

## **Making non-formally and informally acquired competences more visible**

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Austria traditionally puts great emphasis on qualifications acquired in the formal education system, i.e. in school-based and dual programmes as well as in tertiary programmes. More and more often, however, learning takes place outside the formal system, that is, in the non-formal adult education context, at the work place, in voluntary work, etc. The dynamics of the labour market – triggered by technological changes and globalization – virtually require to continue the learning process after completing the formal education system in order to extend and deepen one's knowledge and skills.

In order to underline the importance of competences acquired in all learning contexts and to foster lifelong learning, Austria has – under the responsibility of the ministries of education and science and in cooperation with many stakeholders – developed a [Strategy for the validation of non-formal and informal learning](#). This strategy, which was made public in November 2017, is based on the Council's Recommendation of the same name (2012/C 398/01), in which the EU Member States are invited to develop nationally coordinated approaches and processes with which competences can be made more visible and thus validated.

In Austria many such approaches and processes exist already. For the first time, the national Strategy offers a strategic framework for the development, coordination and network-building of these offers. It aims to promote quality and trust as well as to enhance awareness and use of validation measures.

2018 and 2019 will be dedicated to the promotion, dissemination and implementation of the Strategy. Four thematic working groups have already been established (on quality assurance, professionalization, development of an online portal and system synergies) that should deliver results until the end of 2018. In 2019 the results should be put into practice before new working foci will be defined.