Session 1. Microcredentials and the political context

The case of Slovakia

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#microcredentials

Microcredentials
a labour market
megatrend

Microcredentials: The case of Slovakia

My today programme for you

- **Scene setting (Slovakia: More flexibility urgently needed, but...)**

- **Legislative backing of MC (Do we know what we want? - Terminology)**

- **Challenges (To regulate, or not to regulate, that is the question...)**

- **Three Cedefop questions semi-answered**

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Scene setting

Favourable conditions for implementation: **Higher flexibility** („smaller"qualifications) advocated

2017 Learning Slovakia strategy paper (not adopted by the government)

↘ **2021-2030 Lifelong Learning and Counselling Strategy (adopted 24/11/2021)**

❖ „segmentation" of „large" secondary VET programmes (i.a. due to ELET increase)/modules

❖ LM driven qualifications to be developed in cooperation (4th subframework of SKKR/NQF)

❖ Microcredentials explicitly advocated (IVET - CVET/LMT/LLL)

❖ Policy paper in support of the new LLL legislation requested

↘ Paper focusing on MC and Individual Learning Accounts conducted by State institute of VET

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Gállová, Ľ. et al., (2023). *Nové prvky kvalifikačných systémov na rozvoj zručností*.
([New elements of qualification systems for skills development).
Available at https://europass.sk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/EUROPASS-DOKUMENT-NOVE-PRVKY.pdf

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Legislative backing of MC

Policy paper Gállová, Ľ. et al., (2023) expanded the proposal of the Strategy paper 2021

The „double approach in terminology" („MC/MQ") accepted by the education ministry and in discourse

- MC in general („mikroosvedčenie") softly regulated

  Level indicated by the awarding institution (e.g. via QR code embedded in the digital badge)
  course completion, accredited course completion, internal/external examination, QA system...

- MC certifying qualification („mikrokvalifikácia") listed in the National Qualifications Register
  strictly regulated via SKKR/NQF (however only partly functional so far)

The definition of MC in essence agreed but still open to discussion:

(Do we need a register of institutions offering MC?)

Definition of a microcredential (suggested for the 2023 draft Act on LLL)

1. A „mikrosvedčenie" is **a record of learning outcomes** that a natural person has obtained on the basis of a **small volume of learning in a formal, nonformal or informal setting**, which leads to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences corresponding to current individual social, personal and cultural needs or the current needs of the labour market.

2. The „mikrosvedčenie" is issued by an educational institution or other authorized institution and is owned by an individual being educated, it can be made available and it is **portable**. It can be **used alone or in combination with other certificates**.

3. **A** „mikrosvedčenie" **that meets the conditions specified in the qualification standard gives a professional qualification *. Inclusion of the** „mikrosvedčenie" **in the register of qualifications and determination of the appropriate SKKR level will be carried out by the education ministry.**

4. An **educational program of at least 10 hours** leading to the obtaining of a „mikrosvedčenie" , which gives a professional qualification*, **is assessed by** a secondary school that provides education in the relevant field of education, or a higher education **institution that has an accredited relevant programme**.

5. The **education ministry maintains a list of educational institutions (?!)** providing education leading to a „mikrosvedčenie" **which gives a professional qualification *,** which it publishes on its website.

6. &7. (Technicalities on obligatory info and details to be set by the bylaw)

* Fourth framework of SKKR/NQF related qualification (a „microqualification/mikrokvalifikácia")

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Challenges

- A **win-win strategy** is needed to satisfy both worlds (education and work)

- **Prevent overregulation** feared by employers

- **Prevent devaluation** of formal qualifications feared by educators

- Quality assurance is a crucial point still not fully in place

- SKKR/NQF is not fully functional

- **Prevent verbal games** (new terms for old content): Not all „small volumes of learning" can be considered MCs: **empowering** for LM !

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Three Cedefop questions

1. **How can the EU, the Member states and Social Partners support** the widening of learning opportunities for individuals and foster inclusiveness and equal opportunities?

2. **What can social dialogue bring** on the discussion table on MC?

3. How can the **social dialogue be ensured**?

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Three Cedefop questions semi-answered

- Ad 3 (ensuring social dialogue)

Making MC related agenda attractive for all social partners
(in Slovakia VET is rarely a subject of collective bargaining, but the MC idea is accepted)

- Ad 2 (social dialogue result)

Making the qualification system more flexible without harming the education system
Find a sound solution for appropriate regulation (and quality assurance) based on
„double approach: MC/MQ".

- Ad 1 (what can EU and stakeholders do)

Prevent plain verbal games (do we know what we speak about?)
Promote good practice examples of „small volumes of learning" (not all „small" is MC)
Support portability and prevent overregulation (e.g. via double approach: MC/MQ)
Strengthen supporting MC within Erasmus+
Support the disemination of diverse spells of AI/ICT-driven tutorials incl. language localisations

Thank you

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