

Guidance for young people

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 SLOVAKIA

Timeline



ID number 28569

Background

The ESF project Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET builds on the related 2013-15 ESF project Development of secondary VET.

Objectives

One of the objectives of this ESF project targets guidance and counselling of pupils and parents to support them during a decision on VET. An orientation centre and dual points should be instrumental for appropriate support. Here are some planned outcomes:

- (a) a model and methodology of dual point activities;
- (b) a manual in support of career guidance and counselling of basic school pupils and their parents in the process of entering dual VET;
- (c) a model and methodology of orientation centre;
- (d) a proposal on legislation regarding the implementation of the orientation centre reflecting experience from pilots.

Description

The ESF project Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET launched in 2016 and run by the State Institute of Vocational Education (ŠIOV) aims at improving career guidance and counselling services for learners in VET and those who consider entering this field. As part of this project an orientation centre was piloted in Nitra, targeting lower secondary pupils, teachers and educational counsellors.

VET teachers and trainers were targeted by in-service training offered by ŠIOV (in cooperation with dual points) within the accredited programme Accompanying and motivating learners in dual VET focusing on career guidance. Lower secondary teacher action was via the accredited programme Dual VET system in secondary VET schools for basic school pedagogical staff, to facilitate transition of learners to dual VET.

Career guidance and counselling on dual VET and adults has been carried out by ŠIOV since

then. Sustainability of the service (funding, staff) after completion of the ESF project remains in question.

In 2019, the amendment of the Act on Pedagogical and Professional Staff also influenced guidance, through better distinction in positions and responsibilities between career counsellors and educational counsellors. Although some changes in legislation have already been announced, further reduction of the teaching load of educational counsellors is unlikely due to the impact on the State budget.

2016 Pilot

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

Within the national ESF project Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET, a private company, Centire, was contracted and the experience of the Talent Centre of the Styrian Economic Chamber in Graz was adjusted to the Slovak environment. After piloting the 'Talent Centrum' in Nitra further expansion is expected.

The Act on Pedagogical and Professional Staff (138/2019), opening a new window for capacity building in schools and supporting organisations to offer career guidance and counselling services, was adopted on 10 May 2019. Hiring new staff to expand career guidance and counselling services might be hampered by a lack of professionals. Therefore, teachers in secondary schools working as educational counsellors will remain crucial players and their continuous support is fundamental. However, only a very slight reduction in an educational counsellor's teaching load was accepted by the government in January 2019. It is very likely that this reduction of their teaching load, that is lower than recommended by specialists, will hamper them in the expansion of services.

2020 Implementation

The talent centre in Nitra served over 4 000 pupils of grades 8 and 9 of basic schools looking for information before the decision on secondary school and programme by the end of 2020.

As a result of the implementation of the law on pedagogical staff (138/2019), 79 job placements were created for professional staff: career counsellors in 79 district centres of pedagogical-psychological counselling and prevention (CPPCaPs). They will focus on activities that would be less efficient when performed in schools. At the same time, active support activities will be offered to career counsellors, school counsellors and education counsellors who will provide counselling in schools within the territorial scope of the relevant CPPCaP. Career counsellors in eight CPPCaPs within regions will provide methodological and supervisory activities concerning the performance of career counselling in each region.

2021 Implementation

By the end of activity in 2021, 311 VET teachers and trainers completed in-service training focusing on career guidance for students, and 256 lower secondary teachers were retrained to understand and promote dual VET.

In August 2021, the government adopted an amendment to the Education Act (245/2008), foreseeing also transformation of the current guidance and counselling system for five levels of support services. The first level should be offered in schools by individual specialists, the second level by school support teams already under construction. The third and fourth levels should be offered by centres of counselling and prevention, serving all children in need, and the fifth level by specialised centres of counselling and prevention offering specialised services. Newly created regional networks of counselling institutions complying with a new counselling model should

start working from 1 January 2023. To bring the service even more to clients in the Banská Bystrica region, the creation of district career centres under the management of the self-governing region is being piloted.

The Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30, approved by the government on 24 November 2021, suggests overcoming the current institutional fragmentation of services by the creation of a comprehensive system of lifelong guidance and counselling.

2022 Implementation

A decree of the education ministry of 17 January 2022 regulates school centres responsible for counselling and prevention of misbehaviour.

In parallel to counselling services, which may also include career guidance and counselling, there are also institutions specialising in career guidance. The dual points set up under the national ESF project Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET are currently subordinated to the State Institute of Vocational Education (SIOV) and located nationwide in the premises of the regional branches of the Methodological-Pedagogical Centre. They have been operational since 1 January 2022 as regional centres of SIOV with the main task to cooperate with employer representatives and dual companies and particularly collect data on the provision of training by dual companies as a prerequisite of the so-called direct payments from the State budget to these companies. Assigned by the SIOV headquarters they are obliged to perform tasks related to VET and lifelong learning as a whole. Institutional changes affecting counselling services are also accompanied by the need to retrain school directors and other staff to meet the challenges related to the provision of services in the first and second levels of support services. Similarly, newly established regional units focusing on career guidance started to contact schools to better target learners who are about to choose a school or a profession.

The Lifelong learning and counselling strategy action plan 2022-24, approved by the government on 20 April 2022, indicated the development and implementation of quality standards for career guidance providers and their accreditation procedures by 2024. The development of a system of professional counselling services within employment services (Thematic area 1.12) specifies measures aimed at capacity building and improving counselling services, e.g. via the creation of a client profiling system.

A new talent centre was established in Trnava drawing from the experience of Talent Centrum in Nitra that piloted a new model of service to young learners and families looking for a choice of secondary VET programme within the national ESF project Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET.

2023 Implementation

Within the 2021-23 project, Strengthening regional governance in VET towards improving quality, attractiveness and better alignment to the labour market in the Banská Bystrica region, the so-called Regional Vocational Education Platform has been established. This platform connects schools with employers to increase the number of graduates who find employment in their field directly within the region. Activities were implemented in cooperation with eight secondary vocational schools, which are also involved in the Catching-up regions initiative to create networks between basic schools, parents of students, secondary schools and employers. In the area of career guidance support, the project mainly focused on mentoring career advisors, creating and implementing educational courses and processing labour market-related information for career advisors at basic and secondary schools.

The Regional Career Centres Department (ORCK) was established at the Banská Bystrica Regional Office to manage a network of 13 Regional Career Centres created region-wide to communicate with employers to provide information on labour market needs to schools. ORCK organises joint events for schools and employers, aiming to increase the qualifications and awareness of career counsellors at basic and secondary schools in the region. Schools can receive additional impulses to adjust their curricula

to better reflect both employers needs and learners potential. In addition, SPACE Youth Centres have been created, serving as single points of contact that offer comprehensive support, information and comprehensive counselling services: career counselling, completing additional support related to psychological, social counselling, coaching, and non-formal learning in the field of life skills development. SPACE services are available in seven cities in the Banská Bystrica Region, free of charge for all young people up to 30 years of age. These centres could also develop into systemic support places for NEETs.

2024 Implementation

In November 2024, the State Institute of Vocational Education and the Žilina self-governing region signed a memorandum on the establishment of the talent centre that should start its activities in 2025. The Act on adult education (292/2024), adopted by the parliament on 30 October 2024, aims to enhance the availability of career guidance by creating an opportunity for the public to access career guidance services through individual learning accounts (ILAs). ILAs will be able to be used not only to pay for courses and training, as allowed by existing financial schemes, but also directly for services related to career development. The act introduces a register of career guidance advisors to strengthen awareness of the quality of services. The register will include a list of certified advisors who have met the conditions set by law.

2025 Implementation

The talent centre in Žilina commenced its operations in September 2025. The pilot phase of ILAs is currently underway, with applications for ILA-based support expected to be accepted from January 2026.

A specific outcome of the Catching-up regions project in the Banská Bystrica region (see related policy development) is the creation of SPACE Youth Centres. Their experience in building single contact points for youth and reaching low-qualified individuals, including NEETs in particular, is considered worth disseminating. Currently, the Banská Bystrica region continues in further development of SPACE points services supported by the follow-up 2024-29 ESF+ project. Furthermore, the 2025-29 national ESF+ project 'Coordination of single contact points for youth', managed by a consortium led by the Youth Council of Slovakia with a total budget of EUR 5 887 642, aims to support single contact points' activities and the quality of counselling services in particular throughout Slovakia.

The Association for Career Guidance and Career Development has a long-term history in supporting connections between formal and informal education, and the provision of training, including training of counsellors in regional centres. It initiated the creation of quality career counselling standards. As a member of the consortium, it sees this project as an opportunity to bring innovative approaches and systemic solutions to support career counselling.

The Association conducted a representative survey, according to which only 29% of the population understands what career counselling is, and only 4% declared experience with the service. According to the survey, the reason for this is that career counselling still lacks sufficient infrastructure and public funding and is often mixed up with counselling in schools and offering jobs by labour offices. The survey also indicates that assistance in self-knowledge, work-life balance is more demanded from career counsellors, rather than guidance on vacancies and available training. In contrast to other age cohorts, young people aged 25-34 consider climate change relevant for their careers, and 10% explicitly indicate green transformation as an impact factor for their future.

The Association is a partner in the Erasmus+ project 'Exploring green guidance'. An educational programme has been developed and offered to 13 Green Guidance Ambassadors, advisors involved in testing and spreading awareness of green guidance in Slovakia. A Green guidance handbook has been drafted, and a Green guidance toolkit has been developed, both in English, with a Slovak translation in progress.

Since 2025, the Association has also been a partner of a consortium focusing on the development of an education platform in support of mentorship and career development in particular, funded within the 2025-29 Erasmus+ project EuroMentorLab – Qualified mentors, empowered mentee, with a budget of EUR 250 000.

Bodies responsible

- State Institute of Vocational Education (ŠIOV)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Young people (15-29 years old)

Education professionals

Teachers
School leaders
Guidance practitioners

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

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

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of school leaders, teachers and trainers

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Promotion strategies and campaigns for VET and lifelong learning
Lifelong guidance

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[ESF project Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET](#)

[Talent Centre website information](#)

[Act No 245/2008 on education](#)

[Decree of the education ministry No 24/2022 on counselling and prevention establishments](#)

[Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 \(in Slovak\)](#)

[Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 \(in English\)](#)

[Lifelong learning and counselling strategy action plan 2022-24 \(in Slovak\)](#)

[Lifelong learning and counselling strategy action plan 2022-24 \(in English\)](#)

[Talent Centre Trnava website information](#)

[Act No 292/2024 on adult education](#)

[Association for Career Guidance and Career Development portal](#)

[Association for Career Guidance and Career Development survey \(in Slovak\)](#)

[Banska Bystrica regional SPACE portal](#)

[Green guidance handbook](#)

[Green guidance toolkit](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Act on adult education (292/2024)

The education ministry initiated new legislation instead of the originally proposed law on lifelong learning, which was previously recommended by the Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 and approved by the government.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

CVET

2025 Implementation

Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30

LLCS 2030 focuses on four thematic areas: the qualification system; basic skills and civic education; lifelong learning, counselling, and motivation of citizens for lifelong learning; and building a system of skills management and identification of lifelong learning needs.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

2025 Completed

Catching-up regions initiative

The Catching-up regions initiative, in cooperation with regional authorities, aims to identify challenges and priority areas at regional level to direct investments to. Improving VET programmes in line with labour market needs can foster economic development in regions lagging behind.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Information and support structures for dual VET

The 2016-20 ESF project Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET provides support through its web portals. Eight contact points (officially called Dual points) have also been set up within this project.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28569>