

# Latvia

## **Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System**

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**Title:** Latvia: overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2006

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**Abstract:**

This is an overview of the VET system in Latvia. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General policy context - framework for the knowledge society;
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities;
3. Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities;
4. Initial education and training - pathways and transition;
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults;
6. Training VET teachers and trainers;
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy;
8. Validation of learning - recognition and mobility;
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment;
10. Financing: investment in human resources;
11. European and international dimensions: towards an open area of lifelong learning.

This overview is part of a series produced for each EU Member State (plus Norway and Iceland). Each report is prepared by Cedefop's national network member (ReferNet) and is updated on an annual basis: this one is valid for 2006. Later editions can be viewed from August 2007 onwards at: [http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information\\_resources/NationalVet/](http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/) where more detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can be found.

**Keywords:**

training system; training policy, initial training, continuing vocational training, training of trainers, skill development, vocational guidance, recognition of competences, validation of non formal learning; financing of training

**Geographic term:**

Latvia



## 01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

### 0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Latvia is an independent democratic republic established in 1918. From 1940 to 1991, it was occupied by the Soviet army and was incorporated into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Latvia regained its independence in 1991.

Legislative power sits with the parliament (the *Saeima*), which consists of 100 representatives elected for a period of 4 years. It is elected through proportional representation by citizens aged 18 or older. The 8<sup>th</sup> *Saeima* was elected on in November 2002.

The head of State is the President who is elected by the *Saeima* for 4 years. Executive authority rests with the Prime Minister and the Cabinet of Ministers.

There are 26 districts in Latvia, which consist of 26 counties and 444 civil parishes with elected local governments. Out of 77 Latvian towns, 7 are under state jurisdiction.

The *Saeima*, the Cabinet of Ministers and the Ministry of Education and Science are the main decision-making bodies for VET at national level. The Ministry implements a unified national policy and development strategy in education.

### 0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Latvia covers 64 589 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of 2 306 434 (2005). Between 1989 and 2002 (2 census years) the population decreased by 12% and fell further in 2005 to 2.306 million.

The share of the population below working age is decreasing (20.9% in 1995; 16.0% in 2003). The proportion of the population of schooling age is expected to decrease further until at least 2015.

The proportion of economically active inhabitants in the population has increased due to an increase in the pension age (56.4% in 1995 and 62.6% in 2004). According to demographic prognoses, the economically active part of the population will remain constant till 2010. The number of economically active population will decrease between 2010 and 2020 when the general ageing of the population is expected.

<b>Table 1: Population of Latvia by age group at beginning of 2005–2025 (thousand persons)</b>				
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0-19</b>	<b>20-59</b>	<b>60 +</b>
<b>2005</b>	2 305.0 (100%)	526.2 (22.8%)	1 267.4 (55.0%)	511.2 (22.2%)
<b>2010</b>	2 239.6 (100%)	450.0 (20.0%)	1 282.1 (57.2%)	507.2 (22.8%)
<b>2015</b>	2 174.2 (100%)	421.1 (19.3%)	1 243.0 (57.2%)	509.7 (23.5%)
<b>2020</b>	2 115.4 (100%)	440.0 (20.8%)	1 150.0 (54.2%)	525.0 (24.8%)
<b>2025</b>	2 068.0 (100%)	443.6 (21.4%)	1 079.8 (52.3%)	544.2 (26.3%)

Source: Demographics 2005  
Riga: CSB, 2005

#### **0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS**

Since the mid-1990s, the Latvian economy has been growing. From 1996 to 2003 gross domestic product (GDP) increased by an average of 6.1% per year (8% in 2001 and 8.5% in 2004 - Report on the development of the Latvian national economy - Riga: ME, June 2005). GDP per citizen according to purchasing power standards has increased to 43% of the EU average in 2004.

Expenditures for education did not play big role in the growth of the General government consolidated budget expenditures.

<b>Table 1: Expenditure directed to education from the state budget, in %</b>					
	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
<b>FROM THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET</b>	15.7	15.1	16.9	17.5	15.0
<b>FROM GDP</b>	6.9	6.7	6.8	6.1	6.0

Source: Report on the development of national economy in Latvia  
ME, Riga, June 2002; Report on the development of national economy in Latvia  
ME, Riga, June 2005

The long-term economic strategy is to achieve the level of standard of living of developed countries. To meet this aim, Latvia needs to reach the average GDP per capita of EU countries in the next 20-30 years.

The share of the economy of different economic sectors has changed between 1996 and 2001. The services and building sectors have been growing at the expense of industry and agriculture although the number of people employed in agriculture is still high (15.1% in 2001).

<b>Table 2: Economic constitution of the Latvian economy in 1995, 2002 and 2003 (by %)</b>			
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2004</b>
<b>AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY</b>	9.0	4.6	4.1
<b>INDUSTRY</b>	25.2	17.1	16.7
<b>BUILDING</b>	4.6	5.6	5.8
<b>SERVICES</b>	61.2	72.2	73.4

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Latvia, 2005  
Riga: CSB, 2005

According to the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) of Latvia (Latvijas Republikas Centrālā statistikas pārvalde), the share of the black economy is 16-17% of GDP, and approximately half is related to unregistered employment. The majority of employed people not officially employed work in building, trade and various services.

On average, 522 000 men and 496 000 women were employed in 2004.

<b>Table 3: Rates of employment in 2003 (according to Labour Force Survey data; distribution by per cent)</b>			
<b>RATE OF EMPLOYED POPULATION TO THE TOTAL POPULATION</b>			
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>MALES</b>	<b>FEMALES</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	56.1	61.5	51.3
<b>AGE (YEARS)</b>			
<b>15 -19</b>	9.4	12.0	6.8
<b>20–24</b>	53.6	63.1	43.7
<b>25–29</b>	73.1	80.7	65.4
<b>30–34</b>	78.5	82.1	74.8
<b>35–39</b>	81.0	82.8	79.3
<b>40-44</b>	80.4	79.8	81.0
<b>45–49</b>	80.2	82.1	78.4
<b>50–54</b>	73.1	74.1	72.2
<b>55–59</b>	63.7	72.0	57.2
<b>60–64</b>	33.8	41.0	28.6
<b>65-74</b>	13.0	17.3	10.4

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Latvia, 2005  
Riga: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2005

An unemployment register has existed since 1992. The unemployment rate reached its highest level in 1998, reaching 9.2% (111.4 thousand inhabitants) but it has been decreasing gradually since 1999, reaching 7.6% (89.7 thousand inhabitants) or 8.5% (applying a new method for calculating the share of the economically active population) by the end of 2002 (The Social Processes in Latvia 2003 - Riga, CSB, 2003) and 8.5% at the end of 2004. At the end of 2004, the total number of unemployed people was 90 800 of which 41.0% were men and 12.8% were young people aged 15-24.

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) data shows that the unemployment rate is higher among men than women (14.4% and 11.7% respectively, in 2001), but women constitute more than half of all registered unemployed (57.4% in 2001). Women use State Employment Service (Nodarbinatibas valsts dienests) services more often. For example, in 2001, 33.4% of unemployed women were registered with the State Employment Service, compared with only 24.9% of unemployed men (Statistical Yearbook of Latvia, 2004 - Riga: CSB, 2004).

<b>Table 4: Registered unemployed by gender (at year end in %)</b>			
	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2004</b>
<b>MALES</b>	47.7	42.3	41.1
<b>FEMALES</b>	52.3	57.7	58.9

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Latvia, 2005  
Riga: CSB, 2005

According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) data, the actual unemployment rate is much higher than the officially registered unemployment rate. The unemployment rate calculated by the LFS was 20.7% in 1996, 13.1% in 2001 and 12% in the end of 2002. While on the decrease, it is still higher than the EU average (7.7% in 2002).

Registered unemployment differs in different areas: it is very high in the eastern part of Latvia, in Latgale - 26.6% in Rezekne district, 24.4% in Ludza district, and 24.9% in Balvi district. In Riga the registered unemployment rate was only 4.8%, in April, 2003.

The unemployment rate among young adults is still high (21% in 2000, 23% in 2001, 25% in 2002), and higher than the EU rate (stable at 15% since 2000). According to LFS, the proportion of those seeking employment out of the total number of the economically active population aged 15-24 was 31.9% in 1996, 20.8% in 2002, and 18.5% in 2003.

The proportion of Latvians among the registered unemployed people has increased, whereas the proportion of non-Latvians has decreased since 1995. Nevertheless, the proportion of Russians among the registered unemployed (33.9%) is much higher than their proportion in the population in general (29%) in 2003.

In 2003, the unemployment rate was 4.8% among those with higher education (ISCED 5), in comparison to 10.9% among those with completed general upper-secondary education (ISCED 3A), 9.3% among those with vocational or upper-secondary vocational education (ISCED 3B + ISCED 4) and 17.0% among those who have only completed basic education (ISCED 2).

In May 2000, the LFS asked additional questions to those who had completed vocational educational between 1990 and 1999: 28% were unemployed, 42% were employed in a field other than the pursued education, and only 30% were employed in the profession for which they had completed their studies.

**0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION**

<b>Table 1: Educational attainment of the population aged 25-64 by ISCED level, % (2003)</b>				
	<b>ISCED 0-2</b>	<b>ISCED 3-4</b>	<b>ISCED 5-6</b>	<b>TOTAL (* )</b>
<b>EUROPEAN UNION (15 COUNTRIES)</b>	34%	42%	21%	97%
<b>EUROPEAN UNION (15 COUNTRIES) PLUS 10 NEW MEMBER STATES</b>	32%	46%	20%	98%
<b>BELGIUM</b>	39%	33%	28%	100%
<b>DENMARK</b>	18%	50%	32%	100%
<b>GERMANY</b>	16%	58%	21%	96%
<b>GREECE</b>	46%	36%	18%	100%
<b>SPAIN</b>	57%	18%	25%	100%
<b>FRANCE</b>	35%	41%	23%	100%
<b>IRELAND</b>	37%	34%	26%	97%
<b>ITALY</b>	53%	36%	11%	100%
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	38%	42%	18%	98%
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	32%	43%	25%	99%
<b>AUSTRIA</b>	22%	63%	15%	100%
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	78%	12%	10%	100%
<b>FINLAND</b>	24%	43%	33%	100%
<b>SWEDEN</b>	18%	54%	27%	99%
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>	15%	45%	27%	87%
<b>ICELAND</b>	35%	39%	26%	100%
<b>NORWAY</b>	13%	55%	31%	100%
<b>CYPRUS</b>	34%	37%	30%	100%
<b>CZECH REPUBLIC</b>	12%	76%	12%	100%
<b>ESTONIA</b>	12%	58%	30%	100%
<b>HUNGARY</b>	26%	59%	15%	100%
<b>LITHUANIA</b>	14%	63%	23%	100%
<b>LATVIA</b>	18%	64%	18%	100%
<b>MALTA</b>	80%	11%	9%	100%

<b>POLAND</b>	18%	68%	14%	100%
<b>SLOVENIA</b>	21%	61%	18%	100%
<b>SLOVAK REPUBLIC</b>	13%	75%	12%	100%

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Labour Force Survey

ISCED 0-2: Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education.

ISCED 3-4: Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

ISCED 5-6: Tertiary education

(\*) difference = no answer. EU-15, EU-15+ Acc, D, L, NL, A, ISL: data for 2002

In comparison with EU member states where 46% of the population have achieved ISCED level 3-4, 64% have achieved the same level in Latvia. Traditionally, there has been a premium on people obtaining higher level education (65% of graduates from upper secondary school attend higher education). During the Soviet period, secondary school was compulsory, but since 1991 compulsory education is to lower secondary level only. For the current time, this has been the maximum attainment level for 18% of the 18-24 cohorts.

<b>Table 2: Percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training</b>			
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
<b>EUROPEAN UNION (15 COUNTRIES)</b>	19.4 P	18.5 P	18.0 B
<b>EUROPEAN UNION (15 COUNTRIES) PLUS 10 ACCEDING COUNTRIES</b>	NA	16.5 P	15.9 B
<b>BELGIUM</b>	12.5	12.4	12.8
<b>DENMARK</b>	11.6	8.4	10.0 B
<b>GERMANY</b>	14.9	12.6	12.6 P
<b>GREECE</b>	17.1	16.1	15.3 B
<b>SPAIN</b>	28.8	29.0	29.8
<b>FRANCE</b>	13.3	13.4	13.3 B
<b>IRELAND</b>	NA	14.7	12.1 B
<b>ITALY</b>	25.3	24.3	23.5
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	16.8	17.0	17.0 P
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	15.5	15.0	15.0 P
<b>AUSTRIA</b>	10.2	9.5	9.5 P
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	42.9	45.5	41.1
<b>FINLAND</b>	8.9 B	9.9	10.7 B
<b>SWEDEN</b>	7.7	10.4	9.0 B
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>	18.3 P	17.7 P	16.7 P
<b>ICELAND</b>	28.6	27.3	27.3 P
<b>NORWAY</b>	13.3	14.0	6.6 B
<b>CYPRUS</b>	15.1	14.0	15.1 B
<b>CZECH REPUBLIC</b>	NA	5.5	6.0
<b>ESTONIA</b>	14.2	12.6	11.8
<b>HUNGARY</b>	13.8	12.2	11.8 B
<b>LITHUANIA</b>	16.7	14.3 B	11.8
<b>LATVIA</b>	NA	19.5	18.1
<b>MALTA</b>	NA	53.2	48.2
<b>POLAND</b>	NA	7.6	6.3
<b>SLOVENIA</b>	NA	4.8 U	4.3 U
<b>SLOVAK REPUBLIC</b>	NA	5.6	4.9 B

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Labour Force Survey

NA= not available

B= break in series

U= unreliable or uncertain data

P= provisional value

## 02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

### 0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

Vocational education has gone through 3 major stages of development since 1990:

1995/1998: the main goals for the development of vocational education were defined and determined by the Strategic Programme for the Development of Education 1998/2003 (*Izglitibas attistibas strategiska programma*). During this time, Phare projects were of great importance.

1999/2001: the Law of Vocational Education (*Profesionalas izglitibas likums*), adopted in 1999 formed the juridical basis for vocational education. The Law regulates the forms of vocational education, the level of qualifications to be obtained and their requirements as well as the responsibility of the different VET structures. Phare projects assisted the implementation of the Law.

2002/2005: reforms continued linked to the process of joining the EU. The Education development concept for 2002/2005 was adopted, as was the Programme for the development of vocational education for 2003/2005 with much more specific goals. A number of other strategic documents have been adopted promoting lifelong learning and human resource development, including improving VET opportunities, for example, the annual National employment plans. The overarching goal of the Education development concept is:

- to carry out the necessary changes in the education system to enhance the building of a knowledge-based, democratic and socially integrated society, that would increase economic competitiveness and simultaneously preserve and develop Latvian cultural values.

The main goals defined in the Education development concept 2002/2005 (adopted by decree Nr. 383 of the Cabinet of Ministers on 17<sup>th</sup> July , 2002) are:

- increase education quality for all stages and types of education and shape it according to the public and economic development needs;
- ensure accessibility to lifelong learning for the Latvian population;
- increase cost-effectiveness of education for all stages and types.

The Vocational education development programme 2003/2005 was approved in 2003: it was drafted in accordance with Education Development Concept, National employment plan 2002, National development plan and other strategic documents on EU integration. Its main goals are to develop the VET system to meet the demands of the market economy, encourage employability, meet EU human resource development statements, and promote an EU competitive labour force. There are three sub-programmes focusing on quality in VET (to improve VET teacher training and to ensure VET meets labour

market demands), access (to provide VET for those with incomplete basic education and those with special needs) and improving management and effectiveness of expenditure (to ensure a unified VET system with an efficient use of financial and material resources).

2005 to date: in keeping with an appeal at the March 2005 meeting of the European Council, Latvia has prepared the National Lisbon Programme for 2005/2008 (*Latvijas nacionala Lisabonas programma 2005/2008. gadam*), aimed at the promoting national growth and employment. The Programme is a policy planning document which shows how Latvia will reach the Lisbon strategy goals on the basis of the Integrated Guidelines, approved by the European Council in July 2005. It envisages the following main tasks for improvement of education and skills in 2005/2008:

- strengthen co-operation between public administration institutions, education establishments and employers to adjust education and training supply with labour market needs;
- raise cost efficiency in all levels and forms of education;
- improve availability of education and reduce the number of students who do not graduate or do not achieve a professional qualification;
- increase the availability of lifelong learning and the motivation for people to learn;
- raise the overall level of technological skills and natural science knowledge, improve the professional orientation system and ensure the availability of professional orientation services for all the population in the context of lifelong learning.

### **03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

#### **0301 - ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK**

The Law of Vocational Education (*Profesionalas izglitibas likums, 1999*) determines the competence of those institutions responsible for the organization of VET.

The Cabinet of Ministers (*Ministru Kabinets*):

- determines the state's political and strategic areas in VET; it funds VET providers according to criteria established by the Ministry of Education and Science (*Izglitibas un zinatnes ministrija*); it sets the framework for issuing state-recognised qualifications and determines the recognition of qualifications obtained in other countries.

The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES):

- develops the framework regulations for VET and accredits providers. It also creates and updates the register of occupational standards and makes proposals about the allocation of funds from the state budget. It organises guidance and counselling services and researches skills demands of the labour market. It

employs the heads of VET institutions under its supervision.

The Department of Vocational and Continuing Education (*Profesionalas izglitibas un talakizglitibas departaments*):

- is under the Ministry of Education and Science and it develops state policy and strategy in VET. The department guides, plans and coordinates VET development and supervises VET providers. It collaborates with employer institutions and trade unions and provides technical support for the work of National Tripartite Sub-council for co-operation in VET and employment. It also assures that national policy meets EU demands and takes part in developing transnational agreements.

Vocational Education Centre (*Profesionalas izglitibas centrs*):

- this is also under the Ministry of Education and Science and it organises the accreditation of VET providers and programmes. It participates in the development of occupational standards as well as the content and methodology for exams. It oversees the functioning of learning and examination centres and organises the professional development of VET teachers.

### **0302 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

The Latvian Parliament decides on the main priorities and principles of educational policy and prepares new legislation. The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for implementing educational policy. State and local governments share responsibility for financing education.

Education is regulated by the following laws:

- The Latvian Constitution (*Satversme*): (dated 1922 and renewed in 1991) stipulates that everyone has the right to basic education (and the obligation to attend) and that the state provides opportunities to obtain basic and upper-secondary education free of charge.
- Law of Education (*Izglitibas likums*), 1991 sets the principles of the educational system including for VET (both IVET and CVET). The law stipulates that studies are obligatory until the age of 15, or until lower secondary school completion (in the Soviet system upper-secondary education was obligatory).
- Law of Crafts (*Likums par amatniecibu*), 1993 contains the basic principles and the framework for awarding crafts qualifications.
- Law of Higher Education Institutions (*Augstakas izglitibas likums*), 1995 (amended in 1996, 1999 and

2000) determines the principles for organising and implementing higher education.

- Law of Education (*Izglitibas likums*), 1998; (amended in 1999, 2000 and 2001) stipulates that primary school for children aged 5 and 6 is obligatory, and that basic education or studying until the age of 18 is obligatory. The law regulates the entire system of education, determines the rights and duties of the state, local governments, public organisations, professional associations, individuals, educational institutions, parents and students, as well as the levels and types of education and types of educational institutions.
- Law of General Education (*Visparejas izglitibas likums*), 1999.
- Law of Vocational Education (*Profesionalas izglitibas likums*), 1999 (amended in 2001) sets out the principles of organisation and implementation, as well as the principles for awarding qualifications. It also states the division of tasks and competences and the relationship between employers, teachers and students. This was the first time that social partners have been expected to take an active role in professional education. The Law also states the different pathways for pursuing vocational education, the structure of programmes and the funding principles. The 2001 amendments introduced vocational continuing education for adults to achieve a professional qualification. The amendments see professional development as specific type of vocational education that allows people, regardless of age and previous experience or qualifications, to acquire the knowledge and skills relevant to the demands of the labour market.

The Law of Vocational Education and other laws related to it have so far determined the role of social partners in VET development. Social partners can draw up proposals for improving VET policy and planning and to organise labour market research in cooperation with state and local government institutions. They can also be involved in setting up occupational standards and VET educational programmes.

### 0303 - ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

In 2000, the National Tripartite Sub-council for Cooperation in VET and Employment was founded to ensure coordinated actions in education and training at state level. The Sub-council is part of the National Tripartite Council for Cooperation, which was created with the wider goal of promoting collaboration between the government, employers and employees in implementing VET policy, human resource development and employment. The most significant issues passed to the committee from 2000/2004 are:

- drafts of the Latvian National Employment Plan (*Latvijas Nacionālais nodarbinātības plans*);
- procedure for organising practical training placements;
- Law on Assistance to Job-seekers and the Unemployed;
- regulations for centralised vocational qualification examinations and their commissions as well as regulations for examinations in programmes for unemployed people;
- State demand in VET;
- occupational standards.

In April 2000 the Cabinet of Ministers adopted the Regulations for the Council for Cooperation in VET, formed by representatives from several ministries (one representative from the Ministries of Education and Science, Economy, Culture, Agriculture), by representatives from Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (*Latvijas Pašvaldību savienība*), Employers' Confederation of Latvia (*Latvijas darba devēju konfederācija*), Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (*Latvijas Tirdzniecības un rūpniecības kamera*), Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia (*Latvijas Brīvo arodbiedrību savienība*), as well as one representative from each VET institutions under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science. Unlike in the National Tripartite Sub-council for Cooperation in VET and Employment, in the Council for Cooperation in VET, representatives from VET institutions are included.

At the end of 2005, the Tripartite Sub-council for Co-operation in Vocational Education and Employment have been organized in 4 regions of Latvia: Kurzeme, Dienvidlatgale, Vidzeme and Zemgale. Their main tasks are to promote cooperation in VET development and to improve accessibility, quality of VET, employment development and international cooperation. Regional sub-councils will be involved in coordinating activities of the regional examination centres, activities regarding practical placement, information exchange and accreditation of education establishments and programmes. They will also be involved in the coordination of continuing training.

To elicit greater interest for enterprises to collaborate with schools, favourable conditions must be created and investment incentives are needed. At the current time, the primary area of involvement is that employers evaluate the knowledge and skills of students during their examinations

The Cabinet of Ministers (*Ministru Kabinets*) in May 2001 approved a specific regulation "Procedure how the State delegates to public organisations certain support and management functions of vocational education", providing considerable possibilities for social partners to engage in the activities of VET institutions. Until now, no social partner organisation has shown initiative to take over any additional function.

Table 1: Responsibilities of social partners		
	RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL PARTNERS	TYPE OF ROLE (ADVISORY/DECISION- MAKING, DIRECT/INDIRECT)
<b>NATIONAL LEVEL</b>	The National Tripartite Cooperation Council (NTSP) examines decisions, laws and Regulations issued by the Cabinet of Ministers and submits proposals for improvement to responsible ministries. The Vocational Education and Employment Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council (PINTSA) considers the State development plan, human resources development and employment and prepare proposals for development. It considers proposals and give recommendations to State institutions and public organisations, dealing with VET and employability.	advisory
<b>REGIONAL LEVEL</b>	NTSP promote cooperation at regional level. PINTSA establishes and coordinates the Regional Vocational Education and Employment Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Councils.	advisory
<b>SECTORAL LEVEL</b>	NTSP promotes cooperation in sectoral level	advisory
<b>ENTERPRISE LEVEL</b>		

#### 04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

##### 0401 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM

See the below the Diagram of the Latvian education and training system

##### [The Education System in Latvia](#)

The Latvian system of VET is based on the Law of Education (*Izglitibas likums*) from 1991. VET providers are rooted in the network of educational institutions founded during the Soviet occupation. The network of VET providers covers all districts and many providers are small in terms of student numbers.

The change from a totalitarian system to a free market economy changed the demand for VET. Current concerns focus on preparing students for a competitive labour market and to continue their lifelong professional development.

## THE LATVIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The components of the educational system are pre-school education (*pirmsskolas izglitiba*), 9-year basic education (*pamatizglitiba*), upper secondary education (*videja izglitiba*) and higher education (*augstaka izglitiba*).

Pre-school education (ISCED 0) is for children aged 5-7 years and is provided by general education establishments or kindergartens as part of compulsory basic education. The objective is to foster general development of children and their readiness to enter the primary stage of basic education.

Basic education (ISCED 1 and 2) comprises primary and lower secondary education and lasts for 9 years. It is compulsory for all children aged 7 and above. The National Basic Education Standard (*Valsts pamatizglitibas standarts*) determines the curriculum and the content of national examinations. Those who do not complete basic education by 16 should, according to Law, continue studying to complete the programme by the time they are 18. They can also choose VET programmes that allow them to obtain a first or second level professional qualification and to complete the obligatory basic educational programme.

3-year vocational basic education programmes are provided in vocational schools for students without a certificate of basic education (after completion of at least 7 grades of basic education, but not the year in which they are 15).

Upper secondary education (ISCED 3) comprises two types of programme: general secondary (*vispareja videja izglitiba*) and vocational secondary (*profesionala videja izglitiba*).

In general secondary, there are 4 study fields: general; humanities and social sciences; mathematics, natural science and technical, and vocational (arts, music, business, and sports). The following subjects are obligatory for all programmes: Latvian; first foreign language; second foreign language (in minority population schools - the minority language); mathematics, history; sports; business foundations and computer science. Every programme includes obligatory and optional subjects relevant to the particular field of studies. To receive the Certificate of the secondary education (*Atestats par visparejo videjo izglitibu*), students should take not less than 5 examinations in compulsory or optional study subjects and no more than 4 tests in compulsory study subjects. Provision is regulated by the state which determines its level, form and target groups. It also defines the strategic goals and main tasks of each programme; its obligatory content, basic principles and assessment.

Different vocational education programmes are developed and offered for all economic branches. The National Standard of vocational education (*Valsts profesionalas izglitibas standarts*) and the Occupational Standards (*Profesiju standarti*) determine the curriculum and content of vocational education programmes.

4-year vocational secondary education programmes are offered to students who have successfully completed compulsory basic education. Graduates receive a diploma of vocational secondary education and a Level 3 vocational qualification.

2-3 year vocational education programmes lead to a Certificate of secondary education and qualification level 3.

Post secondary non-tertiary vocational education (ISCED 4) can be followed after graduating from general secondary schools. They are focused towards mastering purely professional skills and knowledge.

Tertiary education (ISCED 5). While there is a difference between academic and professional higher education, it is not institutionalised. Universities and other higher education institutions run both academic and professional programmes.

Academic higher education programmes (ISCED 5A) lead to a Bachelor's degree (*Bakalaura*) and Master's degree (*Magistrs*). The duration of Bachelor's programmes may be 3 or 4 years. A Master's degree is awarded after the second stage of academic education and requires at least 5 years of university studies.

The Law of Higher Education Institutions (*Augstakas izglitibas likums*) and the Law of Vocational Education (*Profesionalas izglitibas likums*) stipulate a 2-level professional higher education – the first level (2-3 years) leading to professional qualification Level 4 (ISCED 5B) and second level (ISCED 5B) leading to qualification level 5 (4-6 years). Having completed a programme, students are awarded a professional qualification or a professional Bachelor's degree that can be followed by a further 1-2 years of professional Master's studies. The Master's degree of higher professional education is awarded if the total duration of studies is at least 5 years.

There can also be short second level professional higher education study programmes (1-2 years), where the qualification is obtained on the basis of the previously acquired first level professional higher education or academic Bachelor's degree. In total the duration of professional qualification Level 5 study programmes is not less than 4 years after secondary education and not less than 2 years after college education.

Bachelor and Master degrees exist both in academic and professional higher education. Bachelors of both categories have the right to enrol in master's studies, masters of both categories (including also degrees in medicine and dentistry - 6 and 5 years of study respectively) - in doctoral studies.

Postgraduate education (ISCED level 6). A Master's degree or the equivalent is required for admission to doctoral studies (Ph.D.) which last 3-4 full-time years. They include advanced studies of the subject in a relevant study programme (or an equivalent amount of independent research while working at a university, research institution, etc.) and a scientific research towards doctoral thesis.

### THE LATVIAN VET SYSTEM

The Law of Professional Education (revised in 2001) stipulates that VET programmes are classified as follows:

- vocational basic education programmes;
- vocational education programmes;
- vocational secondary educational programmes;
- first level professional higher education (college education) programmes;
- professional continuing education programmes;
- professional development educational programmes.

The Law defines five levels of professional qualifications:

- Level 1 (ISCED 2)-theoretical and practical training that prepares students for performing simple tasks in a certain area of practical activity (assistant cook, carpenter etc.);
- Level 2 (ISCED 3)-theoretical and practical background that allows the holder to perform qualified work independently (carpenter, hairdresser, cook, welder etc.);
- Level 3 (ISCED 3)-advanced theoretical and professional background which enables the holder to fulfil certain tasks, including planning and organising work (various technicians, car mechanics, hotel service specialist etc.);
- Level 4 (ISCED 5)-theoretical and practical background that enables the holder to perform complicated tasks as well as to organise and manage others in their work;
- Level 5 (ISCED 5)-the highest qualification of a specialist in a field that enables the holder to plan and perform research and scientific work in the field.

At VET institutions, various educational programmes are offered. The following table shows the type of programme, their duration, previous education and possibilities to enrol at higher education institutions on completion.

<b>Table 1: Types of professional education programmes</b>				
<b>PROGRAMME AND LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION TO BE OBTAINED</b>	<b>PREVIOUS EDUCATION</b>	<b>DURATION OF STUDIES (YEARS)</b>	<b>QUALIFICATION</b>	<b>POSSIBILITY TO ENROL AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS</b>
<b>VOCATIONAL SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME- LEVEL 3</b>	9-year basic	4	Diploma of vocational secondary education	Yes
	vocational education	2		Yes
	Secondary	2		Yes
<b>VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME- LEVEL 2</b>	9-year basic	3	Certificate on vocational education	No
	9-year basic	2		
	Secondary	2	Certificate of qualification	Yes
	Secondary	1		
<b>VOCATIONAL BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME- LEVEL 1</b>	9-year basic	1	Certificate of vocational basic education	No

<b>VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME (PEDAGOGICAL CORRECTION PROGRAMME* INCLUDED)- LEVEL 2</b>	8 years	3	Certificate of vocational education and certificate of basic education	No
<b>VOCATIONAL BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME (PEDAGOGICAL CORRECTION* INCLUDED)- LEVEL 1</b>	8 years	2	Certificate of vocational basic education and certificate of basic education	No

Source: MoES

\* pedagogical correction – programme for early school leavers and those with low level of basic knowledge and skills. The main aim of the programme is to integrate youngsters back to education system and help them acquire simple professional skills.

#### **TYPES AND STATUS OF INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

VET institutions are classified according to ownership:

- state VET institutions;
- local government VET institutions;
- private VET institutions.

VET is free for full-time students at institutions operated by the state or local governments. Students also receive a grant determined by the Cabinet of Ministers. The number of VET institutions operated by local governments and private parties is rather small, but growing (see Table).

<b>Table 2: Vocational education and training institutions according to their status</b>		
<b>EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION ACCORDING TO STATUS</b>	<b>NUMBER OF SCHOOLS, SCHOOL YEAR 1999/2000</b>	<b>NUMBER OF SCHOOLS, SCHOOL YEAR 2004/2005</b>
<b>STATE VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS</b>	111 (91.8%)	93 (83.8%)
<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS</b>	5 (4.1%)	7 (6.3%)
<b>PRIVATE VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS</b>	5 (4.1%)	11 (9.9%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>111</b>

Source: MoES

#### **0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL**

##### **BASIC VOCATIONAL EDUCATION – ISCED 2C**

Students are admitted onto VET programmes without consideration for their previous education but not earlier than in the year in which they turn 15. Those without basic education are admitted to VET programmes which include pedagogical correction (this is targeted at early school leavers and those with a low level of basic education – the aim of the programme is to integrate young people back into the education system).

Programme duration is 1-2 years and leads to a certificate of basic vocational education which certifies that the student has obtained a first level qualification (ISCED 2C). This means that they have the theoretical and practical training to carry out simple tasks in certain fields, for example as a cook's or carpenter's assistant). In the school year 2004/2005, 1 227 students (0.75 % of basic education level students or 2.75% of vocational education students) participated in these programmes.

#### **0403 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)**

The Law of Vocational Education stipulates that the duration of vocational training is 2-3 years for people who have completed basic education and who have made this choice. Upon graduation a VET certificate is awarded. It certifies that the qualification corresponds to professional qualification level 2 (theoretical and practical aptitude for carrying out qualified executive work independently, for example as carpenter, hairdresser, cook, seamstress, welder). (ISCED 3) Vocational training does not give the right to continue studies at a higher education institution, nevertheless for students who want to continue, a 1-year intermediate course in general secondary education is available.

Table 1: National classification of education (adopted in 2004)			
EDUCATION LEVEL AND TYPE	TYPE OF PROGRAMME	ISCED 97	
		EDUCATION LEVEL	CODE
SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION	Vocational education-part of vocational secondary education which does not give the right to continue studies at a higher education level. Duration 2-3 years	Upper secondary	3C
	Vocational secondary education–education which ensures professional qualification level 3 and give the right to continue studies at a higher education level. Duration 3-4 years.	Upper secondary	3A 3B
	Intermediate programme in general secondary education. Duration 1 year. Previous education–vocational education.	Upper secondary	3A 3B

One of the objectives of the National classification of education is comparability with ISCED 97. In the school year 2004/2005, 9 532 students (21.35% of vocational education students) were involved in ISCED 3C vocational programmes.

The content of vocational education study programmes leading to professional qualification level 2 (ISCED 3c) is divided into theory and practice 35:65 respectively and between general and vocational subjects 60:40. The practical training usually takes place at the schools and enterprises.

#### VOCATIONAL SECONDARY EDUCATION - ISCED 3A, 3B

Students who have completed general or vocational basic education (level 1–ISCED 2c) can be admitted to upper-secondary VET programmes which last for 3-4 years. Upon graduation, an upper secondary VET diploma is awarded, as well as a professional qualification level 3 (ISCED 3c). The diploma gives the right to continue studies at a higher education institution.

The structure of upper secondary VET programmes combine theory and practical training on a 50:50 basis and general and vocational subjects on a 60:40 basis. In the school year 2004/2005, 29 261 or 65.53% of VET institutions' students studied in such programmes which are the most popular VET programmes.

Table 2: Full time students in upper secondary education by programme orientation, 2003 <sup>1</sup>					
	TOTAL	VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES		GENERAL AND PRE-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES	
		TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%
<b>EU-25</b>	18 700 379	8 689 700	46	10 010 679	54
<b>LATVIA</b>	86 295	36 945	43	49 350	57

Source: Eurostat, UOE; NewCronos, release date 29/06/2005

<sup>1</sup> ISCED 97, level 3. 00000.

As can be seen by this table, the general secondary education pathway is more popular than for vocational secondary education.

#### **0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING**

An apprenticeship system exists on a small scale mainly in the crafts sector in traditional professions. The Law on Crafts (1993) regulates the organisation of craft education and issuing qualifications. The main organisation involved is the Chamber of Crafts which is a self-governing organisation for developing crafts and craftsmanship in Latvia.

Through the apprenticeship system it is possible to obtain the journeyman (*Amata zella diploms*) and master craft qualification (*Amata meistara diploms*). The journeyman examination comprises two parts: presentation of qualification work and techniques used and theoretical knowledge. The master craftsman qualification is awarded after an examination. In 2002, the Chamber of Crafts issued 32 craft masters' qualifications and 243 journeyman crafts qualifications (altogether 2% of VET graduates) compared to 270 and 679 in 1996. The Chamber has the right to award qualifications of craftsmen in 159 vocations. These qualifications can be used only for the labour market.

Apprenticeship qualifications do not provide access to regulated professions nor do they give access to continue in the formal education and training system. There are no mechanisms in place for those, who dropped out from apprenticeship before completing training, to continue in another form.

Apprentices are admitted regardless of their previous education but not earlier than the year in which they turn 16 (unless they have permission from parents or tutor).

An apprenticeship is based on the Chamber of Crafts standard template contracts, concluded between apprentice and master. They determine the relative responsibilities of apprentices and their master.

Apprenticeship is not popular: approximately only 80 apprentices enrol each year. The Chamber of Crafts is planning to introduce several measures to increase interest, they include: providing more information to VET schools and improving the network of craft masters who would be interested in training apprentices.

Apprenticeship programmes are drafted by the corresponding craft professional association and approved by the Council of the Chamber of Crafts. The curricula are not

approved by the Vocational Education Centre as for IVET programmes, as these programmes are not part of formal IVET.

Apprenticeship training can be organised in 2 ways:

- the apprentice works together with a crafts master and looks for theoretical training possibilities in vocational schools; or
- an apprentice is a student in a vocational school and during practical placement is working with a crafts master. After graduation, the student must pass the exam of journeyman in the Chamber of Crafts.

Theoretical training for masters and journeyman's is offered also by Chamber of Crafts.

#### **0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS**

There are no other youth programmes as alternative pathways except for the pedagogical correction programme. This is part of IVET system leading to the same education certificate and qualification but it's main aim is to re-integrate early school leavers and those with low level of basic knowledge and skills back to the education system and help them acquire simple professional skills.

#### **0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL**

It is possible to enrol in programmes of vocational training or post-secondary vocational training after completing general upper-secondary education. Programmes last for 1-2 years.

In the school year 2004/2005, 8.81% (3 934) of students at VET institutions studied in such programmes.

#### **0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL**

The Law on Vocational education (1999) provides for higher vocational programmes at 2 levels: college programmes (professional qualification level 4; ISCED 5) and higher professional education programmes (professional qualification level 5; ISCED 5).

#### **HIGHER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION**

Higher professional education is subject to the Law of Education (*Augstakas izglitibas likums, 1991, 1998*), Law on higher education institutions (*Augstakas izglitibas likums, 1995*) and Law of Vocational Education (*Profesionalas izglitibas likums, 1999*). In accordance with Law of Higher Education institutions it is possible to obtain a mix of academic and professional qualifications:

- academic education and following degrees:
  - bachelor *bakalaura* (academic degree);
  - master *magistrs* (academic degree);

- doctor *doktors* (scientific degree).
- 4 and 5 level professional qualification and following degrees:
  - bachelor *bakalaurs*(professional degree);
  - master *magistrs*(professional degree).

### COLLEGE PROGRAMMES

In a number of vocational fields, college programmes exist which are the first cycle of vocational higher education. They lead to level 4 professional qualifications (ISCED 5).

Since 2000, vocational bachelor and master degrees have been available.

First level higher vocational education programmes are available at colleges (former institutions of post-secondary VET) and higher education institutions. Studies last for 2-3 years following completion of general or vocational secondary education. The “Diploma of the first level higher professional education” (available since June 2000) is equal to level 4 (theoretical and practical training that enables holder to perform complicated tasks as well as to organise and lead the work of other specialists). Programmes are available in engineering, computer science, business administration, nursing and law. Programmes can give credit towards further studies in the second cycle of vocational higher education.

The content of the first level higher professional education comprises study courses (comprising general subjects, humanities, social sciences as well as technical subjects), a practical placement and a thesis. The content of the study course and the practical placement is set out in occupational standards for some professions.

Second level higher vocational education programmes (ISCED 5A) are provided by universities and other higher education institutions. Studies last 4-5 years following completion of general or vocational secondary education. The “Diploma of Higher Professional Education” is equivalent to level 5 (highest specialist qualification which provides for practical performance as well as abilities to plan and perform research and scientific work). Content comprises (for professional bachelor programmes, professional master programmes, higher professional education programmes), study courses, a practical placement and a qualifying thesis. The content of the study course and the practical placement is set by the respective occupational standards for certain professions.

## 05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

Strategies for adult education in Latvia are defined by the Concept of Adult Education of Latvia (*Pieaugušo izglītības koncepcija*), the National Lisbon Programme for 2005/2008. Adult education should satisfy both the need for personal development and public needs. It should aim to fulfil individual needs and complement existing levels of education and training regardless of age and levels of previous education.

### 0501 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

There is a long tradition of adult continuing education in Latvia usually evening courses for working adults who had not completed their primary or secondary education. The Law on Education (1998) (*Izglītības likums*) stipulates that adult education should be individually chosen to encourage personal development and improved labour market competitiveness. Adults have the right to follow programmes throughout their whole life, regardless of their formal levels of education. On completion, adults receive a certificate of completion from the provider.

The Law on Vocational education (1999) (*Profesionālas izglītības likums*) regulates 2 formal types of continuing education: vocational continuing education and professional improvement. Vocational continuing education enables adults with previous education and work experience to obtain professional qualifications. They are always concluded by a specific qualification for a specific profession acknowledged by the state. Professional improvement enables people regardless of their age and previous education or professional qualifications to master systematized professional knowledge and skills corresponding to the requirements of the labour market. They lead to a formal qualification.

In 1993, the Latvian Adult Education Association (*Latvijas Pieaugušo izglītības apvienība, LPIA*) was founded to develop adult education and a lifelong learning system and a network of adult educational centres and co-ordinators have been established.

#### ADULT CONTINUING EDUCATION MAY BE CLASSIFIED AS FOLLOWS:

- enterprise staff training (70% of enterprises with 50-240 employees provide training);
- training for unemployed people (organised and funded by the State);
- adult education provided in centres of adult education, night schools, etc. supported by local government;
- various training programmes and projects financed by international and local donor institutions and funds, carried out by the state, local government, nongovernmental and other organizations;
- individual continuing education financed by individuals themselves.

#### CVET PROVISION

CVET provision is diverse. The most popular courses are in social sciences, entrepreneurial activity, law, services, health and social care, foreign languages, liberal sciences and arts, as well as engineering sciences, production and building, and teacher education. There are a number of organisations involved in CVET and the network of

providers includes: ministries; employers' organisations; trade unions; university continuing education departments and their distance learning centres, the school of state administration; local training centres; chambers of commerce, centres of adult education, State employment agency and other educational organisations and associations.

### **STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

The Latvian CVET system has a number of strengths and weaknesses which can be summarised as:

Strengths:

- There is a network of providers for CVET for all target groups.
- Cooperation with social partners is formalised through: the Tripartite Cooperation Subcommittee for Education and Employment as well as Cooperation Committee for Vocational Education.
- Teachers have pedagogical education.
- All educational programmes on offer are accredited.
- A central examination system makes for easier comparison of quality across the country.
- Providers are involved in international projects.
- The Ministry of Education and Science plans and determines educational policy, as well as controls its implementation.

Weaknesses:

- Strategic guidelines for lifelong learning and an action plan for implementation have not been developed neither has an adult education Act been passed.
- Ongoing territorial reform complicates the provision of adult learning opportunities.
- State funding for adult education is not sufficient and provision is not available to all population groups.
- There is no adequate system of guidance to support training on a lifelong basis.
- There is no system of CVET for teachers and trainers.
- The networking capacity of the different CVET providers and other organisations is not sufficiently developed.
- There is no system in place to accredit informally acquired skills and competences.
- Provision of CVET across Latvia is not consistent.

Some of these issues are being addressed. A project to develop a lifelong learning strategy is being implemented by the Latvian Adult Education Association in cooperation with the representatives of local governments, universities, representatives of public organizations and other experts. In addition, Professional Career Counselling State Agency (*Profesionalas karjeras izveles valsts agentura*, PKIVA) under the Ministry of Welfare (*Labklajibas ministrija*) is working to provide advice and guidance for both students and unemployed people on their educational choices.

#### **0502 - PUBLICLY PROMOTED CVET FOR ALL**

Following the typology of CVET given in section 0501, there are 3 main types of publicly promoted CVET:

- adult education;
- vocational continuing education programmes (informal training);
- professional improvement programmes (leading to formal qualifications).

All publicly provided CVET programmes must be accredited by the Ministry of Education and Science (*Izglitiba un zinatnes ministrija*). Applications must include information about how the programme will be funded, the target audience, the length of the programme, where it will be implemented, etc. This also applies to the vocational continuing education programmes and professional improvement programmes. Both must also be provided by Ministry of Education and Science certified providers.

The accreditation system is based on standards determined in the Law on Vocational Education (1999). The principle of accreditation is to ensure that programme content meets the required standards of publicly provided vocational education and professional standards. It also assists in the transparency of training, thereby assisting the ability to recognise Latvian qualifications in other countries.

#### **ADULT EDUCATION**

In 2004, 323 adult education providers were registered (6 are state owned, 23 are local government, 3 are private with state investment and the remainder are private which include enterprise training centres). Adult education can also be pursued in other educational establishments.

General education programmes and parts of vocational training can be pursued part-time during the evening.

As mentioned, most programmes need to be accredited but publicly owned providers can offer informal training programmes without obtaining a license.

#### **VOCATIONAL CONTINUING EDUCATION**

Programmes are determined by professional standards and providers are accredited by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the social partners through the Tripartite Cooperation Subcommittee for Vocational Education and Employment. The accreditation process follows an evaluation of the quality of the provision on offer. Providers can only offer courses in programmes which have been licensed and programmes must meet both educational and professional standards. The accreditation procedure for both providers and programmes is outlined in the Law on Vocational Education (1999).

Participants completing a programme take a centrally determined examination which are organised by the Ministry of Education and Science. They aim to ensure that all the graduates, obtaining a certain profession, have identical knowledge, competencies and skills. Social partners are also involved in evaluating examination performance.

### **PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMES**

At the end of professional improvement programmes, an examination following centralised procedures and methodologies are taken. The list of professional qualifications is determined by the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of 7<sup>th</sup> November 2000 No. 383 (Terms for Professional Qualifications, which are Subject to Centralized Professional Qualification Examinations) and Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of 12<sup>th</sup> March 2002 No. 104 (Terms on the Contents and Order of the Centralized Examinations). Both determine the content of the examinations. To issue a certificate of professional improvement, the programme must be at least 160 hours long.

### **0503 - TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHERS VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION IN THE LABOUR MARKET**

Training for unemployed people is organised by the State employment services which procures training from accredited educational institutions. 3 types of programme are available:

- vocational continuing education (see also section 0502);
- professional improvement programmes (see also section 0502);
- adult education programmes (see also section 0502);
- other educational programmes.

They are available if the professional qualifications and/or work experience fall short of the requirements of a profession and the person cannot find work. They are also available where somebody has lost their professional skills. To participate in courses, unemployed people must be at least 18. As demand outstrips supply, motivation is also taken into account when choosing participants.

Training programmes for unemployed people are financed from the state budget. They can also be organised according to employer proposals who are seeking employees with certain skills; where this is the case the employer must provide a job for the trained person lasting at least 1 year.

Vocational training for unemployed people is organized by the State Employment Agency (SEA). The SEA does not carry out training: it procures it from licensed education and training providers through a tendering and contractual procedure. In 2003, 8% of unemployed people participated in such programmes.

The SEA is organised on a regional basis as are their training programmes. In 2004, 97% (84% in 2003) of unemployed people involved in vocational training, requalification and improving their professional skills were provided in their region of residence.

Providers are responsible for programme quality. The SEA examines the following in procuring training:

- material and technical requirements for implementing educational programmes;
- teachers comply to the education and professional qualification requirements of the training programmes;
- ability to meet the course and programme schedules and keep appropriate records.

The SEA should follow up on the training provision on a monthly basis and a statement is prepared indicating the performance of individual trainees.

#### **TRAINING FOR OTHERS AT RISK OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

There are several groups at risk of social exclusion: young jobseekers aged 15-24; those of preretirement age (aged 55-64), those with low skills and a low level of education; disabled people; long-term unemployed (seeking work for more than 12 months); women returners; ex-prisoners and ex-drug addicts.

Young people are an especially important target group given that their rate of unemployment is 22.2% (considerably higher than in other age groups, as well as compared to the EU mean of 15.1%). Special attention is given to young people with low educational achievement, those who have been expelled and young offenders.

Generally, people with low educational achievement are also an important target group (17% of all jobseekers only have basic level education). 26.1% of all jobseekers have also been unemployed for longer than a year.

#### **ESF SPONSORED TRAINING PROVISION**

In 2004, 33 educational institutions provided vocational training for unemployed people. They offered 86 training programmes. Most of this training is funded from the EU Structural Funds through the European Social Fund (ESF) project "Training and Continuing education of the Unemployed" which started on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2004. The objective is to provide vocational training in skills required on the labour market for both adults and young people who have obtained an educational level necessary to master a profession. 83% of participants in 2004 were aged over 25 and most (43.8%) had some previous level of vocational training (31.3% had secondary education).

Another ESF project is the "Providing of Training for Social Exclusion Risk Groups, Including Information and Communication Support to Disabled Persons". This promotes the integration of unemployed people at risk of exclusion by improving their professional qualifications and their competitiveness on the labour market. Target groups comprise: unemployed disabled people; long-term unemployed people; young unemployed people (aged 15-25 years) with only basic education or less; labour market returners and ex-prisoners. 645 people participated in 2004, 43% in vocational training, 27% in improving professional skills and 30% in vocational requalification.

#### **0504 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISES OR SOCIAL PARTNERS**

Enterprise provided training can assist employees to adapt to new tasks or to requalify to improve their career chances. For enterprises in Latvia participation in training is a voluntary activity and they tend to be more concerned with providing training to ensure their employees can adapt to new workplace demands and provide courses on-site or outside of the enterprise usually at private providers. The number of providers has been increasing, especially in the cities, to meet the training demands of enterprises.

Training is available to learn a completely new skill or to add certain competences (e.g. teamwork skills). Every training providers produces a study programme of different courses. Trainers may be employed by a training provider or may be contracted to provide a certain course. It is usually at the discretion of the provider to design their own training programmes but for certain regulated professions other bodies may be consulted to ensure that any professional standards are met. The quality of provision is not otherwise monitored.

Enterprise management usually take the decision to provide training for their employees and the human resource and training departments would seek the most appropriate training depending on the size of the enterprise. Training courses would usually be funded by the enterprise although employees may have to contribute.

Enterprises tend to provide training through external or internal courses. Other means such as job rotation within the organisation may also be used. Study groups and participation in conferences can also constitute training provision.

#### **REGULATION OF ENTERPRISE TRAINING**

While enterprise provision of training is voluntary, some training issues are regulated with a number of Articles of the Labour Code are related to training:

- Article 191 stipulates that employers must create the necessary conditions for employees to participate in education and training through combining work and study. This must be included in collective agreements.
- Article 192 stipulates that theoretical studies and practical training, if employees are trained on site, have to be organized during working hours or after working hours in accordance with legislation, collective agreement or labour contract according to the mutual agreement of the contractual parties.
- Article 193 stipulates that upon completion of training, employees are assigned a category or job title which reflects their specialty and qualification in accordance with the terms of the collective agreement or by mutual agreement of the contractual parties.
- Article 201 stipulates the employers must facilitate employee participation in all kinds of education and training.

Employers can grant study leave for employees to pursue studies while at work – this may be paid or unpaid depending on their employment contract or collective agreement. For State examinations, study leave must be granted for a minimum of 20 days for employees with minimum salary. In some regulated professions, training is compulsory.

Decisions on enterprise training are taken with the cooperation of the social partners. In 2000, the Tripartite Cooperation Subcommittee for Education and Employment was organized with representatives from Ministries (Welfare, Economy, Finance, Justice, Agriculture, Education and Science, Regional Development and Local Government Affairs), the Association of Free Trade Unions and the Confederation of Employers. The task of the Subcommittee is to promote dialogue between employers and employees on training and employment issues.

In terms of provision, compared to other enterprises in the EU, Latvian enterprises follow the trend that the larger the enterprise the more likely it is that training will be available.

<b>Table 1: Training enterprises as % of all enterprises, by size class (1999)</b>				
	<b>SIZE CLASS (NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES)</b>			
	<b>TOTAL (%)</b>	<b>10 TO 49 (%)</b>	<b>50 TO 249 (%)</b>	<b>250 OR MORE (%)</b>
<b>EU-25</b>	61	56	80	95
<b>AUSTRIA</b>	72	68	91	96
<b>BELGIUM</b>	70	66	93	100
<b>CYPRUS</b>	:	:	:	:
<b>CZECH REPUBLIC</b>	69	62	84	96
<b>DENMARK</b>	96	95	98	100
<b>ESTONIA</b>	63	58	85	96
<b>FINLAND</b>	82	78	97	99
<b>FRANCE</b>	76	70	93	98
<b>GERMANY</b>	75	71	87	98
<b>GREECE</b>	18	11	43	78
<b>HUNGARY</b>	37	32	51	79
<b>ICELAND</b>	:	:	:	:
<b>IRELAND</b>	79	75	98	100
<b>ITALY</b>	24	20	48	81
<b>LATVIA</b>	53	49	70	91
<b>LITHUANIA</b>	43	37	60	80
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	71	67	83	99
<b>MALTA</b>	:	:	:	:
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	88	85	96	98

<b>NORWAY</b>	86	84	97	100
<b>POLAND</b>	39	36	52	63
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	22	17	46	78
<b>SLOVAKIA</b>	:	:	:	:
<b>SLOVENIA</b>	48	35	72	96
<b>SPAIN</b>	36	31	58	86
<b>SWEDEN</b>	91	88	99	99
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>	87	85	91	98

Source: Eurostat, NewCronos, 2<sup>nd</sup> Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS2)  
Note: "Training enterprises" are enterprises that did provide any type of continuing vocational training to their employees; Cyprus, Malta, Slovakia, Iceland were not covered by CVTS2.

#### **0505 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE INDIVIDUAL**

There is little information on the amount of training undertaken at individual initiative in Latvia. Some universities have Continuing Education Departments which provide training for individuals. Other training options include self-education through informal study (83.9% of the total population use informal study methods). TV and radio, audio and video cassettes are also used (48.7%), as well as computer learning (40.9%). Libraries and training centres are less popular. These statistics apply irrelevant of age group although for unemployed people self-study methods follow the order of: (1) printed materials; (2) information from the TV and radio broadcasts, audio-video cassettes; (3) computer, use of the internet. Computers and the internet are more frequently used by working people. In turn, libraries and training centres are visited more frequently by the economically inactive population.

### **06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS**

#### **0601 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN VET**

The VET system contains vocational education teachers which are both teachers and trainers. They provide a range of programmes: vocational basic education; vocational lower secondary education; vocational upper secondary education; and professional development and continuing education.

#### **IVET TEACHERS**

Vocational lower and upper secondary programmes comprise general subjects, professional subjects, practical training and work placements. Teachers in the VET system are therefore teachers of general subjects or of a vocational subject. Practical training is taught by vocational subject VET teachers.

## **CVET TEACHERS**

VET teachers for continuing education programmes (CVET) are not specially noted within vocational education terminology. They have the same requirements as VET teachers.

### **LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE FOR VET TEACHERS**

Since the Law on Vocational Education was implemented in January 2004, all VET teachers are now required to gain a pedagogical qualification. Since 2004, all VET teachers must be in one of the following situations:

- have a vocational qualification and pedagogical training;
- have a vocational qualification and participating in pedagogical training;
- have a higher pedagogical qualification or an academic degree and a pedagogical qualification.

According to the Law on Education, the Ministry of Education and Science is the institution responsible for co-ordinating training and continuing education of teachers. Improving teacher training and professional development system is one of the main action points in the White Paper on the Development of Education in 2002/2005 developed by the Ministry of Education and Science, aimed at ensuring the quality of vocational training according to the needs of society and the economy.

The vocational education development programme 2003/2005 is the key document for VET development. The programme includes teacher training where the priority to improve the quality of VET includes improving the further education level of vocational school teachers.

Regulations have gone further since 2005, where an Order of VET teachers education and professional development (Cabinet of Ministers, October 2005) covers the different qualifications required by VET teachers who provide basic vocational education, lower and upper secondary vocational education and continuing vocational and professional development programmes.

### **0602 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET**

The Law identifies only one type of teacher and trainer in all kinds of VET: VET teacher. VET teachers can be categorised according to the level of programme taught: basic vocational and upper secondary vocational, although they can teach both levels if they have the appropriate education. All VET teachers can teach both IVET and CVET at basic and upper secondary level in educational establishments.

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 2004

The Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 347 (October 2000, amendments 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004) provides "Regulations on the needs for training and vocational qualifications required by teachers". The requirements describe:

- the vocational qualification requirements to be met by VET teachers;
- the training programmes which should be followed to qualify to work as a VET teacher.

Pre-service training for VET teachers is organised in higher education establishments. There are 2 types of programme depending whether the teacher is training to be a general subject teacher in a VET school or a teacher of a specific vocation. Programmes for general subject teachers are the same whether the teacher will teach in the general education or VET system. Students study a higher pedagogical level education and achieve a pedagogical qualification.

Professional training programmes are available in different occupational sectors to become a VET teacher. Graduates obtain a professional qualification or scientific degree in the branch. If the graduate would like to work in VET school he/she should continue in a pedagogical education programme (for no less than 320 hours) at a higher education institution, adult continuing education centre or other training institution.

For those without a pedagogical qualification, who would like to work in VET schools as a VET teacher, there is a special programme (Vocational education teachers' professional perfection programme lasting no less than 320 hours) designed according to the occupational standard for VET teachers (2002). To apply, prospective students must have a secondary vocational or a higher professional education level. A combination of secondary education and a master of crafts qualification are also accepted.

#### IN-SERVICE, CONTINUING TRAINING FOR VET TEACHERS

All pedagogical staff (VET teachers, school director, deputy directors, methodologists, interest education teachers, social pedagogues, librarian etc.) should participate in further training to improve their professional qualification every 3 years. Different continuing education programmes, courses, seminars, projects and other pedagogical tools could be used as long as they are not less than 36 contact hours in total. The Law on

Table 1: VET teachers according education obtained

SCHOOL YEARS	NUMBER OF TEACHERS		EDUCATION LEVEL								
			BASIC	SECONDARY			HIGHER				
	TOTAL	WOMEN	TOTAL	INCL. GENERAL SECONDARY	INCL. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL	INCL. THOSE WITH PEDAGOGICAL EDUCATION	TOTAL	INCL. HIGHER PEDAGOGICAL	INCL. OTHER TYPE PEDAGOGICAL (320 H)	PHD	
2004/2005	4 775	3 373	-	842	88	754	465	3 933	2 674	1 027	48
2003/2004	5 224	3 658	-	1 034	126	908	381	4 190	2 755	766	60
2002/2003	5 693	3 869	3	1 110	172	938	337	4 580	2 789	712	80
2001/2002	5 582	3 772	2	1 215	203	1 012	292	4 365	2 648	589	99
2000/2001	5 439	3 607	5	1 226	228	998	283	4 208	2 384	584	59

education states that a teacher is responsible for his/her professional development. Teachers have the right to use 30 calendar days every 3 years for professional development as paid training leave. It is the responsibility of the Director of a VET school to monitor their staff development.

Various organisations provide continuing training for VET teachers including school boards, municipalities, professional associations, the vocational education centre, the teaching and examination centres, universities and higher education institutions as well as continuing vocational training centres.

### **0603 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET**

There is only one type of occupation regulated by law which is a vocational education teacher. There are no differences between vocational education teachers in the IVET or CVET system and teachers for continuing education programmes (CVET) are not specially noted within vocational education terminology. They have the same requirements as other vocational education teachers (see section 0602 Types of teacher and trainer in IVET).

VET teachers in VET schools provide both IVET and CVET courses and there is no distinction regarding their education requirements. In enterprises in-company teachers and trainers could be involved in local training, nevertheless, there is no regulation on their education requirements. Those involved in apprenticeship training should have a craftsman qualification.

### **PRE-SERVICE TRAINING FOR CVET TEACHERS**

The pre-service training is the same for all vocational education teachers. Professional training programmes are available in different occupational sectors within the higher education system. Graduates obtain a professional qualification or scientific degree in the branch. If the graduate would like to work in VET school they should continue in a basic pedagogical programme (no less than 320 hours) at a higher education institution, adult continuing education centre or other training institution.

The training content and curricula is the same for all VET teachers: all must follow a higher education study programme in the appropriate field at a higher level (ISCED 5A). The assessment and quality monitoring structure is also the same.

### **IN-SERVICE, CONTINUING TRAINING FOR VET TEACHERS**

All pedagogical staff (VET teachers, school director, deputy directors, methodologists, interest education teachers, social pedagogue, librarian, etc.) should participate in further training to improve their professional qualification every 3 years. Different continuing education programmes, courses, seminars, projects and other pedagogical tools could be used as long as they are not less than 36 contact hours in total. The Law on education states that a teacher is responsible for his/her professional development. Teachers have the right to use 30 calendar days every 3 years for professional development as paid training leave. It is the responsibility of the Director of a VET school to monitor their staff development.

Various organisations provide continuing training for VET teachers including school boards, municipalities, professional associations, the vocational education centre, the teaching and examination centres, universities and higher education institutions as well as continuing vocational training centres.

## 07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

### 0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

Only in a couple of fields have descriptions of employees' ability and skill requirements been determined, for example in the information technology and building sectors. For jobs in other sectors, occupational standards have been defined for different professions.

Occupational and professional standards are developed by representatives of both educational institutions and social partners through working groups organized by the Ministry of Education and Science. Occupational standards are confirmed by the National Tripartite Sub-council for co-operation in VET and employment and by the Minister of education and science.

Occupational standards comprise a description of specific tasks and employee duties as well as the abilities and skills necessary to carry out those tasks. The standard also determines to which level of professional qualification each specific profession corresponds. When developing educational programmes, educational institutions have to ensure the acquisition of all the abilities, skills and knowledge mentioned in the occupational standards. In December 2005, 338 occupation standards had been drafted and approved.

### 0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

With the adoption of the Law of Vocational Education in 1999, the system of vocational qualifications was created. The qualifications are closely related to general upper-secondary education and higher education. The introduction of centralized final examinations for vocational upper-secondary graduates ensures that everyone who obtains general upper-secondary education follows the same examinations and opportunities to enrol at higher education institutions.

As VET programmes only include a part of general upper-secondary education, special intermediate programmes are available to VET graduates, so that they can enrol at higher education institutions.

Since professional training is based on whole programmes, the possibilities to change mid-course are limited.

### 0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

VET programme curricula are developed by education establishments (based on guidelines developed by Vocational Education Centre (*Profesionalas izglitibas centrs, PIC*) and based on 2 different standards:

- national vocational education standards are developed by the Ministry of Education and Science and adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers. Standards determine strategic objectives of education programmes, compulsory contents of education, basic principles and the assessment procedure in accordance with the level of education. The standards determine the relation of theory to practice, the general subjects versus professional ones and the distribution of general subjects.
- Occupational standards determine basic requirements of vocational qualifications, as well as specific demands for performing the tasks in a given profession. The standard

is developed based on a common agreement among employers, trade unions and national and local government as well as institutions involved in vocational education and employment.

Vocational education programme curricula define:

- objectives of the VET programme;
- content of the VET programme;
- implementation plan for the VET programme;
- enrolment requirements;
- financial, personnel and material resources necessary for implementing the programme.

Obligatory subjects in VET programmes include Latvian, foreign language, computer science, history, and business foundations. VET programmes are evaluated by the Vocational Education Centre. In 2000/2005 the centre evaluated 2 620 programmes.

## **08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING**

### **0801 - VALIDATION OF FORMAL LEARNING: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SCHEMES**

Validation processes are regulated by an order from the Cabinet of Ministers Nr. 339 from 2001 "Procedure for the issue documents certifying to professional education and professional qualifications and certifying to the acquisition of part of a accredited programme of professional education" (*Latvijas Republikas Ministru kabineta noteikumi Nr. 339. Kartiba, kada izsniedzami valsts atzitu profesionalo izglitiba un profesionalo kvalifikaciju apliecinoši dokumenti un dokumenti par akreditetas profesionalas izglitibas programmas dalas apguvi*). This stipulates that state-recognized documents certifying vocational qualifications are awarded for the completion of an accredited programme. Qualifications are issued by the training provider.

To gain a qualification, students must fulfil all the requirements of the educational standard, i.e. to receive a grade in all the subjects, practical studies and practical placement and pass a qualification examination with a grade no lower than 5 "satisfactory."

The Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers from 2000 "Regulations on professional qualifications that are acquired by passing centralized professional qualification examinations" (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of 7<sup>th</sup> November 2000 No. 383 "Terms for Professional Qualifications, which are Subject to Centralized Professional Qualification Examinations" - *Latvijas Republikas Ministru kabineta noteikumi Nr. 383. Noteikumi par profesionalajam kvalifikacijam, kuras iegustot kartojami centralizetie profesionalas kvalifikācijas eksameni*) stipulate that in the majority of cases, to obtain a third level professional qualification the student has to take centralized professional qualification examinations. The content of exams is developed by the Vocational Education Centre under the Ministry of Education and Science with the assistance of the social partners who are usually heads of the examination commission. Students usually take them at learning and examination centres, and they ensure that everyone who obtains a qualification are tested and evaluated using the same methods.

Graduates receiving a state-recognized document certifying a vocational qualification may work in the profession. If the profession is regulated (e.g. as with building workers and people working in medicine), the qualification holder may work only under the supervision of a certified specialist. To obtain independent practice rights, it is necessary to work under supervision of a certified specialist for 2-5 years and then to receive a certificate issued by the relevant competent institution (usually a professional association). The certification exam developed by professional associations usually tests the applicant's capabilities to apply his abilities and skills in practice.

## **0802 - VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING**

There is no legislation regulating the recognition of non-formal education. Each educational institution that provides non-formal educational programmes determines the conditions for issuing certificates. Employers determine whether this document of non-formal education is sufficient to occupy a certain position, or not. Professional associations organizing continuing education of employees choose themselves which non-formal educational programmes are recognized.

Employers can also choose and determine which non-formal educational programmes to recognize. Larger enterprises have staff training plans in which it is stated which non-formal educational programmes the particular specialist has to master.

Non-formal education is not recognized in formal education.

## **09 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT**

### **0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION**

The Ministries of Education and Science (*Izglitības un zinātnes ministrija, IZM*), and Welfare (*Labklājības ministrija*) are responsible for career guidance and counselling. The Concept of career guidance in the Republic of Latvia (adopted on 15.11.1994) determines the goals of guidance and counselling. The Ministry of Welfare's policy is realized by the Professional Career Counselling State Agency (*Profesionālas karjeras izveles valsts aģentūra, PKIVA*) which is under their supervision and which operates in accordance with the Law on Social Security (adopted on 09.05.1995) and the Law on the Support for the Unemployed and Job Seekers (adopted on 09.05.2002), which states:

"Measures for reducing unemployment include guidance and counselling and consulting services, which are offered to those wishing to pursue education or who are working or wish to do participate in remunerated work; the aim is to promote the competitiveness of these people in the labour market and to offer help in the choice of a professional career.

The clients of the Professional Career Counselling State Agency (*Profesionālas karjeras izveles valsts aģentūra, PKIVA*) receive the following services:

- individual and group consultations on career and educational choices and professional suitability;
- individual consultations on employment related questions;
- workshops for young people and adults on career development and questions on seeking employment;
- consultations on educational opportunities in Latvia and abroad.

The Professional Career Counselling State Agency (*Profesionalas karjeras izveles valsts agentura, PKIVA*) was created in 1987; in 2002 it had consultation rooms in 20 districts in Latvia and a mobile consultation group.

The Law of Education (*Izglitibas likums*) adopted on 17.11.1998 stipulates that district local governments ensure the provision of guidance and counselling for children and young adults while the Law of Vocational Education (*Profesionalas izglitibas likums*) adopted on 30.06.1999 stipulates that the Ministry of Education and Science (*Izglitibas un zinatnes ministrija, IZM*), organizes guidance and counselling for unemployed people and for labour market research. In 2000 the Ministry of Education and Science through the Agency for Vocational Education development (*Profesionalas izglitibas attistibas agentura, PIAA*) created the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance (*Profesionalas orientacijas informacijas centrs, POIC*), which provides information on vocational education in Latvia and other EU countries. The Centre is partly financed by the Ministry and partly by the EU Leonardo da Vinci programme. It collaborates with similar organizations in Europe, together forming the "Euroguidance Network."

#### **0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY**

Professional Career Counselling State Agency (*Profesionalas karjeras izveles valsts agentura, PKIVA*) is a state institution under supervision of the Ministry of Welfare. It offers career counselling for all: young people about to choose a career; adults – whether currently employed, unemployed or returning to the labour market; disabled people; parents; and educators. The PCCSA offers not only individual but group consultations and seminars. The total number of people who used the service in 2004 is 38 399. In comparison to 2003 (see table), the number increase by 5.5% (PCCSA 2004 work overview - Riga, 2005).

<b>Table 1: The total number of people who used the service in 2004 is 38 399. In comparison to 2003</b>		
<b>NUMBER OF PEOPLE CONSULTING PCCSA</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE COUNSELLED IN QUESTIONS ON VOCATIONAL CHOICES</b>	36 406	38 399
<b>OF WHICH BY TARGET GROUP:</b>		
<b>UNEMPLOYED PERSONS AND JOB SEEKERS WHO ARE REGISTERED AT THE EMPLOYMENT STATE AGENCY</b>	4 410	8 445
<b>OTHER PERSONS, OF WHICH:</b>	31 996	29 954
<b>ANYONE WHO STUDIES</b>	26 994	24 853
<b>UNEMPLOYED PERSONS AND JOB SEEKERS</b>	1 276	837
<b>EMPLOYEES</b>	2 258	2 754
<b>PARENTS OF STUDENTS</b>	1 468	1 510
<b>SPECIALISTS (EDUCATORS)</b>	-	644
<b>OF WHICH BY SOCIAL EXCLUSION RISK GROUPS:</b>		
<b>PERSONS AFTER CHILD-CARE LEAVE</b>	118	692

<b>PERSONS AFTER RELEASE FROM PRISON</b>	40	16
<b>PRE-RETIREMENT AGE PERSONS</b>	145	396
<b>DISABLED PERSONS</b>	297	446

Source: PCCSA 2004 work overview - Riga, 2005

Various counselling methods are used:

- individual consultation in questions on education, profession choices and career planning;
- group consultations for determining the optimal vocational field;
- consultation on educational possibilities;
- consultation on the content of a profession;
- determining the professionally important qualities, skills, individual characteristics, etc.;
- workshops - for young adults "You and your career";
- workshops - for job seekers "How to find a job";
- consultations in improving methods for job search and CV-writing.

### **0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL**

The total number of employees in the Professional Career Counselling State Agency (*Profesionalas karjeras izveles valsts agentura, PKIVA*) in 2004 was 75. The total number of vocational and career guidance consultants is 37 (3 are men and 34 women with an average age of 36 in 2003). The requirement for working at the PCCSA is higher education in psychology (academic or vocational - the duration of the education 4-5 years) but higher pedagogical education is also acceptable.

## **10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING**

The Development Plan 2004/2006, adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers (*Ministru Kabinets, MK*) on 18.03.2003 envisages the following measures in the framework of the priority "Promoting the development of human resources and employment"

- Promoting employment (43% of the total financing of priorities is allocated to this priority);
- The development of education and continuing education (38%);
- Reducing social exclusion (19%).

As in many other countries, the primary aims with respect to financing training are to increase its cost-effectiveness. Nevertheless funding has been on the increase with additional funding being allocated in 2003 (approximately LVL 13 million or € 18.5 million) and 2004/2005 (LVL 17 million or € 24 million). The largest share of the funding is intended for higher education. Funding allocated to education increase from year to year, but actual amounts remain insufficient.

Expenses per student (calculating in PPS units in €) in Latvia in 1999 were very low. In upper-secondary education, they were € 1 600 in Latvia (compared to 5 900 in the EU) and € 1 900 in higher education (compared to 8 800 in the EU Eurostat, Key Data on Education in Europe, Luxembourg, 2002).

Funding for vocational education and training (except higher education) in 1999 and 2000 were approximately 0.7% of GDP which is not sufficient to promote development. Compared to previous years, there has been an increase in funding through increases in teacher salaries. In 2001, 97% of funding was intended for recurrent funding and only 3% for capital investment.

### **1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Initial vocational education and training (IVET) is financed according Law of Education (*Izglitibas likums*), Law of Vocational Education (*Profesionalas izglitibas likums*), and Regulations of Cabinet of Ministers (*Ministru Kabineta Noteikumi*) in Latvia.

Subsidies come from the state general budget, local government and private sources. Amount of state subsidies determine Cabinet of Ministers in conformity with number of educated persons and minimal educational cost per one educated person. Education establishments make an inquiry for fund every year. After the state budget confirmation school receive funding and spent it to realise their educational programmes accordingly the legislation.

As the majority of VET schools are state-owned and run, the national budget is the main source of funding. The overall budget for VET schools (LVL 30.2 million or € 43 million in 2000) comprised 85% of subsidies from the state general budget (LVL 25.6 million or € 36.4 million) and by 15% of their own income (paid services provided by VET institutions, amounting LVL 4.6 million or € 6.5 million).

In 2001, 97% (96% in 2000) of funds allocated to VET schools were for recurrent costs and just 3% (4% in 2000) towards capital investment. Staff costs account for the bulk of the current expenditure (75%).

Table 1: Annual public funding for VET institutions						
		1999	2000	2001	2002	2004
<b>PUBLIC EXPENDITURE FOR IVET (% OF GDP)</b>		0.7	0.7	no data provided	no data provided	no data provided
<b>SUBSIDIES FROM GENERAL REVENUE</b>	<b>LVL</b>	25.3 million	25.6 million	26.9 million	29.6 million	32.5 million
	<b>€</b>	39.8 million	45.8 million	47.8 million	50.8 million	46.2 million
<b>SELF EARNED INCOME</b>	<b>LVL</b>	4.9 million	4.6 million	-	-	4.1 million
	<b>€</b>	7.7 million	8.3 million	-	-	5.8 million

Source: MoES

### **1003 - FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING**

There is no precise data on total investment in CVET in Latvia. While funding from the state budget can be assessed, other sources are not so easy.

#### **PUBLICLY PROVIDED CVET: ADULT EDUCATION**

According to data available from the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (*Latvijas Republikas Centrālā statistikas pārvalde, CSP*), annual state budget expenditure on adult education institutions have decreased. There are several sources of funding for adult education: participant's fees, employer investment, investment of non-governmental organizations, payments from local governments and state budgets.

Table 1: Funding of adult education institutions (including funding for the education and re-qualification of the unemployed and officer training), thousand LVL (thousand €)							
		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL FUNDING</b>	<b>LVL</b>	11 568.9	10 629.4	12 987.3	10 563.2	11 593.3	14 888.8
	<b>€</b>	16 461.16	15 124.36	18 479.37	15 030.17	16 495.87	21 184.97
<b>OF WHICH:</b>							
<b>FROM THE STATE BUDGET</b>	<b>LVL</b>	5 545.2	4 763.7	5 509.5	3 065.1	3 526.4	2 952.1
	<b>€</b>	7 892.15	6 778.17	7 839.36	4 361.27	5 017.64	4 200.48
<b>FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' BUDGET</b>	<b>LVL</b>	393.5	415.9	455.6	482.4	292.7	603.6
	<b>€</b>	559.90	591.78	648.26	636.40	416.48	858.85
<b>PARTICIPANTS' FEE</b>	<b>LVL</b>	2 633.3	2 659.4	2 298.0	2 700.5	3 233.6	5 254.6
	<b>€</b>	3 746.87	3 784.00	3 269.78	3 842.49	4 601.03	7 776.66
<b>FEES PAID BY ENTERPRISES AND ORGANISATIONS FOR THE TRAINING OF THEIR EMPLOYEES</b>	<b>LVL</b>	2 836.9	2 581.8	2 798.2	3 313.1	3 995.4	5 328.2
	<b>€</b>	4 036.57	3 673.59	3 981.50	4 714.14	5 684.97	7 581.39
<b>OTHER SOURCES</b>	<b>LVL</b>	160.0	208.6	1 926.0	1 002.1	545.2	750.3
	<b>€</b>	227.66	296.81	2 740.77	1 425.88	775.75	1 067.59

Source: CSB data, 2005

State funding for adult education (including some training for unemployed people) has decreased by 15% in the time period between the school year 1999/2000 and 2000/2001. The increased funding from the local governments could not compensate this decrease. Some local governments allocate a concrete percentage from the budget to adult education.

### CVET IN ENTERPRISES

According to Eurostat data (Continuing Vocational Training Survey 1999), the total expenditure on vocational training courses for employees was 1.1% of total labour expenses in all the enterprises in Latvia, which is less than in many other EU countries. It corresponds to the average figure in the EU newer Member States which is 1.2%.

Direct expenditure on vocational training for employees was LVL 16.9 million (€ 24 million), or LVL 86 (€ 122) per employee in those enterprises that offered training. Labour expenses for participants in training courses (indirect expenditure) during their attendance were LVL 8.1 million (€ 11.5 million). Total expenditure on vocational training for employees constituted LVL 2.5 million (€ 2.8 million) or 1.1% of total labour expenditure in all enterprises. Average expenditure per participant are high in Latvia (€ 324), of the 10 new Member States the expenses are higher only in Hungary (€ 505), Estonia (€ 428) and Slovenia (€ 333).

The tax system does not promote employer investment in training. Only approximately 4% of enterprises have a training budget and vocational training is mainly available only in large and economically stable enterprises. These enterprises usually have enough funds as well as a human resource development strategy, some also have their own training centres.

<b>Table 2: Cost of CVT courses as % of total labour cost (all enterprises), by type of cost (1999)</b>			
	<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>DIRECT COSTS</b>	<b>LABOUR COSTS OF PARTICIPANTS</b>
<b>EU-15</b>	2.3	1.4	0.8
<b>BELGIUM</b>	1.6	0.6	0.9
<b>DENMARK</b>	3.0	1.7	1.4
<b>GERMANY</b>	1.5	0.9	0.7
<b>GREECE</b>	0.9	0.4	0.5
<b>SPAIN</b>	1.5	0.5	0.9
<b>FRANCE</b>	2.4	1.0	1.2
<b>IRELAND</b>	2.4	1.5	1.0
<b>ITALY</b>	1.7	1.2	0.6
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	1.9	1.0	1.0
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	2.8	1.7	1.1
<b>AUSTRIA</b>	1.3	0.8	0.5
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	1.2	0.7	0.6
<b>FINLAND</b>	2.4	1.3	1.1
<b>SWEDEN</b>	2.8	1.6	1.3
<b>UK</b>	3.6	2.8	0.8
<b>ICELAND</b>	:	:	:
<b>NORWAY</b>	2.3	1.4	0.9
<b>CYPRUS</b>	:	:	:
<b>CZECH REPUBLIC</b>	1.9	1.2	0.7
<b>ESTONIA</b>	1.8	1.3	0.5
<b>HUNGARY</b>	1.2	0.5	0.4
<b>LITHUANIA</b>	0.8	0.5	0.3
<b>LATVIA</b>	1.1	0.8	0.4
<b>MALTA</b>	:	:	:

<b>POLAND</b>	0.8	0.5	0.3
<b>SLOVAK REPUBLIC</b>	:	:	:
<b>SLOVENIA</b>	1.3	0.8	0.5

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, 2<sup>nd</sup> continuing vocational training survey in enterprises (CVTS).

Direct costs: costs of CVT courses.

Total costs: sum of direct costs, staff time costs and balance of contributions to national or regional training funds and receipts from national or other funding arrangements

Cyprus, Malta, Slovakia and Iceland are not covered by CVTS.

Smaller enterprises tend not to invest so much in training this is partly due to their primary aim to survive in the market whereby investment in human resources takes a lower priority.

#### **1004 - FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET**

Although education funding constitutes a considerable share of GDP, expenditure on training for unemployed people remains low. In 2000 it was 0.25% of the GDP, in 2001 - 0.22% and in 2002 - 0.16%. Active employment measures are financed from the basic state budget (labour market administration (0.12% of the GDP) which also funds the State Employment Service as well as the mechanisms for labour protection and the implementation of labour law and the special employment budget (in 2002 0.04% of the GDP were allocated to training, guidance counselling and increasing the competitiveness of the unemployed, but 0.4% of the GDP - to unemployment benefit). A special budget for social security comprises obligatory payments. In 1999 a new law was adopted "On insurance for cases of unemployment" which stipulates that unemployment insurance services are financed from the State social insurance special budget. From 2002 the funds from the social insurance budget are used for financing active employment measures but no more than by 10% from the annual total budget.

The main institution for implementing labour market policy and programmes for unemployed people is the State Employment Service, formed in 1992. The service was reorganised in 1999 into a public corporation under the Ministry of Welfare and became the State Employment Agency in 2003. It remains a governmental organisation funded by the state but operates independently.

The State Employment Agency is financed from the State base budget, income from the provision of services, gifts and donations, as well as from other resources in accordance with regulatory enactments.

Since 2002, a specialised employment budget is used for financing active employment measures – up to 10% of the budget can be used for such measures. With the new Law to Support Unemployed people and Jobseekers, the range of clients of the State Employment Agency (*Nodarbinatibas valsts agentura*) has been broadened nevertheless the funding has not been increased. In 2003 approximately 72% of the total funds spent on the labour market were used for passive measures (benefits), 24% were envisaged for active employment measures (including the State Employment service/ State Employment Agency funding), 3.3% - for the labour protection and labour market legislation and 0.7% preventive measures (guidance and counselling).

## **1005 - PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES: FROM FUNDING TO INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES**

The National Lisbon Programme of Latvia for 2005/2008 (*Latvijas nacionāla Lisabonas programma 2005/2008 gadam*), is geared towards promoting growth and employment. The measures planned to expand and improve investment in human capital (guideline 23) are:

- To improve the ability of the education and training system and students to adapt to changing labour market requirements, through:
  - balancing the number of students in general and vocational education programmes taking into account the results of long-term forecasts of the labour market;
  - modernise vocational education establishments (2005/2007) with total state and EU funds financing LVL 5.6 million (€ 8 million);
  - modernise the practical vocational training system in economic sectors important to regions in the context of the PHARE 2003 National Programme “Economic and social cohesion measures in Latvia” with the state budget financing of 0.4 million LVL (€ 0.57 million) and EU financing of LVL 1.3 million (€ 1.85 million);
- To improve availability of education at all levels and to reduce the number of students expelled from educational establishments;
- To increase the availability of higher education and improve its conformity with labour market needs;
- To develop a lifelong learning strategy (2005/2007) with EU funds financing to the amount of LVL 0.7 million (€ 1 million).

Other measures funded within the programme under different guidelines but related to financing include:

- Implementing a procedure to regularly analyse the use of government resources and to assess the volume and results of the resources used (under guideline 24).
- Financing grants for students and staff to participate in mobility programmes (Socrates and Erasmus).
- Investing more in the provision of guidance and counselling services.
- Ensuring easier access to training for socially excluded groups (e.g. through investing more in distance learning provision as well as investing in more rehabilitation programmes).

## **11 - EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING**

### **1101 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO POLICY PRIORITIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL**

Accordingly with the National Lisbon Programme for 2005/2008 (*Latvijas nacionālā Lisabonas programma 2005/2008 gadam*), the system of vocational education must ensure that knowledge and skills acquired in Latvia and abroad are comparable and that graduates of VET in Latvia have the opportunity to continue their education abroad and compete in the international labour market.

The priority tasks for the government include:

- continue improving educational programmes in accordance with labour market needs;
- improve the quality assessment system;
- continue wage reform and increase teaching staff to maintain current levels, as well as to encourage further education opportunities for teachers including in international educational activities;
- increase opportunities for student mobility to improve education and acquisition of particular professions;
- ensure co-operation between science, higher education and business, which would ensure a faster transfer of innovations into production;
- ensure high-quality comprehensive services of vocational guidance and counselling;
- apply services of the State Employment Agency (*Nodarbinātības valsts aģentūra, NVA*) and the Social Integration Centre to various population groups with special educational needs.

A lifelong learning system that would provide opportunities for the population to adapt a changing labour market has not yet been created. Various measures should be taken by the Ministries of Education and Science (*Izglitibas un zinatnes ministrija*) and of Welfare (*Labklajibas ministrija*) with the EU funding of € 1 million (LVL 0.7 million) including: the improvement of vocational guidance and conducting more labour market studies.

### **1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Latvia has taken part in the Leonardo da Vinci programme since 1998.

<b>Table 1: The number of mobility projects in Latvia 2000/2004</b>					
<b>PROJECT FORM</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
<b>PUPIL MOBILITY</b>	13	12	17	18	22
<b>STUDENT MOBILITY</b>	2	6	4	6	4
<b>NEW EMPLOYEES' MOBILITY</b>	7	8	9	9	13
<b>MOBILITY OF HUMAN RESOURCES, THE LEADERS AND PLANNERS OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION</b>	22	27	27	30	39
<b>MOBILITY LANGUAGE PROJECTS</b>	10	3	6	2	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>84</b>

Source: Agency for Vocational Education development (*Profesionalas izglitibas attistibas agentura, PIAA*), Leonardo da Vinci II programme

<b>Table 2: Total number of participants in the Leonardo da Vinci mobility projects</b>						
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	322	301	373	343	543	1 882

Source: Agency for Vocational Education development (*Profesionalas izglitibas attistibas agentura, PIAA*), Leonardo da Vinci II programme

Latvian people can participate in vocational education and training abroad. In 2001 a law "On the recognition of regulated professions and professional qualification" (*"Par reglamentetajam profesijam un profesionalas kvalifikācijas atzīšanu"*) was adopted that determines the procedure for the recognition of vocational qualifications in regulated professions obtained in foreign countries (not only in EU countries).

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### **Web sites**

Academic Programme Agency - <http://www.apa.lv>

Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre - <http://www.aiknc.lv>

The Information network on education in Europe - <http://www.eurydice.org>

The Latvian Education Informatization System (LIIS) - <http://www.liis.lv>

Latvian Adult Education Association - [www.laea.lv](http://www.laea.lv)

Latvian Academic Information centre and Latvian National Observatory - <http://www.aic.lv>

Latvian Chamber of Crafts - <http://www.lak.lv>

Agency for Vocational Education development (PIAA) - <http://www.piaa.gov.lv>

Ministry of Education and Science - <http://www.izm.gov.lv>

National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance of Latvia  
<http://piaa.gov.lv/Euroguidance>

Professional Career Counselling State Agency <http://www.karjerascentrs.lv/>

Riga Technical University – <http://www.rtu.lv>

State Employment Agency (NVA) - <http://www.nva.lv>

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<http://www.izmpic.lv>

University of Latvia – <http://www.lu.lv>