Usability of the New Europass Platform

Study report

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Abbreviations used in the Report

AIC	Academic Information Centre
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CV	Curriculum Vitae
EC	European Commission
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
DG EMPL	Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion
EPC	European Professional Card
EU	European Union
ESCO	Classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations
EURES	European Job Mobility Portal
LQF	Latvian Qualifications Framework
NEC	National Europass Centre
NQF	National qualifications framework
SKDS	Market and public opinion research centre SKDS
2FA	Two-factor authentication

Introduction

Europass, as an initiative of the European Union (EU), has been in existence since 2004. Until the conduct of this study in 2023, the development of this initiative has been observed in line with the priorities of European education and employment policies – transparently promoting the mobility of EU residents and opportunities for acquiring qualifications. The goal of Europass is to make individuals' skills and qualifications clearly understandable throughout Europe (including the EU, the European Economic Area, and EU candidate countries). For EU residents to take full advantage provided by Europass, it is crucial to be aware of the significance the Europass initiative had almost 20 years ago and how it has subsequently developed until this study. Starting from 2005, the functions of the National Europass Centre in Latvia have been provided by the Academic Information Centre (AIC), which is tasked with promoting the use of Europass documents and tools in Latvia, as well as providing support to the Latvian residents, education institutions, and other stakeholders in the use of Europass documents and tools.

The **aim** of the study is to determine how user-friendly the Europass online platform (europass.eu), created by the EU, is and how easy the necessary information can be found there. The study also aims to develop recommendations on possible improvements at the national level to continue developing this platform effectively in terms of content and functionality, ensuring convenient usability for all its visitors.

In order to achieve the set aim, the following key research tasks were defined:

1. To explore and analyse the usability and functionality of the Europass platform in accordance with EU regulatory framework for Europass to assess the platform's content and functions, as well as the availability of necessary information.
2. To develop practical tasks related to the Europass platform to analyse its functionality and how easy specific information can be found there.
3. To survey platform users who have completed the specified tasks to clarify their views on the functionality of the platform.
4. To conduct partially structured, in-depth interviews with the Europass platform users to thoroughly explore respondents' views on improvements to be made on the platform.
5. To conduct a survey of representatives of the public regarding the most widely used Europass document – the CV – to ascertain the respondents' awareness of Europass CV possibilities.
6. To organise discussions among representatives of EU network contact points and the education sector on the functionality and usability of the Europass platform.
7. To develop recommendations for improving the functions and content of the Europass platform, taking into account the results and conclusions of the study, to promote the development of the platform according to the needs of Latvian residents.

The study was conducted in several stages by using the following data collection methods: analysis of the Europass online platform and EU documentation; questionnaire of platform users; partially structured, in-depth interviews with platform users; questionnaire of general public; focus group discussions with representatives of EU network contact points and the education sector. In the initial stage of the study in 2023, the survey of platform users (after completing practical tasks) and partially structured interviews were conducted, resulting in detailed insights into the Europass platform. The next stage consisted of conducting a survey among the representatives of the public – visitors of the international education fair "*Skola 2023*" – on the use of Europass CV. Subsequently, three focus group discussions were organised (involving representatives from EU network contact points and the education sector) to explore the usability and functionality of the Europass platform. When preparing this Study Report, the creation, rationale, structure, functions, and relevant EU documentation of the Europass online platform were analysed.

The survey of platform users who had completed practical tasks and partially structured interviews were commissioned by the Academic Information Centre and conducted by the market and public opinion research centre SKDS (SKDS) in February 2023. The data collection tools and practical tasks for the study "Evaluation of the Europass Platform" were developed collaboratively by AIC and SKDS, while participant selection, data collection, and initial analysis were carried out by SKDS. In the next stage, while participating in the international education fair "*Skola 2023*" (3-5 March 2023), AIC conducted a survey among the event visitors. Subsequently, AIC organised several events, including focus group discussions on platform functionality. These events included a seminar for representatives of EU network contact points (in Riga, on 6 April 2023) and two regional seminars for education sector representatives (in Dobele, on 12 April 2023, and Rezekne, on 8 May 2023). The regional seminar was also held in Riga (on 24 May 2023); however, due to the small number of participants, the discussion results were not included in this Study Report. To provide readers of the Report with a comprehensive overview of study-related issues, an in-depth analysis of the structure, functions, and content of the platform was conducted. Additionally, information about relevant EU policy documents was compiled.

Regarding the observed limitations of the study, one of the aspects to be mentioned is the small number of respondents in the survey of platform users – 26 individuals, due to the budget available for the study. Furthermore, in focus group discussions with representatives from the education sector, there were also relatively few participants who were familiar with the platform and could express informed opinions. However, participating in such discussions gives education professionals the opportunity to explore the possibilities offered by the Europass platform and raises their awareness of Europass.

The Study Report consists of the introduction, two chapters, conclusions, recommendations, and four annexes. The first chapter presents the results of the analysis of the Europass online platform, as well as of the rationale for its creation, and relevant documentation, including EU laws and regulations. In the second chapter, the results of platform users' surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions are described. The conclusions summarise the findings and observations obtained during the study regarding the usability and functionality of the Europass platform. The recommendations reflect proposals to the European Commission that could contribute to future improvements of the Europass platform in line with the interests and needs of the citizens of Latvia.

1. Usability and functionality aspects of the Europass platform

For each developed product, technology, or service, the quality of the interaction between the user and this product, or usability may be explored and analysed. Similarly, it is crucial to examine the usage possibilities or functionality, to draw reasoned conclusions about whether a specific product or technology offers practical utility to users and what its added value is. Finding solutions is also essential for future product development mechanisms. In order to objectively assess the usability and functionality of the Europass platform during the study, the current development of the platform and the relevant regulatory framework should be evaluated.

1.1 Rationale for creating the Europass platform and its development

On 15 December 2004, the European Parliament and Council adopted the Decision No 2241/2004/EC on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass), which came into effect on 1 January 2005. Europass is a set of standardised documents that, since 2005, includes:

- Europass CV (Europass Curriculum Vitae or a standardised resume, designed to provide citizens with the opportunity to present clear and comprehensive information about their qualifications and competences).
- Europass Mobility (a certificate of skills and competences gained during specific periods of study or work exchange in another European country).
- Europass Diploma Supplement (a supplement providing detailed information about a completed higher education study programme).
- Europass Certificate Supplement (a supplement certifying an individual’s acquired competences and qualifications that correspond to a vocational education certificate).
- Europass Language Passport (a document that allows the citizens to present their language skills). Following discussions initiated by the European Commission, the Language Passport is no longer issued, and it is not included in the new Europass platform.

Starting from 2005, National Europass Centres (NECs) were established, which at the time of conducting the study in 2023 totalled 34, and they are tasked to coordinate all activities related to Europass in their respective countries. NECs serve as contact points for individuals or organisations seeking to start using Europass or obtain detailed information about the platform and its possibilities.

In accordance with the Decision No 2241/2004/EC, the NECs should coordinate, in cooperation with the relevant national bodies, the activities related to making available or issuing the Europass documents or, where appropriate, carry out these activities; set up and manage the national information system, in accordance with Article 10; promote the use of Europass, including through Internet based services; ensure, in cooperation with the relevant national bodies, that adequate information and guidance on the Europass and its documents is made available to individual citizens; facilitate the provision of information and guidance on learning opportunities throughout Europe, on the structure of education and training systems, and on other issues related to mobility for learning purposes, in particular through close coordination with relevant community and national services, and, where appropriate, make available to citizens an introductory guide to mobility; manage at national level the community financial support for all activities related to the Decision; participate in the European network of NECs.

The first Europass website was developed and hosted by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) in 2005. In 2019, AIC, as the NEC, conducted a study titled “Visibility and Use of Europass Documents in Latvia” (2020), analysing the implementation of the decision adopted on 15 December 2004 in Latvia, and the introduction and visibility of Europass documents from 2005 to October 2019.

On 18 April 2018, the European Parliament and Council adopted the Decision No 2018/646, establishing a system to support transparency and understanding of skills and qualifications obtained in formal, non-formal, and informal settings, including through practical experience, mobility, and voluntary work (Europass). The Decision specified that the Europass framework should be designed in a way as to provide the users with tools to document their skills and qualifications, both presently and in the future. It also stipulated that the Europass website requires functional development and a new type of online platform where individuals could create and use Europass documents and all related functions.

The new Europass online platform has been operational since 1 July 2020, offering users new functionality and usability options.

1.1. Functions of the Europass platform

During the analysis of the content and functions of the Latvian version of the Europass platform (June 2023), several sections with relevant functions are available to platform users (see Screenshot 1[1] in Annex 1).

1.1.1. Section "Europass tools"

In the section **"Europass tools"**, users have access to various digital tools. For instance, in the section **"Europass profile"**, initial profile creation and editing are possible. After this process, registered users gain access to the **"Europass library"**. In the library, users can add, save, and share all their supporting documents, including certificates, cover letters, CVs, photos, and other documents.

In the section "Europass tools", users have access to **"CV editor"**, which allows users create one or multiple CVs from a template in their Europass profile or entirely from scratch with just a few actions. The section "CV editor" also includes a brief video tutorial, which is available only in English. However, users have the option to choose subtitles in other languages, including Latvian. Also **"Cover letter editor"** is available, which offers a simplified format for creating a standard cover letter. This tool comes with a video tutorial available only in English, but with English subtitles.

In the section "My Skills", registered users from the Europass platform are provided with various recommendations on skill sets and descriptions, including information on various job types and their definitions. In the section "Europass tools", users can also test their digital skills by completing a simplified test. When opening the link from the toolbar labelled **"Test your digital skills"**, an explanation of the test procedure is provided, as well as what users should know and understand after completing the test. To customise the test experience to the user's situation, user has to answer a few questions about the user's dream job and educational attainment, but this is not mandatory. Afterwards, the user can proceed to take the test, choosing one of the provided answer options for each question. At the end of the test, the user receives information and a detailed description of their level of digital skills. Once the test results are received, it is possible to identify skill sets that the user should improve to successfully continue working in their current job or prepare for new tasks. At the conclusion of the test, a learning guide is available, assisting in identifying which courses are needed to achieve specific learning goals. This tool also comes with a video tutorial available only in English.

From the toolbar "Europass tools", users can open the link **"Job & Skill Trends"** with a search engine that offers sorting options by country or profession. This section opens in English by default, and to use this tool in the user's native language, page settings need to be changed, initially making the search process more challenging. Upon studying the functionality of this tool, it is observed that information about the most crucial skills for a specific profession is based on the Classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications, and Occupations (ESCO). When opening the ESCO link, the user is directed to the ESCO homepage, where the description is available only in English, despite the language settings of the ESCO website allowing the selection of Latvian.

The next tool available in the section "Europass tools" is the **"European Digital Credentials for Learning"**. In this section, users can include credentials issued by an institution to a learner, documenting completed education and/or training. These credentials can take various forms, such as diplomas, transcripts of records, and various other educational documents that verify learning outcomes. The credentials are multilingual and stamped with a unique electronic seal, serving as the digital equivalent of the institution's traditional stamp. The "European Digital Credentials" tool allows education institutions to easily verify, confirm, and recognise documents of any size or format. It also characterises or certifies qualifications (such as professional certificates, university diplomas, and other acquired knowledge), activities (such as participation in workshops and informal learning events), assessments (such as transcripts of records), and rights (such as the right to enrol in studies or work in a specific profession). The results of the study lead to a conclusion that, based on the concept of this tool and considering its technical implementation, “European Digital Credentials for Learning” could indeed significantly alleviate bureaucratic burdens and enable users to promptly obtain verified documents; therefore, the competent education institutions should be encouraged to use this tool. As for the situation in Latvia, conclusion may be drawn that the regulatory framework in the education sector has not yet been sufficiently adapted to incentivise education institutions to use the “European Digital Credentials for Learning” tool. During the study, it was not possible to test this process in a real environment, so the assessment on how easy or challenging the procedure can be for education institutions registered on the Europass platform as verified issuers of relevant documents was not conducted.

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[1] Since the Study Report was initially composed in Latvian; hence, the Latvian version of the Europass platform was explored and the screenshots from the platform are available in Latvian. During the translation of the Report, the platform has already been updated; therefore, present situation (both in Latvian and English) may be different.

Section “Europass tools” includes section **“European Qualifications Framework”** (EQF). The EQF is a unified eight-level European reference system designed to promote lifelong learning and facilitate cross-border mobility of citizens. By providing reference points to European national qualifications, the EQF helps compare and understand the qualifications of different European countries more successfully. In addition to information about what the EQF is and facts about its development stages, the involved EU institutions, and information about all the countries that have referenced or are still working on referencing their NQFs with the EQF, users on the Europass online platform, based on the given description, have the opportunity to find, understand, and compare different types of qualifications in national qualifications frameworks (NQF). When opening the tool “Compare Qualifications”, the search engine opens only in English, and in reality, the tool compares NQFs rather than individual qualifications. The results of the study allows concluding that, although additional information about NQFs in general could be useful for users, the name of the tool “Compare Qualifications” in this case is more confusing than explanatory. The tool lacks useful explanations for each search action or function, as for users to effectively work with the comparison of NQFs, they need to have an understanding of and detailed information about them in their native language. There are also no clear and simple instructions on how the NQF in a specific country is referenced to the EQF. For instance, in the context of Latvia, users should be provided with easily understandable information on how the LQF is referenced to the EQF. Simultaneously, the platform should include explanation on how the referencing is reflected in the Latvian legislation, such as the Education Law, Vocational Education Law, Law on Higher Education Institutions, and Cabinet Regulation No 322 “Regulations on the Education Classification of Latvia”.

Section “Europass tools” also includes the **“Europass Mobility”**, which allows users to officially record their experience gained through practice trainings or studies abroad. The information provided in the “Europass Mobility” description is relatively easy to understand and systematically organised. The section also explains how users can obtain such a document. Sample Europass Mobility documents are available for users, as well. Unfortunately, when opening, e.g., the Europass Mobility sample documents in Latvia, the page is again available only in English, although the sample documents themselves are available in both English and Latvian.

In the section “Europass tools”, the last ones available are **“Europass Certificate Supplement”** and **“Diploma Supplement”**. Similar to the previous section “Europass Mobility”, this section includes information and descriptions about the Europass Certificate Supplement. This document provides information that helps employers and education institutions understanding the professional qualifications of their holders. The Europass Certificate Supplement includes information about the nature of the qualifications, their level, learning outcomes, and the education system of the issuing country. Similarly, there is information provided about the Diploma Supplement – a document that facilitates the understanding of the qualifications for employers and education institutions. This section also outlines information included in the Diploma Supplement, such as the type and level of the awarded qualification, the institution that granted the qualification, the content of the course, and the achieved learning outcomes, along with details about the education system of the issuing country. In the sections “Europass Certificate Supplement” and “Diploma Supplement”, there are also explanations on how and where learners can obtain them. Examples of the supplements are available, as well. However, once again, when proceeding to the section with examples from specific countries, the page is available only in English. Nevertheless, examples for Latvia are available for download in Latvian.

When composing the Study Report in 2023, discrepancies or inaccuracies were identified regarding the structure of the section “Europass tools”. When hovering over this section in the toolbar, a wide range of functions, as described earlier, is prominently featured. However, upon opening the subsection “Europass tools” with the same name, a section named **“Europass digital tools”** is revealed, and information about this section is presented to a lesser extent. Similarly, for instance, in the skills section, skills are mentioned in a general wording, but when opening a specific link, the user is redirected to the section **“Test your digital skills”**, which can significantly confuse users. A similar issue is observed in the information provided in the subsection “Europass tools” and the main toolbar “Europass tools”, e.g., there are differences in the layout of information and links between the previously mentioned tools “CV editor” and “Cover letter editor” in the subsection “Europass tools” and the toolbar “Europass tools”.

1.1.2. Section “Learn in Europe”

In the section **“Learn in Europe”**, the users can search for information on learning opportunities of all education levels in Europe (see Screenshot 2 in Annex 1). The course search engine operated in a beta test mode in 31 languages at the time of the study (June 2023). Therefore, some inaccuracies may be acceptable, but a final version should be available later so that information can be found with possibly more accurate data and in accordance with the user’s individual preferences and entered parameters. The results of the study show that the course search engine has been operating in beta test mode since the launch of the present Europass online platform, i.e., for three years.

In the section “Learn in Europe”, information is collected from various national qualification databases and databases of learning opportunities, resulting in different interpretations of reflected data. For instance, at the time of this study, the “Learn in Europe” learning opportunity search engine failed to find information about learning opportunities in Latvia, and similarly, information about learning opportunities in Finland could not be found. However, search results for Ireland showed about 1000 pages of extensive records on learning opportunities in the country.

When investigating possible technical reasons or issues, conclusion was drawn that in the spring of 2023, the European Commission introduced within the Europass platform a new data format called ELM3. ELM is a specific programming language used to declaratively create graphical user interfaces for web browsers. ELM3 improves the usability, performance, and sustainability of the interface. Before transitioning to the ELM3 format, information about learning opportunities in Latvia on the Europass platform’s section “Learn in Europe” was provided using the Latvian Qualifications Database (LQD). The LQD only provides information about formal education qualifications in Latvia, not all learning opportunities in the country. Currently, the LQD data is being restructured into the ELM format to ensure comprehensive information about formal education qualifications in Latvia is available on the Europass platform’s learning opportunity search engine. The LQD, from which data about qualifications in Latvia was exported, previously used the QMS2 data format (SAS, Statistical Analysis System). SAS is a programming language for statistical analysis that is useful in various fields and industries for data retrieval and related data processing. It provides results associated with multivariate analysis, predictive analysis, and other data processing methodologies. Due to the mentioned reasons, information about the Latvian qualifications is not displayed on the platform, and similar issues exist with the databases of responsible institutions (qualifications) of other EU countries. As previously noted, during the platform analysis in June 2023, the section “Learn in Europe” was operating in beta test mode. Therefore, during this time, users were unable to fully and qualitatively search for the necessary information about learning opportunities in European countries.

In addition to the learning opportunity search engine in the section “Learn in Europe”, there is also a link to the section **“Information and support”**, where information about the National Europass Centre (NEC) of the selected country is available. When taking a closer look at the information and options available in the section “Learn in Europe”, conclusion was drawn that certain web pages or parts thereof are displayed only in English, resulting in an imprecise representation of information in translation. This can be challenging for users who wish to use or understand this section only in their native language, provided that it is not English.

The section “Learn in Europe” also includes other subsections, such as **“Plan your learning”** and **“Study abroad”** which duplicate information as they partly include the previously mentioned information and links to the learning opportunity search engine. Within the framework of the study, conclusion was drawn that in the section “Learn in Europe”, there could be fewer subsections with information in a more concentrated format to avoid burdening users with unnecessary search functions. Users should be able to find information about learning opportunities as intuitively as possible.

The section “Learn in Europe” also includes the subsection **“Document library”**. The section page opens in English, but when searching for information according to a specific country, the information in the next step appears in the selected language. Upon reaching a specific document, the website is reopened only in English, with downloadable documents available accordingly.

The last subsection in the section “Learn in Europe” is the **“Frequently Asked Questions”** (see Screenshot 3 in Annex 1), which again offers the option to choose a specific country, apparently offering to read frequently asked questions in the selected or Mother language. During the study in June 2023, the subsection “Frequently Asked Questions” offered information in both English and Latvian.

Such incorrect translation practices repeatedly limit users' opportunities to find the necessary information.

1.1.3. Section "Work in Europe"

In the section "Work in Europe", previously outlined information about various Europass tools is partially included, with the main emphasis here being on job search opportunities. The subsection **"Find jobs"** (see Screenshot 4 in Annex 1) mentions that search results are provided by EURES – the European Job Mobility Portal. During this study, it was observed that a known issue with the search engine persists here, as data is aggregated separately from each country, but job offers are not translated. This creates a situation where, for example, to view and thoroughly understand job offers in other countries in the user's field of interest or profession, the user either needs to understand the language of the country providing the job offer or independently translate these job offers.

The search engine "Find jobs" essentially only imports data, as no data processing is provided on the Europass portal.

The section "Work in Europe" also includes a subsection called **"Information and support"**. Similar to the previously discussed sections, this subsection contains information about the NEC of the respective country, as well as other useful services. However, the information about these services is presented in a mixed translation in several languages.

The section "Work in Europe" also includes a subsection called **"Plan your career"**, where information about various Europass tools is reiterated. The explanation mentions that the primary purpose of these tools is to help users inform employers about their skills.

The subsection **"Work abroad"** primarily provides information about the NQF, redirecting users to the CEDEFOP website, where information about the NQF, i.e., the project implemented[2] by CEDEFOP, is available in English. As noted on the CEDEFOP website, only part of the website content is available in the user's selected language. For the first time in the subsection "Work abroad", users have access to a database of regulated professions, which is available only in three official EU languages – English, French, and German. According to the explanation available in the subsection "Work abroad", if the user's profession is regulated and recognition of a professional qualification is required, the user can request recognition by presenting the European Professional Card (EPC) or contact the National Contact Point for Professional Qualifications in the country where they want to work for additional information. Both examples include links to detailed information about the EPC and its National Contact Points. Upon opening these links, the information is predominantly available in English. The information can also be read with the help of machine translation, which unfortunately, during the course of this study, operated only in one language – English. The subsection also offers users the option to contact the ENIC/NARIC centre in the specific country and provides previously mentioned information about Europass documents.

In the section "Work in Europe", a subsection is dedicated to **"EURES"**, where information about the EURES job search portal is again available. The peculiarity of the information included in the portal is that the data is imported from national databases and is primarily available to the user in the language of the searched country. The last subsection in the section "Work in Europe" is the **"Frequently asked questions"** where information is available with inaccurate translation, as in the section "Learn in Europe", presenting information in both English and Latvian.

1.1.4. Section "About Europass"

The section **"About Europass"** provides information that Europass is a set of online tools and information to help users managing every step of their learning and career. The results of the study leads to conclusion that the section compiles all the previously explored tools and functions, and information about each country's NEC is reiterated.

For the first time in this section, users are offered a subsection called **"Contact Europass Helpdesk"**, which allows users to call the Europass Helpdesk on weekdays from 9:00 to 18:00 (Central European Time) in any of the EU official languages from anywhere in the EU. The calls are toll-free. In case of technical issues, the users are encouraged to contact the Europass Helpdesk. A description is provided on what and how detailed information should be submitted in the event of technical issues, with a note that the response is typically sent within three working days (more complex enquiries may take longer). A contact form is available for these inquiries, and the service is provided by Europe Direct with the disclaimer that the information provided by the service is not legally binding (regardless of how the user has contacted the service).

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[2] Cedefop's website devoted to the project about national qualifications frameworks: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/projects/national-qualifications-framework-nqf

This section also includes the subsection **"FAQ"** (frequently asked questions), dealing with the translation issues mentioned in this study: the page is available in two languages – English and Latvian.

In the section "About Europass", the users are offered the **"Statistics"** (see Screenshot 5 in Annex 1). The statistics provided by the European Commission (EC) about the Europass platform are interesting; however, they are only available in English.

In the subsection "Statistics", users are presented with various criteria for selecting statistics, including the number of visits to the Europass platform (including distribution by years, months, countries, and languages), the number of registered Europass profiles referring to registered users with at least one profile (including distribution by years, months, countries, and languages), language proficiency of Europass platform users, as well as statistics on users' main digital skills. During the study, it was observed that practically all statistical data is visible only in English. The only section where information was reflected in, for example, the selected Latvian language was the statistics section on users' main digital skills. To conclude, while conducting the study, the total number of registered users on the Europass platform was 5 030 111.

The section "About Europass" includes the subsection **"Data protection"** which outlines information on the processing and protection of user personal data. The Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion of the European Commission (DG EMPL) is indicated as the responsible data controller.

The subsection **"Personal information"** communicates that data protection is a priority for Europass. The explanation emphasises that Europass will never share, sell, or use the information from users' Europass profile. Users are informed that they may control whom they share their information with and for how long.

In the section "About Europass", the subsection "Document Library" is reintroduced, which was previously accessible from the section "Learn in Europe". Upon reopening the subsection during the study, the functionality issues mentioned earlier were encountered, i.e., incorrect translations.

In the section "About Europass", users can now open the subsection **"News"** for the first time, which includes various information about developments in education and employment. However, the information in this section is available only in English without translations into other languages. The same goes for the last subsection called **"Events"**, where information about past, ongoing, and planned events is available only in English.

The last available section on the Europass platform is the **"Stakeholders"**. In the explanation of the section, it is pointed out that the services offered by Europass are a useful resource for personnel selection professionals, human resources specialists, recruitment and career professionals who need access to reliable tools and information to understand the skills and qualifications of job seekers. Conclusion may be drawn that, in fact, all the previously researched and described Europass tools, functions, and information are available in a concentrated form in this section.

2. Significance and usability of the Europass platform from the perspective of Latvian users

From February to the end of March 2023, SKDS, commissioned by AIC, conducted an evaluation of the Europass platform. This evaluation included surveying respondents after the performance of specific tasks, data collection (for online tasks and surveys), partially structured interviews, and preparation of transcriptions. The aim of the evaluation was to determine how user-friendly the Europass platform created by the European Commission (europass.eu) is and how easy information can be found here. A total of 26 respondents participated in the Europass Platform Evaluation conducted by SKDS. The respondents were selected to ensure a balanced representation of both genders (50:50), various education attainments, and occupations, including five respondents without knowledge of the English language, 13 respondents aged 18 to 25, and 13 respondents in the working-age range. The respondents completed tasks online and filled out online questionnaires. Ten respondents were selected for in-depth, partially structured interviews.

From April to the end of May 2023, AIC organised three regional seminars with the main goal of informing teachers, career counsellors, and other stakeholders about the LQF and Europass. Out of these three seminars, the results of focus group discussions from two of these seminars are included in the data analysis. In addition, on 6 April 2023, AIC arranged a European Union network seminar, and the results of group discussions from this seminar are also included in the data analysis.

In March 2023, AIC participated in the education fair "*Skola 2023*", where a survey on Europass CV was conducted among visitors. In this section, the results of the Europass Platform Evaluation conducted by SKDS, as well as the results of the discussions from the seminars organised by AIC and the surveys collected during the education fair "*Skola 2023*" are analysed specifically in the context of the behavioural patterns of Europass platform users from Latvia.

2.1. Results of survey

This chapter outlines in-depth analysis of the information included in the questionnaires collected within the framework of the Europass Platform Evaluation conducted by SKDS. Given the resource constraints determined for the EU project No 101051168, the number of respondents for the Europass Platform Evaluation conducted by SKDS was limited to 26 persons. Observations show that the evaluation scale offered to respondents in the SKDS study often varies, which could complicate matters for the respondents to have a clear understanding of the questions, thereby potentially influencing the analysis of corresponding responses.

After completing the initial questionnaire, the respondents performed seven tasks (see tasks and questionnaire in Annex 3), which required information available on the Europass platform. The tasks included both searching for information on the platform and using its tools. After completing the tasks, the respondents were asked to evaluate the specific task on an evaluation scale from 1 to 4. Table 2.1 includes descriptions of tasks performed by respondents.

Table 2.1. Tasks performed by respondents

No.	Topic	Task description
1.	Europass Mobility	Find information on Europass mobilities and the Europass Mobility templates on the Europass platform.
2.	Information on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)	Find information on the EQF on the Europass platform. Read the entire description.

No.	Topic	Task description
3.	Comparison of national qualification frameworks (NQFs)	Find a tool on the Europass platform that allows comparing national qualifications frameworks, then select two countries: Latvia and Ireland.
4.	Information and support for working in Europe	Find information on the Europass portal about the institution responsible for employment in Romania. Provide a link to the website. Provide a link to the Europass portal page on information and support for working in Romania. Find information about the institution in Poland that offers recognition of qualifications acquired abroad. Provide a link to the website. Evaluate how easy it was to find information and support for working in European countries.
5.	Seeking learning opportunities	Find the course “Combustion engine mechanic” that can be pursued in the Netherlands. Specify the national qualification framework (NQF) level and the awarding body for this course.
6.	Instructions and tips for creating a CV and cover letter	Find on the Europass portal the page with video tutorials and tips for creating a CV and cover letter. Read these tips.
7.	Creation of a CV	On the Europass portal, open the link https://europa.eu/europass/eportfolio/screen/profile-wizard?lang=lv, click on “Continue as a guest”, and then “Create my profile”. The handout includes a Europass CV template. Create a CV following this template. After creating the CV, save it in PDF format on your computer/smart device.

To the question “Have you previously heard of the free European online tool to help plan your career and learning and manage your skills – Europass?”, 31% of respondents answered that they have not heard of the Europass platform created by the EC (answer – “No”). 69% of respondents answered that they are aware of the Europass platform, with 34% knowing about the platform, but not using the platform, and 35% having used the platform. The majority of respondents who are aware of and use the Europass platform are young people aged 18 to 30 (more than 60% of the respondents included in the study who have used the platform).

The majority (77%) of surveyed respondents have not used the new and improved Europass platform launched by the EC on 1 July 2020. 15% of respondents have used the new Europass platform. 67% of respondents who have used the new Europass platform do not have a profile, while 33% have created a profile.

The most frequently used document among the tools available on the Europass platform is the creation of the Europass CV (six responses received). According to the mentioned statistics, conclusion may be drawn that the Europass platform is predominantly used by prospective young professionals planning to start or already engaged in studies and actively participating in the job market search. This also confirms the activity within the age group of 18–30 and the fact that the creation of the Europass CV is the most commonly used tool.

Task 1. Europass Mobility

The respondents were tasked to find on the Europass portal information on Europass mobilities and the Europass Mobility. After completing the tasks, respondents, using an evaluation scale from 1 to 4, evaluated how easy/difficult it is to find the necessary information about mobilities and the Mobility Document, the comprehensibility of the information, and the included explanations about the significance and applicability of the Mobility Document. They also provided their recommendations on how to facilitate the retrieval of information and related documents on the platform and make the published information about mobilities and the significance of the Mobility Document more user-friendly.

In the first part of the task, the respondents were asked to use the Europass platform to find information on the Europass Mobility and Mobility template by providing the corresponding link (copying it into the questionnaire):

1) As for the link to information on mobilities, 22 out of 26 respondents provided the link to the section "Europass Mobility", while three provided links to the sections "Europass Mobility" or "Preparing for study abroad". One respondent indicated that the required information could not be found.
2) As for the link to the Europass Mobility, 20 out of 26 respondents provided the link to the "Europass Mobility". Three respondents provided the link to "Templates of the European Mobility", where templates for each country's mobilities are available. One respondent provided a link to the template for the Latvian Europass Mobility. One respondent provided a link to the downloadable document "Instructions to issue the Europass Mobility", while another respondent indicated that they did not know whether such a link was available on the Europass platform.

In the second part of the task, the respondents were asked to assess their experience and provide recommendations for improving the Europass Mobility section using an evaluation scale from 1 to 4, where 1 – very difficult/very poorly explained, 2 – rather difficult/rather poorly explained, 3 – rather easy/rather well explained, 4 – very easy/very well explained. An option "Hard to say" was also allowed and marked with 5.

First, respondents were asked to evaluate how difficult or easy it was to find information about mobilities. The majority of respondents (58% or 15 respondents) indicated that the information is rather easy to find, and 15% of respondents found it very easy to find. 27% of respondents indicated that the information is rather difficult or very difficult to find. **The average respondents' evaluation is 2.77**, and based on the scale used, information on Europass mobilities is rather easy to find. This can be viewed positively, as per the collected user statistics, young people and young professionals aged 18–30 could be more active in seeking mobility opportunities.

Recommendations provided by respondents on how to improve the Europass platform to facilitate the retrieval of information on mobilities are primarily related to the need to enhance the layout and visibility of the platform's sections and toolbars, thus creating an intuitively user-friendly environment for any platform user. Respondents have indicated the necessity to improve the visual design of the platform and make changes to the names of platform sections. Also, it is necessary to create/improve information search functions. Approximately 17% of respondents indicate that improvements are not necessary as the required information is easy to find. The majority (40%) of respondents note that the information presented on the Europass platform may cause confusion or lack of understanding about its structure, which may complicate retrieving the desired information.

Afterwards, respondents were asked to evaluate how difficult or easy it is to perceive and understand the information in the section "Mobility". The majority (77%) of respondents have indicated that the information in the section "Mobility" is very easy (31%) or rather easy (46%) to perceive. 23% of respondents indicated that the information is rather difficult (19%) or very difficult (4%) to perceive and understand. **The average respondents' evaluation is 3.04**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, information on Europass mobilities is generally rather easy to understand.

Recommendations provided by respondents on what could be improved to facilitate the perception of information in the section "Europass Mobility" involve better structuring and increased transparency of the available information, as well as reviewing and supplementing the explanatory information in the section with additional materials. 32% of respondents indicate that information in the section "Europass Mobility" is easy to understand and perceive and that no improvements are required.

Furthermore, respondents were asked to evaluate to what extent the meaning and applicability of the Europass Mobility were explained in the text. The majority of respondents indicated that the meaning and usability of the Europass Mobility are very well explained (31%) or rather well explained (42%). 23% of respondents indicated that the information is rather poorly (19%) or very poorly (4%) explained. **The average respondents' evaluation is 3.04**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, the meaning and applicability of the Europass Mobility are rather well explained.

Recommendations provided by respondents on what could be improved with regard to the explanation of the meaning and applicability of the Europass Mobility mostly involve the clarification of the document's objectives and the precision and conciseness of the remaining explanatory content, as well as supplementing the overall content and incorporating practical examples. 26% of respondents indicated that no improvements are necessary or could not answer what improvements would be needed.

Finally, respondents were asked to evaluate how difficult or easy it was to find the Europass Mobility template. The majority of respondents indicated that the Europass Mobility template is very easy (31%) or rather easy (42%) to find, while 27% of respondents indicated that the Europass Mobility template is rather difficult (15%) or very difficult (12%) to find.

The average respondents' evaluation is 2.92, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, the Europass Mobility template is rather easy to find.

Recommendations provided by respondents on what could be improved to facilitate the finding of the Europass Mobility template are mostly related to creating easy understandable and precise titles, providing relevant hyperlinks, enhancing the overall layout, and using various visual elements. 22% of respondents indicated that no improvements are necessary or that there are no specified recommendations.

Table 4.2 includes average evaluations provided by respondents for each aspect to be evaluated within Task 1.

Table 4.2. Summary of respondents' evaluation for Task 1

Aspect to be evaluated	Is the information on mobilities easy to find?	Is the information in the section "Europass Mobility" easy perceivable and understandable?	Is the meaning and applicability of the Mobility well explained?	Is the Mobility template easy to find?
Average respondents' evaluation	**2.77**	**3.04**	**3.04**	**2.92**
	Rather easy	Rather well	Rather well	Rather easy

Overall, respondents have evaluated the visibility of information about mobilities the lowest, indicating the need for improvements and changes in the transparency of the platform, layout of the toolbar, and other adjustments following their recommendations. These adaptations would allow users to more successfully locate the necessary information. The responses and results from Task 1 "Europass Mobility" suggest a generally positive evaluation.

Task 2. Information on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

The respondents were tasked to find on the Europass platform information on the EQF and read the entire description. After completing the tasks, the respondents using an evaluation scale from 1 to 4 marked how easy/difficult it was to find the necessary information about the EQF and the content of the EQF description on the platform regarding its essence and significance. They also provided recommendations on how to improve the retrieval of information, description, and awareness of the EQF.

In the first part of the task, the respondents were asked to use the Europass platform to find the EQF description by providing the corresponding link (copying it into the questionnaire). As for the link to the EQF description, 23 out of 26 respondents provided a link to the section "European Qualifications Framework". Two respondents provided a link to the section on the comparison of national qualifications frameworks in Europe, while one respondent provided a link to a source outside the Europass platform.

In the second part of the task, the respondents were asked to evaluate their experience and provide recommendations for the improvement of the section "European Qualifications Framework". They used an evaluation scale from 1 to 4 where 1 – very difficult to understand/not understandable what the EQF is, 2 – rather difficult/rather difficult to understand what the EQF is, 3 – rather easy/rather well understandable what the EQF is, and 4 – very easy to understand/completely understandable what the EQF is. An option “Hard to say” was also allowed and marked with 5.

First, the respondents were asked to evaluate how difficult or easy it was to find information about the EQF. 50% of respondents indicated that it was rather easy to find information about the EQF, 23% – that it was very easy to find the information, 23% of respondents indicated that it was rather difficult to find the information, while 4% responded that it was very difficult to find the information. **The average respondents’ evaluation is 2.92**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, it was rather easy for the respondents to find the information.

From the recommendations provided by the respondents on how to facilitate the retrieval of information on the EQF, 31% of respondents indicated that they had no recommendations for improving the search of information. The most frequently mentioned recommendation involves the improvement of the layout and transparency of the section. Respondents also pointed out the need for introducing new information search functions or enhancing existing search functions.

Afterwards, the respondents were asked to indicate whether they have understood what the EQF was after reading the description. 62% of respondents indicated that they have understood it rather well, while 11% respondents that they completely understood what the EQF was. 19% of respondents, on the other hand, indicated that, after reading the description, it had been rather difficult to understand what the EQF was, while 4% responded that they had not understood what the EQF was. 4% of respondents could not say whether they understood what the EQF was. **The average respondents’ evaluation is 2.84**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, it was rather easy for the respondents to understand what the EQF was after they had read the description.

After reading the EQF description, the respondents were asked to provide recommendations on how to improve the description to improve the awareness of the EQF. 57% of respondents indicated that the content and quality of the description should be changed, suggesting to create an understandable and structured text, avoid long, monolithic text passages, and highlight the most important points. 24% of respondents had no specific recommendations. Additionally, suggestions were made for visual improvements to the section and the inclusion of practical examples in the description.

Finally, respondents were asked to evaluate to what extent the description clearly explained why the EQF was necessary. 54% of respondents indicated that the description rather clearly explained the need for the EQF with 15% stating that it was clearly explained. 19% of respondents indicated that the description rather poorly explained the need for the EQF with 4% stating that it was very poorly explained. 8% of respondents could not say whether the information was clearly explained. **The average respondents’ evaluation is 2.88**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, the description rather clearly explained the need for the EQF.

Respondents provided recommendations for improving the EQF description. 27% of respondents had no specific recommendations. The remaining respondents suggested that the description should be supplemented with information on the application of the EQF and practical examples, as well as improvements in the textual and visual quality of the description.

Table 4.3 includes average evaluations provided by respondents for each aspect to be evaluated within Task 2.

Table 4.3. Summary of respondents’ evaluation for Task 2

Aspect to be evaluated	**Was the information on the EQF easy to find?**	**Was the description on the essence of the EQF clearly understandable?**	**Was the description on the need for the EQF clearly composed?**
Average respondents’ evaluation	**2.92**	**2.84**	**2.88**
	Rather easy	Rather clearly	Rather clearly

In general, the lowest evaluation was given to the question about whether the description of the essence of the EQF improves the awareness of the EQF. This evaluation suggests that it is necessary to improve the quality of the information included in the description to raise the awareness of the EQF.

Task 3. Comparison of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs)

The respondents were tasked with finding a tool on the Europass platform that allows comparing national qualifications frameworks, then selecting two countries – Latvia and Ireland – and comparing the NQFs of both countries. After completing the task, the respondents, using an evaluation scale from 1 to 4, evaluated how easy/difficult it was to find the NQF comparison tool, as well as the content and significance of the description of the essence of the NQF, and the complexity of the NQF comparison tool, and provided their recommendations for improving the NQF comparison tool.

In the first part of the task, the respondents were asked to use the Europass platform to find a tool that allows comparing the NQFs and determine the level corresponding to the first level professional higher education diploma obtained in Latvia (college education). Out of 26 respondents, 10 indicated that the first level professional higher education diploma corresponds to the NQF level 6, three respondents indicated the NQF level 5, while 10 respondents provided various other correspondences. Three respondents pointed out that they did not find the necessary information. It should be noted that the correct answer for this part of the task was that the qualification corresponds to the NQF level 5.

After comparing NQFs, respondents were asked to provide a link to the NQF comparison tool ("Compare Qualifications") (copying it into the questionnaire). When indicating a link to the description of EQF, 10 out of 26 respondents provided a link to *"Salīdziniet nacionālās kvalifikāciju ietvarstruktūras visā Eiropā"* (Latvian version of "Compare national qualifications frameworks across Europe"), but three respondents to – "Compare national qualifications frameworks across Europe" (English version). Nine respondents provided links to specific comparisons – Latvia/Ireland. The remaining three respondents provided links to various other sections of the Europass platform – "Implementation of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)" and "European Qualifications Framework". One respondent provided a link to a source outside the Europass platform.

In the second part of the task, the respondents were asked to evaluate their experience and provide recommendations for improving the awareness of the NQF and simplifying the usability of the comparison tool. A scale from 1 to 4 was used for the evaluation; however, each aspect had a **different** set of evaluation explanations, which are detailed for each aspect.

First, the respondents were asked to evaluate how easy it was to find the NQF comparison tool on the Europass platform. A scale from 1 to 4 was used, where 1 – very easy, 2 – rather easy, 3 – rather difficult, and 4 – very difficult. An option "Hard to say" was also allowed and marked with 5. The majority (42%) of respondents indicated that it was rather easy to find the NQF comparison tool, for 16% it was very easy to find it, 27% mentioned that it was rather difficult to find the NQF comparison tool, while 15% found it very difficult to find the tool. **The average respondents' evaluation is 2.42**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, it was rather easy for the respondents to find the comparison tool.

Afterwards, the respondents were asked to evaluate how clearly the information about NQF was formulated and explained. A scale from 1 to 4 was used, where 1 – very unclearly, 2 – rather unclearly, 3 – rather clearly, and 4 – very clearly.

38% of respondents indicated that the NQF was rather clearly formulated and explained, while 12% found the wording and explanation very clear. 35% of respondents indicated that the NQF was rather unclearly formulated and explained, while 11% found the wording and explanation very unclear. 4% of respondents could not say whether the NQF was formulated and explained clearly. **The average respondents' evaluation is 2.52**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, the NQF comparison tool is rather clearly formulated and explained.

The respondents provided recommendations on what should be improved to make the explanation of the NQF clearer. 37% of respondents indicated that the quality of the text should be improved in the section by making the existing text shorter and more concise and by including the purpose of using NQFs and detailed explanations of NQF application. The respondents also suggested the inclusion of practical examples and templates, as well as the need to review the information layout in the section.

The respondents were also asked to evaluate how clearly the necessity of the NQF was explained. A scale from 1 to 4 was used, where 1 – very unclearly, 2 – rather unclearly, 3 – rather clearly, and 4 – very clearly. An option "Hard to say" was also allowed and marked with 5.

46% of respondents indicated that the necessity of the NQF was rather clearly explained, while 23% found the explanation very clear. 8% of respondents, on the other hand, found the explanation of the necessity of the NQF rather unclear, but 15% – was very unclear. 8% of respondents could not say whether the need for the NQF was explained clearly. **The average respondents' evaluation is 2.83, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, the need for the NQF was rather clearly explained to the respondents.**

The respondents provided recommendations for further improvements of the explanation of the NQF. 40% of respondents had no specific recommendations or could not answer. 37% of respondents, on the other hand, suggested to review the content of the explanation by incorporating simpler terms and expanding explanatory information. Other recommendations involved the incorporation of practical examples, simplification of the NQF comparison tool, provision of translation in the user's chosen language, and a more user-friendly layout for the section.

Finally, the respondents were asked to evaluate the extent to which the use of the qualification comparison tool was easy and understandable. A scale from 1 to 4 was used, where 1 – very difficult, 2 – rather difficult, 3 – rather easy, and 4 – very easy. An option "Hard to say" was also allowed and marked with 5.

38% of respondents found the use of the NQF comparison tool rather difficult, while 23% found it very difficult. 19% of respondents, on the other hand, found the use of the NQF comparison tool very easy, while 12% found it rather easy. 8% of respondents could not say whether or not the use was easy. Based on the scale used, **the average respondents' evaluation is 2.29**, which suggests that the use of the NQF comparison tool is rather difficult. Conclusion may be drawn that an incorrect translation can make the use of the NQF comparison tool problematic. For instance, in this study, while analysing other tools on the Europass platform, an observation was made that during the search process, the platform switches to English without providing a translation into Latvian. The absence of the Latvian language option may be a significant obstacle for potential users to fully use this tool, as evidenced by the previous findings that the NQF descriptions were understandable.

The respondents were asked to provide recommendations on how to simplify the qualification comparison tool to facilitate its application for the users. 20% of respondents had no specific recommendations or could not answer. The majority of respondents have indicated that it is necessary to improve the layout of the NQF comparison tool and make the displayed information more transparent. They also suggested including an EQF/NQF comparison table next to the tool and enhancing the translation options (full text translation in one language, eliminating textual errors). The respondents have emphasised the need to include explanatory information on how to use the comparison tool and interpret the obtained results.

Table 4.4 includes average evaluations provided by respondents for each aspect to be evaluated within Task 3.

Table 4.4. Summary of respondents' evaluation for Task 3

Aspect to be evaluated	How easy was it to find the NQF comparison tool on the Europass platform?	How well was the essence of the NQF formulated and explained?	How well was the necessity of the NQF explained?	How easy was it to use and understand the NQF comparison tool?
Average respondents' evaluation	**2.42**	**2.52**	**2.83**	**2.29**
	Rather easy	Rather well	Rather well	Rather difficult

In this summary, a scale with different criteria (compared to other tasks) was used – a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 is very easy, 2 – rather easy, 3 – rather difficult, and 4 – very difficult.

In general, the respondents have rated the ease of use of the NQF comparison tool the lowest, describing the use of this tool as rather difficult. This evaluation suggests that it is necessary to make the NQF comparison tool simpler and more user-friendly. Conclusion may be drawn that, in addition to solving technical issues, attention should be focused on explaining the results, ensuring that users have a clear understanding of the selected and obtained results or indicators and their implications in specific situations. Specific examples with explanations would be genuinely helpful, considering that most users are likely to perform such actions for the first time, unless they have had previous experience with such information, or they are professionally involved in the field of education on a daily basis.

Task 4. Information and support for working in Europe

The respondents were tasked to use the Europass platform to find information on the institution responsible for employment in Romania and the institution in Poland that offers recognition of qualifications acquired abroad. After completing the tasks, the respondents, using an evaluation scale from 1 to 4, evaluated how easy it was to find information and support for working in the European countries, to what extent the subsection "Information and support" offered understandable information about job opportunities and services, whether the information about job opportunities and services offered in the subsection "Information and support" was comprehensive, and to what extent, when looking for work abroad, the information found in the section "Information and support" would be useful for the respondents themselves. Respondents also provided recommendations for improvement of the section.

In the first part of the task, the respondents were asked to find on the Europass platform:

1) Information about the institution responsible for employment in Romania and provide a link to this institution.

10 out of 26 respondents provided the answer *"Autoritatea Națională pentru Calificări"*, five respondents – "National Agency for Employment", but four respondents – *"Agentia Nationala pentru Ocuparea Fortei de Munca (ANOFM)".* four respondents indicated that they had not found the information, while three respondents named other institutions. As for the institution responsible for employment in Romania, the respondents provided links to *"Agentia Nationala pentru Ocuparea Fortei de Munca"* (eight respondents), the Europass portal section "Work in Romania" (three respondents), and the Romanian (national) Europass platform (seven respondents). Two respondents provided links to the website of the Ministry of Education of Romania and the Europass platform section on the NQF. Four respondents did not find the necessary information. At one respondent's provided link, a malfunction was observed. The correct answer for the first part of this task was *"Autoritatea Națională pentru Calificări"*. Conclusion may be drawn that, given the sufficiently varied responses from respondents, they evidently struggle to sequentially and accurately find the specified information. This suggests that the relevant sections of the Europass platform are not fully comprehensible to the respondents.

The respondents were asked to provide a link to the Europass portal page on information and support for working in Romania. 15 respondents provided a link to the Europass portal section *"Strādāt Rumānijā"* (Latvian version of "Work in Romania"), but four respondents – a link to the section "Work in Romania" (English version). Three respondents indicated that they did not find the necessary information. Four respondents provided links to several other Europass sections and a source outside the Europass platform.

2) Find information on the institution in Poland that offers recognition of qualifications acquired abroad and provide a link to the institution's website.

When asked to indicate the institution in Poland that offers recognition of qualifications acquired abroad, 11 respondents named the Ministry of Education and Science of Poland (*"Ministerstwo edukacji i nauki"/ "Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki"*), but three respondents – *"Krajowe Centrum Europass*". Four respondents indicated that the information could not be found. Eight respondents, on the other hand, named different institutions and authorities.

When asked to indicate the institutions in Poland that offer recognition of qualifications acquired abroad, 10 respondents named the Ministry of Education and Science of Poland (*"Ministerstwo edukacji i nauki"/ "Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki"*). Four respondents provided a link to the "Coordination Point for Polish and European Qualifications Framework". 10 respondents provided links to several other Europass sections, as well as sites of Polish institutions and downloadable materials. Two respondents indicated that they had not found the necessary information.

In the second part of the task, the respondents were asked to evaluate their experience and provide recommendations for the improvement of the section "Information and support". A scale from 1 to 4 was used, where 1 – very difficult, 2 – rather difficult, 3 – rather easy, and 4 – very easy. An option "Hard to say" was also included and marked with 5.

At first, the respondents evaluated how easy it was to find information and support for working in the European countries. 35% of respondents indicated that it was rather difficult to find information and support for working in the European countries, while 19% found it very difficult. 23% of respondents, on the other hand, indicated that it was rather easy to find information and support for working in European countries, while 19% found it very easy. 4% of respondents could not say whether or not it was easy (see Figure 1 below).

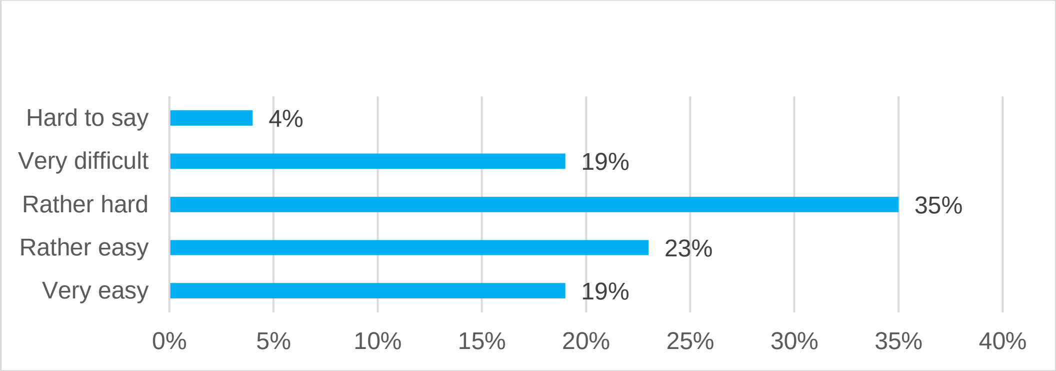


Figure 1. Respondents' evaluation whether information on work in European countries and relevant support can be easily found

The average respondents' evaluation is 2.44, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, respondents generally find it rather difficult to find information and support for working in European countries.

The respondents were asked to provide recommendations on how to facilitate finding information on job opportunities in the European countries, using the Europass platform. 34% of respondents indicated the need to make changes to the layout and structure of the platform, making it easier to navigate and find information. They also pointed out the need to improve translation quality by avoiding language switches without changing the language (13% of respondents). 32% of respondents had no specific recommendations or it was difficult for them to mention any, while 5% of respondents indicated that the relevant information was not found. Other recommendations involved expanding search functions, adding additional explanations, as well as better structuring and simplifying existing information.

Subsequently, the respondents evaluated to what extent the information on job opportunities and services in the subsection "Information and support" was understandable. 35% of respondents indicated that the information on job opportunities and services in the subsection "Information and support" was rather easy to understand, while 27% of respondents found it very easy. 27% of respondents indicated that it was rather difficult to understand the information on job opportunities and services in the subsection "Information and support", while 11% of respondents found it very difficult. **The average respondents' evaluation is 2.77**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, it is rather easy to understand the information on job opportunities and services in the subsection "Information and support" (see Figure 2).

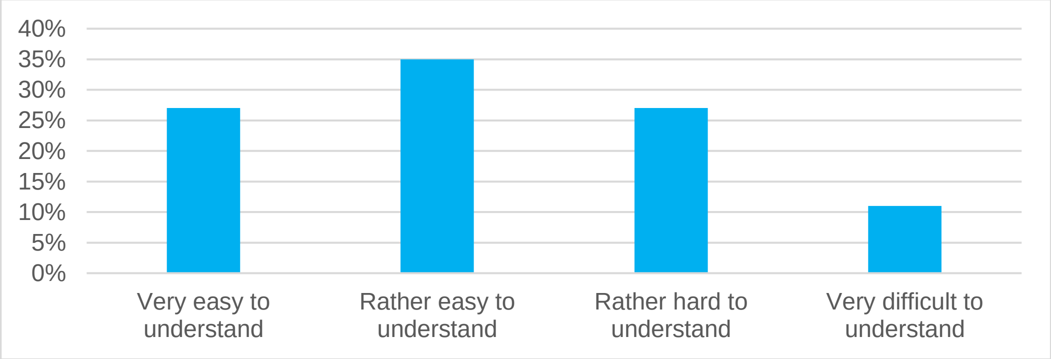


Figure 2. Respondents' evaluation of the extent to which information about job opportunities and services is understandable in the subsection "Information and support"

The respondents provided recommendations for improving the information on job opportunities and services available in the subsection "Information and support". 32% of respondents had no specific recommendations or could not answer. 23% of respondents, on the other hand, indicated that it is necessary to improve translation quality in one selected language (eliminate partial translation of text). 13% of respondents indicated that the explanatory descriptions should be improved, while 6.5% of respondents mentioned that the necessary information was not found.

Subsequently, the respondents evaluated how comprehensive the information on job opportunities and services was in the subsection “Information and support”. 38% of respondents indicated that the information on job opportunities and services in the subsection “Information and support” was sufficiently comprehensive, while 12% of respondents found it very comprehensive. 23% of respondents, on the other hand, indicated that the information on job opportunities and services in the subsection “Information and support” was rather limited, while 12% of respondents found it very limited. 15% of respondents could not say whether or not this information was comprehensive. **The average respondents’ evaluation is 2.59**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, the information on job opportunities and services in the subsection “Information and support” is rather comprehensive (see Figure 3).

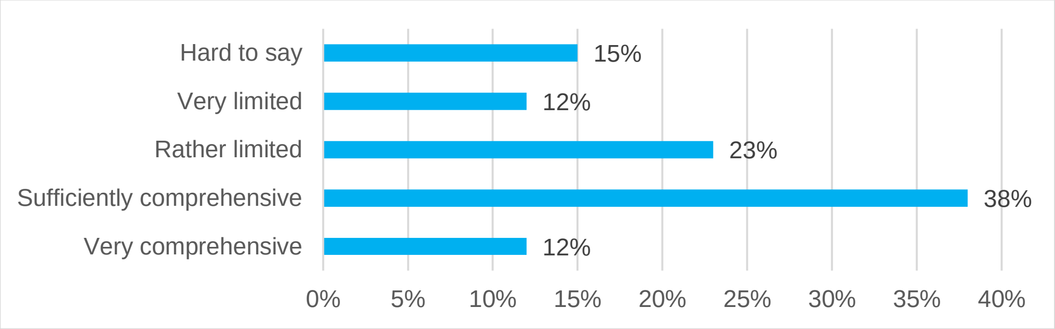


Figure 3. Respondents’ evaluation on the extent to which information on job opportunities and services is available under “Information and support”

The respondents provided recommendations on how to improve the subsection “Information and support” to ensure that the information on job opportunities and services in the subsection “Information and support” is comprehensive for job seekers. 33% of respondents had no specific recommendations or could not answer. 3% of respondents indicated that they had not found this section, while 42% suggested providing broader and more detailed practical information, as well as enhancements to information selection and transparency.

Finally, the respondents evaluated to what extent, when searching for a job abroad, the information found in the section “Information and support” would be useful for the respondents themselves. 35% of respondents indicated that, when searching for a job abroad, the information available in this section would be rather useful, while 19% found it to be very useful. 23% of respondents, on the other hand, found the information available in the section to be somewhat useful, but 11% did not find it useful at all. 12% of respondents could not say. **The average respondents’ evaluation is 2.70**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, the information on job opportunities and services in the subsection “Information and support”, when looking for a job abroad, is rather useful (see Figure 4).

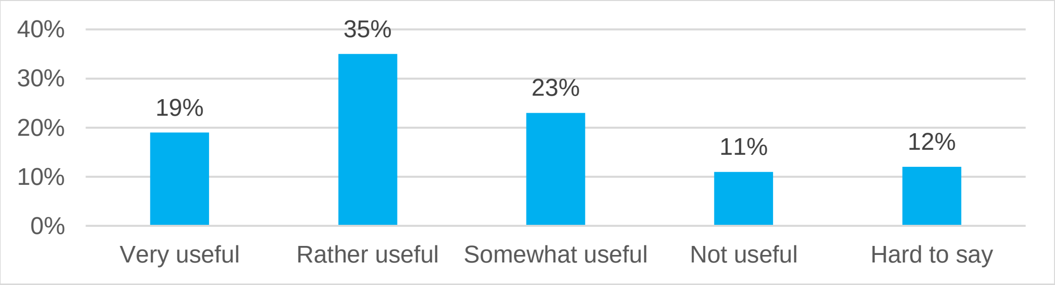


Figure 4. Respondents’ evaluation of the extent to which the information found in the “Information and support” section would be useful for the respondents themselves

The respondents provided recommendations for improving the section to make it more useful for the job seekers, also indicating what additional information should be included. 44% of respondents had no specific recommendations. Respondents suggested that the section needs to include structured and concise information, as well as additional practical explanations, examples, and descriptions of situations.

Table 4.5 includes average evaluations provided by respondents for each aspect to be evaluated within Task 4.

Table 4.5. Summary of respondents' evaluation for Task 4

Aspect to be evaluated	**How easy was it to find information on working in European countries and on the relevant support?**	**Was the information on job opportunities and services easy to understand?**	**How comprehensive and diverse was the information on job opportunities and services?**	**Did you find this information useful when looking for a job abroad?**
Average respondents' evaluation	**2.44**	**2.77**	**2.59**	**2.70**
	Rather difficult	Rather easy to understand	Rather comprehensive	Rather useful

In general, the respondents have evaluated the visibility of information about working in European countries and the relevant support the lowest, indicating the need to improve the visibility of the section "Information and Support" and the diversity of information included in the section.

Task 5. Seeking learning opportunities

The respondents were **tasked to use the Europass portal to find:**

1) The course "Combustion engine mechanic" that can be pursued in the Netherlands, providing in the questionnaire a link to this course, indicate the education institution that offers this qualification, the NQF level of this course, and qualification awarding body.
2) Any educational course in Germany that corresponds to the NQF Level 4, providing a link to this course, the NQF level of this course, and the qualification awarding body.

After completing the tasks, the respondents, using an evaluation scale from 1 to 4, marked how easy it was to find the required information on courses, the EQF/NQF level of educational courses, the awarding body, and, if the respondent wished to pursue this course, how useful the information provided in the course description would be. The respondents also provided recommendations for improvement of the section.

Part one of Task 5

After completing the **first part of the task**, 18 respondents provided links to education courses available on the Europass portal (it is not possible to technically verify the links to education courses due to technical issues with the Europass portal). Five respondents indicated that they had not found the specified course. One respondent provided a link to the Europass portal section "Find courses (beta version)". Another respondent provided a link to the Europass portal section "National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs)", while another respondent provided a link to an informative site about the NQF of the Netherlands.

13 respondents were unable to indicate an education institution that offers the qualification "Combustion engine mechanic". Six respondents mentioned the SBB (Foundation for Cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and Labour Market of The Netherlands), but four respondents – *Stichting Cinop Centrum voor Innovatie van Opleidingen*. One respondent indicated that the education institution had not been mentioned. Another respondent mentioned "Training and Labour Market of The Netherlands" and another – an informative site about the NQF of the Netherlands.

As for the NQF level of the educational course “Combustion engine mechanic”, 19 respondents mentioned the NQF level 2, while one respondent indicated the level 4. Six respondents had not found the NQF level of the specified course, while 11 respondents were unable to indicate (find) the qualification awarding body. Five respondents mentioned the “*Stichting Cinop Centrum voor Innovatie van Opleidingen*”, seven respondents – the SBB (Foundation for Cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and Labour Market of The Netherlands)/ “Foundation for Cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and Labour Market of The Netherlands”. One respondent mentioned “*Nationaal Coördinatiepunt NLQF*”, but another – the Europass platform section “National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs)”.

For exploring respondents’ experience, an evaluation scale from 1 to 4 was used, where 1 – very difficult/not useful, 2 – rather difficult/partially useful, 3 – rather easy/rather useful, 4 – very easy/very useful. An option “Hard to say” was also allowed and marked with 5.

After completing the task on the course “Combustion engine mechanic”, the respondents evaluated how difficult/easy it was for them to find the specified educational course. 31% of respondents found it rather difficult to find the course, while 27% found it very difficult. 15% of respondents, on the other hand, found it rather easy to find the course, while 23% found it very easy. 4% of respondents could not say (see Figure 5). **The average respondents’ evaluation is 2.36**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, it was rather difficult to find the educational course “Combustion engine mechanic”. As for the Europass tools and functions, the results of study have already led to conclusion that, for instance, the Europass platform does not include all countries’ education institutions’ data on learning opportunities, as the searcher was using the beta test version during the study. Additionally, complexity arises from the fact that data is aggregated from various national databases maintained by responsible institutions, which are not always similarly structured in terms of content and format.

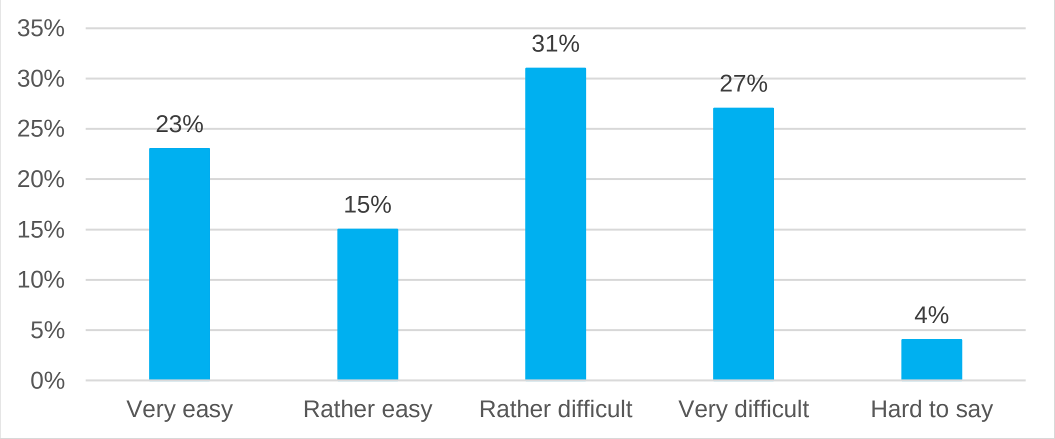


Figure 5. Respondents’ evaluation on how easy/difficult it is to find the course “Combustion engine mechanic” on the platform

The respondents provided recommendations on how to improve the platform to facilitate finding education courses. 29% of respondents had no specific recommendations or could not answer. 29% of respondents suggested the need for improvements in the visual design, structuring, and transparency of information, while 9% of respondents mentioned that the necessary information was not found. Other recommendations from the respondents involved supplementing information about education institutions, explaining the obtained results, and providing guidance on further steps if one wishes to pursue that particular course. The respondents also suggested improving the search functionality on the portal and using appropriate section headings.

The respondents also evaluated how difficult/easy it was for them to find the EQF/NQF level of the education course. 38% of respondents found it easy to find the relevant EQF/NQF level of the course, 27% found it rather easy, while 35% found it very difficult. **The average respondents’ evaluation is 2.69**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, it is rather easy to find the EQF/NQF level of the educational course.

The respondents provided recommendations on how to improve the portal to find the EQF/NQF level of qualifications**.** 67% of respondents had no specific recommendations or could not answer. 18%

suggested to improve the transparency and layout of information, while 11% of respondents mentioned that the necessary information was not found.

The respondents also evaluated how difficult/easy it was for them to find the qualification awarding body. 54% of respondents found it very difficult to find the institution, while 23% found it rather difficult. 15% of respondents, on the other hand, indicated that it was rather easy to find the awarding body. 8% of respondents could not say (see Figure 6). **The average respondents' evaluation is 1.58**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, it is rather difficult to find the relevant awarding body.

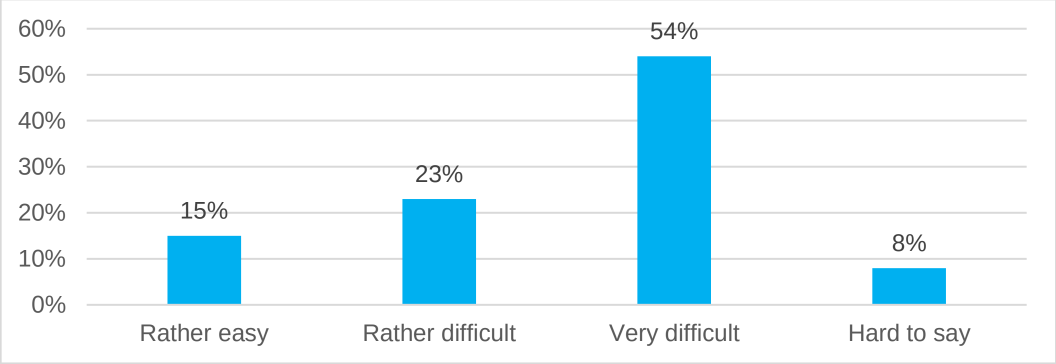


Figure 6. Respondents' evaluation on how easy/difficult it is to find the awarding body for the course "Combustion engine mechanic"

The respondents also provided recommendations for further improvements of the platform to facilitate the retrieval of information on the qualification awarding body. 40% suggested to accurately specify and highlight information about the awarding institution. Other recommendations involved supplementing information about the course and other relevant sections with details about the awarding body, as well as providing explanations for included concepts, while 20% of respondents mentioned that the necessary information was not found. 13% of respondents had no specific recommendations or could not answer.

Conclusion may be drawn that the mentioned recommendations from respondents mainly indicate that the information is not sufficiently highlighted or that there is a lack of precise indications of where to find this specific information.

Respondents evaluated to what extent the information provided in the course description would be useful if they were to pursue this course. 38% of respondents found the information included in the description to be rather useful, while 19% found it very useful. 19% of respondents, on the other hand, found it partially useful, but 12% did not find it useful at all. 12% of respondents could not say (see Figure 7). **The average respondents' evaluation is 2.74**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, the information provided in the course description is rather useful for the respondents.

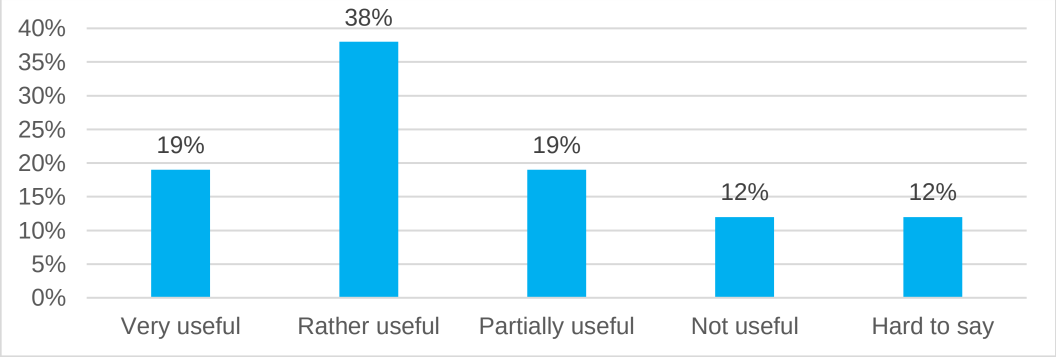


Figure 7. Respondents' evaluation on the usefulness of the description for the course "Combustion engine mechanic"

The respondents provided recommendations on what information should be included to make it valuable for the users interested in pursuing a course. The majority of respondents noted that the course description needs to be supplemented with information, including changes in the layout, formatting, etc. 29% of respondents had no specific recommendations or could not answer.

Part two of Task 5

The second part of Task 5 consisted in providing sites to an education course that can be pursued in Germany and that corresponds to the NQF level 4. Four respondents did not find such a course. 19 respondents provided links to education courses available on the Europass platform (the conformity of education courses, for which sites to the Europass platform were provided, with the task criteria was not verified due to disruptions in the operation of the Europass platform during the preparation of the Report). One respondent provided a link to the Erasmus+ site section “Study abroad”. Another respondent provided a link to the Europass portal section “Find jobs”. One respondent provided a link to a source outside the Europass platform.

In the survey, the respondents were asked to indicate the NQF level of the course. Five respondents did not find the NQF level, while 19 respondents indicated the NQF level 4. One respondent indicated the level 5 as the corresponding NQF level, while another respondent provided a link to the Europass platform section “Find jobs”. Conclusion may be drawn that 73% of respondents have correctly indicated the level – the NQF level 4.

According to the task rules, the respondents had to indicate the qualification awarding body. 73% of respondents mentioned that the qualification awarding body was not found, while four respondents indicated the *“Bundesministerium fuer Bildung und Forschung”*. Three respondents, on the other hand, indicated *“Deutschland”*.

The respondents also evaluated how difficult/easy it was for them to find the specified NQF level. 46% of respondents indicated that it was very easy for them to find the specified NQF level, while 19% found it rather easy. 12% of respondents, on the other hand, found it rather difficult, while 19% found it very difficult. 4% of respondents could not to say (see Figure 8 below). **The average respondents’ evaluation is 2.96**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, it was rather easy for the respondents to find the corresponding NQF level.

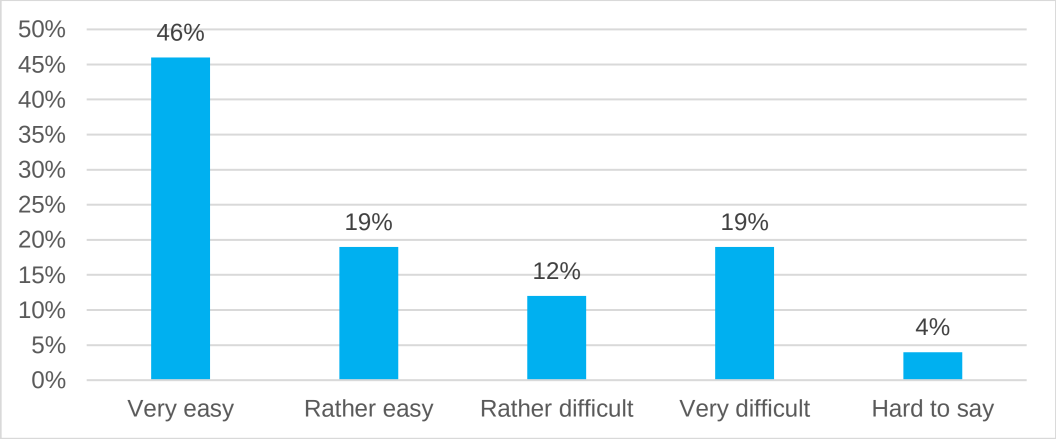


Figure 8. Respondents’ evaluation on how easy/hard it is to find an NQF level 4 course in Germany

In this case, conclusion may be drawn that the respondents had partially or completely misunderstood the purpose and result of this task. 73% of respondents were unable to find the qualification awarding body, while 46% of respondents indicated that finding a course with the specified NQF level was very easy. The result of this task may not objectively reflect respondents’ understanding of the specific task and its purpose.

The respondents provided recommendations on how to help users identifying NQF levels. 65% of respondents had no specific recommendations (everything was clear) or could not answer. 15% of responses highlighted the need to improve the information layout, while 8% of responses indicated that the necessary information was not found.

The respondents evaluated how difficult/easy it was for them to find the qualification awarding body. 69% of respondents evaluated finding the qualification awarding body as very difficult, while 19% found it rather difficult. 4% of respondents considered finding the qualification awarding body to be rather easy. 8% of respondents could not say (see Figure 9). **The average respondents' evaluation is 1.29**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, it was rather difficult for the respondents to find the qualification awarding body.

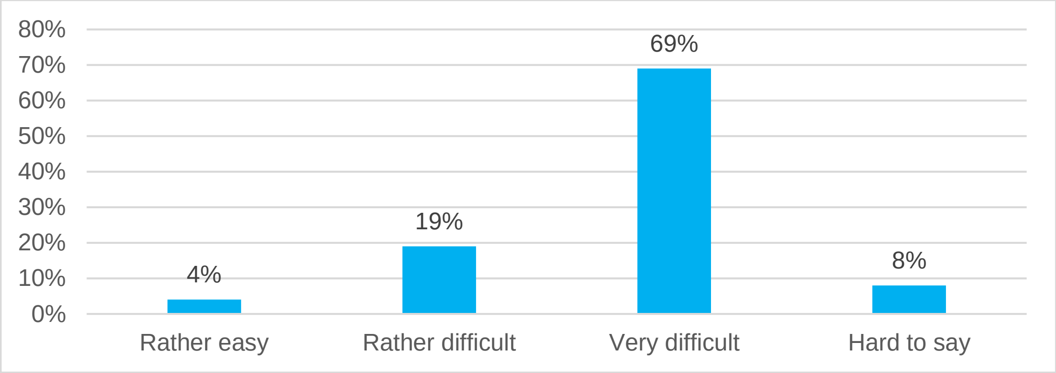


Figure 9. Respondents' evaluation on the easiness to find a qualification awarding institution in Germany

The respondents provided recommendations on how to improve the platform to help users finding the qualification awarding body. 23% of respondents mentioned that the necessary information was not found and thus did not provide any recommendations. 23% of respondents indicated that information on the qualification awarding body should be provided at the beginning of the course description. 20% of responses suggested highlighting information about the qualification awarding body. Other recommendations were related to the availability of translations in different languages, improving the layout of the section, and enhancing search options.

Table 4.6 includes average evaluations provided by respondents for each aspect to be evaluated within Task 5.

Table 4.6. Summary of respondents' evaluation for Task 5

Aspect to be evaluated	**Was it easy to find the course "Combustion engine mechanic" on the portal?**	**Was it easy to find the EQF/NQF level of the course "Combustion engine mechanic"?**	**Was it easy to find the provider of the course "Combustion engine mechanic"?**	**Was the description of the course "Combustion engine mechanic" useful?**	**Was it easy to find a NQF level 5 course that can be pursued in Germany?**	**Was it easy to find the qualification awarding body in Germany?**
Average respondents' evaluation	**2.36**	**2.69**	**1.58**	**2.74**	**2.96**	**1.29**
	Rather difficult	Rather easy	Rather difficult	Rather useful	Rather easy	Very difficult

The lowest overall evaluations suggest that it is necessary to improve the finding of the qualification awarding body in the relevant course descriptions. The previously given task and respondent answers are not entirely mutually consistent, suggesting that respondents, perhaps while performing specific task, did not fully understand its purpose and essence.

Task 6. Instructions and tips for creating a CV and cover letter

The respondents were tasked to find the Europass portal page with a video tutorial and tips for creating a CV and cover letter and to read the tips for creating a CV and cover letter.

After completing the tasks, the respondents, using an evaluation scale from 1 to 4 indicated how difficult or easy it was for them to find the video tutorial and tips for creating a CV and cover letter, and whether the tips for creating a CV and cover letter were clear, detailed, sufficient, and useful. Respondents also provided recommendations for improvement of the section.

For the evaluation of respondent experience, a scale from 1 to 4 was used, where 1 – very difficult/not useful, 2 – rather difficult/partially useful, 3 – rather easy/rather useful, 4 – very easy/very useful. An option "Hard to say" was also allowed and marked with 5.

In the first part of the task, according to the task rules, the respondents had to find the Europass platform page with a video tutorial and tips for creating a CV and cover letter and provide links to these pages in the questionnaire. 25 respondents provided links to the Europass platform pages "Create your Europass CV" and "Create your Europass Cover Letter". One respondent provided a link to "E-portfolio" page (the copied link did not function during the preparation of the Report).

The respondents evaluated how difficult/easy it was to find the video tutorial and tips for creating a CV. 73% of respondents indicated that it was very easy for them to find the video tutorial and tips for creating a CV, while 19% found it rather easy. Only 4% of respondents found it rather difficult, while other 4% found it very difficult (see Figure 10). **The average respondents' evaluation is 3.62**, and based on the scale used, the video tutorial and tips for creating a CV were rather easy to find.

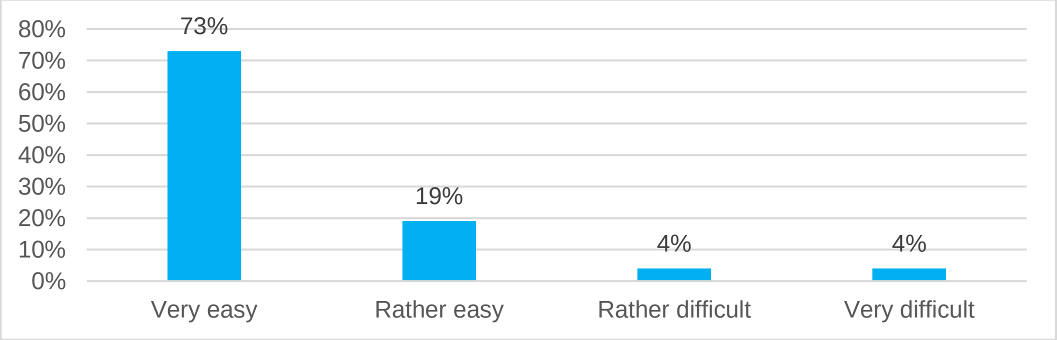


Figure 10. Respondents' evaluation on how easy/hard it is to find video tutorials and tips for creating a CV

The respondents provided recommendations on what should be improved to help users finding the video tutorial and tips for creating a CV. 72% of respondents had no specific recommendations, everything was clear or could not answer. 10% of respondents, on the other hand, suggested providing a translation of the video into Latvian and improve the quality of the video tutorial. Some respondents did not manage to find the video tutorial and, thus, did not provide any recommendation.

The respondents also evaluated whether the provided tips for creating a CV were clear and detailed. 46% of respondents found the tips for creating a CV rather detailed, while 42% found them very detailed. 4% of respondents, on the other hand, indicated that the tips were rather unclear, while 8% did not find them clear at all (see Figure 11). **The average respondents' evaluation is 3.23**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, the tips for creating a CV were rather detailed.

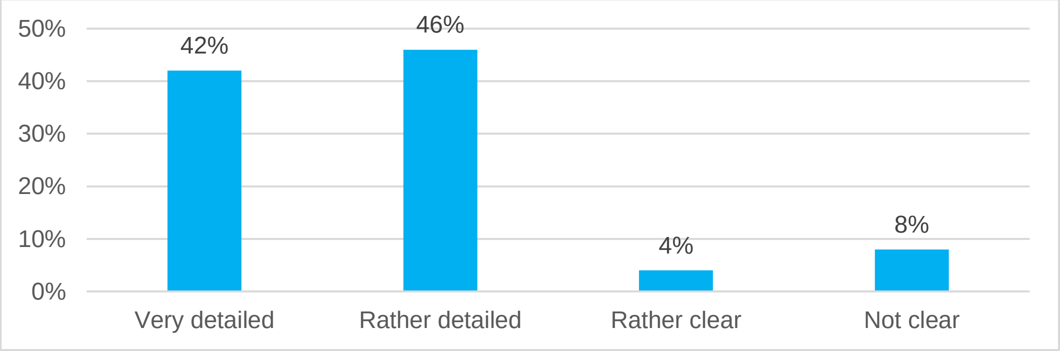


Figure 11. Respondents' evaluation on the extent to which tips for creating a CV are clear and detailed

Respondents provided recommendations for improving the tips for creating a CV. 55% of respondents had no specific recommendations or could not answer. 17% of respondents, on the other hand, indicated that a translation into Latvian should be provided. Other recommendations involved the need to improve the quality of the video, to provide the tips in a different format (other than a video), to expand information on creation of a CV, as well as to highlight tips and recommendations.

The respondents evaluated whether the tips for creating a CV were useful. 38% of respondents found the tips for creating a CV very useful, but 31% – rather useful. 15% of respondents, on the other hand, found them partially useful. 4% of respondents indicated that the provided tips were not useful at all. 12% of respondents could not say (see Figure 12). **The average respondents' evaluation is 3.17**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, the tips for creating a CV were rather useful.

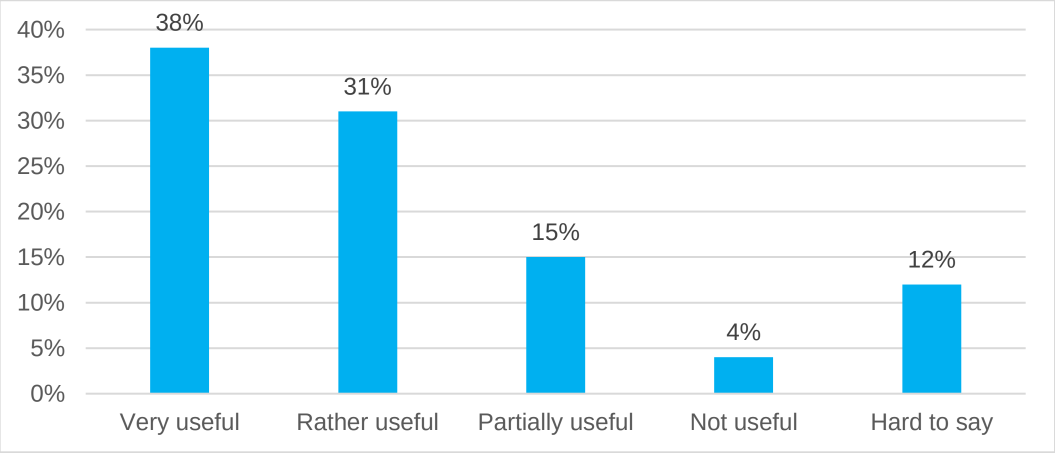


Figure 12. Respondents' evaluation on the usefulness of tips for creating a CV

The respondents provided recommendations on what to improve to make the tips for creating a CV more useful for the user. 50% of respondents had no specific recommendations or could not answer. 27% of respondents, on the other hand, indicated that in order to enhance the usefulness of the tips, it would be necessary to expand the provided information, including more specific sector-related information and practical examples. They also mentioned the need to improve the availability of the video and other materials in Latvian, as well as to enhance the layout of the sections.

The respondents evaluated how easy it was to find the video tutorial and tips for creating a cover letter. 77% of respondents indicated that it was very easy for them to find the video tutorial and tips for creating a cover letter, while 19% found it rather easy. 4% of respondents indicated that it was very difficult for them to find the video tutorial and tips for creating a cover letter. **The average respondents' evaluation is 3.69**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, the video tutorial and tips for creating a cover letter were rather easy to find.

The respondents provided recommendations to facilitate finding the tips for creating a cover letter. 85% of respondents had no specific recommendations or could not answer. Other recommendations involved the enhancement of the visual design and information layout, as well as the availability of the video and other materials in Latvian.

The respondents evaluated whether the tips for creating a cover letter were sufficient and detailed. 50% of respondents found the tips for creating a cover letter rather detailed, while 38% found them very detailed. 4% of respondents, on the other hand, indicated that the tips were rather unclear, while another 4% did not find them clear at all. 4% of respondents could not say (see Figure 13). **The average respondents' evaluation is 3.28**, and conclusion may be drawn that, based on the scale used, the tips for creating a cover letter were rather detailed.

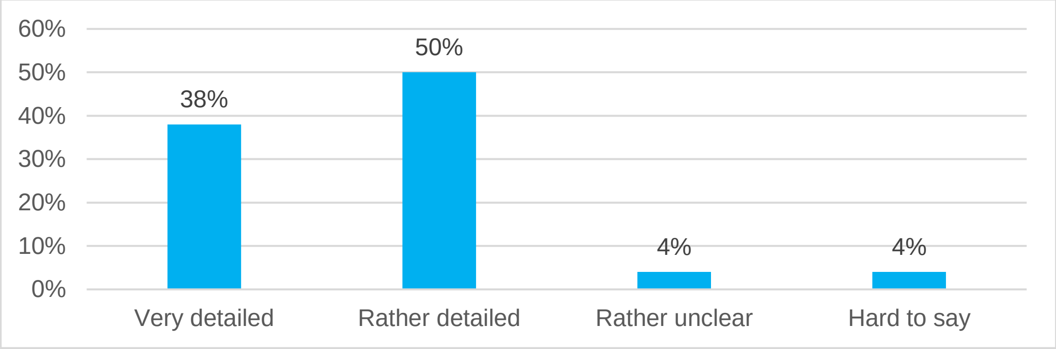


Figure 13. Respondents' evaluation on the extent to which the tips for creating a cover letter are sufficient detailed

The respondents provided recommendations on what should be improved in the section regarding the tips for creating a cover letter to ensure that the explanation was more detailed and understandable. 64% of respondents had no specific recommendations or could not answer. 14% of respondents, on the other hand, indicated that practical examples and samples should be included. They also mentioned that videos and other materials should be provided in Latvian, as well as more extensive explanatory information should be to included. However, some respondents indicated that they had not found the section offering the tips for creating a cover letter.

The respondents evaluated whether the tips for creating a cover letter were sufficiently useful. 50% of respondents found the tips for creating a cover letter rather useful, while 38% found them very useful. 4% of respondents indicated that the provided tips were not useful at all. 8% of respondents could not say (see Figure 14). **The average respondents' evaluation is 3.33**, and based on the scale used, the tips for creating a cover letter were rather useful.

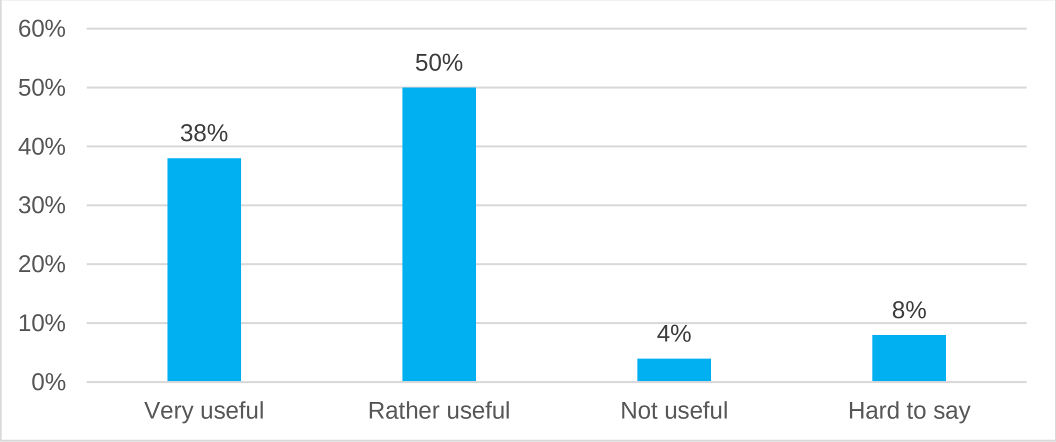


Figure 14. Respondents' evaluation on the usefulness of tips for creating a cover letter

The respondents provided recommendations on how to improve the section offering the tips for creating a cover letter to make them more useful. 57% of respondents had no specific recommendations or could not answer. 14% of responses highlighted the need to improve the layout and design of the information provided. The respondents also noted that there is a need for more extensive, in-depth explanatory information, as well as practical examples and templates, the availability of videos and other materials in Latvian or other languages, not just in English. The previous stages of this study already revealed that video tutorials were only available in English, with occasional subtitle options in other languages, including Latvian. For instance, the tutorial on creating a CV is available only in English with the option to choose subtitles in other languages, including Latvian. Meanwhile, the video tutorial on creating a cover letter is available only in English, with subtitles available only in English, as well.

Table 4.7 includes average evaluations provided by respondents for each aspect to be evaluated within Task 6.

Table 4.7. Summary of respondents' evaluation for Task 6

Aspect to be evaluated	Was it easy for you to find the video tutorial and tips for creating a CV?	Were the tips for creating a CV detailed?	Were the tips for creating a CV useful?	Was it easy for you to find the video tutorial and tips for creating a cover letter?	Were the tips for creating a cover letter detailed?	Were the tips for creating a cover letter useful?
Average respondents' evaluation	**3.62**	**3.23**	**3.17**	**3.69**	**3.28**	**3.33**
	Very easy	Rather detailed	Rather useful	Very easy	Rather detailed	Rather useful

The aggregated average evaluations provided by the respondents indicate that the section providing tips for creating a cover letter is slightly more user-friendly and understandable than the section offering tips on creating a CV.

Task 7. Creation of a CV

The respondents were tasked with opening a specific link on the Europass platform, clicking on "Continue as a guest", and then selecting "Create my profile". Afterwards, the respondents created a CV, based on the Europass CV template included in the handout. After creating the CV, the document had to be saved in PDF format on the computer/smart device.

Having completed the task, the respondents evaluated whether the creation of a CV on the Europass platform was convenient. 50% of respondents found it rather easy to create a CV on the Europass platform, while 38% found it very easy. 4% of respondents, on the other hand, found it rather inconvenient, while 8% found it very inconvenient (see Figure 15). **The average respondents' evaluation is 3.19**, and based on the scale used, conclusion may be drawn that the creation of a CV on the Europass platform is rather convenient for the respondents.

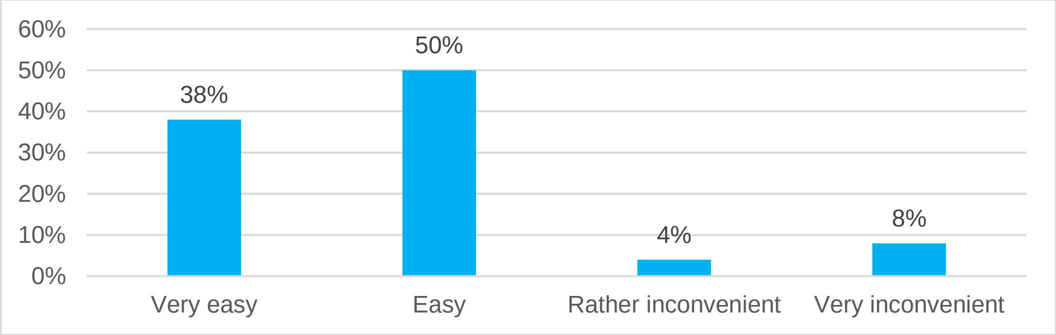


Figure 15. Respondents' evaluation on the convenience of creating a CV on the Europass platform

The respondents provided recommendations on what should be improved to make the creation of a CV on the Europass platform more convenient. 73% of respondents had no specific recommendations or could not answer. To make the process of creating a CV more convenient, it was suggested to rectify textual and technical errors, supplement and highlight the most important tools/functions for the users, as well as to update the information.

The respondents evaluated whether it was easy to create a CV on the Europass platform. 50% of respondents found it very easy to create a CV, while 38% found it rather easy. 8% of respondents, on the other hand, found it rather difficult to create a CV on the Europass platform, while 4% found it very difficult. **The average respondents' evaluation is 3.35**, and based on the scale used, conclusion may be drawn that it is rather easy for the respondents to create a CV on the Europass platform.

The respondents provided recommendations on what should be improved on the portal to facilitate the creation of a CV on the Europass platform. 69% of respondents had no specific recommendations or could not answer. The respondents indicated that it is necessary to highlight the save function, as well as the CV download function.

The respondents evaluated whether it was clear what information needs to be entered in all the fields. 25 respondents indicated that it was clear what information needs to be entered in all the fields. One respondent claimed that it was not clear what information needs to be entered in each respective field, but did not provide comments specifically on which fields are unclear.

The respondents evaluated whether the CV format was well-structured and easily comprehensible. 61% of respondents found the CV format very well-structured, while 27% found it rather well-structured. 4% of respondents, on the other hand, found it inconvenient, but another 4% found it very inconvenient. 4% of respondents could not say (see Figure 16). **The average respondents' evaluation is 3.52, and based on the scale used, conclusion may be drawn that the CV format is very convenient for the respondents.**

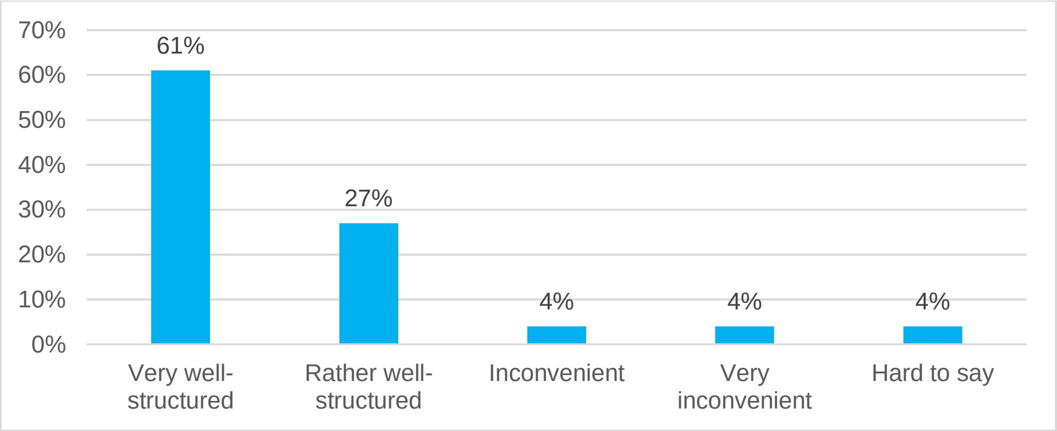


Figure 16. Respondents' evaluation on the extent to which the CV format well-structured and easily comprehensible

Table 4.8 includes average evaluations provided by respondents for each aspect to be evaluated within Task 7.

Table 4.8. Summary of respondents' evaluation for Task 7

Aspect to be evaluated	Was the creation of a CV on the Europass platform convenient?	Was the creation of a CV on the Europass platform easy?	Was the CV format well-structured and convenient to use?
Average respondents' evaluation	**3.19**	**3.35**	**3.52**
	Rather convenient	Rather easy	Very convenient

The average evaluation provided by the respondents indicates that the current CV format is both well-structured and convenient for use. The creation of a CV on the Europass platform is rather convenient and easy; however, there is room for improvements in terms of convenience and simplicity.

After completing Task 7, the respondents provided recommendations on what could be improved to make the CV format more convenient, well-structured, and easier to understand. 74% of respondents had no specific recommendations or could not answer. The respondents noted that the CV included too much information and that there was a need to expand the variety of available CV designs on the platform and the option to save it in different formats.

The respondents evaluated whether it was immediately clear that information was to be first entered into the profile and then used to create the CV. 46% of respondents indicated that it was immediately clear, while 54% found it unclear. The respondents were asked to indicate what could be further improved on the platform that was not mentioned in the previous four questions related to Task 7. 67% of respondents had no specific recommendations or could not answer. Similar to previous sections, respondents pointed out the need to enhance CV editing and saving functions, the visibility of search tools and sections, and to clarify section headings.

Finally, after completing all tasks, the respondents evaluated which sections of the platform mentioned in the tasks seemed most relevant and which ones were considered irrelevant. They used a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 – unnecessary and 4 – relevant. The evaluations provided by the respondents are summarised in Figure 17 below.

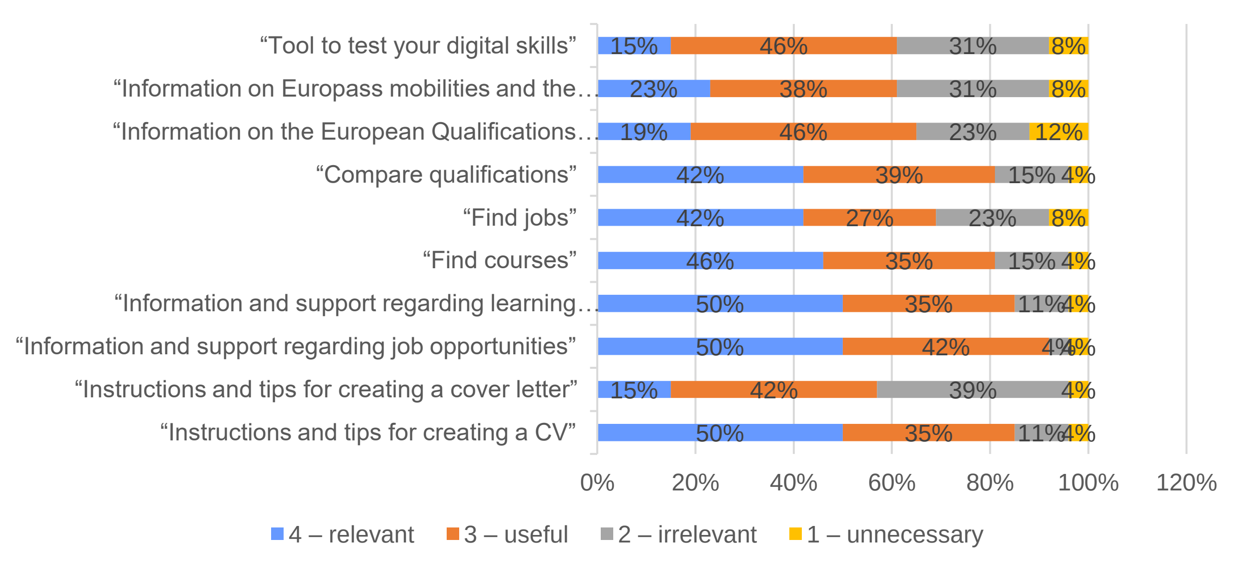


Figure 17. Significance of Europass platform sections according to the respondents' evaluation

At the conclusion of the questionnaire, respondents also provided their responses to the question "After completing the tasks, please evaluate the overall experience of using the platform (what you liked, what you did not like, what could be further improved)". The following most common responses regarding what the respondents did not like and what could be improved (percentage of all received responses; one respondent's answer may be included in multiple categories) were provided:

1) 24.7% of responses mentioned issues with language switching and appropriate translation, translation "jumping" between languages, content translated only partially (observed language and translation "mixing" in sections), lack of full translation into Latvian, or sections' content being only in English or another foreign language.
2) 16.5% of responses indicated a very complicated page structure, issues with overall transparency of the page, sections, sub-sections, and toolbars, and the need to improve the structure and layout of sections and subsections. The respondents could not locate information and navigate.
3) 10.3% of responses mentioned visual and graphic design issues (font size, text layout and highlights, inappropriate images, grammatical errors, etc.).
4) 5.2% of responses indicated the need to improve information search options, including searching by keywords.

2.2. Results of interviews

As part of the Europass Platform Evaluation conducted by SKDS in February 2023, in-depth interviews lasting 25-40 minutes were carried out with 10 interviewees, selected from the initial 26 respondents. Information about the respondents has been compiled and is available in Annex 2.

Initially, the interviewees were asked **if they had previous experience with the Europass platform**. Seven respondents answered that they have had some experience with the Europass platform, but mostly to a minimum extent. From their responses, it was evident that they had used the Europass platform primarily for specific training on CV creation or similar purposes. Three interviewees pointed out that they had not really had experience with the Europass platform, considering that they had only heard about its existence. Overall, it can be inferred from the responses that the majority of interviewees have heard of the Europass name, and more than half of them have had some experience with the Europass platform, mostly related to CV creation. This may suggest that not all potential functions of the Europass platform are adequately advertised and explained to potential users. The responses suggest that Europass brand is recognised, which can be viewed positively.

Furthermore, the interviewees were asked more detailed questions, prompting a thorough analysis of the Europass platform. First, it was determined **what overall impressions, both positive and negative, the interviewees had about the Europass platform**. The majority of respondents acknowledged that the tool they liked the most and found understandable was the CV creation, despite some comments about the absence of CV creation instructions in Latvian. Positive feedback was also received for the cover letter creation tool, and the digital skills assessment test was mentioned as a successful example. However, after these examples, the number of positive comments significantly decreased as the interviewees criticised the accuracy of the text translation. Specifically, when opening certain sections, information was presented in multiple languages, such as headings in Latvian, but detailed explanations in English. The same refers to the links provided by the respondents to other sites, where the initial reference on the Europass platform, for instance, is translated into Latvian. However, upon opening the specific link, the target address or site opens in English and, unfortunately, mostly without text translation options. Similarly, many comments were made about the somewhat chaotic layout. For instance, the interviewees pointed out that the layout of the toolbar of the main sections and the included information and headings did not correspond to the information contained in the sections if they are separately opened in different sections on the Europass platform. The interviewees acknowledged that the purpose of certain sections, such as “Stakeholders”, was unclear. Also, the interviewees found it very difficult to grasp specific terminology related to, for instance, European and national qualifications frameworks. This may indicate the need to gradually explain specific terminology to users in a more common language, as it is clear that not all the respondents are experts in education sector, especially in understanding the meaning and essence of specific terms, abbreviations, and designations, particularly within the Europass platform information related to the EQF and NQF. In addition to the aforementioned points, conclusion may be drawn that the search functions have not always been able to help respondents effectively and have often contributed to even greater confusion about the information included in the Europass platform. From the respondents’ answers, it is evident that the assigned tasks and their purpose have not been fully understood by some respondents when opening the requested sections, indicating that the survey results may not be entirely objective. The respondents also acknowledged that there was generally a lot of information that complicates understanding what and where to search for. Several interviewees, commented about issues not only in terms of content, but also about technical aspects – specific sections and functions did not work as they should.

Next, the interviewees were asked to **evaluate the visual design of the Europass platform**. The responses varied, as some interviewees generally liked the colours and visual design, while others, on the contrary, found the visual design hindering the perception and retrieval of relevant information. Upon closer analysis of the interviewees’ comments where various issues were pointed out regarding the visual design, the emphasis was placed on the fact that the visual representation and layout of sections were often misleading. For instance, the interviewees commented that the respective headings or main sections should be more highlighted so that they stand out from the rest of the information, which may be secondary to the potential user. As mentioned above, views were divided regarding the choice of colours on the Europass platform. For instance, some interviewees explained that, in their opinion, the existing colour tones on the website blend into each other, hindering their ability to distinguish one section from another. They also pointed out that essential information was not adequately highlighted, such as through underlining or using bolder fonts. The interviewees who liked the colour tones used on the Europass platform also pointed out the same issue, i.e., that essential information or section headings and topics were not visually separated enough from the rest of the information and subsections. They also mentioned issues with the aforementioned search function. It was not entirely clear why, when opening specific search results, the displayed page was often only partially translated, and the information was represented in both

English and Latvian. The interviewees did not see a sense of technical completeness on the Europass platform. For instance, various addresses of users in sections and formatting of lines and text often further confused information seekers or users.

In the remaining interview questions, the interviewees discussed specific tasks related to finding specific information and filling out forms, as well as other questions about the functionality of the Europass platform. In most interviews, incorrect translation or the absence of translation was mentioned. The interviewees also pointed out technical errors, such as inaccurate use of punctuation marks and similar issues. The interviewees suggested introducing video tutorials in all the sections, as they could be helpful for users. These responses indicate that the availability of video tutorials only in English is a significant barrier for users who prefer to learn in their native or understandable language to explore the options of the relevant Europass tool or offered function. Responses regarding the CV creation tool were relatively positive, especially when the functioning and required steps to create a personalised CV were clear. The interviewees mentioned observing some technical inaccuracies related to typographical errors in the CV creation process, but overall, the task was understood. Similarly, relatively positive comments were made about the cover letter creation tool, acknowledging its usefulness for creating a quality cover letter. Responses regarding the Europass Mobility section were mostly positive, as users generally understood the purpose of this section and the Mobility templates. Therefore, it was not too difficult for the interviewees to find specific information in the Mobility section. However, it should be noted that the absence of accurate text translation still poses a challenge for users during the search process. Based on the responses, conclusion may be drawn that the task of finding and comparing specific information about the NQF and EQF was the least successful for them. The results of interviews evidently show that only those respondents who already had an understanding, knowledge, or experience with the EQF and NQF in their personal or professional background could fully use the information represented on the Europass platform. For successful retrieval and comparison of information about the EQF and NQF, a straightforward, easily understandable explanation of what these frameworks entail is crucial. Therefore, conclusion may be drawn that only those users who work, for instance, in the field of education on a daily basis and are familiar with the information about the EQF and NQF or who have already previously purposefully become acquainted with this information, could consider the information about the EQF and NQF self-evident. Otherwise, it could be very challenging for the users to immediately understand from the Europass platform what the EQF and NQF are and to complete specific tasks related to them. Conclusion may be drawn that, despite some respondents finding specific required information about the EQF and NQF when performing the tasks, there was not a sufficient understanding of the EQF and NQF. This implies that the Europass platform generally does not provide adequate support for users, who have not had previous experience with the EQF or NQF in their personal or professional experience, to easily and successfully find the necessary information.

2.3. Results of focus group discussions

AIC organised three regional seminars titled “Significance of the Latvian Qualifications Framework and Europass in Education” – a seminar in Dobele on 12 April 2023 and another seminar in Rezekne on 8 May 2023 for the representatives of education sector, as well as the seminar in Riga on 24 May 2023. During these seminars, focus group discussions were organised regarding the significance of the Europass platform for Latvian users, as well as various usability issues related to the Europass platform (data from the last seminar is not included in analysis). In all the regional seminars, the same set of questions was posed during the discussions (see questions in Annex 4), allowing a comprehensive analysis of the responses provided within the context of both regional seminars.

In the first question, participants were asked about the **purposes for which they use the Europass platform**. The discussions in the Dobele seminar revealed that, when entering the workforce, employers often require the submission of a CV in Europass format. This requirement prompts citizens to start using the Europass platform and the CV creation tool. Similar requirements were mentioned by participants regarding the organisation of school mobilities, where it was necessary to attach a CV in Europass format. The school representatives participating in the seminar pointed out that they helped the relevant staff and teachers prepare CVs in Europass format. Some school representatives commented that, in their opinion, a CV in Europass format was very dull and formal. On the other hand, others responded that they used it only when it was necessary to prepare a CV for participation in specific projects. It was also suggested that, in the future, learners could be given the task of creating a Europass profile and CV during the training activities. In the regional seminar in Rezekne, participants responded similarly to this question, indicating that Europass platform was mostly often used for preparing CVs and cover letters. Some comments pointed out that the Europass platform was also used for skills assessment, and with the help of a Europass CV, a user could demonstrate, for example, foreign language proficiency to a potential employer.

The next question was about the **main advantages of the Europass platform and which information/tools on the platform were most useful in the participants' work.** The responses evidently showed that the main advantages include the storage of entered data on the Europass platform, a common format, the fact that Europass platform is a free tool, and its visibility both in Latvia and Europe. Additionally, comments were made about the Europass library, which allows users to compile their qualifications in one place. A representative of an education institution pointed out that the advantage of the Europass platform was the comprehensive information about job and learning opportunities, as well as about institutions that can provide support in the respective country. The usefulness of the Application Manager function was also noted, along with the ability to compile all documents in one place and send this compilation to an employer with a single link. These responses suggest that Europass indeed allows users to choose and use the most useful tools according to each individual's needs.

The next question was about **information sections/tools that should be improved.** During the seminar in Dobele, objective responses to this question were not possible to obtain, as only one participant had created a Europass CV from the Europass platform profile, and therefore, other broader recommendations were not provided. School representatives commented that, in a situation where there was a need to create a Europass CV for participation in a specific Erasmus+ conference, their attempt had failed due to technical issues. In the discussion at the seminar in Rezekne, on the other hand, several responses were given regarding the decision to eliminate the two-factor authentication (2FA) on the Europass platform. Many participants considered it a correct decision as 2FA had hindered the use of the platform for many users. Additionally, there were suggestions that the Europass CV template should be more creatively designed, allowing users to customise the template according to their needs. The respondents provided examples where such possibility could be crucial, especially for users working in various fields of culture and arts where significant modifications to a CV template might be necessary to avoid overly formal representation. However, the results of the study led to conclusion that for employers and their human resources specialists comparing the Europass CVs of potential employees in as uniform a format as possible is essential, because a common layout significantly facilitates the collection and comparison of necessary information, for instance, among multiple candidates for a specific job position. Comments were also made on the identified issue in this study regarding inaccurate translations, which can affect how smoothly potential users can apply the functions and tools. The discussants emphasised that CV formatting could be improved to make it more user-friendly for employers.

In the next question, the **participants were asked to express their opinion on the two-factor authentication (2FA) on the Europass platform.** It should be noted that while preparing the Study Report, the 2FA was no longer mandatory, but it was still mandatory during the regional seminars organised by AIC. The analysis of the responses to this question suggests that there is generally support for additional security measures for personal data in place. However, some participants suggested providing access to authentication through online bank tools. Participants attending the seminar in Rezekne responded to this question by pointing out that the introduction of a mandatory 2FA had led to a decrease in the number of users. Comments indicated that this was a significant barrier for users with lower digital skills. However, the participants also expressed the opinion that not all users fully realise the importance of personal data security, and attention should be paid to this aspect when using the Europass platform.

The last question posed in the regional seminars in Dobele and Rezekne was about the **options and/or tools the respondents would like to see on the Europass platform.** From the provided responses, conclusion may be drawn that, from a future perspective, the Europass platform could be made more visually appealing to attract a broader audience, especially young people. The participants also raised a question about whether the Europass platform was compatible with employer systems, to which the organisers responded that Europass offers interoperability and more detailed information about this option could be found on the Europass platform. One of the discussants suggested that it would be useful to introduce a tool for assessing language skills on the Europass platform, which should be available in all languages supported by Europass. Additionally, a participant asked whether Europass provided a tool that offers information on the most in-demand professions in European countries. The organisers responded that the European Commission was currently working on a new tool called "Job & Skill Trends", which would display the top 10 professions and skills in each European country.

From the questions raised and the responses provided by participants in the regional seminars, drawing objective conclusions about the number of Europass platform users in the regions is challenging, as the discussions involved users with more experience and understanding of using the Europass platform. The responses provided by discussants, although a few in number, suggest that a certain part of participants in regional seminars truly understands and uses the tools and options offered by the Europass platform. However, there is a lack of detailed opinions from a larger number of participants, which may indicate that a significant part has not yet started using the Europass platform, and perhaps there is a lack of detailed and comprehensive understanding of all the possibilities offered by the Europass platform. It is possible that the technical issues mentioned by the discussants, such as the lack of translation, lack of transparency, inaccurate instructions, 2FA, and other inaccuracies in terms of the functions and content, significantly impact the prospective users' decision-making – whether or not to use the Europass platform despite these issues.

On 6 April 2023, AIC organised a seminar for the contact points of European Union networks (representatives of EU networks), where, as part of the discussion, the participants were asked specific questions related to the Europass platform (see the questions in Annex 4). The focus group of this seminar consisted of representatives from various national and non-governmental institutions dealing with issues related to education and employment on a daily basis. Therefore, these participants can be considered specialists and experts in their field, with a closer connection to the Europass platform in their daily activities compared to other users.

The first question posed to the participants was about the **goal of the Europass platform and whether the platform achieves it.** One of the discussants indicated that the Europass platform achieved its goals, as it provided much broader information about education and employment opportunities, promoting mobility. However, discussants added that not all goals could be fully achieved, as, for example, the section "European Digital Credentials" was still in the development process, and there was no complete clarity about the security and authenticity of these issued credentials; work still needs to be done to achieve the initial goal. As another issue, the respondents pointed out the 2FA process affecting access to the Europass profile and Europass Wiki. It should be noted that, at the time of the aforementioned EU network seminar, the 2FA was still mandatory. Regarding the 2FA, discussants additionally commented about the challenges faced, for instance, by many educators from education institutions who use the Europass platform. Difficulties with 2FA complicates remembering which specific user email was used when creating the Europass profile, which could result in data loss.

The experience of platform users indicates that entered profile information disappeared when mandatory 2FA was requested. Consequently, after 2FA, it was necessary to enter all personal profile information again, which was time-consuming.

The representatives of EU networks concluded that 2FA significantly impacted the number of Europass portal users, which could potentially decrease after such authentication conditions. The discussants representing education institutions expressed opinion that even currently, for teachers creating an "EU login" seemed difficult due to their individual digital skill levels. However, some discussants provided comments pointing out that a 2FA was necessary after all in order to ensure the security of users' data. The representatives of EU networks positively evaluated the option to create a CV without registration and pointed out that to retain existing users, actions within the platform should be simplified. The discussants commented that seminar participants (specialists and experts) inform users about the European Commission's corporate decisions regarding the Europass platform in a straightforward manner and seek to assist within the scope of their competence. The discussants also highlighted the issue that job opportunity data on the EURES portal was provided in national languages, severely limiting the possibility to search for job offers on the Europass platform. This issue had been previously identified in the study, and a user from Latvia cannot fully apply this information. However, if information about job opportunities were available in the user's native language without specific explanations, this situation could also be identified as misleading. For instance, a user might get the impression that when applying for a job vacancy abroad, they are not required to be proficient in the language of the respective foreign country. Such circumstances could significantly mislead users and create misunderstandings. The discussants added that modern machine translation tools could translate vacancy titles, improving the comprehensibility of this information on the Europass platform, given that vacancy data from the EURES portal is republished from 31 countries and currently presented in different languages and formats. Other opinions were also expressed regarding the absence of translations for the republished vacancies from the EURES portal, suggesting that not all vacancies need to be translated. Instead, users should have access to precise filtering options to select vacancies in their preferred language. During the seminar discussions, conclusion was drawn that information about all available vacancies in EU countries was not sent to the EURES platform. The discussants mentioned various situations from their professional work experience. For instance, a career consultant for refugees created a CV on the Europass platform as an unregistered user and then sent it to a specific client. However, since the created Europass CV was in PDF format, the clients, in this case, the refugees without prior knowledge, could not edit it afterwards. The described technical obstacles evidently hinder specialists in fulfilling their duties effectively. Thus, instead of helping to address necessary issues through the use of the Europass platform, additional problems arise.

During the discussion, a question was also raised about the **main advantages of the Europass platform and which information/tools on the platform were most useful for the discussants' work.**

The representatives of EU networks acknowledged as an advantage that information presented on the Europass platform was available without the need for registration. As positive examples, the ability to download the created Europass CV and then upload the saved file to the Europass platform for necessary changes or additions was highlighted. Positive feedback was also received about the Europass profile, where all necessary information can be saved, and users can log in at any time to make changes. The discussants representing the State Education Development Agency commented that they often received inquiries about learning and job opportunities abroad. Therefore, the sections “Learn in Europe” and “Work in Europe” were very useful. During the seminar discussions, the representatives of EU networks pointed out that in each country, there were many sources of information and databases that were likely not connected to the Europass platform. Thus, it cannot currently be guaranteed that the most essential and up-to-date information is available on the Europass platform. In this study, the functionality of the mentioned sections was analysed previously. Once these sections operate without technical errors and the data within them is accurately summarised and synchronised within the limits of possibility, they will be more effectively used. Positive comments were also provided regarding the visual design of the Europass platform. Broader discussions unfolded around the question of why the Europass CV is not available in Word format. The representatives of EU networks reiterated that having the Europass CV in Word format would be necessary to facilitate CV creation in various situations. However, arguments against it were also raised, as users might delete various sections, potentially disrupting the existing Europass CV format visually. As a possible solution, it was suggested to technically prepare the Word file version as partially editable. This approach would allow the option to edit only specific sections. Such a solution would indeed technically preserve the Europass CV format as non-modifiable, and users could conveniently and quickly edit information as needed without mandatory connection to the Europass platform. The representatives of EU networks positively evaluated the fact that the Europass platform was developed as a one-stop platform, which is inherently beneficial. The platform offers users a wide range of information with the possibility to search for data based on specific parameters. It was also suggested that the National Europass Centre could collaborate with libraries to disseminate information about the Europass platform. Additionally, collaboration with coordinators representing the European movement in Latvia was proposed, as many of them work in libraries. Eurodesk coordinators were also mentioned as potential collaborators who could help improving the understanding and information about Europass.

The discussants were also asked **which information sections/tools should be improved.** The provided comments suggested that user interests and skills should have filters to ease their selection, as versions on the Europass platform are offered only when the user starts searching for something specific, which may not always be objectively possible. The representatives of EU networks also recommended the introduction of logging into the Europass profile using internet bank or “latvija.lv” to avoid the need for “EU login”, as suggested in a previous study. The discussants also proposed that the Europass platform should integrate with individual learning accounts and improve the skills addition function, as previous experience showed that skills were challenging to find, especially those not directly related to work.

In the concluding question, the **discussants were asked to evaluate the functionality and user-friendliness of the platform.** The representatives of EU networks, as specialists in the education and employment sectors, concluded that they operated with sufficient digital skills on a daily basis. Some participants emphasised that they assess their digital skills as high, so using the Europass platform posed no problems for them. However, they acknowledged that assessing to how easy it was for other individuals to use the Europass platform was challenging. Examples were mentioned that for younger citizens using the Europass platform may be relatively easy. It was also noted that video tutorials were available on the Europass platform, but the discussants mentioned the difficulty of finding them. The functionality of video tutorials was described previously in the framework of this study, but with a significant limitation – they are available only in English, making them practically unsuitable for the users without sufficient knowledge of the English language. The representatives of EU networks recommended creating a virtual assistant on the Europass platform to assist with information searches. Some participants pointed out that, in their opinion, the tools available on the Europass platform became not easier to use over time, but rather the opposite – more time was now needed to perform actions in each tool. Others mentioned the proliferation of individual profiles on multiple websites these days, making it cumbersome for people to create new profiles to save the general information. Therefore, the option on the Europass platform to prepare and download a CV as an unregistered user and then upload it again for improvement and addition was positively appreciated. During the discussions, the discussants said that, from the user’s perspective, the Europass platform was becoming increasingly complex. The discussants suggested that it should first be made technically compatible with other national systems so that users do not have to manually select and find different information about their education and work experience on other websites, systems, or databases. In the conclusion of discussion, the representatives of EU networks mentioned positive examples where more and more employers tended to request candidates to submit their CVs in the Europass CV format because it would be easier to review and compare them in this way. Another significant advantage from the user's perspective is that, by using the Application Manager on the Europass platform, job seekers do not need to send their CV as a PDF file but can instead provide a link to the document.

In summary, the opinions expressed by the participants during the discussions in the seminar for the representatives of EU networks of 6 April were sufficiently well-argued and justified. As mentioned before, these participants represented various national and non-governmental institutions in the education and employment sectors, so their opinions can be regarded as assessments or recommendations from professionals.

The discussions, comments, and opinions expressed in the EU network seminar and regional seminars varied greatly due to the composition of the target audience. Therefore, conclusion may be drawn that even education sector professionals have many questions about technical shortcomings and issues, which objectively means that everyday users face numerous challenges when aiming to use all the options offered by the Europass platform.

AIC participated in the education fair "*Skola 2023*" during which a visitor survey was organised, offering participants the opportunity to take part in a competition. A total of 468 respondents participated in the survey. The survey results suggest that the respondents represented a diverse range of age groups. There were 76 participants under the age of 15, 231 in the age group from 15 to 18 years, 62 in the age group from 19 to 25 years, 13 in the age group from 26 to 30 years, 30 in the age group from 31 to 40 years, 43 in the age group from 41 to 50 years, and 30 in the age group 50+.

The survey participants were asked **whether they have, at some point, created an Europass CV**. 138 participants (28.6%) answered "Yes", 271 (56.1%) answered "No", and 74 (15.3%) participants answered with "I do not know". Participants were also asked to indicate which skills they wanted to improve. The most popular skills mentioned were language skills (116 responses), communication skills (52 responses), CV creation skills (31 responses), digital skills (27 responses), and social skills (eight responses).

Considering the primary target audience of the education fair "*Skola 2023*" – learners, prospective students, and adults of various ages – the significant interest in Europass among the age group from 15 to 18 years with 231 survey participant can be evaluated as positive. This age group is at the beginning of making career choices as they need to decide on their future education. It is encouraging that a relatively large number of participants are actively engaging in filling out survey questionnaires, demonstrating their interest in Europass. The lowest interest and participation, on the other hand, were observed in the age group from 26 to 30 years, with only 13 participants in the survey. Likewise, conclusion may be drawn that the activity in other age groups could have been higher, but this largely depends on precise and detailed statistics of fair visitors, which were not available while conducting this study. Considering the survey results, it is crucial to attract to the Europass platform not only younger, but also older users with experience in the professional field of work. This way, they can find the necessary information about new learning or job opportunities or simply use the platform to access information for their professional development.

Conclusions

In the course of this study conducted in 2023, several trends were observed in the content and functionality of the Europass platform. Summarising the analysis of the Europass platform, user survey, interviews, and the results of focus group discussions, several significant conclusions were drawn.

- **Lack of accurate and understandable information.** As repeatedly pointed out in this Study Report, the same "Europass tools" are often presented with different or modified names, causing confusion among users. Even if users successfully comprehend information such as the meaning of the EQF and NQF, further application of this data using the platform's tools may be challenging. For instance, when seeking information about the EQF and NQF levels, there is a lack of clear explanations to assure users that the retrieved information is indeed what they were originally searching for. Video tutorials available only in English, occasionally with subtitles in other languages, are not a comprehensive solution. In any case, this restricts the range of users seeking information in a clear and understandable video material.
- **The search options and usability of the information provided on the Europass platform are challenging.** Frequently, information on the Europass platform is presented inaccurately, leading users to seek necessary information through alternative means since the potential indicators (e.g., key words) may be misleading. The platform lacks support tools to help users understand more precisely what they are searching for. The practical task results analysed in the study indicate that users can achieve accurate end results only by initially defining the sought information or function specifically and terminologically correctly. Europass platform users possess diverse prior knowledge and professional work experience, making it crucial to develop information retrieval tools that are intuitive and easily adaptable to different target groups.
- **Technical shortcomings of the Europass platform.** Additional problems arise from technical errors on the Europass platform, where, for instance, certain open content sections do not function properly, or the provided links are inaccessible. Specific issues related to Europass platform in beta or test mode impact the long-term qualitative use of the platform, and users should be informed when they might be offered not a test version, but the main version.
- **Data is not synchronised with the databases of competent institutions in the EU countries.** This is a significant issue in the operation of the Europass platform as consistency in the information presented by EU member states may not observed. For instance, the data on learning opportunities is fully imported from certain EU countries, while practically no data is imported from other EU countries. Although it is possible in the future to resolve the issue of importing relevant data from all EU countries, the next challenge is the accurate representation of the imported data, considering that the data is compiled from various national institutions, different systems, and in different languages. In the context of this study, conclusion may be drawn that the lack of translation or appropriate filters hinders users to look for a job in other countries. This, in turn, is likely to discourage individuals from continuing to use the Europass platform and erode their trust in the platform's user-friendliness and functionality in the long run.
- **Ensuring accurate translations on the Europass platform.** The analysis of the results of the surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions shows that the issue of providing accurate translations was pointed out by practically every target audience, impacting the user's initial reaction. Often, in the very first step of the search, a specific Europass section or page is provided to the user only in English, without the option to switch to the desired language. The results of the analysis of platform functions suggest that frequently the necessary Europass sections even open with translations in two languages (both English and Latvian), which can create confusion about the page content and hinder comprehending the information. Therefore, the user's initial reaction, even before the end of the information search, is negative, which can significantly reduce their interest in continuing to search for the necessary data.

Recommendations for improving the usability and enhancing the functionality of the Europass platform

Considering the identified content-related and technical issues of the Europass platform within this study, recommendations from various target groups have been compiled to enhance the usability and functionality of the Europass platform.

The recommendations developed during the study are addressed to the EC – the host of the Europass platform – with a specific emphasis on the needs and interests of the Latvian platform users:

- **To improve the format of information presentation on the Europass platform.** Eliminating, for instance, discrepancies in toolbar headings or titles and provide a more detailed representation of these aspects throughout the platform is crucial. The study repeatedly led to conclusion that the same information was presented in multiple locations, which can confuse users.
- **To improve the quality of translations in all Europass platform sections.** Although the users in this study pointed out that the sections for creating CVs and cover letters were the easiest to understand, the quality of translation across all the platform sections needs to be reviewed. Machine translation may not always accurately formulate text in the respective language, resulting in translations difficult to understand. All the sections should be reviewed and edited, given that many spelling, stylistic, and grammar errors are still present.
- **To translate sections that have not been translated into Latvian or have been translated only partially.** Certain sections on the Europass platform are not translated into Latvian at all. For instance, the heading of the section “European Digital Credentials” is in Latvian (*“Eiropas digitālie mācīšanās apliecinājumi”*), but upon opening the section, the information is only available in English. The situation where opening specific sections on the Europass platform, information is partially not provided in the selected language needs to be addressed. This is observed in the FAQ (Frequently asked questions) section, where, as mentioned earlier, the text is presented in parallel in two languages – English and Latvian. In certain sections, information is available only in English, and there are sections where the section headings are in Latvian, but the subsequent text is in English. The entire platform content should be ensured in the user’s selected language. Translations should also be applied to text used in the system for all languages, such as “Apply” in the qualification frameworks comparison tool, “Go to top” in the job search section, “Job/Course” in the Application Manager’s section “My Applications”, etc. Leaving certain terms untranslated not only complicates understanding of the information for users who do not have command of English, but also creates the impression that the Latvian version of the platform is not fully developed.
- **To address the issues when Europass platform users are redirected to other sites using links, but, at the end, the information is no longer available in the selected language.** It has been repeatedly observed in this study that when users are redirected to other sites, e.g., the CEDEFOP’s website, only a specific part of information is available in the selected language (in this study – Latvian). A similar situation should be avoided with job offers using data from the EURES portal, where specific job offers from the respective countries, including their descriptions, are available only in the respective country’s language without translation. While it is understandable that the Europass platform republishes information from national databases in the original language and machine translation tools cannot provide high-quality results, the platform should include clear and timely instructions about the language(s) in which specific information is available. This would enable users to make informed decisions about their further actions on the platform.
- **To resolve issues with data synchronisation between national databases and the Europass platform.** Information from national databases on courses, qualifications, and job opportunities is not accurately imported or synchronised on the Europass platform. This creates situations where information on learning opportunities in certain countries is available, but in other cases, data is entirely missing. Taking into account that data synchronisation is technically challenging and possibly time-consuming, clear instructions about data sources, as well as dates for data refreshment and/or import, should be included on the platform to help users understanding and reviewing the imported information.
- **To improve search options on the Europass platform.** To make information search on the Europass platform more intuitive for users, it is essential to improve the search tool functionality or even create a virtual assistant that helps users in finding the necessary information. For users who are

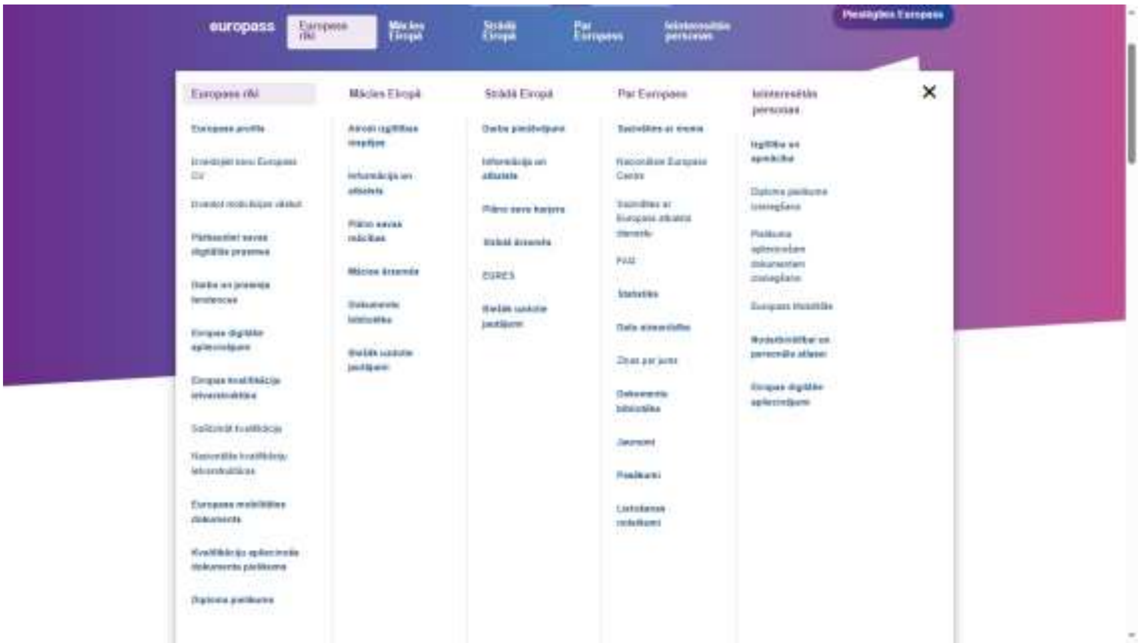
not familiar with professional terminology in the fields of education or employment, it is challenging to immediately locate the desired information.

- **To improve the presentation of information in the learning opportunities search engine.** The results of study suggest that users consider locating specific courses and their providers to be difficult. At the time of conducting the study, entering the names of most countries that provide information to the Europass platform did not yield any search results. In cases where information cannot be displayed from a specific country for technical reasons (due to data not being submitted or technical issues), clear instructions should be included in the section "Find courses", indicating that information may not be available for technical reasons.
- **To develop the final versions for search tools operating in beta test mode.** For instance, learning opportunities search engine still operated in beta test mode while analysing the platform's functions in June 2023. Unfortunately, such situation has persisted since the launching of the new Europass platform.
- **To address issues when users, changing to other platform pages, encounter language shifts.** Often, when switching between different sections of the Europass platform, the language shifts from, for example, Latvian to the default language, English. As a result, the users have to perform unnecessary actions, such as changing the language back to their preference each time in the upper right corner of the page.
- **To review the formulation of the name for the national qualifications framework comparison tool.** In the tools list, the NQF comparison tool is named *"Salīdzināt kvalifikāciju"* ("Compare qualification" in English), which creates a misleading impression as the tool offers to compare NQFs, not qualifications. However, upon opening the tool, the option to compare NQFs across Europe is presented, and the comparison of qualifications is no longer mentioned. Therefore, the tool's name should be changed to avoid confusion among users. This issue also exists in the English version with the tool named "Compare qualifications", which is, in essence, identical to the Latvian translation. Therefore, the tool's name should be reviewed in all the European languages. It is essential to apply a wording for the section heading that is understandable to platform users (considering that the NQF concept may only be familiar to industry professionals) and does not create a misleading impression that the tool allows comparing different qualifications.

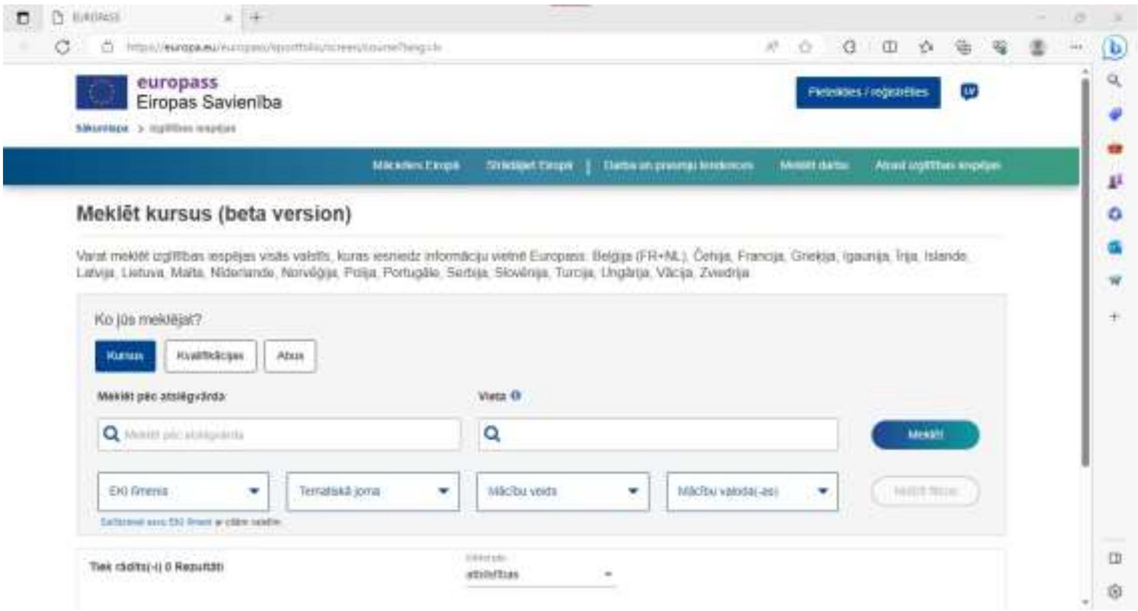
Annexes

Annex 1. Screenshots used in the Study Report
Annex 2. Information on respondents
Annex 3. Questions and tasks included in the Europass Platform Evaluation
Annex 4. Questions for discussions in seminars

Annex 1. Screenshots used in the Study Report (in Latvian)


europass
Europass rīki
Mācies Eiropā
Strādā Eiropā
Par Europass
Ieinteresētās personas
Europass rīki
Mācies Eiropā
Strādā Eiropā
Par Europass
Ieinteresētās personas
EURES
FAQ

Screenshot 1. Menu of the Europass online platform


europass
Eiropas Savienība
Pieteikties / reģistrēties
LV

Meklēt kursus (beta version)

Varat meklēt izglītības iespējas visās valstīs, kuras iesniedz informāciju vietnē Europass: Beļģija (FR+NL), Čehija, Francija, Grieķija, Igaunija, Īrija, Islande, Latvija, Lietuva, Malta, Nīderlande, Norvēģija, Polija, Portugāle, Serbija, Slovēnija, Turcija, Ungārija, Vācija, Zviedrija.

Ko jūs meklējat?
Kursus
Kvalifikācijas
Abus
Meklēt pēc atslēgvārda
Vieta
Meklēt
EKI līmenis
Tematiskā joma
Mācību veids
Mācību valoda(-as)
Tiek rādīts(-i) 0 Rezultāti
atbilstības

Screenshot 2. Europass platform section “Learn in Europe”

Frequently Asked Questions

Find

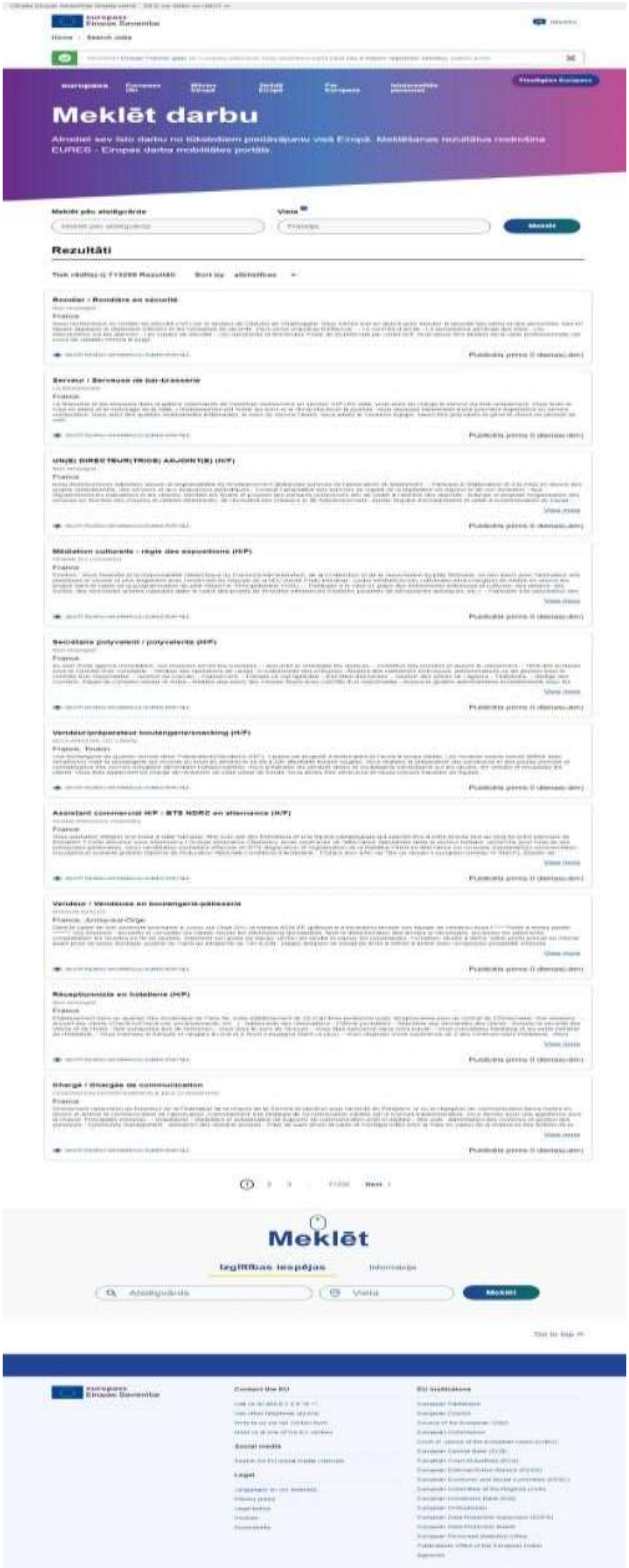
2FA-FAQ

Europass Veidnes

Atbalsts un Informācija

Share this page

Screenshot 3. Europass platform section “Learn in Europe”, subsection “Frequently Asked Questions”



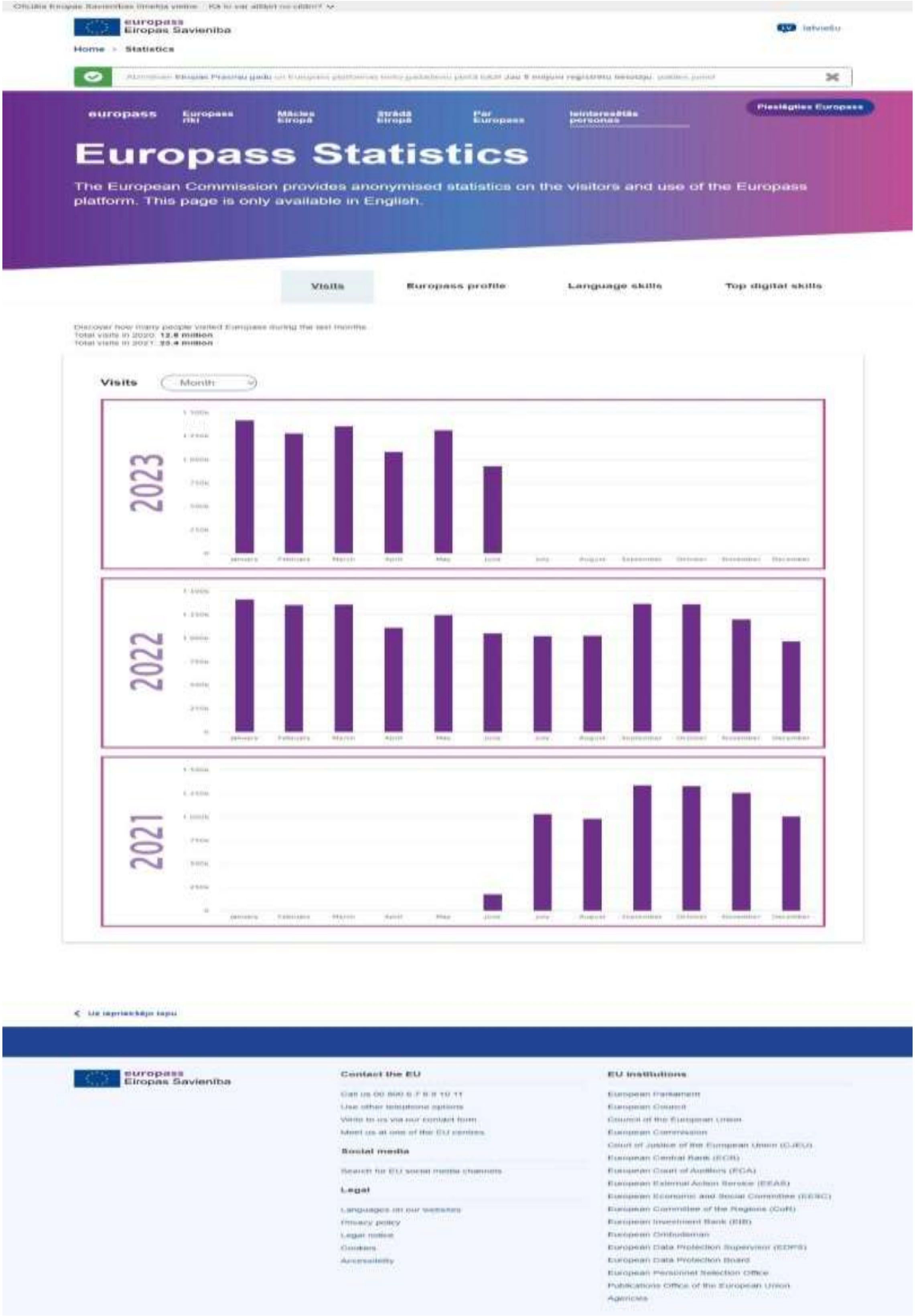
Meklēt darbu

Atrodiet sev īsto darbu no tūkstošiem piedāvājumu visā Eiropā. Meklēšanas rezultātus nodrošina EURES - Eiropas darba mobilitātes portāls.

Rezultāti

Home
Search Jobs
Meklēt
Meklēt
Izglītības iespējas
Informācija
Atslēgvārds
Vieta
Meklēt

Screenshot 4. Europass platform section “Work in Europe”, subsection “Find jobs”



europass
Eiropas Savienība
latviešu
Home > Statistics
europass
Europass rīki
Mācies Eiropā
Strādā Eiropā
Par Europass
Ieinteresētās personas
Piesāķies Europass

Europass Statistics

The European Commission provides anonymised statistics on the visitors and use of the Europass platform. This page is only available in English.

Visits
Europass profile
Language skills
Top digital skills

Discover how many people visited Europass during the last months
Total visits in 2020: **12.8 million**
Total visits in 2021: **25.4 million**

Visits
Month
2023
2022
2021
1 500k
1 250k
1 000k
750k
500k
250k
0
January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
September
October
November
December
Uz iepriekšējo lapu
europass
Eiropas Savienība
Contact the EU
Social media
Legal
EU institutions

Screenshot 5. Europass platform section “About Europass”, subsection “Statistics”

Annex 2. Information on the participants of in-depth interviews

No.	Participant	Age	Education	Occupation	Region	Foreign language skills
1.	Female	31	Higher	Job seeker	Vidzeme	English, Russian
2.	Female	19	Secondary	Student	Riga	English
3.	Female	21	Secondary	Student	Surroundings of Riga	English, Russian
4.	Female	46	Secondary vocational	Specialist in textile manufacturing	Kurzeme	Russian
5.	Male	31	Higher	Office worker	Kurzeme	Russian
6.	Male	49	Secondary vocational	Sign language interpreter	Kurzeme	Russian
7.	Male	19	Secondary	Student	Surroundings of Riga	English, Russian
8.	Female	22	Higher	Customer service assistant	Surroundings of Riga	English, Russian
9.	Male	23	Higher	Student	Vidzeme	English
10.	Female	40	Higher	Official	Latgale	English, Russian

Annex 3. Questions and tasks included in the Europass Platform Evaluation

The new Europass platform was launched in 2020. Have you used the new platform since then?

a) Yes
Choosing the answer "Yes", an additional question is offered. You can mark multiple answers.
Indicate which Europass tools and other options on the platform have you used.
  - CV
  - Cover letter
  - Library
  - Learn in Europe
  - Work in Europe
  - Comparison of national qualifications frameworks
  - Tool to test your digital skills
  - Other (specify)

Second additional question. Have you created a Europass profile?

  - Yes
  - No

b) No

Which foreign languages can you communicate in freely? *(multiple answers possible)*

- English
- Russian
- German
- Other(s) ____________

In which Latvian region do you reside?

- Riga
- Vidzeme
- Kurzeme
- Latgale
- Zemgale

What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

Which age group do you belong to?

- Under 18 years of age
- 18–30
- 31–40
- 41–50
- 51–64
- 64+

Open the web browser and enter the link www.europass.eu. Choose the Latvian language. Tasks must be completed using only the information available on the Europass portal.

Task 1. Europass Mobility

Find information on Europass mobilities and the Europass Mobility template on the Europass portal.

Link to information on mobilities:

Link to the Europass Mobility:

Questionnaire for evaluating the availability of information

1. Was it easy to find information on mobilities?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Free response – what could be improved? ________
2. Was the information easily understandable?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Free response – what could be improved? ________
3. Was the meaning and applicability of the Europass Mobility sufficiently clearly explained in the text?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Free response – what could be improved? ________
4. Was the Europass Mobility template easy to find?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Free response – what could be improved? ________

Task 2. Information on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

Find information on the EQF on the Europass platform. Read the entire description.

Link to the EQF description:

1. Was the information on the EQF easy to find?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Free response – what could be improved? ________
2. After reading the description, did you understand what the EQF is?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. More or less
    d. Free response – what could be improved? ________
3. Did the description provide clear information on the essence and purpose of the EQF?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. More or less
    d. Free response – what could be improved? ________

Task 3. Comparison of National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs)

Find a tool that allows for comparing national qualification frameworks. Select two countries: Latvia and Ireland. Specify which education document in Ireland corresponds to the diploma of first level professional higher education obtained in Latvia (college education).

Link to the qualification comparison tool:

The diploma of first level professional higher education (college education) corresponds to ________.

1. Was the NQF comparison tool easy to find?

    (on the scale of 4, where 1 = easy and 4 = difficult)

2. Did the section provide clear information on the essence and purpose of the NQF?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. More or less
    d. Free response – what could be improved? ________
3. Was the use of the tool simple and understandable?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Free response – what could be improved? ________

Task 4. Information and support for working in Europe

Find information about the institution responsible for employment in Romania.

Find information about the institution in Poland that offers recognition of qualifications acquired abroad.

Institution responsible for employment in Romania:

Link to the institution’s website:

In Poland, qualifications acquired abroad are recognised by:

Link to the institution’s website:

Link to the Europass platform page on information and support for working in Romania:

1. Was it easy to find information and support for working in European countries?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Free response – what could be improved? ________
2. Was the information on job opportunities and services contributing to employment, which is available in the subsection “Information and support”, sufficiently comprehensive and understandable?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Free response – what could be improved? ________
3. Would the information available in the section “Information and support” be useful for your if you were to search for a job abroad?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Free response – what could be improved? ________

Task 5. Seeking learning opportunities

Find the course “Combustion engine mechanic” that can be pursued in the Netherlands. Specify the national qualification framework (NQF) level and the awarding body for this course.

Link to the course:

Education institution offering to acquire this qualification:

NQF level of the course:

Awarding body:

1. Was it easy to find the specified course?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Free response – what could be improved? ________
2. Was it easy to find the EQF level of the course?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Free response – what could be improved? ________
3. Was it easy to find the awarding body and course level?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Was not indicated
   d. Free response – what could be improved? ________
4. Would the information provided in the course description be useful for you if you were to pursue this course?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Free response – what could be improved? ________

Find any course that can be pursued in Germany and that corresponds to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level 4.

Link to the course:

NQF level of the course:

Awarding body:

1. Was it easy to find a course with the specified NQF level?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Free response – what could be improved? ________
2. Was it easy to find the awarding body and course level?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Was not indicated
    d. Free response – what could be improved? ________
3. Would the information on the course you found be useful for you if you were to seek for learning opportunities abroad?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Free response – what could be improved? ________

Task 6. Instructions and tips for creating a CV and cover letter

Find the page with a video tutorial and tips for creating a CV and cover letter. Read the tips for creating a CV and cover letter.

Link to the tips and instructions for creating a CV:

Link to the tips and instructions for creating a cover letter:

1. Was it easy for you to find the instructions and tips for creating a **CV**?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Free response – what could be improved? ________
2. Were the tips for creating a **CV** sufficient and detailed?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Free response – what could be improved? ________
3. Were the tips for creating a **CV** useful?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Free response – what could be improved? ________
4. Was it easy for you to find the instructions and tips for creating a **cover letter**?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Free response – what could be improved? ________
5. Were the tips for creating a **cover letter** sufficient and detailed?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Free response – what could be improved? ________
6. Were the tips for creating a **cover letter** useful?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Free response – what could be improved? ________

Task 7. Creation of a CV

Open the link https://europa.eu/europass/eportfolio/screen/profile-wizard?lang=lv, click on “Continue as a guest”, and then “Create my profile”. The handout includes a Europass CV template. Create a CV following this template. After creating the CV, save it in PDF format on your computer/smart device.

1. Was creating a CV on the Europass platform convenient and easy?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Free response – what could be improved? ________
2. Was it clear what information needs to be entered in all fields?
    a. Yes, it was clear in all fields.
    b. No, it was not clear in all fields.

        i. Specify fields in which it was not clear ____________.
3. In your opinion, is the CV format well-structured and easy to understand?
    a. Yes
    b. No
        i. What could be improved? _____________
4. Was immediately clear that information was to be first entered into the profile, not the CV, and then used to create the CV?
    a. Yes
    b. No
5. What could be further improved that was not mentioned in the previous 4 questions?

____
____
____

Which platform sections mentioned in the tasks seemed most relevant and which ones did you find irrelevant? Provide an evaluation on the scale of 4 (where 1 – unnecessary and 4 – relevant).

	1 (unnecessary)	2 (irrelevant)	3 (useful)	4 (relevant)
Instructions and tips for creating a CV				
Instructions and tips for creating a cover letter				
Information and support regarding job opportunities				
Information and support regarding learning opportunities				
Find courses				
Find jobs				
Compare qualifications				
Information on the European Qualifications Framework				
Information on Europass Mobilities and the Mobility template				
Tool to test your digital skills				

Conclusion

After completing the tasks, please evaluate the overall experience of using the platform (what you liked, what you did not like, what could be further improved).

____
____
____

Annex 4.Questions for discussions in seminars

Questions for discussions in regional seminars titled “Significance of the Latvian Qualifications Framework and Europass in Education” in Dobele (12 April 2023) and Rezekne (8 May 2023).

1. For what purposes did you use the Europass platform?
2. In your opinion, what are the main advantages of the Europass platform? Which information/tools on the platform are most useful in your work? Which information sections/tools should be improved?
3. What is your opinion on two-factor authentication on the Europass platform?
4. What options and/or tools would you like to see on the Europass platform?

Questions for discussions in the European Union network seminar on 6 April 2023.

1. In your opinion, what is the goal of the Europass platform? Does the platform achieve its goals?
2. In your opinion, what are the main advantages of the Europass platform? Which information/tools on the platform are most useful in your work?
3. Which information sections/tools should be improved?
4. How would you assess the functionality and user-friendliness of the platform?