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EU-level project launched to recognise the competences of migrant women for their social inclusion

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The Project *FORWARD – Competence Portfolio and pedagogical tools to identify, recognize, validate and improve the competences acquired by migrant women in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts* aims to design and implement an innovative competence-based portfolio and pedagogical tools for the identification, recognition, validation and development of the competences of migrant women, as a way to improve their employability and social inclusion.

The project consortium includes **partners** from **six EU Member States**: SURT Foundation, Spain; Women's issues information centre, Lithuania; PEOPLE s.r.l., Italy; Frauenservice Graz: Women's Service Graz, Austria; Monika-Naiset liitto ry, Finland; Romanian Institute for Adult Education IREA, Romania.

The initiative is co-financed by the European Commission, under the Lifelong Learning programme, Grundtvig Action, and the implementation period is between December 2011- November 2013.

Migrant women are one of the most disadvantaged groups in the EU in terms of labour participation and social inclusion. Despite their diversity as a group, gender and origin crisscross as disadvantage factors in their lives. Subsequently, migrant women have high unemployment rates, are among the lowest paid workers in the EU and are consistently de-skilled and pushed to casual jobs in unregulated sectors. This results in a systematic violation of their rights, an invaluable loss of talent and a high risk of poverty in the crisis economy.

FORWARD builds on a potential strong mechanism to overcome these problems, promoting the participation of migrant women in adult education, and focuses particularly on two key tools: competence-based methodologies and competence validation frameworks.

FORWARD is also based on another key mechanism for the employability and social inclusion of migrant women: systems of validation of learning acquired in formal, informal and non-formal contexts.

FORWARD will address these needs by learning from existing good practices of competence-based learning and validation models and providing a specific pilot-tested competence portfolio and career guidance tools adapted to the experiences and needs of migrant women in the EU, and the very similar obstacles they find to participate in the labour market, despite their heterogeneity as a group.

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