

36th CIF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2025

International Relations in a Changing World: Way Forward for Social Work

Subtheme F. Challenges for Social Work in an Increasingly Digitized World

“CAREER GUIDANCE 4.0: TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR FUTURE-READY CAREER PROFESSIONALS”

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Abstract

In the current era of rapid technological change and labour market disruption, the nature of careers has become increasingly non-linear, complex, and unpredictable. The accelerating shift towards Industry 4.0 has created emerging professions and transformed existing ones, reshaping the skills and competencies required for employability and career success. Career guidance and social inclusion professionals often struggle to keep pace with these changes, lacking access to up-to-date tools, methodologies, and training to effectively support young people's transitions into the world of work. This gap poses a critical challenge for vocational education and training (VET) systems and for social work professionals who seek to promote equitable access to opportunities in an increasingly digitized world.

The Careers 4.0 project (KA220-VET-851950D8), funded under the Erasmus+ programme, addresses this challenge by developing an innovative conceptual and methodological framework aligned with new labour market trends and Industry 4.0 competencies. The overarching aim is to empower VET, career, and social inclusion professionals working with young people aged 16–24 to manage change, build career adaptability and resilience, and support lifelong career development. The project seeks to enable these professionals to respond proactively to the uncertainty and continuous transitions that characterize contemporary education and employment landscapes.

The project follows a collaborative, research-informed development process that involves stakeholder consultation, literature review, and piloting. Its main activities include: (1) the design of the Career Competencies 4.0 Framework, identifying key digital-era career skills and behaviours; (2) the development of an integrated digital information and assessment system, which incorporates online skills assessment questionnaires and a dynamic career information tool highlighting emerging professions; and (3) the creation of a comprehensive training

programme introducing innovative Career Guidance 4.0 methodologies and practices, tailored to the needs of career practitioners and VET professionals.

Launched in December 2024 and scheduled for completion in November 2025, Careers 4.0 brings together an international consortium of experts from Romania, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Cyprus. As the project approaches its final phase, initial outputs demonstrate its potential to enhance the professional capacity of career and social inclusion practitioners, foster digital readiness, and support evidence-based guidance tailored to the rapidly evolving labour market.

This presentation will introduce the Careers 4.0 project, explain the trajectory followed by the international team, and highlight its main results and anticipated impact. By aligning career guidance practice with the competencies and challenges of the digital era, the project contributes to building more inclusive, future-oriented support systems for young people's career development.

Keywords: Careers 4.0; Industry 4.0; career guidance and planning; competencies; young people; digital era