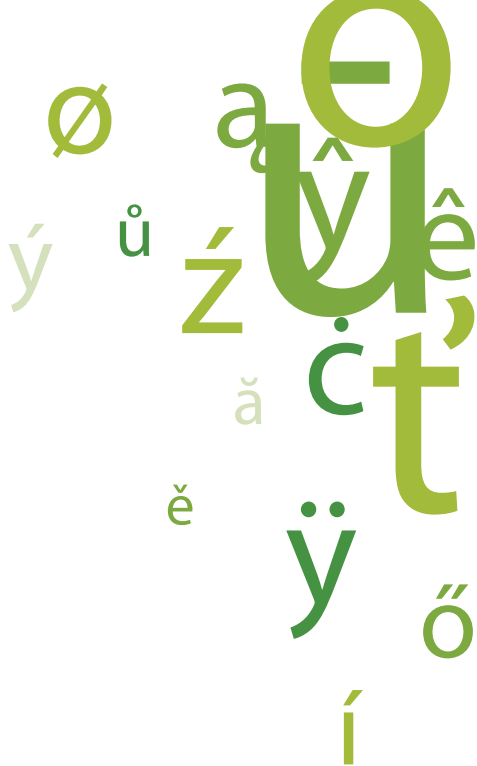


LIFELONG
GUIDANCE
SYSTEM
IN SLOVAKIA

Bratislava 2014
Euroguidance, SAAIC



euro | guidance



LIFELONG GUIDANCE SYSTEM **IN SLOVAKIA**

Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation,
Euroguidance centre
Bratislava 2014

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Slovak Euroguidance centre operates under the Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation (SAAIC) and is part of a Europe-wide network of centres, which are designed to promote mobility and to develop the European dimension in guidance.

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European Network to Support
Guidance and Counselling



Erasmus+

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1 SUMMARY

Career guidance and counselling services have a long tradition in Slovakia (until 1992 part of Czechoslovakia or Czech and Slovak Federal Republic). First career guidance and counselling facilities have been established even in late 1920's, services of this kind were available especially for young people during 1930's and early 1940's. The current system of guidance and counselling services started to develop in 1957 and since then it was under permanent development to today's network of services covering nearly all ages and the whole variety of problem areas. When speaking about used and/or preferred approaches, in recent years a shift from static and psychometric approaches in vocational counselling to dynamic educational and integrated lifelong career guidance and counselling services can be observed.

Career guidance in Slovakia is covered mainly by two sectors – educational sector and sector of employment services. Services organised under the responsibility of ministries and/or regional governments are available to various groups of citizens and are free of charge. Although this area is still a domain of state, some services are offered also by private sector, as well as by NGOs.

Within educational system there is quite a large network of guidance and counselling practitioners in different institutions, inseparable part of whose job is to cooperate in helping pupils, students, parents and other educators to get acquainted with the world of learning opportunities and the world of work. Teachers in position of educational counsellors, special educators and school psychologists (if available – school psychologists are not common in all schools) provide information, guidance and counselling services at schools (the lower and upper secondary education level). These professionals closely cooperate with centres of educational and psychological counselling and prevention (centrá pedagogicko-psychologického poradenstva a prevencie). For pupils and students with learning difficulties and other disabilities there is a possibility to use services of counselling centres for those with special education needs.

In the organisational structure of the Central Office and Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, subordinated to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, there are units serving as career information and guidance services mainly for adults, registered unemployed and employed people. This particular help for those in search of job is offered by Information and Guidance Centres, units existing in each local office. Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family provide also counselling services, focusing mostly on disadvantaged groups of job seekers (mainly on school leavers, graduates, young people under 25, those with low qualification, long term unemployed, job seekers with disabilities, etc.).

Career guidance in Slovakia is provided mainly as a part of more complex educational, psychological, counselling and social services. As a result of this those who can be referred to as guidance practitioners have various qualifications ranging from psychological, pedagogical, andragogical to education in social sciences and accumulate more functions (e. g., teachers, psychologists, social workers, etc.). Until 2012 there were no specialized higher education programmes offered to guidance practitioners by Slovak universities or other HE institutions (even though students can choose some optional courses on this topic) – in 2012 Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra launched a 3-year bachelor study programme of career guidance and counselling, which is accredited as a specialisation within psychology as a main study programme.

2 KEY CHALLENGES ADDRESSED BY GUIDANCE

Slovakia belongs to countries with high unemployment rate within EU-28 as well as within OECD, and this is true for the last two decades when unemployment as a new social and economic phenomenon emerged in early 1990's (for detailed information on unemployment rates statistics see Eurostat and/or OECD web pages). What is more serious is the fact that Slovakia has one of the highest unemployment rates of two most disadvantaged groups on the labour market – those under 25 years of age, and long term unemployed.

Youth unemployment rate is above 30 % level for at least last decade (in the 4Q 2012 it was 35.1 %¹). In relation to this, two other facts should be mentioned:

- Slovakia has one of the lowest early school leavers rates in EU and belongs to those not many countries that meet the respective EU 2020 target for quite a long time.
- At the same time, the percentage of young people aged 20-24 years with at least upper secondary education, i. e. with an education level ISCED 3A, 3B or 3C was one of the highest in EU (92.3% in 2012²).

In the light of these facts it might be obvious that one of the most effective and useful tools how to change the situation in youth unemployment is or could be career education, career guidance and counselling – through up-to-date and quality service available to all in need it would be possible to help them make better career choices, develop career management skills and thus improve their perspectives as well as the overall situation on the national and European labour market.

Currently several national projects co-funded by the European Social Fund are being realised, especially under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, all of them are strongly focusing on structural changes in VET, lifelong learning and co-operation with labour market. Activities in the area of career information, guidance and counselling services for various target groups are also anchored in these projects.

1 Source: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php?title=File:Youth_unemployment,_2012Q4_\(%25\).png&filetimestamp=20130418091546](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php?title=File:Youth_unemployment,_2012Q4_(%25).png&filetimestamp=20130418091546)

2 Source: VANTUCH, J. - JELINKOVÁ, D.: Early leaving from vocational education and training in Slovakia. Bratislava: ŠIOV/SNO, 2013. 30s. <http://www.refernet.sk/images/news/files/Early%20leaving%20from%20VET%20in%20Slovakia.pdf>

3 KEY DATA, STATISTICS

Responsibility for monitoring of statistical data in the educational sector, including those about career guidance and counselling services provided by centres of educational and psychological counselling and prevention and other related specialists and school facilities lies on the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (since January 2014 the Institute is merged with the Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information). Statistics on guidance and counselling services provided by offices of labour, social affairs and family are gathered by the above mentioned sectoral central institutions (Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family).

There are no special evaluation systems focusing on career information, guidance and counselling services provision, neither in the educational, nor in employment services sector. In the educational sector this is covered by the State School Inspection, an institution authorised by law to monitor and evaluate all schools and school facilities in pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education. In the employment sector these duties are the responsibility of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, as well as the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic.



4 LEGAL BASIS / POLICIES

4.1 Legislation

Career information, guidance and counselling services provision in the educational sector is defined by the Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. (with amendments) adopted in May 2008 and valid since September 1, 2008. These services are in a more detailed way described in paragraphs (§§) 130-136, which are dealing with a broader scope of “school facilities of educational counselling and prevention”.

Information, guidance and counselling within employment services provided by offices of labour, social affairs and family are defined by the Law on Employment Services No. 5/2004 Coll. (with amendments) adopted in December 2003 and valid since February 1, 2004. The respective services are described in § 42 (career information and guidance services) and in § 43 (counselling services).

Several instruments and measures relating directly or indirectly to lifelong guidance were introduced by legislation in recent years:

- Amendment of the Act. No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services, namely the Act. No. 138/2008 Coll. adopted in March 2008 and valid since May 1, 2008, introduced the “national system of occupations” with a detailed description of its purpose and a link to the “national system of qualifications”;
- the Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on Vocational Education and Training (adopted in May 2009 and valid since September 2009, or January 2010 respectively) introduced several tools relevant for career information and guidance provision, especially in relation to VET and labour market needs – e. g., development of sectoral and regional labour market needs prospects; duties of employers, sectoral and professional organisations to develop and provide information on their future needs of qualified labour force, etc.;
- the “national system of qualifications, information system on lifelong/ further learning and the system of monitoring and forecasting learning needs” were introduced by the Act No. 568/2009 Coll. on Lifelong Learning, adopted in December 2009 and valid since February 1, 2010.

4.2 Lifelong Learning, Employment and Social Inclusions Strategies and implications for Guidance

The first policy paper on lifelong learning based on European documents was the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning adopted by the Ministry of Education in 2001. In April 2007 the Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance was adopted by the Slovak government, and it was for the first time when a direct and clear links and interrelations between these two, previously quite independently covered areas were defined in an official national document. The implementation of this policy paper was unfortunately not followed by appropriate steps, fostering especially lifelong guidance sectoral policies and subsequent practice. The Strategy was later on, in November 2011, amended and updated by the Ministry of Education, but only in the area of LLL.

In 2013, the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth 2014 – 2020 was adopted. Principal themes (areas) are: education, employment, creativity and entrepreneurship, participation, youth and the world, health and healthy lifestyle, social inclusion, volunteering, and youth work. One of the strategic objectives of the area Employment is the Labour Market Orientation: to introduce systematic career guidance and thus increase the degree of orientation of young people on the labour market.

In 2012 the National Roma Integration Strategy until 2020 was adopted. One of the sub-goals is to support targeted career counselling for children at risk of generational transmission of poverty (e.g. long-term unemployed).

As mentioned before, currently several national projects co-funded by ESF are being realised especially under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. E. g., through the project “Further education and counselling for adults as a tool for better succeeding on the labour market” (managed by the National Lifelong Learning Institute) first career guidance centres providing services for adults have been established in 2013.



5 MAIN BODIES, THEIR SCOPE OF ACTION, INFRASTRUCTURE

The **Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic** (Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu Slovenskej republiky) is the central body of the state administration for pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher education, educational facilities, lifelong learning, science and for the state's support for sports and youth. The MESRS is responsible for the development of the educational system, approves national educational programmes and accredits educational and study programmes for higher education institutions. The ministry directly supervises many government-funded organizations, from those with some relevance to career guidance and counselling issues let's mention the Research Institute for Child Psychology and Pathopsychology, the National Institute for Education, the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education, the Methodology and Pedagogy Centre, the National Lifelong Learning Institute, etc.

The **Research Institute for Child Psychology and Pathopsychology** (Výskumný ústav detskej psychológie a patopsychológie, VÚDPaP) provides research, methodological, training and supervisory activities for centres for educational and psychological counselling and prevention (currently more than 80 centres operating in Slovakia). VÚDPaP is the only institution in the Slovak Republic that is focusing on the complex research of psychological aspects of child and youth development.

The **State Vocational Education Institute** (Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania, ŠIOV) is responsible for methodological management of secondary vocational schools, design of new educational and study programmes and innovation of existing ones, development of pedagogical documentation, etc.

The **National Lifelong Learning Institute** (Národný ústav celoživotného vzdelávania, NÚCŽV) is an organization responsible, among other things, for creating and updating the National Qualification Framework. It is also involved in the development of the national system of qualifications, system monitoring and forecasting of training needs, especially from the further, lifelong learning perspective. It provides methodological management and execution of educational activities for teachers in adult, further education. The

NÚCŽV also serves as the Secretariat of the National Forum for Lifelong Guidance.

The **National Institute for Education** (Štátny pedagogický ústav, ŠPÚ) works to ensure professional and methodical management of schools and school facilities as well as educational activities of teaching staff. The ŠPÚ is (above all) responsible for curricular changes, applied educational research, the development of curricula, school educational programmes, preparation of pedagogical documentation for schools and school facilities in the field of education and training of teaching staff.

The **Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education** (Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva; since January 2014 merged with the Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information) is the methodological and coordination office of the unified and comprehensive information system, the conceptual and research office, the sector's office for surveys and analyses, the central processing office for information in the area of funding of education within all chapters, etc.

The **Methodology and Pedagogy Centre** (Metodicko-pedagogické centrum, MPC) is an organization, which provides and fulfils tasks within the area of further, continual education and training of teachers and other professionals in the pre-primary, primary, and secondary education (including educational counsellors).

The **Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic** (Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR) is responsible for policies in the area of employment support, social care and functioning of the pension scheme. It is the administration body for the social and legal protection of children and family policy coordination and the largest provider of social services in the Slovak Republic. Ministry directly supervises (above all) state providers of employment services – Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and its local offices of labour, social affairs and family, and also the Institute for Labour and Family Research, etc.



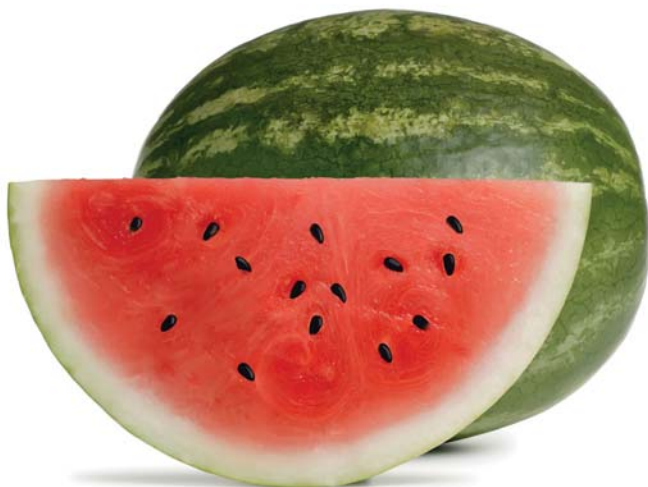
The **Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family** (Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny, ÚPSVaR) manages controls, directs and coordinates the performance of 46 local offices of labour, social affairs and family. It performs state administration in the field of social affairs (social benefits, social assistance, counselling and psychological services, etc.) and public employment service (evidence of unemployed and vacancies, recruitment, career information, guidance and counselling provision, etc.).

The **Institute for Labour and Family Research** (Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny, IVPR) is an organization providing research focused mainly on the sociological study in the field of social and family policy, labour market and employment policies, industrial relations and working conditions and in the field of occupational safety and health. The IVPR also produces publications on topics such as family and family policy affairs, children rights, equality of opportunities between men and women, social protection of elderly people and those with disabilities, employment issues and the labour market development, wage policy and occupational safety and health affairs, etc.

6 PUBLIC AWARENESS, FUNDING, ICT IN GUIDANCE

Information about further education, training, and employment opportunities are provided by several online portals, such as: www.strednaskoly.sk (information about secondary grammar and vocational schools and conservatoires), www.portalvs.sk (information about higher education institutions); www.istp.sk (labour market information), etc. Recently new tools providing useful information on quality of primary, secondary schools, as well as higher education institutions were introduced: Digital map of schools (primary and secondary; <http://mapaskol.iedu.sk>), analyses and statistics on unemployment of secondary schools graduates (<http://www.uips.sk/regionalne-skolstvo/nezamestnanost-absolventov-strednych-skol>; <http://www.uips.sk/regionalne-skolstvo/uplatnenie-absolventov-ss>), Information about higher education institutions and their graduates (<http://vs.iedu.sk/en/welcome>).

Career guidance and counselling services at schools as well as in PES are financed mainly from public budget, in some cases also from other sources. Most of the existing services provided by NGOs are funded by different grants such as ESF, LLP, etc.



7 SECTORAL APPROACHES

7.1 Early Childhood

Currently there are 78 district centres for educational and psychological counselling and prevention (and 8 such centres responsible also for the methodological guidance of school counsellors and district centres) operating throughout the country. Centres provide counselling also in the period of early childhood, but mainly for the school population.

More information:

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Slovakia:Guidance_and_Counselling_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education

7.2 School Education

Essential providers are centres for educational and psychological counselling and prevention and centres for special educational counselling (centrá špeciálnopedagogického poradenstva). Centres for educational and psychological counselling and prevention provide psychological examination in terms of vocational orientation and career guidance and counselling.

On the individual basis there are educational counsellors (teachers in all primary and secondary schools), school psychologists (not common in all schools), special educators, social educators and prevention coordinators who carry out their activities in schools.

The Association of Educational Counsellors has been functioning since 1992.

More information:

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Slovakia:Guidance_and_Counselling_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education

7.3 Apprenticeships

There has been quite a long tradition of typical apprenticeships in Slovakia, but due to political, social and economic changes after 1989 direct employers' involvement in vocational education through apprenticeship was interrupted. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport in close co-operation with employers' organisations is currently preparing some structural changes in the VET system where some elements of apprenticeship model applied abroad are supposed to be implemented.

More information:

<http://www.refernet.sk/images/news/files/Early%20leaving%20from%20VET%20in%20Slovakia.pdf>

7.4 Adult Learning / Continuous Training

New in this area is project managed by the National Lifelong Learning Institute "Further education and counselling for adults as a tool for better succeeding on the labour market". Through this project 25 counselling centres providing services for adults have been established since April 2013.

More information:

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Slovakia:Guidance_and_Counselling_in_a_Lifelong_Learning_Approach

7.5 Higher Education

During last few years guidance and counselling services in HE institutions gained a stronger support from HEI managements, though it should be mentioned here that this kind of services has quite a long tradition in Slovakia (the Counselling Centre for University Students, providing mostly psychological counselling services, was established in 1968). As a result of these trends the Slovak Association of Counsellors in Higher Education has been established in 2013.

More information:

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Slovakia:Guidance_and_Counselling_in_Higher_Education

7.6 Employment

Employment services are provided by public and private providers. Public providers are the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and 46 local offices of labour, social affairs and family.

Local offices of labour, social affairs and family provide career information and guidance services mainly for adults, registered unemployed and employed people. This particular help for those in search of job is offered by Guidance and Information Centres, units existing in each district office. Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family provide also counselling services, focusing mostly on disadvantaged groups of job seekers.

Private, non-state providers include legal entities and persons carrying out work/job mediation (with a licence), temporary employment agencies and sheltered employment agencies.

8 QUALITY ASSURANCE

Until now there are no quality assurance tools, instruments or processes applied nationally and focusing on career information, guidance and counselling services provision, based on certified QMS models. It is however supposed that in the course of time and in approaching EU recommendations in the area these tools will have to be developed or amended to national quality assurance needs.

8.1 Standards, Indicators, Accreditation Systems

Standards of occupations in the area of career information, guidance and counselling services provision, both in educational and employment services sectors are supposed to be developed and introduced into practice within the national system of qualifications that is being developed.

Currently there is no accreditation system for professionals working either in the field of career guidance and counselling services or in related areas (career information provision, career education, research).

8.2 Professionals in Guidance

8.2.1 Qualifications – Requirements / Standards

No specifically defined qualification is required for professionals working in this area in the educational sector, though it might be mentioned that all of them have at least the master level of university degree in very different branches (nevertheless, majority have qualification in teaching, adult education, psychology and other human and social sciences). For professionals in employment services only for career counsellors working in the counselling services units (dealing mostly with disadvantaged job seekers) a master level of university degree without any further specification is required.

8.2.2 Institutions offering qualifications and training

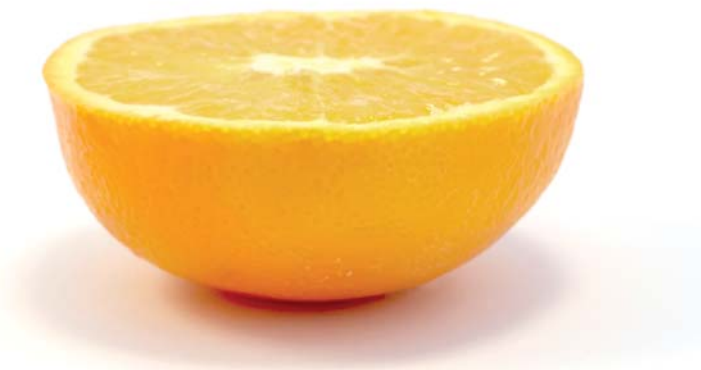
The first and very new option how to acquire the qualification as “career counsellor” is available only since 2012 when such a specialisation was accredited within a study programme of psychology at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Health Care of the Constantine the Philosopher University (CPU) in Nitra.

9 GUIDANCE RESEARCH

The Research Institute for Child Psychology and Pathopsychology is the only institution in Slovakia that is focused on the complex research of psychological aspects of child and youth development and on the research of conditions that influence this development. Key research areas are: mental development of children, specifics of mental development of children from minority groups (those with disabilities, gifted, socially disadvantaged children, or generally exceptional, requiring special needs and attention) and social development of children and youth.

The Institute for Labour and Family Research is an organization providing research focused mainly on the sociological studies in the field of social and family policies, labour market and employment policies, industrial relations and working conditions and other related areas. Career guidance and counselling as specific topics are covered by the Institute only indirectly, mostly in relation to measures focused on youth unemployment and the long term unemployed.

Research connected or directly dealing with guidance and counselling is also realized at some Slovak universities.



10 COOPERATION AND SERVICES ON EUROPEAN LEVEL

Erasmus+ (2014-2020) is new EU funding programme for education, training, youth and sport, which aims at boosting skills and employability, modernizing education and training, supporting youth. Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation – SAAIC (www.saaic.sk) was nominated by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic as the National Agency for Erasmus+ Programme for Education and Training Sectors (www.erasmusplus.sk).

Euroguidance (www.euroguidance.eu) is European network with two main priorities: promoting the European dimension in lifelong guidance and provide quality information on lifelong guidance and mobility for learning purposes. Slovak Euroguidance centre (www.saaic.sk/euroguidance) operates under the Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation (SAAIC).

European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network – ELGPN (www.elgpn.eu) aims to assist in developing European cooperation on lifelong guidance in both the education and the employment sectors. Slovak Republic has its representatives officially from the National Lifelong Learning Institute (www.nuczv.sk) and both key ministries – the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (www.minedu.sk) and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (www.employment.gov.sk).

Eures is European Employment Services network aiming to facilitate the free movement of workers. It is the main economic instrument of the European Union for the proper functioning of labor markets. The EURES advisers offer information, counselling and other services to clients throughout Europe. The EURES has a database of job vacancies throughout the EU. In the Slovak Republic are EURES services (www.eures.sk) available through the EURES advisers and helpers for all 46 Labour offices and also by the EURES-Internet-job markets.

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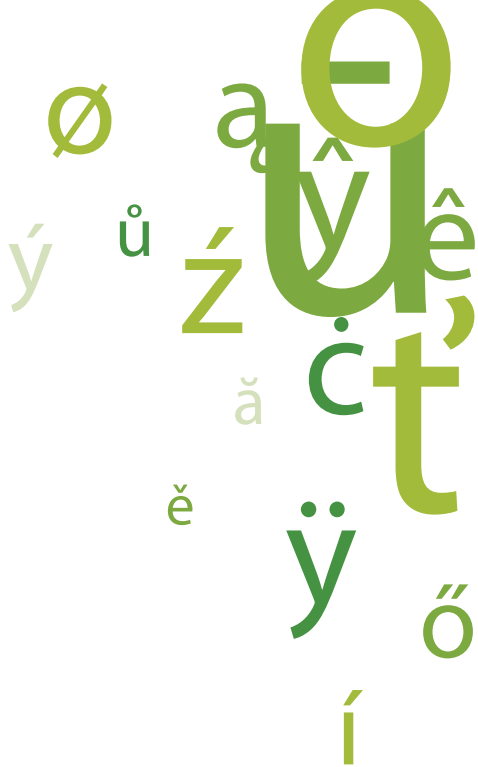
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[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php?title=File:Youth_unemployment,_2012Q4_\(%25\).png&filetimestamp=20130418091546](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php?title=File:Youth_unemployment,_2012Q4_(%25).png&filetimestamp=20130418091546)



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