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Nobody Should be Required to Study Something They Already Know!

Insights from the peer-learning project RPL in Practice

What we will talk about

- The RPL in Practice project

- An example of applied RPL from University of Iceland

- [Voices from the project on Recognition of Prior Learning](#)

Poll no 1: To which group do you primarily belong?

1. Institutional leader
2. Education professional
3. Students/learner
4. Policy maker

Poll no 2: To what extent do you have experience with RPL?

1. Substantial
2. Some
3. Little
4. None

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Recognition of prior learning in higher education

The RPL in practice project

- EU funded "Support to the implementation of the EHEA reforms" Erasmus + - Key action 3: Support for policy reforms.

- Contract period April 15, 2019 – April 14, 2021

Project website: https://www.uhr.se/en/rplinpractice

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The objective of the project

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Focus on **Higher Education**

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Participants: authorities, ministries and HEI:s in 5 countries and EURASHE

Basic documents and background

- The Council recommendation, of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32012H1222%2801%29

Background

- Gap between policy and practice

- only six education systems have nationally established and regularly monitored procedures, guidelines or policy for the assessment and recognition of prior learning as a basis for both accessing higher education programmes and the allocation of credits towards a qualification

Figure 4.13: Scorecard indicator n°10:
Recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning, 2018/19
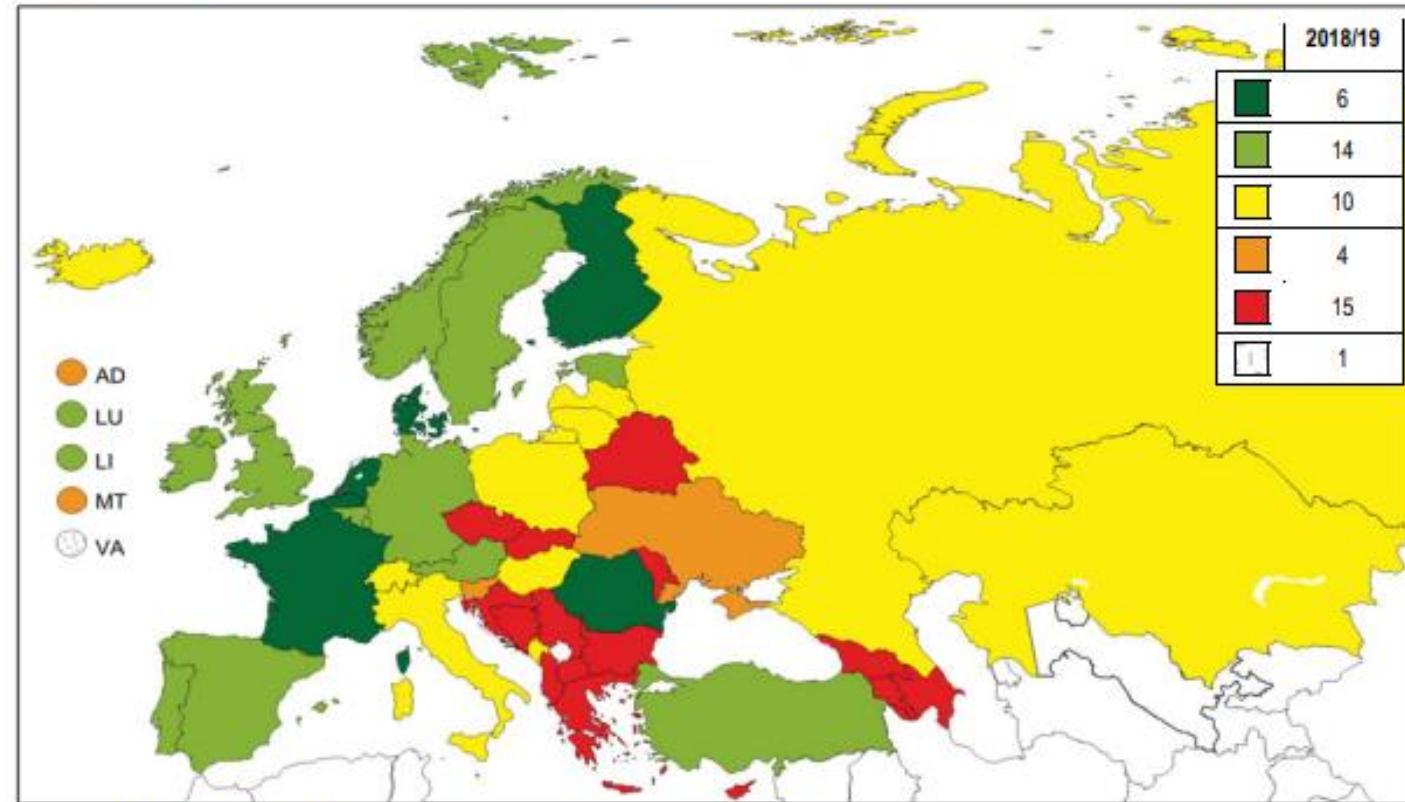
Source: BFUG data collection.

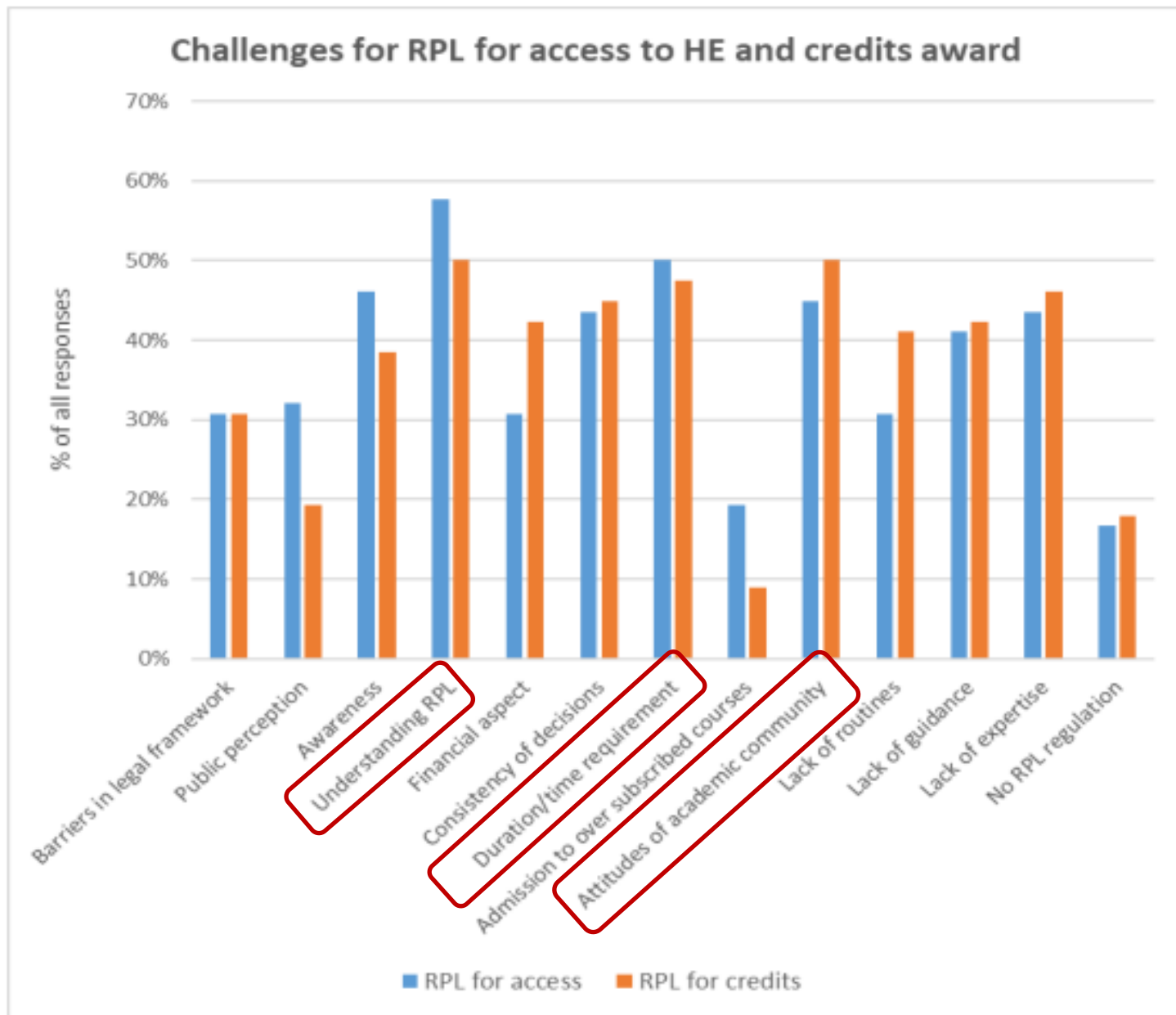# % entering through standard and alternative routes (Eurostudent VI)
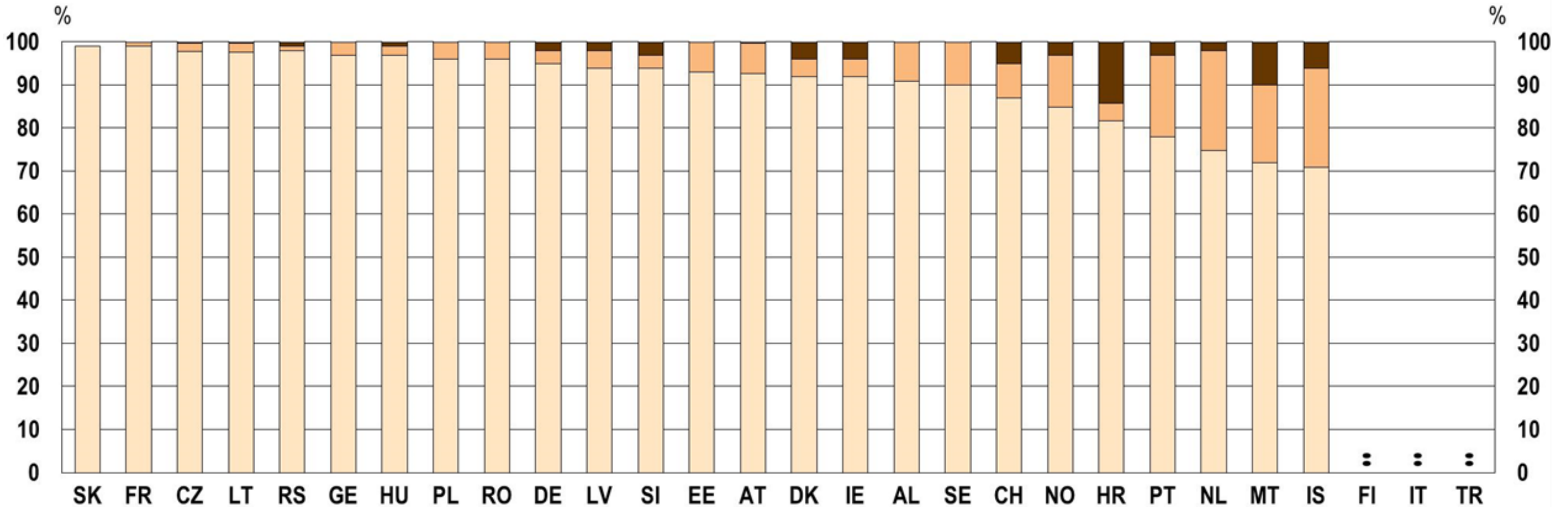
Standard route:
entry with the standard upper secondary qualification

Delayed route:
entry with the standard upper secondary qualification obtained later

Alternative route:
entry without the standard upper secondary qualification

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Survey results

Challenges for RPL for access to HE and credits award

Project outputs

- Materials:
  - Information leaflet on basic facts of validation
  - Tested self-assessment template
  - Survey on Institutional Experiences of Recognition of Prior Learning in Higher Education, Report
  - 2 webinars, Why validation and How validation
  - Final conference
  - Film clips with project participants

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Project outcomes

- Institutional and national project were going on in parallel to the RPL in practice project

- Crossbreeding between them

- A lot has happened during the project period
  - New legislation
  - New institutional processes and routines
  - Pilot projects at institutions have started

- Film clips on the project website https://www.uhr.se/en/rplconference

Conclusions 1

- Peer learning works

- Ideal conditions:
  - when the peers are in the process of developing practices
  - with a mix of actors, HEIs, Ministries, QA-agencies, Enic-Naric's and other national and European agencies/organisations
  - with participants on different stages of implementation
  - beneficial with a champion – gives insight and confidence

Conclusions 2

- It's not "one-size-fits-all"

"I expected to get cookbooks...Now I know that if we were "given" best practices examples ready for "policy copying" at the very beginning, we would have skipped discussions on the RPL concepts, deep analysis and real understanding of the national contexts...We would have gotten tools but would potentially skipped acquiring skills and understanding to develop them by ourselves."

Conclusions 3, Crucial points for implementation

- Institutional and programme level commitment

- Transparent procedures and guidelines including agreed standards and definitions

- Learning outcomes-oriented curricula related to a national qualifications' framework

- Information, student guidelines and support

- Committed and well-informed academic and administrative staff

- Appropriate funding

- Clear legal provisions/legislation

- Need for networks and information sharing

- ...and more

Development of a self-assessment template

The European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning
http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3073_en.pdf
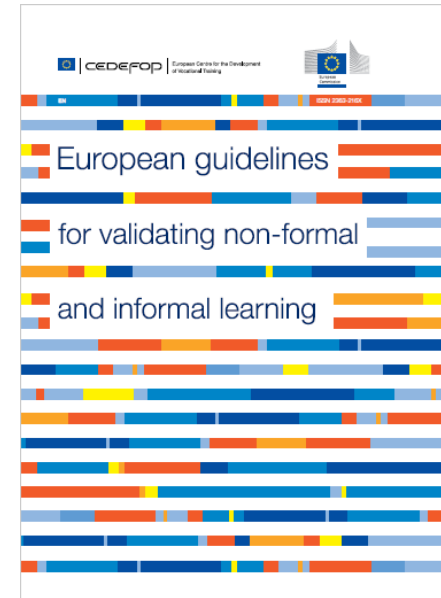
| Identification | Documentation | Assessment | Certification |

The purpose of developing the self-assessment template, project focused

- To have a common focus when looking at the different phases of validation,

- Provide a tool for achieving structured peer learning in the project.

- Participating HEIs were asked to fill in the template whilst working in practice with a validation case in order to:
  - facilitate the institutions in looking at their own process to see if it was in line with recommendations and guidelines
  - extract the fundamental building blocks for RPL and the most crucial points for successful implementation of RPL practices

The purpose of developing the self-assessment template, external focus

- Function as an instrument to self-assess an institution's own RPL practice.

- But also serve as a basis for focused discussion about RPL within the institution.

- The importance of transparent procedures and guidelines were stressed both within the project but also in the answers in the survey and during the webinars. The template can help to implement such procedures.

- However, the template can gain on translation, and it should be adapted to the national or institutional context.

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The self-assessment template

Part 2. Self-assessment template – to be filled in parallel to working with an RPL case

1. Identification	Short description	Crucial points for successful implementation	Challenges	Links to examples
Has the purpose of the validation and the different phases of the process been clearly defined and communicated to the candidate?		- Clear information and support to candidates. - Clear role definitions and responsibilities. - Clear definitions of how validation can be used. - Clear information about the process and what kind of information the candidate has to present. - Guidance/mentoring to candidates.	- The candidates' understanding of their responsibility and the effort they must put into the process – including the reflection on their learning.	https://www.cit.ie/rpl https://www.cit.ie/rpl/bookaworkshop https://www.kth.se/en/studies/master/recognition-of-prior-learning-1.786469
Which tools and procedures support identification?		- Guidelines - Easy access to information on Learning Outcomes on programme and course level linked to a qualification framework. - Templates and forms. - Examples	- Poorly constructed Learning Outcomes. - Know when all the relevant evidence is identified.	https://www.cit.ie/courses/findacourse https://www.cit.ie/rpl/usefulforms http://courses.cit.ie https://www.algebra.hr/visoko-uciliste/en/studij/ https://www.studera.nu/startpage/road-to-studies/admission-to-university-studies/prior-learning-and-exemptions/ https://www.kth.se/utbildning

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Recommendations, Ministries/national authorities

- Provide necessary frameworks for HEIs to work with RPL.
  - Legal provisions need to be in place.
  - A functional qualifications framework facilitates the implementation of RPL.
  - Consider how additional costs for RPL should be covered.
- Initiate a discussion with national authorities, quality assurance agencies and higher education institutions, which can facilitate cooperation, networking and peer-learning.

Recommendations, Higher education institutions

- Use the information and the tools which are already there, get inspiration from what has been done earlier.

- Make use of the self-assessment template developed within this project.

- Revisit the learning outcomes of courses and programmes with validation in mind and reference them clearly to a qualification's framework.

- Initiate an internal discussion to involve all staff categories in RPL, from senior management to faculty to student counselling and administration.

- Learn from previous experience – save and use previous decisions to improve and quality assure practice.

- Continuous peer learning and cooperation with other HEIs, nationally and/or internationally

Recommendations, European level – EU commission and BFUG

- Continue support peer-learning on European level

- Make sure that peer-learning projects involve different actors

Materials

- Information leaflet on basic facts of validation

- Self-assessment template

- Report, Mapping Institutional Experiences of Recognition of Prior Learning in Higher Education

- Presentations and films from 3 on-line seminars

- Film clips with project participants

- Final report of the project

Project website: https://www.uhr.se/en/rplinpractice

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In one or two words, what does RPL contribute to?

Thank you!

www.uhr.se/en/rplinpractice