

**Key Data  
on Vocational Training  
in the European Union**

**Young People's  
Training**

## Acknowledgements

This publication is the outcome of cooperation between the European Commission-Directorate General for Education and Culture-, Eurostat – the European Union Statistical Office – and CEDEFOP – the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

It has come about through the pooling of these three organizations' resources and experience.

Contributions from the Member States through the relevant statistics working parties have also been vital.

We would also like to express our warm thanks to Fabrice de Zanet and Anne-France Mossoux (University of Liège), who, in collaboration with Louis Bronne, Severine Jacquemart and Christine Mainguet were actively involved in the preparation of Chapters B, C, D, E, F and G; the members of the CEDEFOP documentary information network for their contribution to Chapter B; and Anna Borkowsky (Swiss Statistical Office), Mary Dunne (Ministry of Education, Statistical Department, Ireland), Gunnar Ennequist (Swedish Statistical Office) and Walter Hörner (Federal German Statistical Office).



## Preface

Europe is rich above all in human resources.

It is on the battleground of innovative capacity, qualifications and quality of work that Europe will be able to confront increasingly tough international competition while preserving its own social model. Training is the key to our competitiveness, and so to employment.

We must therefore invest more than ever in training in order to raise the general level. This investment is essential if we are to cope with the major trends in the evolution of the jobs market: the mismatch between the qualifications in demand and those available, demographic changes, the growth of the service sector, and the transformation of work.

That economic necessity goes hand in hand with a social imperative. Over recent years social exclusion has spread in Europe. European society must take full measure of the problem. Social exclusion can be combated on two fronts: it must be reversed by reintegrating those who have been excluded, and it must be prevented by reducing the vulnerability of those at risk of exclusion. Here too, training has a key role to play.

The aim of this publication is to provide a comprehensive overview of initial training. It is intended as a tool for analysis and for supporting the employment strategies developed in all the Member States at all levels of initiative: regional and local authorities, businesses and unions.

This edition, like the previous one, is the result of close cooperation between DG XXII (Directorate-General for Education, Training and Youth), Eurostat (Statistical Office of the European Communities), and Cedefop (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training).

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## Introduction

The first edition of the Key Data on Vocational Training in the European Union, issued in October 1997, aroused great interest. Chapter B, 'Training and initial vocational training programmes', set out data from a new series launched by Eurostat in 1994, in collaboration with DGXXII and CEDEFOP. The data presented were the first internationally comparable statistics on vocational education and training for young people. Since then, the series has been improved and extended to other fields. Two further sets of data on school years 1994/95 and 1995/96 have been added to the first (the subject of the 1997 Key Data), refining the information gathered. In view of the great interest and novelty of the information collected, the decision was taken to devote a whole edition of the Key Data on Vocational Training in the European Union to vocational education and training for young people. This gives a more detailed picture of and targeted information on various aspects of vocational training.

The Employment Guidelines emphasise vocational education and training as an important prerequisite for young people successfully entering the labour market. Member States will need to ensure that young people are better able to adapt to technological and economic change and to the evolution in skills in response to the labour market needs, in particular by setting up or developing apprenticeship systems.

The issue of equal opportunities is of particular relevance in the training context. The acquisition of competences and qualifications is one of the best guarantees for women in preparing for the prospect of lasting, more reliable and better paid employment with opportunities for advancement in their work.

To be in a position to design, monitor and evaluate their training policies effectively, decision-makers need reliable, comprehensive, detailed and comparable information on training for young people. It was in order to meet this need that DG XXII, Eurostat and CEDEFOP have planned this publication.

Because of the diversity of training systems and mentalities, it is difficult to apply common definitions and concepts on a universal scale. Even so, considerable effort has gone into creating and applying definitions that are as precise as possible, to ensure that the programmes grouped in the same category are in fact comparable. It is in this spirit that definitions such as 'alternance programmes', 'apprenticeship programmes', or 'programmes offering further opportunities to train', etc., have been created. The consequence of the groupings that have been formed and the definitions applied is that some of the statistics presented here may appear to differ from those produced at national level.

This publication is a compilation of statistical information (most of which comes from the Vocational Education and Training Data Collection (VET)) and qualitative types of information derived from comparative publications at European level. The symbiosis between these two types of information means that a more objective and at the same time more significant overview of the aspects of vocational education and training covered is presented. Furthermore, this interaction between quantitative and qualitative information enriches both ways of producing the knowledge needed to political action: on the one hand, qualitative analyses can be incorporated into an objective quantitative framework; and on the other, the statistics are more meaningful when they are placed in a general or a particular context as appropriate.

In this publication the VET system descriptions are extended to cover the whole European Economic Area, thus supplementing information from the European Union Member States with data from Iceland and Norway. Since there are no real VET programmes in Liechtenstein, this country is not mentioned in this publication. A description of training programmes for young peoples in Switzerland is presented in annex 2.

These new dimensions are factors in the specific nature of the present edition of the Key Data on Vocational Training in the European Union, compared with the previous edition.





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### **The position of young people in the socio-economic context of the European Union.**

Chapter A describes the demographic context, trends in the levels of education and training and the position of young people vis-à-vis employment. It devotes particular attention to young people with a low level of skills and the role that can be played by VET in improving their prospects of employment.

### **Training and vocational education systems**

Chapter B presents the national vocational education and training systems. It describes the programmes in each country and some of their particular features (ISCED level, duration, decentralisation in the definition of objectives and financing, teaching of the mother tongue and of foreign languages).

### **The enterprise, an active partner in vocational education and training**

Chapter C is devoted to the enterprise, which is seen both as the place of training and as the generator of contracts and funding.

### **Apprenticeship**

Various relevant indicators, such as time spent in enterprises, salary level, possibility of continuing with education/training, equal opportunities and financing, illustrate apprenticeship systems in Europe.

### **Continuing with training after vocational education and training**

Chapter E covers the methods of continuing with training (towards which stream, which level) and the various opportunities depending on the place of training.

### **Participation in vocational education and training**

Chapter F provides information on participation in vocational education and training: the volume of participation, rates of participation and the age of participants.

### **Equal opportunities for men and women in vocational education and training**

Chapter G presents the respective situation of men and women in vocational education and training from different angles: level of programmes undertaken, place of training, continuing with training, participation.

### **The measures adopted by the European Commission**

Chapter H gives information on the measures being conducted by the European Commission in favour of vocational education and training.

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## Data Sources

The data in Chapter A are derived from demographic statistics and from the findings of a Eurostat Community Survey on Labour Forces. The data in Chapters B, C, D, E, F and G are from the Vocational Education and Training Data Collection (VET). These are supplemented by qualitative information from various sources. The data in Chapter H come from administrative sources of the European Union.

## Symbols, abbreviations, codes

### Symbols used in the tables and diagrams

- : data not available
- nil data (zero)
- 0 negligible data
- \* estimated data
- . not relevant
- ^ not reliable

*Italics*: the data in italics in the tables and text are not shown in the diagrams; they provide additional information.

### Abbreviations for countries

#### European Union

- B** Belgium
- DK** Denmark
- D** Germany
- EL** Greece
- E** Spain
- F** France
- IRL** Ireland
- I** Italy
- L** Luxembourg
- NL** Netherlands
- A** Austria
- P** Portugal
- FIN** Finland
- S** Sweden
- UK** United Kingdom

#### Other EEA Countries

- ISL** Iceland
- N** Norway

#### Others

- CH** Suisse

### Other abbreviations used

- ISCED** International Standard Classification of Education (see definitions inside the back cover flap)
- EU** European Union
- EU-15** European average
- LFS** Labour Force Survey
- VET** vocational education and training



## Technical notes

### Estimates

The figures are estimated when:

- they relate to a year other than the reference year of the indicator; in Chapters B, C, D, E, F and G, the data of a Greek VET programme and a VET programme in French-speaking Belgium relate to 1994-95, not to 1995-96;
- and/or no data exist for less than 5% of VET participants; in this case, it is assumed that the 5% on which there are no data follow the same pattern as the distribution in the country as a whole.

The figures for the United Kingdom have been supplied using a different methodology from the one used in the VET data Collection. They were arrived at from a global estimate for the country as a whole rather than being calculated on the basis of programme units. This means that they cannot be regarded as strictly comparable. The coverage of the VET Data Collection, which takes into account the vocational education and training directed mainly towards young people, has not been followed in all respects.

### Missing data

Where more than 5% of data is missing, there is a footnote under the diagram and the corresponding percentage of VET participants is shaded in the diagram.

## A few definitions

### Types of education

#### Pre-vocational training and pre-vocational education

The purpose of programmes in this category is to familiarise participants with the working world and prepare them for access to vocational education and training programmes. Successful completion of such a programme does not yet lead to a vocational qualification appropriate to the labour market.

#### Vocational education and training

The purpose of programmes in this category is to give participants the practical skills, expertise and knowledge they need to obtain employment in a specific occupation or group of occupations. Successful completion of such programmes leads to a vocational qualification appropriate to the labour market, recognised by the competent authorities in the country in which it is obtained (for example the Ministry of Education, employers' associations, etc.).

#### General education

The main purpose of programmes in this category is to give participants a detailed knowledge of a discipline or group of disciplines. Their aim is usually – but not invariably – to prepare participants to continue in education/training at the same or a higher level. Successful completion of the programme may give participants a qualification appropriate to the labour market. Generally such programmes take place in schools.

### Training venues

#### Enterprise

Any body whose main objective is the production of goods or services.

#### Educational/training establishment

This term designates all types of establishment, whether or not they are part of the educational system, that are organised, equipped and staffed to provide education or training.

#### Distance education

Education not requiring the physical presence of an instructor (such as correspondence courses or courses using the medium of computers, radio or television).

## Vocational Education and Training Data Collection (VET)

### History of the Collection

The Vocational Education and Training Data Collection (VET) is a new statistical tool developed by DGXXII and EUROSTAT, in collaboration with CEDEFOP, under the LEONARDO DA VINCI programme.

The first Collection was launched in July 1994, when it referred to academic year 1993-1994. Initially, the database covered 238 programmes in 15 European Union Member States. It was used for Chapter B in the first edition of *Key Data on Vocational Training in the European Union*, published in the autumn of 1997.

After a start-up phase, VET Data Collection has become an **annual** collection of data.

The data collection tools (a questionnaire and software) developed by EUROSTAT were revised and reformulated by a team of consultants from the University of Liège *Service de Pédagogie expérimentale*, which also took over the compilation and analysis of the data, as well as the contacts with the national delegates responsible for providing the data. These experts met on several occasions to discuss the methodology used and the results obtained.

It was the **1995-96** database that was used in the production of the indicators set out in this edition. This covers **267 vocational education and training programmes**, of which 229 organised in the 15 European Union Member States, 23 in Iceland and Norway and 15 in Switzerland. Data referring to the 1995-96 school year which the Member States provided after 31 August 1998 could not be taken into consideration in this publication.

A fourth batch of data referring to year 1996-97 was launched in the summer of 1998. Here the aim is to compile not only the same information as before but also data by field of training, as well as some additional information on teachers and trainers.

### The aim of the Collection

The main purpose of the VET Data Collection is to gather **comparable data** on vocational education and training programmes in the EU and EFTA countries and to produce statistical indicators for use by political decision-makers.

### The special features of the Collection

The statistics on participants are compiled **programme by programme**. The main characteristics of each vocational education or training programme, such as its duration, the place of training and the method of funding are also collected.

In this collection process, a vocational education and training programme has been defined as '*any activity whose aim is to promote the acquisition of the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for the exercise of an occupation or group of occupations*'.

The data collected are **semi-aggregated**. Not every national vocational education and training programme is taken into account in this collection: for the purpose of the VET Collection national programmes may very well be regrouped or split into programme units, according to their main features. The structure rather than the content or field of national programmes determines whether they belong to a given **programme unit**.

To adapt national statistics to comparable concepts, definitions and classifications for every country, a **common framework** has to be defined. This is the reason why certain detailed information reflecting the diversity of systems could not be taken into account.

On the other hand, detailed statistical data on participation in vocational education and training as well as detailed descriptive information have been compiled with a view to establishing, after processing, common classification categories.

The data collection procedure has drawn on **administrative sources** provided by participant countries. The units responsible for the production of statistics on vocational education and training are the ministerial departments (usually the Ministry of Education or Employment), or national statistical offices. One or perhaps two officials per country attached to those bodies have joined the network of experts feeding data into the VET database.

### Scope of the Collection

Classification of the two types of education and training programmes covered by the survey

Criteria	Vocational education and training	Pre-vocational education and training
Provides a complete set of skills	Yes	No
Provides an appropriate qualification for the labour market	Yes	Yes or No
Specifically prepares for continuation of the education or training	Yes or No	Yes
ISCED level	ISCED levels 2, 3 and 5 (lower than a university diploma or any equivalent qualification)	ISCED level 2 or 3
Duration	Over 600 hours	Over 300 hours

Not all national programmes are necessarily covered. In particular, vocational programmes at ISCED level 6 are excluded from this collection, since the objective is to highlight the possible alternatives to university. In the same way, in some countries the training of teachers and nurses, for example, may or may not be included depending on whether it is classified as ISCED 5 or ISCED 6.



### **Unit of comparison**

Since the number of programme units varies considerably depending on the way in which the national system of vocational education and training is organised, the unit of comparison used in this publication is not the number of programmes but the volume of training, as reflected by the number of participants.

### **Limits of the Collection**

- Since the data are gathered by the national statistical offices or the Ministries of Education or Employment, for the time being it is difficult to obtain full information on the programmes organised by non-public bodies.
- As in any compilation of quantitative data, the categories used for a comparable presentation of the programmes are very general. Some of the information, reflecting the diversity of systems, cannot be included in the comparative presentation.
- The data focus more on the way programmes are conceived in theory. It would be of interest to supplement this information by an analysis of the actual routes taken by participants.