



## 6<sup>TH</sup> EUROPEAN CONFERENCE IN E-GUIDANCE: *WIDENING ACCESS TO LIFELONG GUIDANCE*

### ABSTRACT

#### TITLE OF THE SPEECH

***Latvian portals to support guidance information: National Database of Learning Opportunities NIID.LV  
[www.niid.lv](http://www.niid.lv) and Career Services of State Employment Agency***

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#### SHORT AUTHOR(S) PROFILE

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#### ABSTRACT

**National Database of Learning Opportunities NIID.LV ([www.niid.lv](http://www.niid.lv))** provides information on various learning opportunities in Latvia. As of autumn 2009 the database provides detailed information on available courses in vocational education on secondary level, higher education, adult training and informal courses aimed at children and young people. The website was launched in 2007, was developed within an ESF project "Fostering provision of career education programmes within education system" .. NIID.LV is maintained and managed by State Education Development Agency Career Guidance Department. State Education Development Agency works under the auspices of Ministry of Education and Science.

NIID.LV database is in the process of being interconnected with European Commission's Portal on Learning Opportunities throughout the European Space PLOTEUS. The interconnection is expected to be completed by Spring 2010.

The NIID.LV website consists of two parts: the database on learning opportunities and "portal" section containing additional information and services.

The **database** contains detailed information on current learning opportunities. A range of information is available for each learning opportunity entry – title of the course, certification, information on study levels/ degrees/qualifications, duration, entry requirements, tuition fees, study type, instruction language, contact details, links to the course/programme description at course provider's website, links to licensing/accreditation information at the national registers etc. The database provides four ways of finding a learning opportunity: 1) Full text search (similar to internet search engines) 2) Detailed search (allows to specify search parameters via structured system of menus) 3) Browse all courses by provider 4) Browse by course theme.



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The **portal** section of the database provides services and information that are aimed to help the user interpret and understand information found in the database. These include: **detailed descriptions of various education terms and concepts** that are used throughout NIID.LV database as well as in the wider educational environment (e.g. licensing, accreditation, course classification, information on certificates etc.) This information is linked to the database search system via contextual menus. **NIID.LV e-guidance service**. The user posts a question using an on-line form and receives the answer by e-mail. Users also have access to a selection of previously posted questions and answers. The user can browse these questions/answers by thematic groups and/or perform a free text search. The questions range from very technical (e.g. finding a specific course) to more general (e.g. career choices). **On-line self assessment tests**. These custom made tests help the user to find out about their interests, personality, motivation, career values, preferred working environment etc. Other sections of NIID.LV data base portal are: what's new in the database, events, links etc..

The NIID.LV database is managed and maintained by a staff of three people – two persons are involved with managing and updating database entries, one person is providing e-guidance service. The database provides authorized access for the education providers to update their database entries remotely. However this has proved to be problematic due to motivational and quality control reasons, so all the data management is performed by the NIID.LV staff in cooperation with education providers. The software development of the database is outsourced. The database is a custom-made software solution that is built on CLUSTERPOINT SERVER database technology.

The development plans of the NIID.LV database include: widening types and levels of available courses, setting up an English version of the database (study opportunities in Latvia), providing better ways of finding the information, interconnection with PLOTEUS portal.

**Career Services of State Employment Agency** (<http://80.232.229.54/>) is the internet based extension of the career services of the State Employment Agency. The website provides the user with individualised career choice and guidance self-services. The website also aims to promote services of career guidance officers at the State Employment Agency branches throughout Latvia.

The website contains **general information to assist the user with his/her career decisions**: what is career; what to consider when choosing a career; career decision-making; job seeking (how to write CV, motivation letter, job interview). The website also contains a **database of occupations** and a **database of study programmes and training courses**. The interactive section of the website contains **on-line self assessment tests** for young people and for adults, a **computer game** to assist one's career choice. The website provides **description of the career guidance services** as provided by State Employment Services career guidance officers.

To enjoy the full range of website's services the users are encouraged to create a free account – this allows to keep track of completed interest tests, collect information on occupations and training opportunities in the user's "basket", upload and keep one's career related document (e.g. CV) online.

### FOR ADDITIONAL INFO

[www.niid.lv](http://www.niid.lv) (National Database of Learning Opportunities NIID.LV)

<http://80.232.229.54> (Career Services of State Employment Agency)