in the guidelines for personnel interviews. Supervisors, therefore, ought to speak to members of staff concerning advanced training courses and motivate them. In the public sector, advanced training is also supported by statutory regulations as, e.g. the Government and States Civil Servant Act, which guarantees civil servants the possibility of regular vocational advanced training as well as paid or unpaid leave for advanced training courses. In addition, there are institutions whose advanced training courses are designed especially for the public sector or authorities as, e.g. the VWA or colleges of administration. In Esslingen, the training program of the Adult Education Centre¹⁰ is available to members of staff

free of cost and during working hours. The program of the Adult Education Centre also offers courses in Social Literacy . But also fee-based courses from other public and non-public providers are to a certain extent financially supported and encouraged. Depending on the topic or innovation, internal training courses also take place. Finally, there is a high participation rate of civil servants with work-related advanced training (76%), individually applied advanced training (11%) and non-work-related advanced training (13%).

2.3.5. France: THE CNFPT (Centre National de Formation du Personnel Territorial°), the National Training Centre for Regional Staff)

is a public, decentralised joint structure which participates in the training and employment of 1.87 million regional staff. It helps regional authorities manage jobs: assistance, changing needs, VAE, the RED. The CNFPT has national and regional political bodies. A joint structure, it is comprised in equal parts of representatives of employer authorities and representatives of their staff. Decentralised, it has nationwide authority thanks to a single network of 29 regional offices and their departmental branches, 18 skills clusters and 5 institutes (4 INSET and the INET). Employees from the establishment ensure the completion of its missions, to ensure it is in synch with the career development of employees and the requirements of the regional civil service. 1,200 representatives of employers and staff work together within the 29 regional and departmental offices, added to which is a network of institutes and partners who set up training programs. The CNFPT comprises:

- a board of directors which is the decision-making body, presided over by a local elected representative;
- a national advisory board which is responsible for assisting the board of directors in training matters, presided over by a staff representative;
- 29 regional advisory boards which prepare regional training programs, presided over by a regional representative for each office.

Thanks to this strong regional footing, the CNFPT is the special point of contact, on a daily basis, for regional authorities, providing them with the needs and resources necessary to successfully provide an effective local public service. Finally, it offers a complete range of training measures as close as possible to the needs, problems and professional realities perceived by civil servants.

The CNFPT is a decentralised joint public body whose training and employment missions help support regional authorities and their employees in their public service mission.

Its main task is to develop and deliver mandatory training, a mission expanded by the law of 19 February 2007. Such training now benefits all regional employees in all categories, A, B and C, throughout their

professional life: integration training, professionalization training, regulated training, suited to the needs and limitations of certain professions.

The CNFPT designs and dispenses training which, while being optional, allow trainers to drive their own promotion: skills development training, training leading to a diploma or certificate, preparation for professional exams and competitions for the regional civil service. The CNFPT organises several competitions for the regional civil service: regional administrator, heritage curator, library curator, chief engineer. It also provides support for the validation of acquired experience (VAE) and organises the recognition of diploma equivalences (RED). All other competitions and professional exams have, since 1 January 2010, been organised by management centres (CDG).

The CNFPT is the key player involved in the vocational training of employees of regional authorities, whether in the definition of general training guidelines or the definition of training syllabi.

The CNFPT organises statutory training sessions. It also organises preparation for competitions and professional exams, as well as on-going training with a view to getting a new job or promotion, and finally inter-regional skills development training. It increasingly organises made to measure and inter-regional training.

The law of 19 February 2007 strengthens the CNFPT's partnership and support roles over its prescriber role. Thus, the need for professionalization training is assessed between the authority and the employee, and it is the authority which approves the pathway and respect for training requirements. The CNFPT provides support and implements training.

The law confers new responsibilities upon the CNFPT relating to vocational training, such as monitoring requests for the validation of acquired experience (VAE) it receives, and skills assessments, as well as the observance of Individual Training Rights (DIF).

2.3.7. Slovenia: First let us see how the Civil Servants Act defines the term public staff: "Civil servants shall be individuals employed in the public sector. For the purposes of this Act, the public sector shall be comprised of:

- state bodies and the administrations of self-governing local communities,
- public agencies, public funds, public institutions, and public commercial institutions
- other entities of public law that indirectly use state or local budgetary funds.

In compliance with Article 102 of the Civil Servants Act officials shall have the right and the duty to receive further training in respect to official work posts, and to add to their expert knowledge according to the specified programme and upon referral by their superior."

As already mentioned above the central body responsible for the implementation of additional trainings and seminars for public staff is the Administrative Academy of the Ministry of the Interior.

Besides two compulsory trainings public officials are obliged to attend the Academy offers a wide range of seminars which vary every year. This year there are fifteen topics available:

1. Preparation of regulations
2. Implementation of regulations
3. Employees legislations
4. Public finance
5. Public contracts
6. Public-private partnership
7. Administration and management
8. Quality of administrative work
9. Special knowledge and skills
10. Communication in public administration
11. Integrity and ethics
12. Data management
13. Health and safety at work
14. Legislative changes
15. Other seminars and conferences which are not part of the programme organized by the Administrative Academy

Under each thematic unit there are several seminars among which public officials can choose.

There is no formal requirement making any of these seminars obligatory. Employees might participate in any of them either upon their own initiative or upon referral of their superior.

As the name itself suggests, the administrative Academy offers trainings and seminars which are suitable for administrative staff mainly.

Legislation covering the area of education and schooling (1996) requires from teachers and other professional staff employed in the field of education to engage in continuous education and trainings. The system itself is organized in such a way that unless they do so they cannot be promoted to receive higher title which in itself is linked to higher salary as well. Those working in the field of public education and schooling are thus obliged to participate in life-long learning.

For doctors of medicine a principle of continuous post-graduate development applies. In the framework of this continuous education they have to renew their licence every seven years. During this period they have to collect 75 credit scores which they can obtain by participating at conferences and trainings at medical and other institutions or by self-training.

Nurses, however, have their own umbrella organisation (Nurses and Midwives Association of Slovenia) which offers different seminars and conferences nurses might participate in to constantly improve their knowledge. However, unlike doctors who must renew their licences every seven years and are thus obliged to participate in continuous education and trainings, nurses might do so either upon their own initiative or upon referral by their superior.

The Training Centre of the Police Academy is responsible for additional trainings and education of police officers. According to their programme they follow the actual needs for trainings and provide quality implementation of these. In this way they improve the work and efficiency of the Police which also contributes to satisfaction and motivation of the employees. Their trainings are specifically designed for adult learners and include contemporary approaches.

As can be seen from the above public staff in Slovenia has lots of opportunities to participate in life-long learning. Some of them do it out of necessity, others decide to participate in order to constantly grow and develop and to keep in touch with new developments in their respective fields.

2.4. Public staff and Social Literacy Competencies

- 2.4.1. Austria: The results of the survey among Austrian civil employees show that Social Literacy is well-known and is perceived as very important or important. Most interviewed persons highlighted the value especially for personal competences or key competences, also known as soft skills. A majority of them knows such measures and/or has already attended relevant courses. However, the importance for training these competences is not mirrored in the training schedule for civil servants, and therefore not part of the mandatory education. It is only open to those individuals who choose such subjects in their continuous education. As a consequence, we have observed a certain discrepancy between the statements above and the more detailed analysis of the answers of the questionnaires.
- 2.4.2. Czech Republic: As already stated, the term “social literacy” is not used in the Czech environment at all, nonetheless, it should not be considered as a lack of awareness of the topic among the public staff. Since we did expect such phenomenon in their perception of social literacy related questions, we used the terminology with which they were familiar in the questionnaires. It is quite obvious that they are fully aware of the meaning of the social competencies in their professions from their answers is the research. All of the asked members of public staff replied positively regarding the meaning of social literacy (chose “It is rather important” or “It is very important”).
- 2.4.3. Italy: Over the years the training office has offered specific courses dedicated to all employees involved in front-office activities. Moreover, courses focused on communication skills are organised yearly and opened to all personnel of the administration.
- 2.4.4. Slovakia: Educated public administration in higher positions are aware of the needed social competences for the public administration work. They are able to understand the competences under the coined term social literacy though are not quite aware of the broadness of the meaning. It can be said that the inability to name the competences is the sign of not being able to fully use its potential and efficiently work with them. This can be considered together with poor availability and access to the courses.
- There are available some trainings considering certain soft skills but none of them is directly oriented for broader understanding of the social literacy: having knowledge, positive human values and being able to choose from the skills that engender the desire and ability in human beings to act positively and responsibly in a range of complex social settings. Not being properly trained in the field lays the ground for the general public staff not to be so

careful about these competences, although naturally they might understand the need of the competences.

The hunger for this kind of knowledge is accompanied by the fear of having another non-practical training which will not be able to develop the competences. The biggest challenge for carrying out such a training seems to be in meeting the needs of specific workplace, being able to carry it during the working hour but make it so effective the worker do not feel is losing its time to accomplish his/her tasks.

2.4.5. Germany: The results of the survey among the Esslingen staff certainly are not generalizable in a representative way, however they confirm the distinct trend in the German “public sector”. Social Literacy is well-known and is perceived as very important or important (in Esslingen 98%), in the public as well as in the private sector. As early as the application for employment, value is attached to the so-called “Softskills”. 61% of the Esslingen staff has already attended relevant courses in the field of SL. To some extent, Social Literacy also flows into training courses (social professions or study programs), e.g. Public Management. In addition, the learning of social competencies is established in the curriculum in order to train and strengthen the skills of young people at an early stage while attending school.

2.4.6. France: We have carried out our research on the basis of the lists below to show what is currently on offer and available to any civil servant. We have therefore tried to investigate themes as close as possible to the theme of our project. an interesting analysis which measures the gaps between what may exist and what we should strive for. This reflection can serve as a basis for the creation of training tools for civil servants (and others, not exclusively), because there are points in common between the education of the youngest in society and adults, which should achieve the same result. While it is fairly easy to take the acquisition or strengthening of know-how and technical skills (knowhow) into account, work on life skills is trickier. This is where the concept of psychosocial skills comes into play. This term first appeared in France in the 1990s to refer to health promotion. It makes general reference to the work of the WHO and U.N.E.S.C.O., which have defined 10 skills to be developed during education to enable the adoption of healthy behaviour. It involves:

- Knowing how to resolve problems - make decisions
- Understanding oneself in order to establish relations with others
- Having creative and critical thinking
- Self-awareness, showing signs of empathy
- Knowing how to manage stress and one's emotions.

Very general, these skills are used in health promotion schemes aimed at children, mainly in the framework of a partnership with educational teams. Their use is on the other hand less well-adapted when working with a view to preventing or reducing risks with adults or late teens. Here it is more a question of encouraging change or adaptation to risks incurred, well-established attitudes and behaviours. The psychosocial skills called upon are more specific. North American research has shown, over the last twenty years, the links between different psychosocial skills and the modification or upholding of behaviour, whether this involves abstinence, physical activity or access to care.

- 2.4.7. Slovenia: While reviewing the programmes of additional education and trainings for public staff we did not come across the term 'social literacy' as such. However, all of the seminars listed under point 2.2 above (Social literacy competencies in education and trainings) and relating to social skills and communication skills development are intended for public staff. Since the seminars mentioned are already described in detail under point 2.2 we will simply make a brief summary at this point.

Public administration: Administrative Academy of the Ministry of the Interior which is the central body providing further education and trainings for public staff offers the following seminars this year which we consider interesting in the light of improving social skills:

- Mediation in public administration
- Negotiation techniques
- Personal skills in interpersonal relations: seminar with a workshop
- Skills in managing interpersonal conflicts: seminar with workshop
- Dealing with difficult customers: seminar with workshop

Health care: Healthcare workers interested in improving their social skills might participate at the following seminar: How to effectively solve conflicts with patients.

Education: The following training is intended for teachers of elementary and secondary schools: Successful communication and conflict managing

Police: As already pointed out above, one of the tasks of the Training Centre of the Police Academy is also to develop social skills of those working at the Police. The Centre implements several programmes in the field of human rights protection, a programme for police officers working with multiethnic communities and 'train the trainer' courses.



As can be seen from the above, public staff has the opportunity to improve their social skills by participating in different seminars organized either by authorities or organizations engaged in their respective fields.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Description of the tools

In our research we used the questionnaire SOCIAL LITERACY, WP2: FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS, QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUBLIC STAFF annexed to this country analysis which we also used to make the interviews.

The questionnaire itself is divided into the following five sets of questions:

1. Personal data
2. Professional data
3. General perception and overview
4. Possibility and opportunity
5. ICT skills and information technology

The first two sets gather the information about the interviewees themselves – their gender, age and nationality, professional field, etc.

The third set of questions was designed in such a way to get the insight into how the interviewees see the issue and what is the current situation in the field.

The fourth set of questions asks the interviewees about the social literacy skills they consider important and in which way they would like to acquire them (preferred type of training and type of learning strategies).

Under the fifth set of questions the interviewees provide the information about how comfortable they are with using ICT.

3.2. Analysis of the Questionnaires

3.2.1 General information about the interviewees

3.2.1.1 Austria: We selected departments that are especially established for citizens' service and participation or who have direct contact with citizens through their work and projects. The survey was anonymous; the response was that 32 valid completed questionnaires were returned.

3.2.2.2 Czech Republic: 30 public administration employees. Due to the assumption that some of the recipients may not understand the term of social literacy or soft skills, we added questions that eliminate the possible misunderstanding.

The second method we used was a semi-structured interview. These interviews were taken with 6 public libraries employees within analytical visits of the education methodologists from our NGO within another project focused on adult education in libraries. The interviews served as an additional source of information and were only pointed out in the questions where a rapid difference was found compared to the administration staff.

In the additional interviews we discussed the gained data with public staff education expert from the education agencies that will be stated as possible stakeholders further on.

The sample of all repliers ranged from 24 to 56 years of age.

3.2.2.3 Italy: the survey involved people working in the front offices or in close interaction with citizens/users.

Due to the multiplicity of services offered by the Municipality, employees have to deal with people with different needs, from other cultures and, sometimes, also with psycho-social disabilities.

The surveys were also sent to 9 persons working in the Adult education centre Università delle LiberEtà, both as staff or teachers.

3.2.2.4 Slovakia: the number of the target group answering the questioners is 18, showing low number of non-returned questioners. Target group primarily consisted of the heads of the departments (18 out of 20). Most of the professionals used the words professional officer (odborný referent) to describe their position in the organization. Considering the role of the respondents, the group shows high educational level. Except for one example all of the respondents indicating the highest educational profile are university educated. The group was balanced in gender and relatively young (average age counted from the data of 15 respondents is 34 years).

3.2.2.5 Germany: the translated questionnaire was sent to all members of staff of the Esslingen City Administration, who either work in the departments that are especially established for citizens' service and participation or who have constant, direct contact with

the citizens of Esslingen through their work and projects. The survey was anonymous; the response was that 55 valid completed questionnaires were returned.

3.2.2.6 France: we met different people, each of them from different professional spheres, but meeting the following main criteria:

- state employees or officials
- with significant experience (at least one year) to testify with reliable data
- people concerned with evolving and upgrading skills in their position,
- open minded and interested in new approaches to vocational training
- passionate about their work
- philanthropic

3.2.2.7 Slovenia: altogether we made fourteen interviews which included four males aged between 35 and 60 and ten females aged between 33 and 54. As far as education of the interviewees is concerned eight of them have a faculty degree, two have concluded post-graduation studies, two finished high school, one has an occupational degree and one of them is a doctor of medicine.

As far as their working environment is concerned three of the interviewees work in the public health care sector, two in the public administration, two in a public insurance institution, one in a public library, two at the public employment service, one deals with internal affairs and three work at a public social institution.

3.2.2 Data Analysis

For the analysis of the questionnaires data please see Appendix 1.

3.2.3 Conclusions of the analysis of the questionnaires

As a general conclusion from the analysis of the questionnaires, we can say that Social Literacy is considered very important for public staff work. They are conscious of what Social Literacy means and of its relevance when approaching and facing problems in their work, though sometimes the term itself may be perceived as misleading. What clearly comes to light is that there is great need of training in this field, mostly in terms of concrete and practical training (workshops, seminars, structured courses, etc.).

For further information about the analysis of the questionnaires please see Appendix 2.

3.3 List of possible stakeholders

3.3.1 Austria:

- Labour market service, especially advisers who work with clients
- Municipalities: especially social services, citizenship administration
- Provincial and federal government administration
- Social insurance
- Tax office
- Railway
- immigration administration

3.3.2 Czech Republic:

Stakeholders in the Czech Republic may be sorted in two groups according to the focus of their activities and their relation towards the social literacy competencies development.

1 – SL Education Receivers: from this group, those who are undergoing tense or psychologically demanding situation were chosen.

- Labour office staff
- Labour office managers
- Municipality administration staff
- Legal administration staff
- Local government staff
- Public libraries staff
- Financial office staff
- Public insurance agency staff
- Social care institute staff

2 – SL Education Providers

- National Library
- Ministry of Education
- Accredited educational agencies: i. a. AQE agency, Institut pro veřejnou správu Praha, Vzdělávací agentura Metis, Professional Education agency, etc.

3.3.3 Italy:

- Agenda 21 office
- Canine Registry
- Public Nursery
- Public Library
- Service Center for Foreigners
- Economic activities office (commerce, public exercises, crafts)
- Culture and Tourism office

- Private building control office
- Expropriation and Municipal Real Estate Tax office
- School Education office (school canteens and after-school activities)
- Youth Info point
- Rental estate office
- City Museums
- Lost and found office
- Protocol office
- PuntoInforma - Tourist information desk
- Municipal Police
- Civil Protection
- Cemetery service office
- Demographic office
- SISSU - Information Desk for Social Services
- Sport office
- One Shop Stop office
- Municipal Public relation office
- Public Green area office
- City Public districts (7)

3.3.4 Slovakia:

- Region of the Žilina (Žilinský samosprávny kraj)

According to the decentralization process and the Public Administration in Slovakia, the region of Žilina is a workplace for the public staff workers fulfilling the task over the whole region which has 696, 836 inhabitants.

www.regionzilina.sk

- IPA Slovakia, Ltd. , the Centre of Education (IPA Slovakia, s.r.o. , Centrum vzdelávania). An important educational organization seated in Žilina.

www.ipaslovakia.sk

- The Faculty of an Humanities, the University of Žilina (Fakulta humanitných vied, Žilinská univerzita)

Faculty offers the education on the pedagogics, languages and life-long learning programs in the town.

www.fhv.uniza.sk

- Žilinský večerník

A regional most read newspaper can offer an opportunity to highlight the issue and the project.

www.zilinskyvecernik.sk

- The Association of the Institutions for the Education of the Adult in the Slovak Republic (Asociácia inštitúcií vzdelávania dospelých v Slovenskej republike)
www.aivd.sk/

3.3.5 Germany: derived from the questionnaire results and the expected advantages and limits of an E-Learning Platform for Social Literacy, apart from the interviewed, citizen-orientated areas of the administration, from the Esslingen perspective, the following target groups come into consideration:

- Members of staff on parental leave, absent for personal reasons or due to illness. During this time, staff members and civil servants of the City of Esslingen do not lose their claim to their job and continue to be treated as employees. Advanced training courses supported by the employer continue to be possible and practical and in addition, they quite possibly make a return to the job easier after the break. Here, an E-Learning-Platform offers advanced training possibilities that are flexible in terms of timing and location-independent for those interested.
- Citizens' involvement, volunteer work, active citizenship. From the viewpoint of a citizens' community, it makes sense if not only the administration side, but also the active citizenry can act communicatively and in a socially competent way. If only one side knows how to engage in a successful dialogue, how to overcome conflict and problem situations constructively or how to develop a view for the other side, it is not particularly expedient and after all, it has to do with the joint shaping of public life and society. Here, a (free) E-Learning-Platform can be a supporting, socially correct offer for active citizens to expand their social competencies suitable to their fields of commitment (social, political, intercultural etc....) – flexible in terms of timing, location-independent and also reasonably independent from the financial situation of the individual (wide access).
- Job starters and trainees: Social competence is decisive in one's working life and at one's place of work. An E-Learning-Platform could offer job starters and trainees a flexible, affordable and supporting basis and also motivate them to attend more in-depth seminars.
- Phenomenon Social Media: Social Media also play an increasingly important role in the public sector. Many communities are already trying to use the new technical possibilities for more citizens' participation and communication – with quite large stumbling blocks. The new media also pose new demands on the question "how do I communicate correctly", or on social competencies (an increased transceiver problem, discussions and handling of the "Anonymity" of the Web, information flood, critical faculties ...) Especially for the field of Social Media, an E-Learning-

Platform can perhaps be more than a mere supplement or support, as practice relevance itself lies in the World Wide Web here.

- Trainer, course providers: In the sense of a support or supplement to “traditional” courses through new learning methods and technical possibilities online, the platform could/should also be offered those trainers who want to use their courses not completely online, but as a supplement, in order to provide various course elements, lessons, training tools and teaching aids, or to network the study group (Forums etc.).

3.3.6 France: We can establish a network of participants who will receive the final tool comprising staff from the following structures:

- Le Conseil Général de la Gironde
- Le Conseil Général des Landes
- Le Conseil Général des Pyrénées Atlantiques
- Le Conseil Général du Lot et Garonne
- La Mairie de Canéjan,
- La Mairie de Mérignac
- Le Centre Social Administratif d’Andernos
- Le Service Mobilité internationale du Conseil Régional d’Aquitaine
- Le Service Mobilité internationale du Conseil Régional d’Aquitaine
- La Caisse Régionale d’Assurance Maladie d’Aquitaine,
- L’Institut Régional des Travailleurs Sociaux d’Aquitaine

3.3.7 Slovenia: We consider the following institutions to be important for the dissemination of the results of the SocLit project:

- Administrative academy of the Ministry of the interior (http://www.mnz.gov.si/si/javna_uprava/upravna_akademija_usposabljanje_in_strokovni_izpiti/)
- Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (<http://www.acs.si/>)
- Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (<http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/>)
- Medical Chamber of Slovenia (<http://www.zdravniskazbornica.si/>)
- Nurses and midwives Association of Slovenia (<http://www.zbornica-zveza.si/>)
- Training Centre of the Police Academy
- Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes (<http://www.cmepius.si/en/>)
- Association of Community Colleges of Slovenia (<http://www.zlus.si/>)

4. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRES DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Austria:

The respondents name “lack of personal interest” to be first and foremost the main obstacle for permanent advanced training in the field of Social Literacy, while economic-pragmatic restrictions like “other priorities” or “lack of financing” take second priority. This underlines a positively supporting attitude towards Social Literacy advanced training courses.

Communication, problem solving, intervention and conflict solving are considered to be particularly important. The course forms which are clearly preferred by the respondents are workshops and modularly structured courses. The online. e-learning and distance learning field is, grouped together, at least in the center zone, but is rated skeptically, above all with regard to Social Literacy. New on-line learning forms and possibilities (e.g. video, simulations, social networks, discussion forums etc.) are considered to be a chance by a predominant majority.

The great significance of practice relevance and interaction is also reflected in the information about the preferred teaching methods for Social Literacy. Here, the clear favourites are and role-playing games and practice examples, followed by discussion forums and simulations.

Regarding IT competences, the conditions for an e-learning platform seem to be favourable. All respondents consider themselves to be familiar or very familiar with computer and internet. On the other hand, experiences with Online-/E-/ or Distance Learning are limited and only exist at one quarter of the respondents.

4.2. Slovakia:

Research among the target group showed us that the social literacy is a great topic for the public stuff workers. It seems that the leaders of the divisions in municipality in Žilina are aware of the need for workers able to successfully and deliberately mediate his/her world as a public stuff worker in different settings. Problematic is the understanding of the term which seems for the respondents to be quite narrow and putting the stress on the communicative part of the concept. Whereas such quality as coaching and mediation which can be seen as truly social literacy skill- ability to communicate the expectations on the very smooth way has almost no importance in the eyes of the representatives.

Throughout the whole questioner we see the determination for obtaining a very practical, concrete, issue-oriented training. Respondents see the strong need to learn quality of the social literacy and also wants to be delivered it effectively for the motivated workers, preferably during the working hours but so that they are not losing the precious time. Struggle for the effectiveness is reflected also in the means of the training where the preferable forms are simulations, discussion boards and good practise examples. Using the new technologies is no problem for the respondents though only half has an experience with using it for the learning purposes, such as the distance learning course. Not such a big number of the respondents who have the experience but a high number of people voting for the preferable kind of a course to be e-learning and workshops shows significant hope that this kind of course would meet the needs of the public stuff workers.

4.3. Italy:

The analysis of the questionnaires shows that:

- employees consider social literacy very important in their work and, consequently, to participate in the training program;
- interaction with citizens, problem solving ability, together with communication skill, are the competencies reported as necessary to perform front-office activities,
- the training model preferred is the participation in seminars / workshops with practical activities and in discussion groups;
- the social literacy education offered by the local administration is judged very positively, even if the lack of resources and the different personnel assessment criteria are perceived as critical topics;
- even if the ICT competence is very high in general, (there are many experiences in online education), employees feel very important to strengthen their skills in this field.

4.4. Germany:

Social Literacy (SL) is already consciously present in the respondents and is considered to be very important or import for the public sector and one's own job-related tasks. 61% indicate that they have attended relevant courses. The specified courses are varied and are widely spread over the conceptual spectrum of Social Literacy. Support for advanced training (especially for SL) from the City of Esslingen as the employer is evaluated as positive by a majority. 68% of the respondents indicate that their institution supports and encourages the development of the social skills of their staff. The respondents name "lack of personal interest" to be first and foremost the main obstacle for permanent advanced training in the field of Social Literacy, while economic-pragmatic restrictions like "other priorities" or "lack of financing" take second priority. This underlines on the one hand the impression of a basically wide range of courses as well as a positively supporting attitude towards Social Literacy advanced training courses and on the other hand the principle of voluntariness and initiative, which characterizes Germany in general in the field of adult education.

For one's own work, above all communication, problem solving, intervention and conflict solving are considered to be particularly important. The course forms which are clearly preferred by the respondents are workshops and modularly structured courses. The Online-/E- and Distance Learning field is, grouped together, at least in the centre zone, but is rated sceptically, above all with regard to Social Literacy. A great number of the respondents demand a high practical relevance and see direct exchange with people (learning with and through people) as elementary for the quality of the courses. Only 47% of the respondents declare themselves against an extension of their Online- and E-Learning experiences, when it has to do with Social Literacy. 53% answered positively, but also pointed out the problems of the lack of practical relevance and personal contact. They see the value of Online-/ and E-Learning above all as a fascinating addition or support of the practice-orientated or "traditional" courses, not as an alternative. In the context of addition and support, new learning forms and possibilities online, collaterally as well as follow-up (e.g. video,

simulations, social networks, discussion forums etc.) are then definitely considered to be a chance by a predominant majority. The possibility of a freer and location-independent time management of online courses is also considered to be attractive.

The great significance of practice relevance and interaction is also reflected in the information about the preferred teaching methods for Social Literacy. Here, the clear favourites are Practice Examples (87%) and role-playing games (81%), second come - with 50% and 44% respectively – discussion forums and simulations.

In technical terms of IT competence, the conditions for an E-/Online-Learning-Platform look good. 68% of the respondents consider themselves to be very familiar with dealing with the Web, PC and software programs, 30% consider themselves reasonably familiar. On the other hand, experiences with Online-/E-/ or Distance Learning are limited and only exist with 22% of the respondents. It is interesting to find that the age of the respondents has no significant influence on most questions dealing with IT- / or Online competence.

From the free answer possibilities of the questionnaire, there are a variety of recommendations, impressions, explanations and reflections expressed by the respondents to the topic, and these are categorized below in the detailed analysis and are attached complete and original in the Appendix. In many cases, intercultural competence was named as a complementary term to the traditional main issues of Social Literacy. In addition, special attention was paid to the importance of self-experience, self-reflection and a healthy portion of self-evaluation in connection with Social Literacy courses.

4.5. Slovenia:

We can see that our interviewees consider social literacy skills to be very important for public staff in Slovenia. In particular, they think proper communication skills and emotional intelligence are the main two issues when talking about social literacy. As far as their concrete work place is concerned the most important skill turned out to be communication skills. With regard to this it is then somewhat surprising that half of them have not yet attended any of the trainings in the field of social skills and that 36% of them believes there are no such courses available. Another worrying fact is that 86% of them answered their institution does not pay attention and does not encourage their staff to be trained in social skills.

One important thing they also pointed out is that there is no accreditation system with regard to social skills trainings which might be the reason they do not attend such trainings to a greater extent.

As far as social skills are concerned we see there is a general interest among the public staff, but it may be the system that does not allow for these trainings to be implemented on a larger scale.

The results of the last part of the questionnaire are worrying, though. Living in an information technology based world we find the fact that half of the persons interviewed are very uncomfortable using the computer very upsetting. Furthermore, none of them is very comfortable with using the computer and 86% have never attended an online course.

If the number of interviewed persons was much higher these results would be very worrying. However, with only fourteen interviewees we cannot draw general conclusions, especially because the youngest among them is 33 years old. If this survey included a larger number of interviewees and if they were younger we are convinced the result of this last part would be

very different. Nevertheless these results show that among public staff not only social literacy programmes have to be promoted but also ICT skills programmes and trainings so they will be more comfortable using them.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Austria:

Although officially the (compulsory) continuous education of public sector staff includes measures that may be, in the broad sense, regarded as dealing with social literacy, there are only few offers and most people select trainings that deal with the contents of their jobs, e.g. legal information, ICT skills, financial regulations etc. Social skills are frequently considered as “soft” skills, with a slight contempt, in contrast to the acquisition of “hard facts” that are considered to be more valuable. Many answers also showed that people believe that they are quite good, sometimes even perfect, in their social skills, and that – “unfortunately!” – it is only the other side that makes the problem. Those who have this opinion will also be the hardest to reach for any social literacy measure. However, the majority of staff proved to be quite open-minded and genuinely interested in improving their communication and conflict solving skills.

We therefore recommend not only to keep social literacy skills as separate education themes, but also to introduce aspects of social literacy into the curricula of other educational measures, although we are aware that this might be difficult due to limitations and restrictions of resources.

5.2. Czech Republic

From all the collected data it is obvious that there are several problematic spots in public staff education. Firstly, it would be more than appreciated to change the system of considering relevance of the concrete seminars or workshops for each employee, because they very often complain about irrelevance of the choice that is done by their bosses. This fact affects both the efficiency of the education process and the participants’ motivation to develop their knowledge and skills. Secondly, the trainings should be built as practical as possible to meet the actual needs and expectations of the participants. And thirdly, the seminars/workshops/other educational events should never try to cover too wide areas, because the participants are very often confused by a large amount of information that they are not able to process.

5.3. Italy

Training should be implemented by sharing with the participants the most efficient strategy and by using all kinds of training tools and methods that can help the learning process: discussion groups, role-playing exercises, simulations (i.e. cases involving critical situations

or/and dealing with difficult people), video/audio training supports, verbal and non-verbal communication examples, etc.

5.4. Slovakia

Slovak educational system is finally stabilised but still trying to face legacies of communisms. One of the example might be the system of education for the public staff workers. Allowance of the free competitions among the providers of education, required education for the workers and the system of accreditation sets a good starting point in the legislation. In the offer of educational providers the adult education painfully missed the soft skills trainings. This had been changed in the past years. The most flexible reaction was naturally coming from the private sector, but the change had occurred also in the public sector. Still, it remains a great problem, as it is reflected by the workers in the higher places. Leaders of the departments see requirement of their employees who need to be aware of the most effective ways how to work with people in order to secure the good functioning of their office and the personal integrity of the workers. Pressures for top-down process for the social competences education are visible from the different directions. Though not that efficiently form the state, as it fails to have a functioning human resources strategy for the public staff and for the decades Slovakia is the country with low level of people engaged in continuing education. In the mentioned circumstances is a strong advantage for Slovakia to be a member of the European Union for the field of adult learners education. Thus there is an access to new trends in education, such as is the social literacy courses and using the new technologies. The concept of the social literacy is able to grasp the public workers topic, of not only the soft skills but also of organisational skills and values which help to communicate and understand the expectations. The hunger for this kind of knowledge is accompanied by the fear of having another non-practical training which will not be able to develop the competences. The biggest challenge for carrying out such a training seems to be in meeting the needs of specific workplace, being able to carry it during the working hour but make it so effective the worker do not feel is loosing its time to accomplish his/her tasks. The massive help for introducing the training would help to secure usable knowledge for the communicative part of the state. Facing the state administration who can handle the problems of the citizens would be massive help for the state facing the difficulties to legitimate state order after twenty years of democracy and living in the economic crisis.

5.5. Germany

The most important recommendations are just included in the Analysis of the Questionnaires, the conclusion and the suggestion of stakeholders. As a citizen's community with an active civil society, included in a lot of political and social fields of engagement (f.e. ES 2027, FNP 2030, Integration, civic engagements, youth, councils...). Esslingen am Neckar just knows about the importance of Social Competencies and just supports trainings for the

staff because it's necessary for the daily work. Concerning a E-Learning platform, there is a certain scepticism about how learning social literacy online. The question is, how to handle this and concentrating on the advantages of E-Learning (time, independency of place, networking, for free or short money), on a "supportive" character in addition to practical based or traditional courses with attractive new and motivating tools. And at least perhaps there are chances concerning the listed stakeholders as groups of interest/ target groups.

5.6. France

France is aware of difficulties caused by seriously lacking social skills in certain sectors. National Education has put content in place which takes this whole area into account, focusing on the concept of "living well together". Recent information shows that, for example, civic morality courses are to be introduced into upcoming benchmarks for an hour or half an hour a week, after the 2014 summer break. Trainers who are to start training in September 2013 are prepared for this new approach. However, adult education, particularly that aimed at civil servants, should focus more on this type of module.

5.7. Slovenia

Analysing the situation in Slovenia with regard to social literacy competencies of public staff we came to the conclusion that there are seminars and trainings available. We find it a positive thing that different institutions dealing with different areas of public sector offer separate trainings. For example, the Administrative Academy of the Ministry of the Interior – although the main body for implementing additional trainings for public staff – offers trainings which are designed especially for administrative staff. Public staff employed in the field of education have separate training available organized by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports. Furthermore, doctors of medicine and nurses have their own organizations (Medical Chamber of Slovenia and Nurses and Midwives Association of Slovenia) which also organize seminars on social skills development. The Police have its own trainings in relation to social skills developed particularly for situations they encounter.

Even though these seminars are not numerous there is a general awareness among public staff about the importance of social skills at their work. However, there is no formal requirement making any of these seminars obligatory. Employees attend them either upon their own initiative or upon referral of their superior. This is also reflected in that there is no accreditation system with regard to social skills competencies. If the system was organized differently – making the acquiring of these skills obligatory and awarding the participants with credit points which consequently would translate into higher position and better payment – we believe there would also be more interest among public staff for these kind of trainings.

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Link to national educational institutes:

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