

Survey on the services of Icelandic Euroguidance Centre

Final report



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Survey on the Services of the Icelandic Euroguidance Centre. Carried out on the request of its Project Manager.

Final version

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1 Purpose

The Icelandic Euroguidance Centre has the two main purposes of promoting the European dimension on guidance and to highlight its importance. In this context, guidance is seen as a tool which can enhance people's possibilities of learning and working in Europe and get validation for the experiences and skills acquired. Similar Centres are operated within all countries of the European Economic Area and they form the Euroguidance cooperation network which operates an information web with e.g. an overview over guidance in all the member states and an electronic newsletter on innovation in guidance and counselling.

Special emphasis is placed on communication, cooperation, common utilisation of experience and knowledge on education and training in Europe. The purpose of the survey is to seek the opinion of counsellors on the information and services provided by the Centre.

1.1 Objectives

With the purpose of the survey in mind, the following questions were asked:

1. What service would you like to receive from the Euroguidance Centre?
2. Have you familiarised yourself with the information provided by the Euroguidance Centre?
3. Have you used the services of the Euroguidance Centre?
4. What services of the Euroguidance Centre have you used?
5. What services are you interested in receiving from the Euroguidance Centre?
6. What is the importance of each service component provided by the Euroguidance Centre?
7. How well does the Euroguidance Centre's staff provide each service component in relation to their importance?
8. What is the overall satisfaction rate with the services provided by the Euroguidance Centre?

2 Method

A quantitative method was used in this survey to gather data on the service of the Euroguidance Centre. A questionnaire was sent out to just over 300 Icelandic counsellors with a link to a web survey in May, August and September 2011.

2.1 Measuring instrument

The questionnaire was designed especially as a measuring instrument by the author of this report, in cooperation with the Euroguidance Centre's project manager. It can be found in Annex 1.

In the questionnaire, counsellors are asked about the present service, the performance of the project manager and the importance of each service component, their expectation to the service and overall satisfaction rate. Background questions were on gender, age, period of employment and education.

2.2 Sample

In May only 26 counsellors participated in the survey and therefore it was decided to repeat the call in August and September. Only 9 additional counsellors participated and the whole sample was therefore only 35, or just over 10% of the whole group of counsellors.

2.3 Data processing

Two types of software were used, Excel and SPSS and a describing statistics was utilised. In the light of the small sample, the results have to be taken provisionally and can therefore not be said to represent the opinion of all counsellors. The results are published as indications and can shed some light on certain elements of the service.

2.4 Information on participants

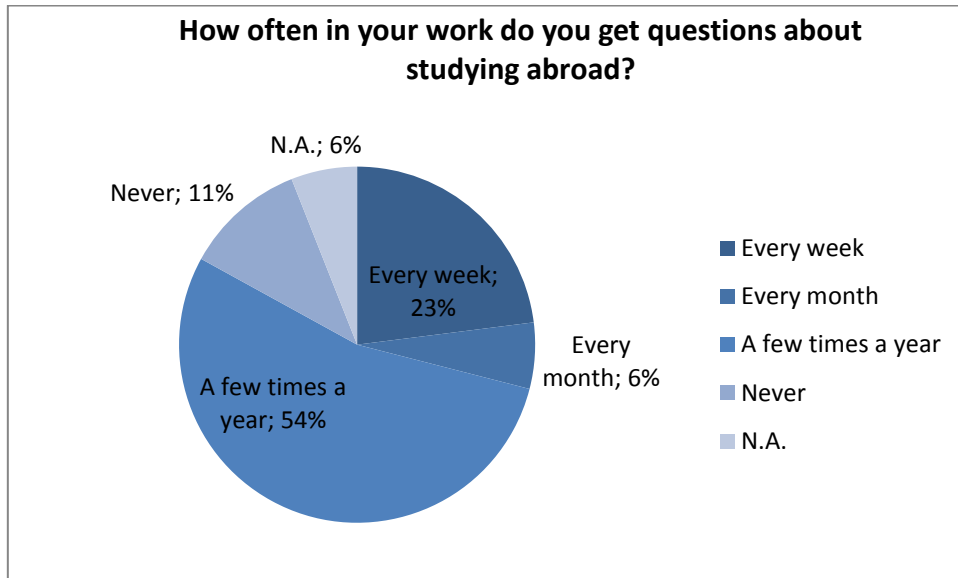
Table 2-1 provides information on participants' gender, age, education, period of employment.

Table 2-1 Information on participants

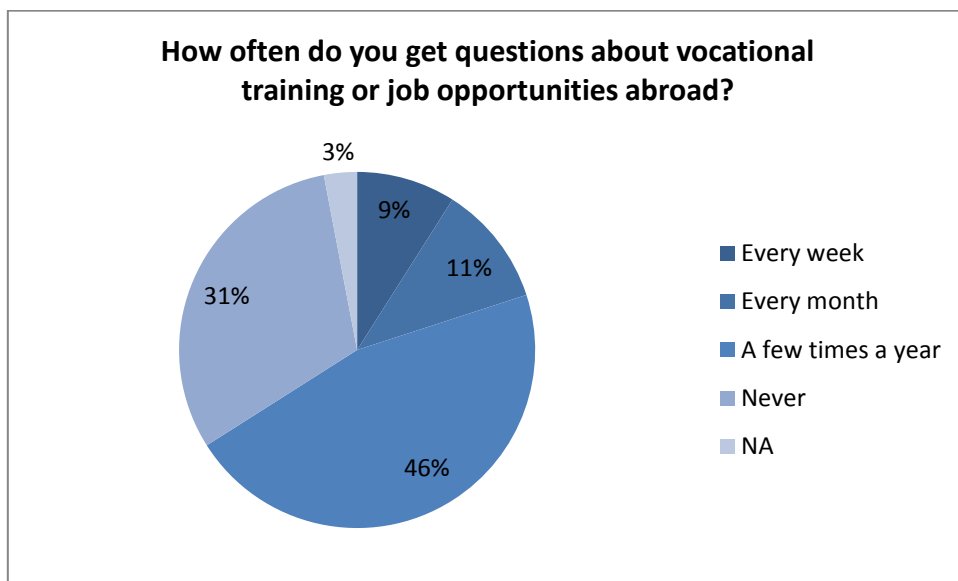
Question	Number (n) of 35 in total	Percent age (%)
What is your gender?		
Man	5	14%
Woman	30	86%
How old are you?		
Younger than 31	0	0%
31-40	6	17%
41-50	16	46%
51 and older	13	37%
What is your education?		
BA, BSc	12	34%
MA, MSc, MPA, MBA, MPM	23	66%
PhD	0	0%
For how long have you worked as a counsellor?		
Less than 5 years	9	26%
5-10 years	9	26%
11-15 years	13	37%
More than 15 years	4	11%
Where do you work as a counsellor?		
In a compulsory school	13	37%
In an upper secondary school	9	26%
In a university	4	11%
At an institution or in a company	7	20%
Elsewhere	2	6%

2.5 Frequency of questions about studying, vocational training or working abroad

Graphs 2-1 and 2-2 show how often the counsellors who participated in the survey answered questions about studying, vocational training or working abroad.



Graph 2-1 Frequency of questions about studying abroad



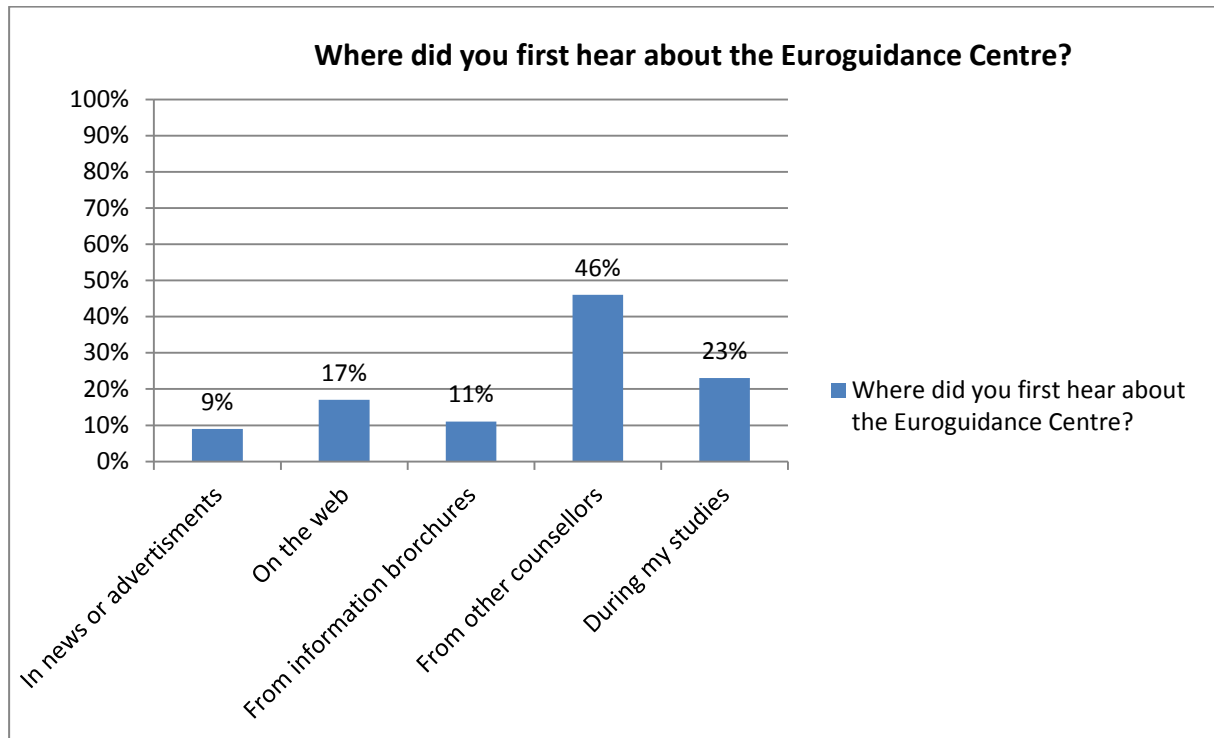
Graph 2-2 Frequency of questions about vocational training and job opportunities abroad

3 Results

Here are the main results from the survey as a whole.

3.1 Where did you first hear about the Euroguidance Centre?

Graph 3-1 shows where the counsellors who participated in the survey first heard about the Euroguidance Centre.



Graph 3-1 Where participants first heard about the Euroguidance Centre

3.2 Have you familiarised yourself with information from the Euroguidance Centre?

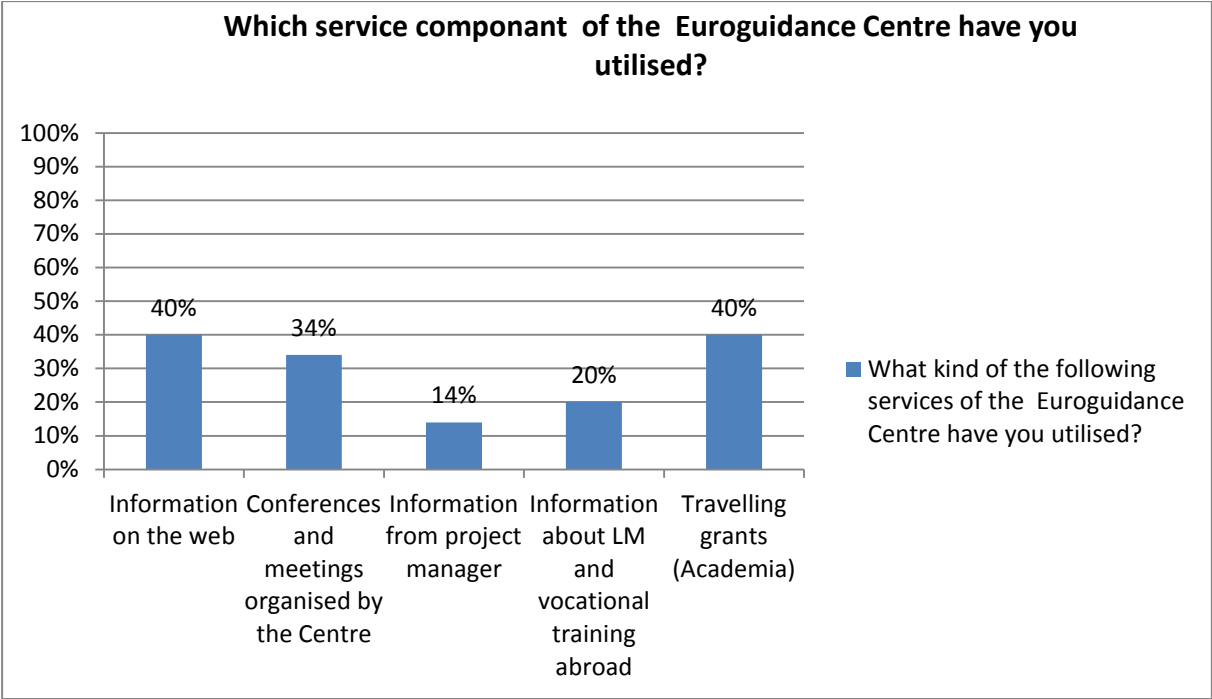
Of the 35 counsellors who participated in the survey, 30 (86%) had familiarized themselves with the information provided by the Centre whereas 5 (14%) had not.

3.3 Have you used the services of the Euroguidance Centre?

Of the 35 counsellors who participated in the survey 23 (66%) had used the services of the Centre whereas 12 (34%) had not.

3.4 Which service component of the Euroguidance Centre have you used?

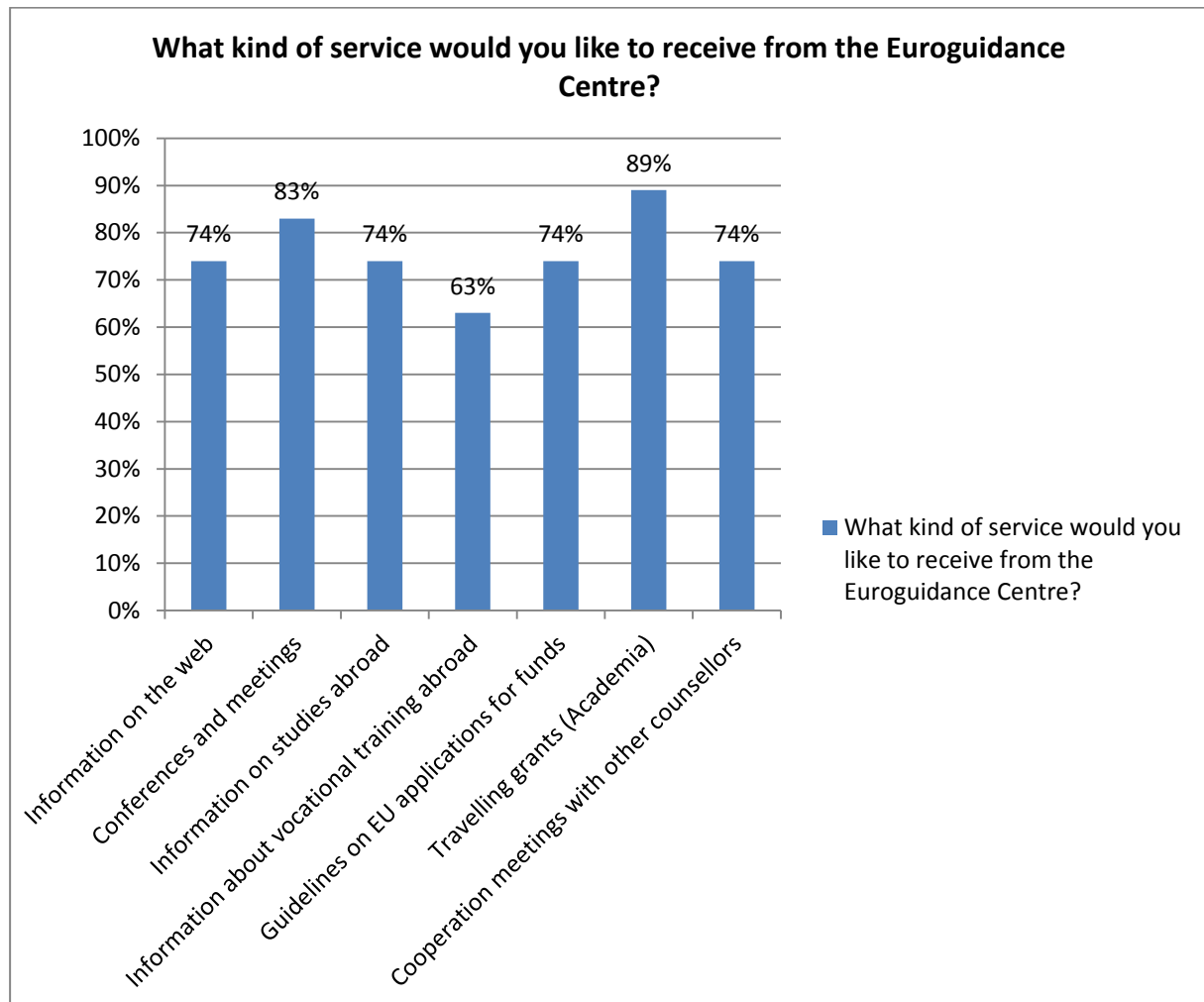
Graph 3-2 shows the percentage of the 35 participants who had used different parts of the services provided by the Euroguidance Centre. Around 40% had used information on the Centre's web and had received travelling grants (LdV) and 1/3rd had attended conferences and meetings organised by the Centre.



Graph 3-2 Euroguidance Centre’s services utilised by participants

3.5 What service would you like to receive from the Euroguidance Centre?

Graph 3-3 shows the percentage of the 35 participants who would like to receive certain kinds of services. The results show that there is great interest to use the services provided by the Euroguidance Centre and the greatest interest is in attending conferences and meetings organised by the Centre and to obtain travelling grants to attend courses.



Graph 3-3 Services that participants would like to receive from the Euroguidance Centre

3.6 What is the importance of each service component offered by the Euroguidance Centre?

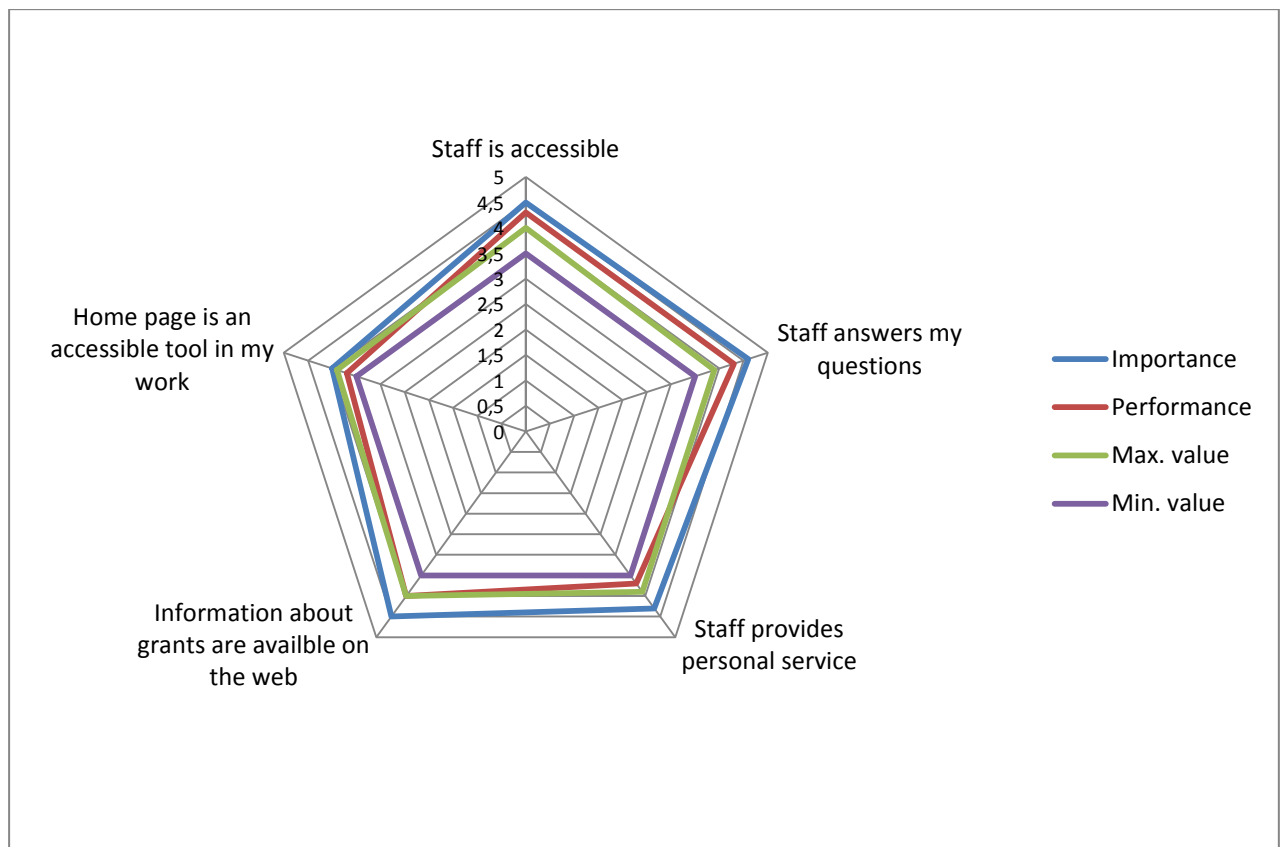
Graph 3-1 shows the importance of each service component offered by the Euroguidance Centre according to the participants' view. The most important service appears to be getting answers to questions (89%), having access to staff (86%) and getting online information about grants (83%).

Graph 3-1 The importance of each service component offered by the Euroguidance Centre

Service components provided by the Euroguidance Centre	How important is the component? (N=35)					
	Very important	Important	Rather important	Not important	Neutral	N/A
Staff is accessible	66%	20%	3%	-	8%	3%
Staff answers my questions	69%	20%	-	-	8%	3%
Staff provides personal service	43%	31%	-	-	20%	6%
Information about grants are available on the Centre's web	66%	17%	3%	-	11%	3%
The web is a useful tool in my daily work	31%	37%	-	3%	26%	3%

3.7 How is the performance of the Euroguidance Centre’s staff in connection to the importance of each service component?

Graph 3-4 shows what the participants felt about the performance of the Euroguidance Centre’s staff in connection to the importance of each service component. Importance and performance is measured from 1 to 5 where 5 is a very important service component and participants agree that the service has been provided. The graph shows that all the components are important and that participants feel that the service is provided accordingly. Improvements are possible in providing personal service and making the web is available in the counsellors’ daily work.



Graph 3-4 Performance when fulfilling service components compared to their importance

3.8 What is the overall satisfaction with the service provided by the Euroguidance Centre?

Table 3-2 shows that 21 (60%) of participants are satisfied or rather satisfied with the service provided by the Euroguidance Centre and 14 were neutral. No participant was unhappy with the service.

Table 3-2 Overall satisfaction with the service

Overall, how satisfied are you with the service provided by the Euroguidance Centre? (N=35)				
Very satisfied	Rather satisfied	Neutral	Rather dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
23%	37%	40%	-	-

3.9 Other things concerning the services provided by the Euroguidance Centre

The final question was whether participants wanted to mention something. Eight participants chose to do so.

From their answers it is obvious that they think that the Euroguidance Centre is a great institution. They expressed that the dissemination of information was good and that other institutions could learn from it and that the communication with its project manager was very good. Satisfaction with seminars and the service and support which is offered was expressed. It was also mentioned that the Centre's web was very good and the flow amount of information presented there exemplary.

It was mentioned that it could have been presented in a better manner when the Centre's web became part of the web of the Lifelong Learning Programme. It was also mentioned that it was not very clear from the web how to contact the Centre's staff. It was also mentioned that the Euroguidance Centre's web was not very prominent on the web of the Centre for Lifelong Guidance Expertise (CLGE) and by cooperation better in this respect, counselling could be enhanced.

4 Discussion

As only around 10% of the total number of guidance counsellors in Iceland responded to the survey, the results have to be taken provisionally and cannot be interpreted as the opinions of the whole group of counsellors in Iceland. The results here presented are therefore first and foremost indications of the opinions of the participants but give important indications about certain aspects of the service provided. When so few participate in a survey, one can speculate about the reasons why and about the group which did not respond. It is not known whether the group which did participate is representative of the entire group. There are however some useful suggestions about improved services and general satisfaction was expressed in the open question about the services and usefulness of the Euroguidance Centre.

A great majority of the participants know the Euroguidance Centre well. Around 86% of them had familiarised themselves with the information provided by the Centre and 66% had utilised the services. Respondents were overall satisfied with the services but around 40% were neutral. This can be explained almost entirely by the 34% who had not utilised the services and can therefore not form an opinion. It is therefore possible to conclude that no one of the group who had used the services is dissatisfied with it. There is thus a strong indication about a general satisfaction with the service.

When looking at individual service components, some possibilities for slightly improved services can be seen in when providing personalised services and in making the Centre's web more accessible in the daily work of counsellors. The services least utilised is information about learning, vocational training and working. Therefore it seems possible to improve this service component, especially since the interest in all the service components seems to be great as can be seen in graph 3-3. Information about learning and working abroad could be increased as can be seen in graphs 2-1 and 2-2 which show that 20-29% of participants get questions about this at least once a month. With further dissemination of the information in this field, the initiative of counsellors to present them to students and the labour market could be enhanced.

Overall, it is possible to conclude from the answers given by the participants in the survey that the staff of the Euroguidance Centre is generally providing very good services and it would be correct to continue on the same path and to increase even further personalised services and improve the information about possibilities in studying and working abroad.

Annexes

Annex I – Questions for a web survey

1. Where did you first hear about the Euroguidance Centre?

- In news or advertisements in the media
- On the web
- In information brochures
- From other counsellors
- Elsewhere, then where: _____

2. Have you familiarised yourself with the information provided by the Euroguidance Centre?

- Yes
- No
- N/A

3. Have you utilised the services of the Euroguidance Centre?

- Yes
- No
- N/A

4. If the answer to question 3 is “yes”, which service component of the services of the Euroguidance Centre have you utilised?

- Information on the Centre’s web
- Conferences and seminars organised by the Centre
- Information provided by the project manager about studying abroad
- Information about the labour market and possibilities of vocational training abroad
- Travelling grant to attend a course (Academia)
- Other, then what: _____

Below there are questions about some of the service components provided by the Euroguidance Centre. For each questions, two answers are required. First of all, please indicate your opinion on each service component as you have experienced them and secondly, please indicate how important you find this service component.

	To what degree do you agree that the service component has been provided as far as you are concerned?						How important do you find this service component?				
	Agree completely	Agree partly	Neutral	Disagree partly	Disagree completely	N/a	Very important	Important	Rather important	Not important	Not important at all
5. Euroguidance Centre's staff is accessible											
6. Euroguidance Centre's staff answers my questions											
7. Euroguidance Centre's staff provides personalised services											
8. Information is accessible on the Centre's web											
9. The Centre's web is a useful tool in my daily work											

10. Overall, how satisfied are you with the services provided by the Euroguidance Centre?

- Very satisfied
- Rather satisfied
- Neutral
- Rather dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

11. Which of the service components listed below would you like to get from the Euroguidance Centre?

- Information on its web
- Conferences and seminars
- Information provided by the Centre's project manager about studying abroad
- Information about the labour market and possibilities of vocational studies abroad
- Guidelines and information which encourage people to apply for EU grants
- Travelling grants to attend a course (Academia)
- Cooperation meetings organised by the Centre with other counsellors
- Other, then what: _____
- None of the above

12. How often in your work do you get questions about studying abroad?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Every month
- A few times a year
- Never
- N/A

13. How often in your work do you get questions about vocational training or job opportunities abroad?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Every month
- A few times a year
- Never
- N/A

14. Where do you work as a counsellor?

- In a compulsory school
- In an upper secondary school
- In a university
- At an institution or in a company
- Elsewhere?: _____

15. For how long have you been working as a counsellor?

- Less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- 11-15 years
- More than 15 years

16. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

17. How old are you?

- Less than 31 years
- 31 - 40 years
- 41 - 50 years
- 51 years or older

18. What is your education?

- BA, BSc
- MA, MSc, MPA, MBA, MPM
- PhD

19. Is there something you would like to mention concerning the service of the Euroguidance Centre?
