European project of Validation of Competencies in Companies arrives in Portugal

SONAE MC DEVELOPS PIONEER PROGRAM OF RECOGNITION AND VALIDATION OF COMPETENCIES

Sonae MC is the first Portuguese company to implement a Recognition and Validation of Competencies program. The initiative, pioneer in the field of Logistics, was developed together with the Portuguese National Agency for Qualification and Professional Education (ANQEP) and the Trade Union Training and Professional Development Centre (CEFOSAP), allowing Sonae MC’s employees to achieve a level 2 or 4 of the National Qualifications Framework (equivalent to the 9th and 12th grades, respectively, with professional qualification).

This initiative – pioneer in Portugal – is integrated in the European policy for the validation and recognition of professional competencies. The process relies on the use of instruments that can recognise and validate professional competencies, following the completion of a purposely designed certification exam.

Isabel Barros, Director of Human Resources at Sonae MC, says, ‘Sonae MC’s ultimate purpose is to value its collaborators, investing in their training and implementing actions that will contribute to their personal and professional development. The creation of this program will allow for our collaborators’ compromise, training and experience to be recognised by conferring them a qualification, at their own company. This way we will be promoting the personal and professional enrichment of our collaborators of the Logistics unit, taking into consideration not only the relevant role they have in the development of our business, but also the existing gap of competencies and the current absence of an adequate training offer in our teaching system.’

The “Validation of Competencies in Companies” pilot project is being developed in the Logistics unit and will build from the content and training offer of the School of Logistics. This initiative intends to widen the concept of “on-the-job training” to the recognition, validation and certification of professional competencies.

By developing processes towards having their professional competencies recognised, validated and certified, Sonae MC’s collaborators will benefit from an enhanced ability to adapt to their
jobs’ demands, an increased degree of satisfaction and motivation at work, a greater intern (changing careers or duties) and external mobility, as well as an easier career progression.

In 2012, the Council of the European Union issued a recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning that highlighted the relevance of the intervention of, among others, employer organizations, individual employers, trade unions and national entities in the process of recognising professional qualifications. According to the European body, all these stakeholders play an important role in facilitating opportunities for non-formal and informal learning and any subsequent validation processes.

**Sonae MC** is the food retail business division of the Sonae group, Portugal’s leading operator through its network of Continente hypermarkets. Operating in a number of different formats, it offers a wide range of products and services: Continente (hypermarkets), Continente Modelo (supermarkets), Continente Bom Dia (convenience supermarkets), Meu Super (franchised supermarkets), Bom Bocado and Bagga (coffee shops and restaurants), Makenotes (stationery and gifts), Note! (bookshops and stationery), Well’s (health, wellbeing and eye care) and ZU (products and services for cats and dogs).