



europass

RECOGNITION AND USE OF EUROPASS DOCUMENTS IN LATVIA

Summary of the study results

Riga, 2020



Ar Eiropas Savienības
programmas
„Erasmus+” atbalstu

The research report and its summary have been prepared by the Academic Information Centre – the National Europass Centre.

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The opinion expressed is binding only on the author(s) and cannot in any case be regarded as an official position of the European Commission.

Study period

The study generally covers the period from 2005 to 2019, but the statistical data cover the period from 2005 to 2018. Some parts of the study, which describe the current situation of Europass documents and activities in Latvia, cover the period from 2005 to October 2019.

Objective of the study

The **objective** of the study was to analyse the Europass documents (Europass CV, Europass Language Passport, Europass Mobility, Europass Diploma Supplement, and Europass Certificate Supplement) and the online service which includes a Cover Letter, a European Skills Passport, visibility, use and evaluation.

Tasks of the study

1. To carry out an analysis of various sources (other studies, laws and regulations, websites, databases) to determine the role of Europass in education and labour market.
2. To carry out an analysis of available statistics (national Europass website and social networks, Europass online editor, etc.) to assess the dynamics of the use of Europass documents and tools.
3. Develop questionnaires and conduct online surveys of different target groups (career counsellors, learners, Europass Mobility holders, international project coordinators, employers) to study the visibility and use of Europass documents.
4. To conduct unstructured interviews (with representatives of education institutions, public administrations) to further analyse examples of good practice in the use of Europass documents.
5. To summarise the data collected and draw conclusions on the visibility and use of Europass documents, as well as make recommendations at different levels for further action by stakeholders.

Data collection methods

Content analysis of several information sources, online questionnaires, telephone interviews, as well as unstructured interviews were used as **data collection methods**. The survey of employers was conducted using the services of “Factum Interactive” Ltd. and the content of the questionnaire was previously agreed upon. For the study, the data from the 2011 study report “Recognition of Europass documents among potential users”, conducted by the research company on behalf of the National Europass Centre of Latvia, were used to compare data on the recognition of Europass documents. Although the comparison of the data obtained in the study is conditional, as the target audience of each study is different, it generally shows the growing public awareness of Europass documents over time.

Development of Europass from 2005 to 2018

Starting from 2005, the National Europass Centre organises at least two events for stakeholders each year – seminars or conferences on topical issues of the time, in which, depending on the content, one or the other partner or target group

participates. The National Europass Centre also regularly supports and participates in events organised by partners to inform the audience about the benefits of using Europass documents. The annual events of the cooperation partners, which the National Europass Centre has been actively supporting with its participation for several years, are Career Days in various education institutions, fairs and events organised by EURES for jobseekers, international exhibit “School” for all interested parties, informative seminars for Erasmus+ implementers. During these years, joint events for different audiences have been organised in cooperation with partners. In 2016, the National Europass Centre proposed to hold annual meetings of the European Union networks in the field of education and employment – EURES, Europass, Euroguidance, Eurodesk, ENIC/NARIC, ECVET, NCP EQF, ReferNet – to inform each other in an active and regular discussion about the most relevant networks and seek new opportunities.

At events, the National Europass Centre mainly informs the audience about all Europass documents and services, which contribute to the growing number of users of Europass documents every year.

In 2005, the National Europass Centre created the national Europass website (www.europass.lv) in Latvian and English. Over time, the website has been updated several times taking into account the developments in information technologies and Europass documents, but the main sections in all versions are dedicated to Europass documents, as well as About Europass, News, Links and Contacts. From 2013, the collection of statistical data on the website was started. The website has been visited 480 388 times between 2013 and 2018.

The table below summarises the main activities of the National Europass Centre, as well as the activities in Europe between 2005 and 2018, which contributed to the implementation and use of Europass documents in Latvia.

Table 1. Main activities and events in the context of Europass (2005-2018)

Year	Activity or event
2005	Cooperation with Euroguidance and EURES networks of Latvia has been started
	Europass launch conference
	Working group for the development and implementation of Europass Certificate Supplement in Latvia
2006	International conference on the Certificate Supplement
2007	Eurodesk, Europass, EURES, Euroguidance conference “Europe offers... Eurodesk, Europass, EURES, Euroguidance”
2008	Nordic-Baltic Europass, Euroguidance and EURES Networks Conference “European Mobility Networks: Intercultural Dialogue in the Nordic-Baltic Region”
	Regional meeting of the Nordic and Baltic Europass Centres in Jurmala
2009	Video tutorials for CV and Mobility
2010	Twitter, Draugiem, Facebook profiles created
	Conference “Using Europass to preserve informal experience”
2011	A study on the recognition of Europass documents among potential users in Latvia
	Conference “Europass in Latvia – evaluation of five years of operation and future development trends of Europass”
2012	New online editor and CV template
	Europass external evaluation
2013	European Skills Passport in an online editor

	Comic "Always ask your friends!"
2014	Motivation letter in online editor
2015	New video tutorials for CV un Language Passport
	New comic "The Strong Four of Europass"
	International conference "10 Years for Europass"
	Seminar "Cooperation between EU networks in the field of education and employment"
2016	Working seminar "Europass Certificate Supplement in Latvia"
	Seminar "Europass and other current issues in career guidance"
	Online game "How mobile are you?" created
	Nordic-Baltic regional meeting in Riga
	New Europass Mobility form
2017	International Conference "Digital Data for Higher Education Mobility"
	Mobile version for www.europass.lv created
	Video on how to fill in the Europass Mobility and on the procedure for issuing Europass Mobility
2018	European co-funded Europass video
	New decision of the Council and Parliament of Europe

Main results

The aim of the survey was to find out the respondents' opinion on the visibility and use of Europass documents. Some of the questionnaires focused more on the use of specific Europass documents, such as Europass Mobility and Europass Certificate Supplement. Surveys of different target groups also provided a broader perspective on citizens' understanding and assessment of the importance of Europass documents.

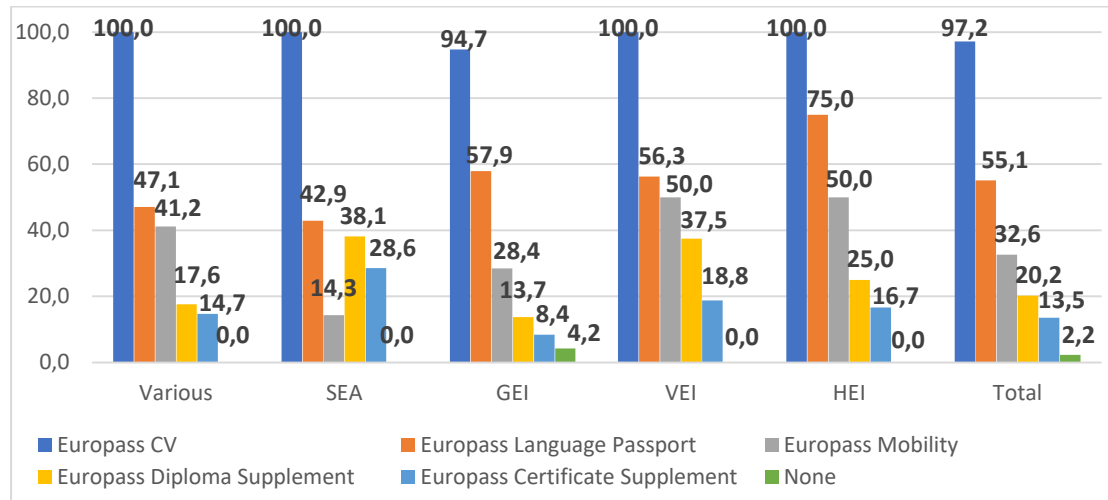
Career counsellors

Career counsellor groups included in the study:

1. State Employment Agency;
2. General education schools;
3. Vocational education institutions;
4. Higher education institutions;
5. Local governments, youth centres, individual companies.

Study results showed that Europass CV is the most recognised by career counsellors from Europass documents and the least recognisable was Europass Certificate Supplement (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Europass documents known to career counsellors (%)

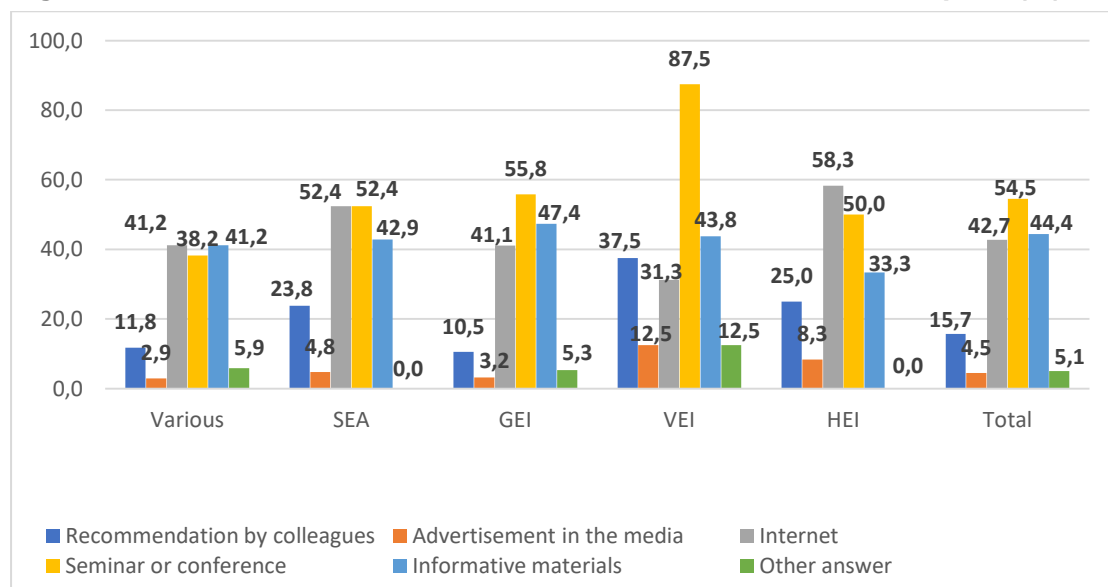


Career counsellors stated that the **main advantages** of Europass documents were that they were easy to use because of their ready-made form (74.7%) and its visibility throughout the European Union (70.8%). A smaller proportion of respondents indicated that the Europass format is required for applications for education, employment or voluntary work (29.2%) and that it is easy to assess skills using a self-assessment table (33.7%).

Respondents indicated that they had **demonstrated** a Europass CV at **career counselling** sessions (90.4%), while around half of respondents had presented cover letters (51.1%). Relatively few respondents have shown Europass Language Passport (28.7%) and Europass Skills Passport (14.6%) in career counselling.

The main **sources of information** from which respondents found out about Europass were seminars or conferences, information materials, the Internet and recommendation by colleagues (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Sources of information for career counsellors about Europass (%)



Learners

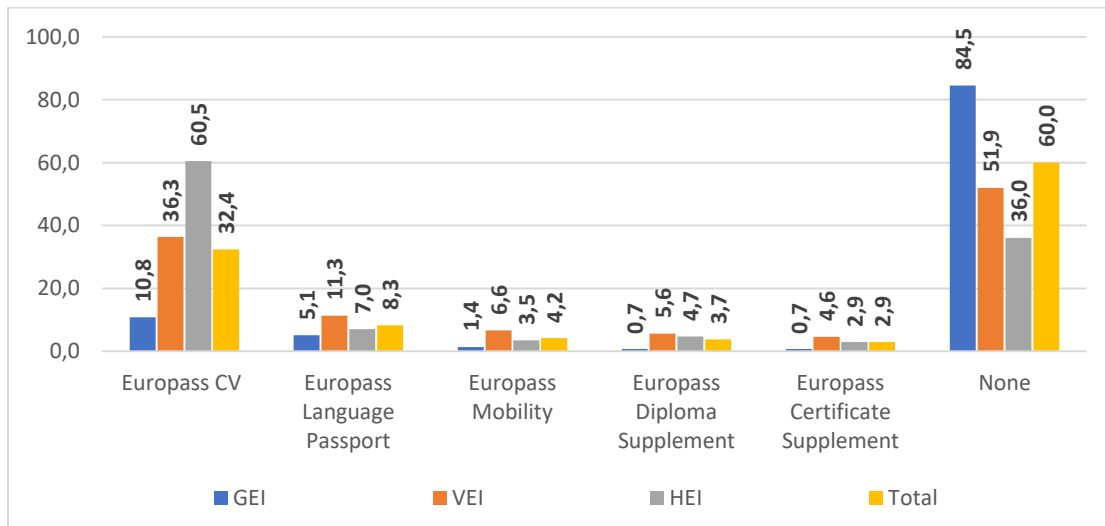
The respondents to the survey for young people – learners were:

- Learners of general education institutions;
- Learners of vocational education institutions;
- Students of higher education institutions.

Among young people, most learners were aware of Europass CV (55.5% of all cases), but a significant proportion of respondents (37.9%) did not know any documents. Language Passport was known to 18.7% of respondents. A similar proportion of respondents stated that they were aware of Europass Diploma Supplement (8.5%), Europass Certificate Supplement (8.8%) and Europass Mobility (10.2%). It should be emphasised that Europass Certificate Supplement is more related to vocational education and has not yet been introduced in Latvia (introduced in 2020), so the results of the survey are not surprising. In turn, Europass Diploma Supplement is attached to the document certifying higher education and has been mandatory in Latvia since 2004, but most likely it is not perceived as one of Europass documents, as it does not include Europass logo. The content of Diploma Supplement is governed by Annex 7 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations “Procedure by which state recognised education documents certifying higher education are issued” (19.04.2013).

Regarding the **visibility** of Europass **documents**, young people indicated that more than half (60%) do not use any of these documents and that 32.4% of respondents have used a Europass CV; the rest of the documents were used by relatively few respondents – from 8.3% of respondents who used Europass Language Passport to 2.9% of respondents who marked Certificate Supplement (see Figure 3).

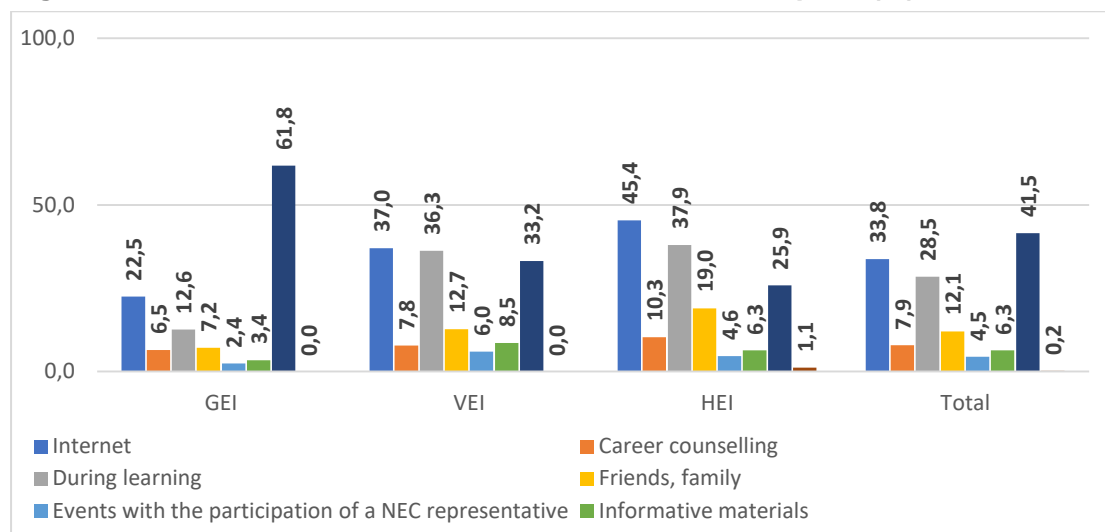
Figure 3. Europass documents used by surveyed learners (%)



Respondents were asked what the **reasons** were **for creating** their Europass **documents**. The results of the surveys showed that half of the respondents (50.5%) did not create Europass documents, but the most common reasons for doing so were learning (25.6% of respondents) and applying for a job (21.1% of respondents). A similar proportion of respondents surveyed produced Europass documents on their own initiative (15.8% of respondents) and by being involved in a project (13.6% of cases), with the least number of respondents (5.7%) preparing Europass documents in career counselling. The survey also identified sources of information on how respondents found out about Europass. A significant proportion of respondents

surveyed (41.5% of respondents) indicated that they had not obtained information about Europass. Most respondents learned about Europass on the Internet (33.8%) and in lessons or lectures (28.5%), while the least used sources of information are events attended by a representative of the National Europass Centre (4.5%), informative materials (6.3%) and career counselling (7.9%) (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Sources of information for learners about Europass (%)



Europass Mobility holders

One of the Europass documents issued by the institutions and not regulated by law is Europass Mobility. According to the requirements of State Education Development Agency, participants of the EU programme Erasmus+ experience exchange trips from the vocational education sector must issue a Europass Mobility certificate after the activity. The aim of this survey was to explore the awareness of this and other Europass documents among Europass Mobility holders and how they have used Europass documents.

The survey clarified which international **experience exchange programmes** the respondents participated in. About half of the Europass Mobility holders surveyed have participated in more than one programme, i.e. 52.1% of respondents indicated only one mobility programme (in all cases it was the Erasmus+ programme). Almost all respondents (98.9%) have participated in the Erasmus+ programme. The next most frequently mentioned were the Comenius programme (21.3% of respondents), followed by Nordplus (17% of respondents) and Leonardo da Vinci (14.9% of respondents), as well as Grundvig (11.7% of respondents).

The **use** of Europass Mobility certificates was assessed among the respondents. The results of the questionnaires show that in most cases respondents have used Europass Mobility when formulating their skills on a CV (44.7% of respondents) and applying for a project (30.9% of respondents). Significantly fewer respondents indicated that they had used this document when applying for learning (9.6%) and work (18.1%).

Survey of international project coordinators on Europass Mobility

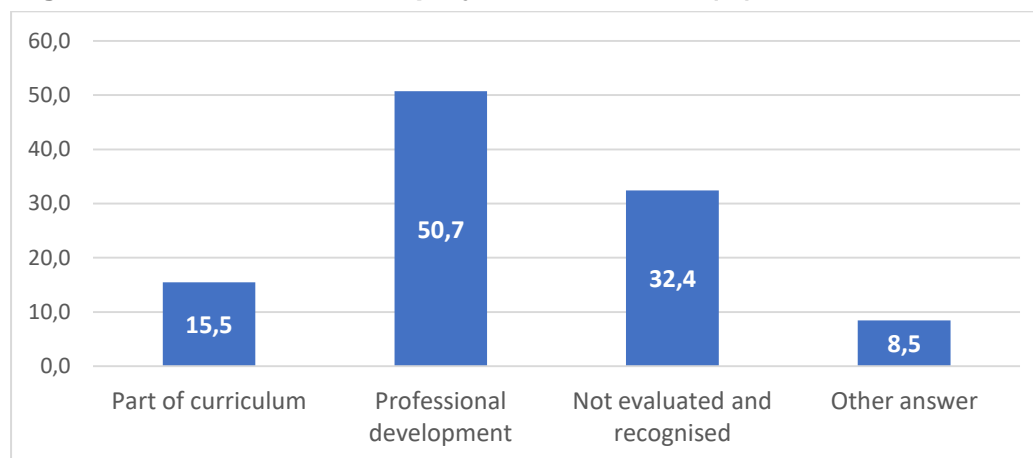
International project coordinators are the main contact persons for participants in experience exchange trips, therefore their opinion and evaluation of Europass documents is useful for analysing the practice of using documents in Latvia.

In the surveys, 98.6% of international project coordinators answered that their institution or organisation had **experience** in the Erasmus+ programme. Almost half of the respondents mentioned Comenius (46.5%), followed by Nordplus (33.8%), Leonardo da Vinci (26.8%) and Erasmus (16.9%).

Regarding the **complexity of the acquisition of Europass Mobility**, most international project coordinators (88.7%) answered that the procedure was “very simple” or “simple”. Relatively few respondents (11.3%) expressed the opinion that the acquisition procedure is “complicated” or “very complicated”.

The survey examined whether and how the learning outcomes described in Europass Mobility are assessed and recognised in the institution or organisation represented by the respondents. Half of the respondents (50.7%) answered that learning outcomes achieved during mobility are recognised as part of professional development, and a relatively small proportion of respondents (15.5%) indicated that these learning outcomes are perceived as part of the curriculum. A significant proportion of respondents (32.4%) mentioned that the learning outcomes described in Europass Mobility are not assessed and recognised (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Evaluation and recognition of Europass Mobility in an institution or organisation of international project coordinators (%)



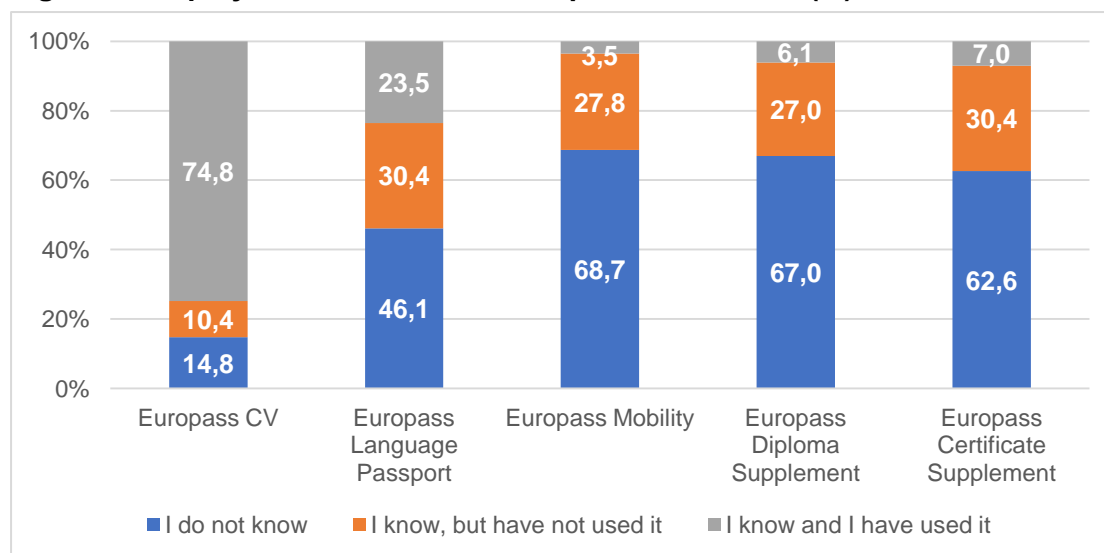
Employers

The aim of the survey of employers was to study the respondents' assessment of Europass documents, as well as their recognition among Latvian employers. The survey included companies from various sectors with more than 50 employees, represented by managers or recruitment specialists, who advertise vacancies at least once a year.

A survey of employers found that jobseekers usually submit a (Europass) CV when applying for a vacancy (80% of respondents). Applicants submit other Europass documents significantly less frequently: Europass Language Passport (10.4% of respondents), Europass Certificate Supplement (6.1% of respondents), Europass Diploma Supplement (4.3% of respondents) and Europass Mobility (0.9% of respondents).

Regarding the extent to which employers are aware of Europass documents, it was found out that most respondents indicated that they knew or had heard of Europass documents, but when asked about specific documents, most respondents mentioned that they had only encountered a Europass CV (74.8%), far less with Europass Language Passport (23.5%) and a very small proportion of respondents (3-7%) have had experience with other Europass documents (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Employers' awareness of Europass documents (%)



Representatives of vocational education institutions on Europass Certificate Supplement

The aim of the survey for representatives of the administration of vocational education institutions was to study the experience of education institutions in relation to the issuance and use of Europass Certificate Supplement. Although the issuance of this document is not specified in laws and regulations, some vocational education institutions issue it to their graduates together with the certificate of professional qualification.

Representatives of vocational education institutions were asked whether the institutions also provide graduates with a Certificate Supplement. Out of 51 respondents, one vocational education institution answered in the affirmative: Vocational Education Competence Centre "Riga State Technical School". The representative of the vocational education institution pointed out that one of the main reasons for issuing a Certificate Supplement is to promote competitiveness of graduates in labour market in order to clearly reflect their learning outcomes.

Statistical analysis regarding the use of website

Statistical analysis of the national Europass website

The results of the target group survey show that respondents' awareness of the opportunities offered by the national Europass website (www.europass.lv) varies, but there are similar trends in the frequency of use. Although most of the surveyed career counsellors (36.5%) visit this website only once every six months, 76.4% of career counsellors indicated that information included is useful at work. On the other

hand, the majority of respondents (62.7%) have not visited the Europass website. A similar proportion of Europass Mobility holders have not visited this website (35.1% of respondents) and visit this website every six months (34% of respondents). Similarly, most surveyed employers (78.3%) are aware of the Europass website but have not visited it. Slightly more than half of the international project coordinators surveyed (54.9%) have used the video guide and example on the Europass website to complete the Europass Mobility.

Between 2013 and 2018, the national Europass website was visited by an average of 98.3% of new visitors per year, which indicates the effectiveness of the activities of the National Europass Centre in attracting new users. During this time, the average time a user spent on the site was 1.54 minutes, and the average number of sessions per user was 1.37 times.

Statistical analysis of Europass portal

Europass portal (www.europass.cedefop.europa.eu), maintained by Cedefop from 2005 to July 2020, contained information on Europass documents as well as an online editor.

From 2005 to 2018, the Europass portal from Latvia has been visited 1 231 044 times. The average number of visits per year was 87 931. In 2018, the number of visits from Latvia was 146 994 times.

Compared to other countries, during the period considered, the number of visitors to the portal from Latvia does not appear in the list of 20 countries, of which the site has been visited most. Overall, Italy, Portugal and Romania represent the most users.

According to the results of the surveys, the most frequently used service in the online editor is the creation of a Europass CV – 80.3% of the surveyed career counsellors and 34.5% of the surveyed learners have prepared this Europass document online. Whereas, 55.7% of surveyed employers are aware of the possibility for jobseekers to create a Europass CV online.

Recognition and use of Europass documents

The chapter on the recognition and use of Europass documents contains information from various sources, how Europass documents have been introduced and used over time, what is their regulatory framework (if any) in Latvia, as well as examples of good practice in the use of documents.

Europass CV

Europass CV is the **most recognisable** and widely used of all Europass documents, which is proved by both online editor statistics and audience survey results.

Creating a Europass CV in an online editor is the most commonly used service. The results of the survey show that 80.3% of career counsellors and 34.5% of learners have prepared a Europass CV online, 55.7% of employers surveyed are aware of this possibility. The majority of career counsellors surveyed (90.4%) have demonstrated to their clients how to create a Europass CV in an online career editor.

Europass Language Passport

The Europass Language Passport is used very little in Latvia, compared to the Europass CV, Europass Mobility and Diploma Supplement, although the results of the surveys show that a relatively large number of respondents are aware of this document.

According to the results of the 2019 survey, the Europass Language Passport is a **relatively recognisable document**, next to the CV. More than half of the surveyed career counsellors (55.1%) and fifth of the surveyed learners (18.7%), as well as 33% of Europass Mobility holders, i.e. the highest proportion of respondents after those who knew the Europass CV and Mobility answered that they knew the document. However, the statistical data of the Europass online editor show that the Language Passport is the least prepared document (0.5%) of Latvia in the analysed period, although in the 2019 survey the least prepared online document was the European Skills Passport.

Europass Mobility

According to the survey results, Europass Mobility is the third best known document for respondents (after CV and Language Passport), i.e. 32.6% of careers counsellors and 10.2% of learners said they were aware of Europass Mobility.

In general, the Europass Mobility holders **identified this document as practical** (70% of respondents replied that Europass Mobility was “very useful” or “useful”). The most Europass Mobility holders have used this document when formulating their skills in the CV (44.7%) or applying for a project (30.9%) or have not used it at all (29.8%).

In the period from 2005 to 2018, most participants in mobility trips were sent to Germany, Italy and Spain. A rarer destination has been Luxembourg and Switzerland.

Europass Diploma Supplement

The Europass Diploma Supplement is one of the documents issued by the education institution and not by its holder. Recognition and use of this document largely depends on the laws and regulations in place in the country. One of the features of assessing the visibility of this document as part of the Europass framework is the tendency of target audiences not to see it as a Europass document. Although Europass Diploma Supplement is issued together with all higher education documents in Latvia, it does not have Europass logo and does not contain clearly visible references to Europass.

According to the results of the 2019 target audience surveys, 20% of career counsellors, 8.5% of learners and 16% of Europass Mobility holders said they knew the document. The majority of employers surveyed (67%) are unaware and have not come across the Europass Diploma Supplement and most employers (95.7%) have not received this document from applicants who have applied for a vacancy in the last year. The majority of employers (71.3%) expressed an opinion that they were “not at all important” or “rather unimportant” for job candidates to add a diploma supplement to their education documents.

Europass Certificate Supplement

Europass Certificate Supplement is a document that accompanies basic and secondary vocational education document to supplement the information it contains, making it easier to understand, especially for employers or institutions abroad. This document is prepared and issued to its graduates by a vocational education institution.

This document was not yet implemented in Latvia during the development of the study. Compared to other Europass documents, the Europass Certificate Supplement is the least known – 13.5% of surveyed career counsellors, 8.8% of surveyed learners and 13.8% of Mobility holders are aware of this document.

Conclusions and recommendations

The Europass CV is invariably the best known and most widely used Europass document in Latvia. The employers' survey shows that, in general, Europass documents are first associated with the Europass CV.

Europass Language Passport is used relatively little in Latvia, although the survey results show that it is the second most recognisable document following Europass CV. It should be emphasised that the language self-assessment table is included in the CV form, so this document is used more in reality.

The next most familiar document is Europass Mobility, although its users are a specific social group, i.e. participants in exchange trips, so the use of this document is rather limited. Although only those to whom this document was issued took part in Europass Mobility holder survey, one fifth of respondents were unaware of Europass Mobility.

Europass Diploma Supplement is the least known document from the documents introduced in Latvia. Although its issuance to graduates of higher education institutions in Latvia has been mandatory since 2004 and its structure in accordance with the model established by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO/CEPES) is regulated by Annex 7 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations "Procedure by which state recognised education documents certifying higher education are issued" (19.04.2013), it may not be perceived by citizens as a Europass document because it does not have a Europass logo and does not include clear references to the Europass framework. Although the successful use of this document in Latvia has all the preconditions (i.e. the regulatory framework), the results of the surveys show that the role of the Europass Diploma Supplement is not fully appreciated in labour market.

Europass Certificate Supplement is the least known document; it is most likely because it has not yet been introduced in Latvia.

The results of the survey of learners suggest that the majority of young people surveyed are generally relatively unaware of Europass documents and therefore do not use them. It is possible that such results could be explained by the age of the respondents, as mostly young people aged 15 to 17 are not economically active, do not apply for jobs or projects. However, when planning future informative activities, special attention should be paid to learners and teachers in general education institutions, as the lack of awareness of Europass documents and their tasks was particularly significant in these target groups. One of the surprising results was that a small percentage of career counsellors in general education institutions did not know any Europass documents, so it cannot be assumed that this and other audiences were fully informed about Europass.

The study included suggestions relating to different aspects and target groups of Europass. See suggestions below.

Recognition of Europass documents

- When planning future informative activities, special attention should be paid to learners and teachers in general education institutions, as the lack of awareness of Europass documents and their tasks was particularly significant in these target groups.

Europass online editor

- As the online editor can be seen as a user-friendly tool, more support measures should be put in place at the same time to help different audiences to better reflect their knowledge, skills and competences in writing.
- Career counsellors should inform professionals in general education institutions, local governments and various organisations, as well as in State Employment Agency, about online editor services. Therefore, despite the extensive use of the online editor from Latvia, it is necessary to continue informing various target groups about the new Europass platform, as well as to find contact points, possibly in libraries and local governments, which would facilitate the dissemination of information.
- The online editor has traditionally been more used in some countries – Italy, Portugal, Spain, Romania and Germany, therefore in the future the experience and awareness-raising activities of these countries could be more explored.

Use of Europass documents

- In order to encourage citizens to use Europass documents, it is necessary to highlight their benefits and applications.
- The results of the survey show that overall, it is relatively more difficult for general education institutions (as opposed to vocational and higher education institutions) to include knowledge, skills and competences acquired during learning process or teacher continuing development which takes place during mobility, therefore more attention should be paid to support measures, in order to help these institutions better integrate mobility into the learning process.
- It is necessary to continue informative support measures also on those Europass documents which issuance or use is regulated in order to make their use meaningful and useful.
- It is necessary to provide methodological support for adequate preparation and renewal of documents, so that citizens describe their knowledge and experience as accurately as possible.

Target audience suggestions

- Most career counsellors suggested that online sources should provide more examples and clearer instructions on how to fill in Europass documents.
- Career counsellors and Europass Mobility holders recommended that more and frequent information should be provided about the possibilities of Europass and that the completion of documents should be simplified.
- Europass Mobility holders emphasised the need to inform employers about the use of Europass documents.
- Europass Mobility holders and international project coordinators expressed the view that laws and regulations should be developed to ensure the validation and recognition of learning outcomes described in Europass Mobility.
- Europass Mobility holders and international project coordinators suggested that procedure for issuing Europass documents should be simplified automatically assigning document numbers and allowing the document to be completed electronically.

Overall, the results of the study show that Europass documents are comparatively recognisable and that the activity of citizens in using online editing services is relatively high. However, targeted information measures must continue to be developed to promote not only the visibility but also the practical use of Europass

documents. Citizens also need support in completing the documents so that they can better reflect their knowledge, skills, competences, experience and qualifications. When creating informative activities, it is important to emphasise the meaningful use of documents in appropriate life situations.