

Amendments to the Act on VET (61/2015)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 SLOVAKIA

Timeline

2021 Approved/Agreed

2022 Implementation

2023 Implementation

2024 Implementation

ID number 39147

Background

Still low attractiveness of dual VET (below 10% in all VET school students each year) led to efforts to simplify further the conditions for entering and providing dual VET, reduce the administrative burden of companies interested in dual VET, and strengthen the position of employer and professional organisations ('sectoral assignees').

Objectives

Initiated by employers' representatives and based on the experience of the ESF project 'Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET', amendments to the VET Act came in force from 1 September 2021 aimed to:

- (a) significantly strengthen the influence of employers' representatives on the provision of secondary VET, for example by:
 - (i) extending the responsibilities of the Employer Council for Dual VET to the entire system of vocational education and training that is also visible in the change of the name to the Employer Council for VET;
 - (ii) empowering 'sectoral assignees' to propose the experimental verification of new VET programmes in order to strengthen supply of programmes aligning the needs of the labour market;
 - (iii) extending the rights of 'sectoral assignees', such as to withdraw the right of VET school to use the title 'centre of VET' and, similarly, to grant and withdraw the right of the company to use the title 'supra-company training centre';
- (b) make the conditions for providing dual VET more flexible, for example by:
 - (i) reducing the administrative burden for companies by simplifying the verification of the company's ability to provide practical training, the possibility to conduct regular practical training abroad (i.e. outside mobility projects) and introducing an obligation for schools to provide employers with administrative data on dual learners and allow for access to information on their school performance;
 - (ii) allowing the inclusion of training abroad offered as a consequence of the Erasmus+ mobility or intra-company agreements into the number of training hours prescribed by curricula, provided commitments set by the contract on the provision of practical training between Slovak entities are also accepted by an international provider;

- (iii) introducing the title 'supra-company training centre' to companies already offering practical training fulfilling specific requirements. These centres can be seen as an extension of dual into 'trial', as they offer practical training also for learners who sign a learning contract with a self-employed person, a small or medium-sized enterprise that otherwise only have limited opportunities to offer practical training;
 - (iv) considering as also qualified for the position of head instructor or instructor in dual VET practitioners without respective certificate of apprenticeship if they passed the exam 'verifying professional competence' according to the Lifelong Learning Act (568/2009);
 - (v) making it possible for students to receive a company scholarship intended for students in the system of dual education also in the case of attending practical training in other premises than the premises of the company they have signed individual learning contracts with;
 - (vi) expanding dual VET beyond traditional apprenticeship, covering also programmes preparing kindergarten teachers, tutors and social care workers;
- (c) make the law more flexible by:
- (i) abolishing the prescribed minimum number of teaching hours (1 400) aimed at practical training in VET programmes offering double qualification (a 'maturita' school-leaving certificate and a certificate of apprenticeship) to open the door for diversified solutions embedded into respective State education programmes; for the exceptional case of limited access to practical training caused by pandemic restrictions a minimum number should be prescribed;
 - (ii) allowing, in some cases, higher flexibility concerning hiring professionals providing practical components of VET, to help address an emerging lack of staff in VET schools.

Initiated by the labour ministry to create an umbrella institution covering earlier responsibilities of education and labour ministries led to the 2024 amendment of the Act on VET strengthening the position of the Sector Councils Alliance toward VET. The SCA has been newly granted responsibility towards

- (a) publishing not only the 'National System of Occupations' but also the 'National Qualifications System' on its website;
- (b) ensuring creating and updating qualification and assessment standards;
- (c) coordinating 'vocational education and training for the labour market at the national level' in addition to employer and professional organisations identified by the education ministry as so-called 'sectoral assignees'.

Description

Strengthening the position of 'sectoral assignees' and the Employer Council for VET over the VET system as a whole from 2021 induced a debate over creating a new institution covering the VET system as a whole. The Sector Councils Alliance has been newly created to take over some responsibilities from the education and labour ministries from 1 January 2025.

2021 Approved/Agreed

A final version of the amendment to the Act on VET was adopted by the government on 25 August 2021 and by the parliament on 20 October 2021.

2022 Implementation

The amendment came into effect on 1 January 2022.

2023 Implementation

The Employer Council for Dual VET, renamed the Employer Council for VET by the

2021 amendment of the Act on VET, strengthened its influence across the entire initial VET system. However, in February 2023, the Sector Councils Alliance (SCA), a new influential institution, was established, initiated by the labour ministry and employer representatives.

2024 Implementation

The new Act on adult education (292/2024) was adopted by the government on 21 August 2024 and by the parliament on 30 October 2024. It substantially amended the Act on VET empowering the Sector Councils Alliance (SCA) as a key player in initial VET from 1 January 2025.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (until 2024)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Education professionals

Teachers
Trainers

Entities providing VET

Companies
Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
VET providers (all kinds)

Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies
Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Attractiveness of the teaching and training profession/career

European and international dimensions of VET

Mobility of learners and staff

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

Act on VET (61/2015) as amended by the Act 413/2021 (in Slovak) [Zákon c. 61/2015 Z. z. o odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave]

Related policy developments

2024 Implementation

Amendments to the Education Act (245/2008)

In January 2021, the education ministry submitted to public discussion an extensive amendment of the Education act (245/2008), which provoked a heated debate with more than 1 000 comments, of which more than 680 were fundamental.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET

2024 Implementation

Measures to alleviate the crisis caused by the coronavirus

After the closure of schools, teachers began spontaneously to move to distance learning using communication platforms (such as Zoom); at the same time, the burden of work was transferred onto learners and households.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

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IVET

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/39147>

