

Slovakia

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

2007

eKnowVet – Thematic Overviews

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Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in Slovakia. 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 vocational education and training
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults
6. Training VET teachers and trainers
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy
8. Accumulating, transferring and validating learning
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: the reference year of this report is, 2006. Later editions can be viewed from December 2008 onwards at: 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:

Slovakia

THEMATIC OVERVIEWS



Slovakia

01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Established on 1st January 1993 after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, Slovakia is a parliamentary democracy with a one-chamber parliament of 150 members elected for four-year terms. Political parties are allotted seats according to the percentage of votes they receive in direct elections. The president, elected for a five-year term by a two-round popular vote, is the head of state with no substantial executive powers. Slovakia is a member of the OECD (2000), NATO and EU (both in 2004). The country is composed of 8 state administration and self-governing regions. Despite solid economic growth, Slovakia in long terms fights with high unemployment (16.3% in 2005, Eurostat LFS) and low employment rates (57.7 % in 2005, Eurostat LFS). Medium-term macroeconomic forecasts are very positive, very high GDP growth and further decrease in unemployment is expected. A part of the Roma minority living in segregated settlements remains however at high risk of social exclusion.

0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The country has an area of 49 034 km² with 5 379 455 inhabitants and a population density of 110 inhabitants per km² (Census, 26th May 2001). A total of 55% of the population lives in urban areas and 45% in rural areas. Since the beginning of the 1990s, Slovakia has experienced a huge decrease in birth rate and an ageing of the population. Live births declined from 80 116 in 1989 to 50 841 in 2002, followed by slight year-on-year increase to 54 430 in 2005. Per capita financing introduced in 2004 is aimed at forcing the merging and closing of schools with low enrolments. A demographic trend broken down by age groups indicates the need for further restructuring of school networks.

Table 1: Age-specific demographic trends by age groups until 2025

	TOTAL	0-24			25-59			60+	
		TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE
2010	5 400 780	1 550 585	792 807	757 778	2 854 281	1 426 066	1 428 215	2 854 281	399 000
2010(%)	100	28.71	14.68	14.03	52.85	26.40	26.44	52.85	7.3
2025	5 396 429	1 285 728	657 658	628 070	2 703 833	1 364 049	1 339 784	1 406 868	592 200
2025(%)	100	23.83	12.19	11.64	50.10	25.28	24.83	26.07	10.9
2005*	5 387 285	1 768 809	904 480	864 329	2 750 524	1 369 431	1 381 093	867 952	341 000

2005* (%)	100	32.83	16.79	16.04	51.06	25.42	25.64	16.11	6.3
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Source: INFOSTAT Demographic prognosis 2002 (medium scenario)

* Mid-year population (2006 Statistical Yearbook of the Slovak Republic)

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

Despite the decrease of employment in agriculture (10.2 % in 1994) and growth in the service sector (50.1 % in 1994), Slovakia is still characterised by a strong emphasis on industry.

Table 1: Employed by sectors (in thousands of people)

NACE CATEGORY	2003		2004		2005	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
AGRICULTURE INCLUSIVE FISHING (A+B)	125.3	5.8	109.8	5.1	105.1	4.7
INDUSTRY INCLUSIVE CONSTRUCTION (C-F)	829.0	38.3	846.6	39.0	858.9	38.8
SERVICE (G-O)	1 208.3	55.8	1 210	55.8	1 248.6	56.3
UNKNOWN	1.9	0.1	4.1	0.2	3.8	0.2
TOTAL EMPLOYED	2 164.6	100	2 170.4	100.0	2 216.2	100.0

Source: Statistical Office SR (ŠÚ, Štatistický úrad SR), LFS

In parallel to the increase of employment in manufacturing and construction a lack of graduates in appropriate number and structure is indicated in the automotive industry, electrical engineering and construction. In particular a boom in automotive industry results in the need for creation of 53 000 new jobs between 2006 and 2010, almost doubling 2005 data of 57 376 people employed in this sector, according to the Association of Automotive Industry (*Združenie automobilového priemyslu*). At the same time, there were 26 324 unemployed graduates as of September 2005, 14 866 as of May 2006 and 21 448 as of September 2006, according to data of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family (*ÚPSVaR, Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*).

The distribution of employed by level of education is visible from the following table (Table 2).

Table 2: Employed by level of education in 2004 and 2005 (in

thousands and %)

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	2004		2005	
	N	%	N	%
ISCED 1	110.3	5.1	102.6	4.6
ISCED 3C (CoA)	728.1	33.5	700.5	31.6
ISCED 3C (WITHOUT CoA)	48.7	2.2	55.8	2.5
ISCED 3A (MSLC) + CoA	111.9	5.2	115.5	5.2
ISCED 3A (MSLC) GEN	95.9	4.4	97.8	4.4
ISCED 3A (MSLC) VET	746.7	34.4	778.5	35.1
ISCED 5+	328.8	15.1	365.6	16.5
TOTAL	2170.4	100.00	2 216.2	100.0

Source: ŠÚ, LFS

Note: CoA – Certificate of Apprenticeship (*výučný list*), MSLC – “Maturita” School Leaving Certificate (*vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške*)

GEN - general education stream, VET vocational stream

In 2004, out of 2 170 400 persons aged 15-64 and employed in the national economy, 1 904 200 were employees (88%), of which 41.9 % in the public sector and 58.1% in the private sector. In 2005, employment increased and out of 2 216 200 employed persons, 1 929 100 (87%) were employees, of which 754 400 (39.1%) in the public sector and 1 174 700 (60.9%) in the private sector.

The employment rates however still lag far behind the EU 2010 targets. In 2005, total employment rate of population aged 15-64 was 57.7% (56.9% and 57.6% in 2004 and 2003), while the employment rate of women was 50.9% (50.9% and 52.2% in 2004 and 2003).

Table 3: Unemployment in 2003 - 2005

	UNEMPLOYED (4Q LFS)	DISPOSABLE REGISTERED UNEMPLOYED (31ST	REGISTERED UNEMPLOYED (31ST

			DECEMBER)		DECEMBER)	
	NUMBER	RATE (%)	NUMBER	RATE (%)	NUMBER	RATE (%)
2003	458 200	17.4	413 086	15.6	452 224	16.7
2004	455 100	17.1	342 294	13.1	383 155	14.6
2005	407 600	15.3	293801	11.4	333 834	12.9

Source: ŠÚ (LFS), ÚPSVaR

Despite a modest increase in employment, unemployment rates are in substantial decrease accompanied also by the decrease of persons receiving unemployment benefits. There were 42 028 beneficiaries in December 2004 in comparison to 100 427 in January 2004. In 2005, the average monthly number of benefits receivers decreased to 38 497 from 75 897 in 2004. The unemployment rates of women are slightly higher than rates of men. In 2005 it was 17.2% in comparison to total unemployment rate 16.3% (in 2004 it was 19.2% and 18.2 %, and in 2003 17.7% and 17.6%, respectively). The following weak points from 2005 LFS statistics are worth stressing: 101.3 thousand unemployed people have never been employed, 291.2 thousand were unemployed over one year. A long-term unemployment rate (12 months and more) was 11.7 % in 2005. Since 2000, it has been over 10% and worst among current EU27 countries. A very long-term unemployed rate (24 months and more) was 8.4%. Comparison to EU15 and EU27 (1.9% and 2.3%, respectively) indicates serious concerns.

Unemployment hits extraordinarily elderly and young people. Unemployment rate in age group 50-64 was 13,5% (6.8% and 6.3% in EU27 and EU15 respectively). Unemployment rate in age group 15-24 was 30.1% (18.7% and 16.7% in EU27 and EU15, respectively).

Despite a decrease in absolute numbers of youth unemployment (from 146 600 in 2002 to 95 500 in 2005) and a decrease of unemployment rate (from 37.7% to 30.1%), youth transition into the labour market remains a problem. The youth employment rate is constantly low (26.7%, 27.3%, 26.3%, 25.6% in 2002 to 2005, respectively). A decrease in absolute numbers of unemployed can be explained by the decrease in population (21 763 young people less) and boosted post-secondary education. Nevertheless, reinforcement of entrepreneurs' engagement in initial secondary VET, for long years indicated as a weak point of VET system in Slovakia, remains a hot issue, as documented by the contrast between 2005 youth employment rate in Slovakia and EU 27 (25.6% and 35.9%, respectively) and growing complaints concerning a lack of labour force in some blue-collar occupations.

According to the newest harmonised data (Eurostat 2003), the total public expenditure on education was 4.38% of the GDP, compared to 5.22% for EU25. Private expenditure on education was 0.46% of the GDP compared to 0.63% for EU25. Annual expenditure on public and private educational institutions per capita was 20.6 in contrast to 25.1 for EU25. In the ISCED 1 segment it was 15.4 compared to 19.7 for EU 25, in the ISCED 2-4 segment it was 18.3 compared to 25.9 for EU25, which was the third lowest, and in the ISCED 5-6 it was 35.7 compared to 36.7 for EU25.

The Ministry of Finance (MF, *Ministerstvo financií*) data illustrates a severe decrease in expenditure on education in % of the GDP from 4.75% in 1995 down to 4% in 2004, followed by a slight increase, however permanently below EU 25 average. No substantial improvement is indicated by the MF for 2007 and 2008.

Table 4: Expenditure on education* in % of GDP and in % of total public expenditures

	1995	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
% OF GDP	4.75	4.17	4.17	4.03	4.15	4.50
% OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE	9.76	9.70	9.90	10.00	10.58	10.80

Source: MF

* all expenditures of the government, of municipalities and self-governing regions, including private sources of regional schooling; expenditures of private higher education institutions are not included (they are not available)

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

Diagram of population in Slovakia (Age 25+) by level of education

Although Slovakia is among the EU leaders in the share of ISCED 3+ educated, the high share of ISCED 3C and the low share of ISCED 4+ levels indicate future risks for the implementation of a knowledge economy. In addition, only the Bratislava region is significantly better off.

Table 1: Highest achieved education level of 25+ aged in Slovakia and Bratislava region (%)

	ISCED 1+2	ISCED 3C	ISCED 3A-GENERAL	ISCED 3A-VOCATIONAL	ISCED 4,5,6	ISCED 0	No RESPONSE
SLOVAKIA	24.65	32.17	4.60	24.07	12.36	0.36	1.79
BRATISLAVA	14.97	25.08	6.59	25.45	25.74	0.11	2.06

Source: ŠÚ, Census 2001

A favourable low share of ISCED 0-2 educated population is confirmed by the low share of early school leavers aged 18-24 (4.9%, 7.1%, 5.8%, 6.4% according to LFS 2003 to 2006 data), which is significantly below the EU 25 data (15.1% in 2006). Although youth education attainment level is among best in Europe, with the share of population aged 20-24 having completed at least upper secondary education 91.3% and 91.5% in 2004 and 2005, respectively, the need for increasing the number of tertiary educated is very urgent.

Table 2: Educational attainment of the population aged 25-64 by ISCED level (%) in 2005

	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
EU 25 (%)	30	46	23
SLOVAKIA (%)	11	74	14
SLOVAKIA (ABSOLUTE NUMBERS IN 1000s)	340	2 230	433

Source: Eurostat, LFS

It is expected that with a decreasing number of population the share of enrolment in tertiary education will increase and that universities will accept more students also in absolute numbers in order to secure their financial sources. There were 50 508 new students enrolled in academic year 2004/2005, of which 32 934 in full-time and 17 574 in part-time studies, compared to 57 491 new students enrolled in the academic year 2005/2006, of which 36 196 in full-time and 21 295 in part-time studies. Nevertheless, it is important

- to prevent from softening the standards in part-time studies compared to full-time studies,
- to fight speculative enrolment in universities visible in severe dropping out predominantly at universities of technology,
- to offer signals for secondary schools graduates in order to prevent from mismatch in tertiary graduates and labour market needs,
- to diversify among higher education universities in order to offer more Bachelor studies adjusted to regional needs.

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

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

The key policy document approved by the government on 19th December 2001 and consequently passed by the parliament is the National Programme of Upbringing and Education in the Slovak Republic for the next 15 to 20 Years (*Národný program výchovy a vzdelávania v Slovenskej republike na najbližších 15 až 20 rokov*). Within Pillar No. 11 "Vocational Education and Lifelong Learning" out of a total of 12 pillars, lifelong learning and further development of VET is recognised as the highest priority.

A new law on education replacing 19 times amended law regulating regional schooling (originating from 1984) had been declared inevitable. Nevertheless, by the end of May 2007, the new law on education and the new law on lifelong learning were still under discussion and were not submitted to the government. Furthermore, voices for elaboration of a specific law on VET can be more and more heard from businesses. It must be stressed that VET/LLL issues were not addressed by concrete policies in

2002-2005 in contrast to rich declarative support (see Thematic overview 2006, section 0201). Although the year 2005 can be considered a turning point in policy planning and aligning national policies to European policies, there was finally no time for the government to implement planned measures. For detailed description of the VET related topic of the policy paper on the Competitiveness Strategy for the Slovak Republic until 2010: the National Lisbon Strategy (*Stratégia konkurencieschopnosti Slovenska do roku 2010: Národná Lisabonská stratégia*) adopted by the Government Resolution No. 140/2005 on 16th February 2005 and four action plans corresponding to four areas:

- Information society;
- Science, R&D and innovations;
- Education and employment;
- Business environment;

subsequently approved by the Government Resolution No. 557/2005 of 13th July 2005 see Thematic overview 2006, section 1101.

Thus, since 2006 as visible from priorities and plan of legislative tasks of the Ministry of Education a turning point has been again expected. The manifesto of the new government (see also CEDEFOP 1/2007 "A time of reform - but will Pericles' message be heeded?") was adopted by the parliament on 4th August 2006. In this manifesto, the government committed itself, among other things, to raising the salaries of teachers, providing multi-source financing for education, and making the management of the education system more efficient. With regard to vocational training, the new government also committed itself to coordinating VET and the labour market, creating new fields of studies, and supporting a continuum of education and training programmes. Based on this manifesto, the Ministry of Education has set the following VET related priorities for 2007:

- the establishment of a two-level model of educational programmes in VET;
- the creation of a system of coordination of vocational education for the labour market;
- the elaboration of a proposal for criteria for the participation of employers' and employees' associations in vocational education;
- continuous and permanent cooperation between employers' and employees' associations, professional guilds, and the central bodies of state and local administration for the implementation of new study and training branches.

The first task which is a precondition a curricular reform strengthening a curricular autonomy of schools a which should allow for more consequent transformation towards modularisation and competence based programming was adopted by the government on 6th June 2007. The second task was fulfilled by approval of respective document by the Ministry of Education on 13th March 2007. Other two tasks are still under discussion after rejection at the level of advisory body of the Ministry of Education. The most sensitive point that causes controversy is the form of fiscal incentives for involvement of employers in VET/LLL.

On the other hand there were three important documents with impact on VET successfully adopted:

- The Draft Concept Paper for the Professional Development of Teachers in a Career System (*Koncepcia*

profesijného rozvoja učiteľov v kariérovom systéme) was adopted by the government on 18th April 2007 with ambitious investment in continuing professional development of pedagogical staff as well as an increase of their wages. Following this, the new act is to be prepared by the end of 2007 (see also Cedefop Info 2/2007 Improving the status of teachers is proving costly);

- The Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance and Counselling (*Stratégia celoživotného vzdelávania a celoživotného poradenstva*) was adopted by the government on 25th April 2007. Subsequently, respective law should be prepared by the end of year;
- The Concept of the Pedagogical and Psychological Guidance System and its Implementation into the Practice (*Koncepcia pedagogicko-psychologického poradenského systému a jeho implementácie do praxe*) was adopted on 21st March 2007 stressing importance of career guidance and counselling that should complement for long-year existing systems of educational and psychological counselling.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family (*MPSVR, Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) has reflected many VET related topics within the national action plans of employment 2002 -2003 and 2004-2006.

The National Action Plan of Employment for 2004 –2006 (*NAPE0406, Národný akčný plán zamestnanosti na roky 2004-2006*) explicitly mentioned recommendations on “investing more and more effectively in human capital and lifelong learning” and in response to Employment Guideline 4 “Promote development of human capital and lifelong learning” 12 measures were identified (see Thematic Overview 2006, section 0201), among which the following one is of particular importance

- provision of incentives to employers (financial, tax relief, etc.) who co-operate with universities in planning study programmes and who assist in provision of links to practice.

This kind of measures are still not set and the discussion among experts indicates that policy makers are still far from reaching decision, in particular on changes in tax policy to stimulate investment in VET/LLL regardless the type of school and/or type of learning setting.

The currently most coherent policy paper is the National reform programme of the Slovak republic 2006 – 2008 reflecting both the aforementioned Competitiveness Strategy for the Slovak Republic until 2010: the National Lisbon Strategy and the Integrated guidelines for growth and jobs of the EU economic policy adopted by the Government decision No797/2005 of 12th October 2005. For description see Thematic Overview 2006, section 1101 and for further development see 1101 in this report.

03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

0301 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

IVET

According to § 42(2) of the Constitution of SR (*Ústava SR*), citizens have the right to free primary and secondary education, including secondary VET schools and if possible (“depending on the potential of the society”) also tertiary education. Non-state (non-public) schools are entitled by the Constitution to collect tuition fees.

Here is the list of fundamental laws regulating IVET:

- School Act No. 29/1984 Coll. (*Zákon č. 29/1984 Zb. o sústave základných a stredných škôl (školský zákon)*),

substantially amended by Act No. 171/1990, lastly amended by Act No. 365/2004; this law defines fundamentals of the education system, in particular primary and secondary schools and a set of decrees and other bylaws specifying details.

- Act No. 279/1993 Coll. on School Establishments (*Zákon č. 279/1993 Z.z. o školských zariadeniach*), lastly amended by Act No. 596/2003; this law specifies details concerning diverse establishments offering services for the education sector or offering education and training, however, considered “non schools” from the legislative point of view among which centres of practical training and centres of vocational practice are VET relevant.
- Act No. 596/2003 Coll. on State Administration in Education and School Self-government (*Zákon č. 596/2003 Z.z. o štátnej správe v školstve a školskej samospráve*) lastly amended by Act No. 689/2006; this law regulates in detail procedure of establishing schools and school establishments, status of their managers, management of schools by local/regional and national authorities (state, public, self-governing, including specific self-governing bodies at schools and regions), supervision of schools and school establishments, etc.
- Act No. 597/2003 Coll. on Financing Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and School Establishments (*Zákon č. 597/2003 Z.z. o financovaní základných škôl, stredných škôl a školských zariadení*), lastly amended by Act No. 689/2006; this law and respective bylaws specify financing schools and school establishments on per capita principle (see 1002). Since January 2004 all primary and secondary schools receive equal per capita funding from the state budget regardless of their status in order to encourage the establishment of non-state schools.
- Higher Education Act No. 131/2002 (*Zákon č. 131/2002 Z.z. o vysokých školách*), lastly amended by Act No. 538/2005; this law with respective bylaws is fundamental for tertiary education. It also regulates financing. Tertiary education is free of charge in public universities; however it will be possible to collect fees for part time studies also in public universities since 2008. Private higher education institutions collect fees, and in addition they were supported by ad hoc contribution from the state budget to facilitate their start. No subsidy from the state budget is envisaged since 2008.

CVET

Here is the list of relevant legislation regulating CVET:

- Act No. 386/1997 Coll. on Further Education (*Zákon č. 386/1997 Z.z. o ďalšom vzdelávaní*), lastly amended by Act No. 365/2004 contains classification of institutions providing CVET, training activities, accreditation and certification rules. It also identifies sources of financing CVET, however only in a declaratory form, without any measures to provide for mandatory public or private financing CVET.

- Act No. 311/2001 Coll. of the Labour Code (*Zákon č. 311/2001 Z. z. Zákonník práce v znení neskorších predpisov*) regulates employers' and employees' responsibilities for upgrading skills (§§).
- Act No. 455/1991 Coll. on Trade Licensing (the "Trades Licensing Act"), lastly amended by Act No. 126/2006 Coll. (*Zákon č. 455/1991 Zb. o živnostenskom podnikaní (živnostenský zákon)*) regulates trades. It indirectly stipulates that the provision of continuing training is a free trade, i.e. no professional qualification is requested when registering (unless the trade is explicitly listed in the law and qualification of trader explicitly required).

Establishment of private CVET providers can be based on the following acts:

- Act No. 513/1991 Coll. Trade Code as amended (*Zákon č. 513/1991 Zb. Obchodný zákonník*),
- Act No. 34/2002 Coll. on Foundations (*Zákon č. 34/2002 Z. z. o nadáciách*),
- Act No. 83/1990 Coll. on Associations of Citizens (*Zákon č. 83/1990 Zb. o združovaní občanov*), and
- Act No. 455/1991 Coll. on Trade Licensing as amended (*Zákon č. 455/1991 Zb. o živnostenskom podnikaní v znení neskorších predpisov*).

The following are additional norms relevant for financial management of IVET and CVET providing public institutions:

- Act No. 303/1995 Coll. on Budgetary Rules (*Zákon č. 303/1995 Z.z. o rozpočtových pravidlách*), last amendment by Act No. 609/2003;
- Act No. 523/2004 Coll. on Budgetary Rules in Public Administration (*Zákon č. 523/2004 Z.z. o rozpočtových pravidlách verejnej správy*), last amendment by Act No. 527/2006;
- Act No. 583/2004 Coll on Budgetary Rules in territorial self-government (*Zákon č. 583/2004 Z.z. o rozpočtových pravidlách územnej samosprávy*), amended by Act No. 611/2005;
- Act No. 291/2002 Coll. on the State Treasury (*Zákon č. 291/2002 Z.z. o štátnej pokladnici*), last amendment by Act No. 198/2007;

Furthermore, there are four fundamental laws stipulating qualification requirements and/or the responsibility of employers to improve qualification of employees:

- Act No. 312/2001 Coll. with regard to state service (*Zákon č. 312/2001 Z.z. o štátnej službe*);
- Act No. 553/2003 Coll. with regard to public service (*Zákon č. 553/2003 Z.z. o odmeňovaní niektorých zamestnancov pri výkone práce vo verejnom záujme a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov*);
- Act No. 311/2001 Coll. of the Labour Code, already mentioned above;

- Act No. 455/1991 Coll. on Trade Licensing (the “Trades Licensing Act”), already mentioned above

The full list of all legislative norms of the education sector, e.g. the Decree of the Ministry of Education No. 41/1996 Coll. on Professional and Educational Competence of the Educational Staff (*Vyhláška Ministerstva školstva č. 41/1996 Z.z. o odbornej a pedagogickej spôsobilosti pedagogických zamestnancov*), containing dozens of decrees and other regulations is available in Slovak at <http://www.minedu.sk/index.php?lang=sk&rootId=5>, and in English partly within the Slovak education system description in Eurybase at http://www.eurydice.org/ressources/eurydice/eurybase/pdf/0_integral/SK_EN.pdf

In addition to aforementioned norms there are many sectoral legislative norms stipulating in detail qualifications (vocational capabilities) for specific professions, e.g. Act No. 315/2001 Coll. on Fire Fighting and Rescue Corps (*Zákon č. 315/2001 Z. z. o Hasičskom a záchrannom zbore*) or the Decree of the Ministry of Interior SR No. 121/2002 Coll. on Fire Prevention (*Vyhláška Ministerstva vnútra č. 121/2002 Z.z. o požiarnej prevencii*) or the Regulation of the Government SR No. 213/2004 Coll. on further training of healthcare workers of (*Nariadenie vlády SR č. 213/2004 Z.z. o ďalšom vzdelávaní pracovníkov v zdravotníctve*).

A new act on lifelong learning is under preparation in the Ministry of Education. Legislative principles have been already agreed and the full version is expected to be submitted to the government by the end of 2008.

LABOUR MARKET TRAINING

The labour market training is regulated by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family (*MPSVR, Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) by

- Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services (*Zákon č. 5/2004 Z.z. o službách zamestnanosti*), later amended and newly offered in full wording as Act No. 389/2006 Coll. It identifies respective tools of active labour market policy (§§ 49-61), provision of training of job seekers and employees in need of increasing their employability (§§ 44-47).

SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

In Slovakia, social partnership has been introduced in early 1990s; however the social dialogue was interrupted in 1997 as a consequence of the conflict between the government and the trade unions. After elections in 1998, social dialogue has been renewed, backed by Act No. 106/1999 Coll. on the Economic and Social Partnership (Tripartite Act) (*Zákon č. 106/1999 Z.z. o hospodárskom a sociálnom partnerstve (zákon o tripartite)*). It was explicitly stated that the aim of partnership is to reach agreement on respective topics at the national level.

After gradual increase of tensions between social partners, the Tripartite Act was nullified by Act No. 585/2004. The Council of Economic and Social Partnership (*RHSP, Rada hospodárskeho a sociálneho partnerstva*) replaced the Council of Economic and Social Agreement (*RHSD, Rada hospodárskej a sociálnej dohody*) since December 2004. RHSP has been established as an advisory body to the government. Thus, the aim of creating room for mutual consultations has been pronounced over the inevitability of agreements among the three parts. Dissatisfaction of trade unions with this regulation of the social dialogue has been reflected by the parliament after the 2006 elections and new tripartite act is coming into the force since 1 April 2007.

A new Tripartite Act No. 103/2007 Coll. established a new consulting and concerting body the “Economic and Social Council of the Slovak Republic” (*HSR, Hospodárska a sociálna rada Slovenskej republiky*). The Council consists of 21 members equally representing three partners with seven seats each. Trade unions are represented by seven representatives of Confederation of Trade Unions (*KOZ, Konfederácia odborových zväzov*) and employers’ representatives are composed of four representatives of National Union of Employers (*RÚZ, Republiková únia zamestnávateľov*), two of the Federation of the Employers’ Association of Slovakia

(AZZZ, *Asociácia zamestnávateľských zväzov a združení Slovenskej republiky*) and one of ZMOS. RÚZ is a member of UNICE.

The Council concerters standpoints and recommendations and makes agreements (e.g. general agreements and diverse social agreement on employment, productivity, wages, etc.) in the field of economic development and development of employment, it concerters standpoints and recommendations in the field of state budget, and concerters standpoints to relevant legislation set by § 4 of the Tripartite Act. In contrast to Trade unions, RÚZ opposed adoption of this act considering recent practice satisfactory and not needing further regulation by law.

Social dialogue at the highest level could result in the General Agreement (*Generálna dohoda*) between social partners (which however happened last time in 2000). On the branch level, social dialogue is carried out through collective bargaining. Partners for collective bargaining on this level are respective employers' organisation and respective union body and it results in a collective agreement at the master agreement level (*kolektívna zmluva vyššieho stupňa*).

Currently, the legislative framework setting the structure of the social dialogue is comprised of:

- Act No. 103/2007 Coll. on Tripartite Consultation at the National Level and on Amending and Supplementing Certain Acts (Tripartite Act) (*Zákon č. 103/2007 Z.z. o trojstranných konzultáciách na celoštátnej úrovni a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov (zákon o tripartite)*);
- Act No. 575/2001 Coll. on Organisation of the Government and Organisation of Central State Administration (*Zákon č. 575/2001 Z.z. o organizácii činnosti vlády a organizácii ústrednej štátnej správy*); lastly amended by Act No. 678/2006;
- Act No. 2/1991 Coll. on Collective Bargaining, (*Zákon č. 2/1991 Zb. o kolektívnom vyjednávaní*), lastly amended by Act No. 103/2007;
- Act No. 311/2001 Coll. of the Labour Code (*Zákon č. 311/2001 Z.z. Zákonník práce*), lastly amended by Act No. 231/2006.

Although social partners may participate in decision-making processes in curriculum development, education standards establishment and in qualification exams, their role in VET is primarily that of advisors to the state administration as visible from the following table.

Table 1: The role of social partners in the decision-making processes		
LEVEL	RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL PARTNERS	TYPE OF ROLE (ADVISORY/DECISION-MAKING, DIRECT/INDIRECT)
NATIONAL LEVEL	Economic and Social Council (<i>Hospodárska a sociálna rada</i>)	consulting and concerting *

	Council for VET (<i>Rada pre OVP</i>)	advisory
	15 tripartite sectoral expert commissions for secondary VET education	Advisory in curriculum development and setting of standards
REGIONAL LEVEL	Learning region partnership**	advisory
REGIONAL LEVEL	VET/LLL councils in the process of being established	advisory
SECTORAL LEVEL	According to the result of social dialogue (collective agreement at the master agreement level)	depending on agreement
ENTERPRISE LEVEL	According to the result of social dialogue (collective agreement (<i>kolektívna zmluva</i>))	depending on agreement

* Decision-making till October 2004 under the name Council of Economic and Social Agreement, in practice it however did not influence LLL/VET issues substantially; advisory under the name Council of Economic and Social Partnership since December 2004 till April 2007.

** Functioning in 6 out of 8 regions, not established in *Nitra* region and in decay in *Košice* region.

0302 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: IVET

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

After the chain of changes in responsibility towards VET since 1989, the Ministry of Education (*MŠ, Ministerstvo školstva*) is now the single national level authority essentially responsible for education. The ministry is responsible for the elaboration of all education policies making use of the services of directly managed institutions of which the most important ones are as follows:

- The National Institute for Education (*ŠPÚ, Štátny pedagogický ústav*) - general education curriculum including general subjects of VET schools; measuring educational output;
- The State Institute of Vocational Education (*ŠIOV, Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania*) - VET curriculum in co-operation with 15 sectoral expert commissions;
- The Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (*ÚIPŠ, Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva*) - collecting

information including UOE harmonised statistics in education, analytical studies;

- The Research Institute for Child Psychology and Pathopsychology (*VÚDPaP, Výskumný ústav detskej psychológie a patopsychológie*) - psychological aspects of child and youth development; and
- Five Methodological and Pedagogical Centres (*MPC, metodicko-pedagogické centrá*) - in-service regional training of teachers.

The State School Inspection agency (*Štátna školská inšpekcia*) is a state administration body headed by the Chief School Inspector (*hlavný školský inšpektor*) appointed for a 5-year period by the Minister of Education (minister *školsťva*). By law the State School Inspection is independent in its performance of school inspection, which is based on the annual plan and results in the annual report on the status of education and upbringing.

Other ministries play a limited role, e.g. in support of specific secondary VET schools (health, police, justice/warder, military) within their professional scope.

REGIONAL/LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Slovakia is in the process of decentralisation, with regional parliaments and heads of 8 self-governing regions elected for the first time in December 2001 for four-year terms. Responsibility for the establishment of schools was transferred to the self-governing bodies on 1st July 2002. A new system of self-governing offices and sectoral state administration offices was established on 1st January 2004, and fiscal decentralisation came into force on 1st January 2005. The responsibility for primary schools and other establishments of local importance were transferred to municipalities, and the responsibility for secondary schools and other establishments of regional importance to self-governing regions. Schools, which are of trans-regional importance, e.g. bilingual schools established under international agreements or special schools for special education needs pupils, have remained under the responsibility of the state administration. Hence, the local/regional educational authority is currently of two types:

- the state administration, based on eight regional school offices;
- the self-governing administration, with offices of municipalities and eight offices of self-governing regions located in the same cities as the eight state administration regional school offices.

The first level of the state administration agenda in education is covered by school directors who are appointed to five-year terms; a school director selection process is obligatory every five years.

Before establishing or cancelling an education institution, a municipality/self-governing region is obliged to ask *MŠ* to register/de-register the institution. Without this registration/de-registration, the municipality and/or self-governing region cannot act. The law also requires a statement from the municipal school board or territorial school board concerning the intentions of the municipality or self-governing region.

Although limited freedom in finalising the curricula is given to schools (10% of the weekly instruction hours and 30% of its content may be adjusted according to local/regional needs) curriculum development is centralised. *MŠ* approves all curricula (the so-called basic pedagogical documents (*základné pedagogické dokumenty*); in case of VET finalised under the supervision of sectoral expert commissions affiliated to *Š/OV*) and provide for textbooks.

Higher education institutions are autonomous and represented in contacts with *MŠ* by the Slovak Rector's Conference (*Slovenská rektorská konferencia*) and the Board of Higher Education (*Rada vysokých škôl*).

OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The role of social partners is advisory. Their most important platform is the Economic and Social Council (*Hospodárska a sociálna rada*). Before submission to the government crucial policy papers relevant to VET must be discussed in a regular meeting of Economic and Social Council. E.g. the “Concept of Two-level Model of Educational Programmes in VET” aimed at decentralisation of curricula development competences to schools (see 0703) was discussed with social partners and accepted without contradiction.

All the other bodies mentioned in the table in 0301 regardless whether informal or formal with the written statute have limited possibility to influence decision making. They can however influence creation of policy papers in the period of their creation and or public commenting. Nevertheless, both employers and trade unions lack specialists and specialised institutions focused on VET. Although there are signals that social partners miss this kind of bodies, experts wearing two hats with original background on the governmental sector are a typical feature.

There are many non-governmental organizations dealing with education, however no one with a special focus on VET policy. Depending on grant giving institutions and their priorities they adjust their activities to the sources of financing. The most important non-governmental institution is the Slovak Governance Institute (*SGI, Inštitút pre dobre spravovanú spoločnosť*), www.governance.sk. Its mission is to propose and promote solutions for good, accessible, transparent and effective services. *SGI* spun off from the Institute of Social and Economic Reforms (*INEKO, Inštitút pre ekonomické a sociálne reformy*) in October 2001 with much stronger focus on public policy. The background of *SGI* in economics is therefore significant.

There are many VET related NGOs affiliated to diverse institutions, among which schools create a specific category. These NGOs were as a rule created to bypass fiscal and legal barriers imposed on state/public organizations. Of course there are also various associations set up to protect particular interests and to lobby for them, e.g. Association of Vocational Schools of Slovakia (*Združenie odborných učilíšť Slovenska*), Association of Schools of Higher Professional Studies in the Slovak Republic (*Združenie škôl vyššieho odborného štúdia v Slovenskej republike*).

0303 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: CVET

The Ministry of Education (*MŠ, Ministerstvo školstva*) is responsible for legislation for CVET, however, there are no clear borders between responsibilities of the *MŠ* focusing on “further” education and other governmental institutions engaged in lifelong learning, in particular the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family (*MPSVR, Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) with responsibility to labour market training.

MŠ has one directly managed institution *Academia Istropolitana* with a mission in this field. *Academia Istropolitana* is education and training provider, and at the same time it develops draft policy papers, proposals of measures concerning CVET and lifelong learning. It was appointed to carry out the ESF project “Creation, Development and Implementation of an Open System of Life-long Learning in the Slovak Republic for the Labour Market”, one result of which was the “Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance and Counselling (*Stratégia celoživotného vzdelávania a celoživotného poradenstva*)” adopted by the government on 25th April 2007.

The Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (*ÚIPŠ, Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva*) also serves *MŠ*, e.g. by provision of statistics or specific research studies, if required by *MŠ*. This institute maintains a list of CVET providers stemming from the registry of the Ministry of Interior (*Ministerstvo vnútra*) and publishes offers for further education of pedagogical staff.

Other ministries have also specific institutions taking care of further training in the sector, among which the most important is the Institute for Public Administration (*Inštitút pre verejnú správu*), offering professional training for officers at all levels of government including self-governing bodies. This institute similarly to other sector institutes also offers expert consultancy to respective ministries. Within the Ministry of Health (*Ministerstvo zdravotníctva*) sector even, the institution providing professional

training and LLL for doctors and health care personnel was transformed to the state university, the Slovak Medical University, established in 2002.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family (*MPSVR, Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) is responsible for labour market training funding and organisation. Labour market training together with other employment services are provided through the Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*ÚPSVaR, Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*), the network of offices of labour, social affairs and family, and detached (annexed) branch offices, all headed by the Centre.

The Institute for Labour and Family Research (*Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny*) originated from merging of diverse independent institutions under *MPSVR*. In contrast to the former labour market research institute from 1980s and 1990s it has only limited research capacities. The Social Policy Institute (*Inštitút sociálnej politiky*) has been set up in 2004 by *MPSVR* in support of policy making in the social sector, replaced by the Department of Social Analyses and Strategies in 2006 (*Oddelenie sociálnych analýz a stratégií*).

There is no specialised institution monitoring in-company training. Training provided on commercial basis is not regulated. Accreditation of the programme can be required by clients. Thus, training providers offering programmes on the market usually ask for accreditation at *MŠ*, although accreditation is not required by law anymore even in case of labour market training organised by labour offices.

Publicly promoted programmes and courses open to all interested citizens might be provided by public (in particular schools), private or non-state providers. Private providers can act as trade organisations, small traders, foundations and associations of citizens (see respective legislation listed in *0301*).

An important lobbyist in CVET is the Association of Adult Education Institutions in the Slovak Republic (*Asociácia inštitúcií vzdelávania dospelých v SR*), however large enterprises and/or associations in branch industries are much stronger in lobbying for training benefits at the government.

04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

0401 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM

The [structure of the education and training system](#) hasn't changed essentially since the 1970s.

KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten (*MŠ, materská škola*) provides pre-school education for children aged 2-6 and prepares them for compulsory school attendance. Due to population decline, there is competition for children which has encouraged staff to think of how to attract as many children as possible; as a consequence, they were considered the most innovative segment among formal education institutions in 1990s.

BASIC SCHOOL

Basic school (*ZŠ, základná škola*) is composed of primary and lower secondary level education. Many schools in rural areas provide primary level education only (30% of the population is situated in villages with less than 2,000 inhabitants). Children enter basic school aged 6. Instruction is provided by primary level class teachers and by teachers typically with a double specialisation (e.g. mathematics and physics) at lower secondary level. Technical education is provided one hour per week within the mainstream lower secondary level children and is the first specialised VET subject.

Three years lasting gradual expansion of basic school from eight to nine years has been decided by the government in 1996. Since 1999/2000 school year, all students leave basic school after completion of 9th grade, except for those who transfer to long form grammar schools (typically after the 4th grade), or low achievers. The latter leave after 10 years of compulsory education before completing the 9th grade, including the repetition of some of grades. After completion of basic school, students, typically aged 15, attend secondary school.

UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

There are three streams of upper secondary education: general academic provided by grammar schools (*G, gymnázium*); and two vocational streams provided by secondary specialised schools (*SOŠ, stredná odborná škola*) and secondary vocational schools (*SOU, stredné odborné učilište*). Merging of schools of these streams became necessary as a consequence of a severe decline of population in early 2000s. Associated secondary schools (*ZSŠ, združená stredná škola*) and joined schools (*SŠ, spojená škola*) are officially recognised by law in order to stimulate smooth merging schools. In the former case a new legal subject is established, usually but not exclusively resulting from merging *SOŠ* and *SOU*, in the latter case merging can affect different sorts of establishments (e.g. *ZŠ, G* and *SOU*), while original legal subjects can remain preserved as organisational units.

After completion of basic school, students, typically at the age of 15, decide to attend secondary school. As the minimum length of compulsory education is fixed at 10 years, students participate in at least one year of upper secondary schooling. The end of compulsory education is not certified, it is expected that everyone, except for extremely low achievers, will finish at least a 3-year ISCED 3C level education to obtain a certificate of completion of secondary vocational education (*stredné odborné vzdelanie*). Those VET students who finish 4 or 5-year ISCED 3A courses with an upper secondary school leaving certificate (*maturitné vysvedčenie*) are considered to have achieved a "complete secondary vocational education" (*úplné stredné odborné vzdelanie*). These terms often lead to confusion in international comparisons. Students who do not achieve a complete secondary vocational education (ISCED 3A) might complete secondary vocational education (ISCED 3C).

VOCATIONAL (UPPER) SECONDARY SCHOOLS (I.E. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (SOU) AND SECONDARY SPECIALISED SCHOOLS (SOŠ))

Of the two vocational streams, *SOU* are predominantly aimed at blue-collar professional training. Until the 1990s, students were employed by enterprises and, in contrast to other secondary schools, they were offered financial bonuses. Generous expenditure supported by enterprises enabled the creation of so-called complex *SOU*, offering theoretical education as well as school based practical vocational training of ISCED 3C level. Furthermore, ISCED 3A type VET expanded within *SOU* in addition to the ISCED 3C level training. With the fall of communism, *SOU* not only lost their social and political status, but also their economic base. Enterprises facing restructuring and privatisation were no longer able to employ students. To prevent the *SOU* network from collapsing, the state took over the responsibility for financing all students. *SOU* lost almost all contact with enterprises and are now run by regional authorities together with *G*. Links to enterprises are to be revitalised and in some sectors have been carried out (e.g. in the automotive industry).

SOŠ represent a variety of schools preparing students for both higher education and/or the labour market in professions requiring a good quality general and professional education with a firm grounding in theory. Typically, they provide for ISCED 3A level education corresponding to respective sectors of economy.

A special stream of *SOŠ* and *SOU* for students with special needs also exist.

ACADEMIC UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

Grammar school is the alternative to VET schools. It is a very demanding general educational institution aimed at deepening the students' theoretical knowledge and academic skills, and considered the best preparatory programme for university studies. The course of study lasting 4-8 years ends with a school leaving examination (*maturitná skúška*) which is an obligatory precondition for admission into higher education. Standard courses of study last 4 years. The bilingual version (with English, German, French, Spanish or Italian as a complementary language of instruction) lasts 5 years. The so-called long form of *G* study (for pupils completing Grade 4 or exceptionally Grade 5 of *ZŠ*) lasts 8 years. It was originally aimed at pupils considered as exceptionally academically gifted. Currently it predominantly attracts parents who expect a better academic environment and/or prefer bypassing the rigorous secondary school admission procedure after the completion of basic school. In large municipalities about 20% of respective age cohort attends the long form of *G* in contrast to originally projected 5%.

SERVING SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (SEN) STUDENTS

Special schools provide education and training to mentally and physically challenged students. Since the early 90s, the trend to integrate SEN students is increasing and inclusion efforts are supported by legislation and fiscal reward. Despite this, a system of special schools continues to play an important role in assisting SEN students to cope with the demands of society and the labour market. There are both general stream special schools (basic schools and grammar schools) and vocational stream schools.

The curricula in special SOŠ and SOU are equivalent to mainstream schools but are adjusted to the needs of the students. As of 15th September 2005 there were 5 SOŠ (with 216 students, 34 full-time teachers and 14 part-time teachers) and 12 SOU (with 762 students, 116 full-time teachers and 14 part-time teachers) offering secondary education and 45 vocational schools (with 4 024 pupils, 252 full-time teachers and 44 part-time teachers) for mentally challenged students. The latter are not considered secondary schools. They provide for training with three levels of training designation: trained, fully trained, and trained with qualification.

There are also 29 practical schools (with 389 pupils, 74 full-time teachers and 15 part-time teachers) for those unable to enter secondary vocational training; graduates are expected to perform simple work in households and/or sheltered workshops.

OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS

The formal education system is completed with a set of specialised facilities providing assistance to schools, parents and students (e.g. school service centres, school catering facilities, school clubs, centres of leisure, youth centres, in-country schools, pedagogical and psychological counselling centres) and offering additional specialised education (e.g. language schools, etc.). Basic schools of arts are state subsidised institutions offering paid education (with symbolic fees) in music, dance, fine arts, and drama for gifted and/or motivated children and adults. Trend indicates increasing attractiveness for children as visible from statistical data (without adults), 98 395 students in 2003, 105 573 in 2005, and 117 086 in 2006. Centres of practical training (*strediská praktického vyučovania*) provide for the practical training of students who receive theoretical education at SOU without the full option of school based practical training.

NETWORK OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Register of regional schools and educational establishments (named as a "network" according to legislation) is maintained by the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (*ÚIPŠ, Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva*). The numbers and types of secondary schools and centres of practical training are presented in [Table 1](#).

The numbers of respective secondary schools and centres of practical training active in respective school year and in case of joined schools deciphered according to the sort of respective constituents are presented in [Table 2](#). In contrast to the network data based on legal status and offered in the earlier mentioned table, this data is based on collected statistical sheets and is source of UOE harmonised statistics.

0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

There are no "regular" VET schools on any level lower than ISCED 3 in the Slovak Republic. There are only fragments of VET in relevant subjects of basic school (*ZŠ, základná škola*) of which the subject technical education (*technická výchova*) is worth stressing. Nevertheless, there is a specific school, the so-called vocational school (*U, učilište*), affiliated with the secondary vocational school (*SOU, stredné odborné učilište*) and making use of the premises of *SOU*. *U* typically provides two-year training courses with specially adjusted curricula for marginal low achievers from basic school (*ZŠ, základná škola*). This programme is rated as level ISCED 2C, though it is offered to students of mainstream upper secondary education age. The official document on the completion of education within programmes with specially adjusted curricula is a final exam certificate and a special kind of certificate of apprenticeship.

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

As outlined in *0401*, students typically enter upper secondary VET at the age of 15 after completing 9-years basic school (*ZŠ, základná škola*). There are 3 types of upper

secondary school: grammar schools (*G, gymnázium*) for academic education; and secondary specialised schools (*SOŠ, stredná odborná škola*) and secondary vocational schools (*SOU, stredné odborné učilište*), both providing vocational education. Entry requirements are set by schools within a framework defined by the Decree of the Ministry of Education (*Ministerstvo školstva*). The supply/demand ratio influences the level of difficulty of entrance exams; exams may not even be required.

There are two types of educational programmes:

- study branch (*študijný odbor*). Students following a study branch finish with an upper secondary education exam (*maturitná skúška*) which is equivalent to ISCED 3A. The length of study is usually 4 and sometimes 5 years
- training branch (*učebný odbor*). This provides ISCED 3C equivalent level of education and is completed with a final exam (*záverečná skúška*) and a certificate of apprenticeship (*výučný list*). The typical length of study is 3 years.

Officially approved study and training branches are annexed to Ministry of Education Decree No. 80/1991 Coll. on Secondary Schools, as amended by Decree No. 424/2005 Coll. and the current register, annually updated, is maintained by the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (*Inštitút informácií a prognóz školstva*). The national classification of education containing scientific fields, study branches at higher education institutions, study and training branches at secondary schools for statistical purposes has been set by the Decree of the Statistical Office SR No. 571/2006 Coll. (*Vyhláška Štatistického úradu SR č. 571/2006 Z.z., ktorou sa vydáva Štatistická klasifikácia odborov vzdelania*).

The number of study programmes offered at *SOU* and *SOŠ* as of September 2006 is provided in [Table 1](#).

SOŠ

SOŠ traditionally provide for ISCED 3A level education and occasionally ISCED 3C, and in special cases, post-secondary education (ISCED 4, and 5B). In *SOŠ*, general subjects represent 42-45% of instruction time. VET subjects represent 55-58% of instruction time, out of which 25-30% is practical training.

SOŠ consist of the following types of schools: secondary industrial schools, secondary geodetic schools, secondary agricultural schools, secondary forestry schools, secondary horticultural schools, secondary wine-and-fruit-growing schools, secondary health schools, commercial schools, commercial academies, hotel academies, social-law academies, schools of library and information studies, secondary pedagogical schools, specialised schools for girls, schools of applied art, conservatories, dance conservatories, secondary schools of art, pedagogical and social academies, pedagogical and cultural academies, secondary veterinary schools, secondary schools of apprenticeship, and specialised schools.

There are several types of secondary industrial schools whose specialisations are indicated in their names, e.g. secondary industrial schools of machinery, of construction, etc., all typically offering 4-year courses of study finishing with a "*maturita*" school leaving certificate and often considered as preparatory for subsequent education at technical university. Conservatories are a special case, closer to non-university tertiary education offering a 4-year course of study finishing with a "*maturita*", and 6-8 year courses of study finishing with an "*absolutorium*" (ISCED 5B rated with regard to the content). Few *SOŠ* offer ISCED 3C courses.

SOU

SOU can provide VET in ISCED 3C training branches and 3A study branches. *SOU* represent the vocational stream of training for workers. In ISCED 3A branch curricula, general subjects represent 25-50% of instruction time. VET subjects represent 50-75% of instruction time, out of which 35-40% is practical training. In ISCED 3C branches, general subjects represent 20-40% of instruction time; VET subjects 60-80% of

instruction time, out of which 50% is practical training. Vocational schools (*učilištia*) affiliated to SOU and making use of SOU premises are oriented toward low demanding professions and pupils with learning difficulties and who usually did not succeed in completing the full 9 grades of basic schooling.

There are several types of secondary vocational schools whose specialisation are indicated in their names, e.g. secondary vocational schools of agriculture, of chemistry, of construction, of food processing, of machinery, etc.

Training branch graduates (ISCED 3C) are qualified workers. They are not eligible for tertiary education. Due to the low absorption of the labour market and the higher social status of the “*maturita*”, graduates often apply for a two years post-graduate programme ending with a “*maturita*”. Study branch graduates (ISCED 3A) are allowed to apply for higher education although they are trained for the labour market (in contrast to the similar educational programme at SOŠ). The share of students of study branches (ISCED 3A) is gradually increasing. Nevertheless, in comparison with grammar school (G) and SOŠ graduates, it is more difficult for SOU ISCED 3A graduates to pass an admission test or graduate from technical universities. Diversification within tertiary education has yet to come about, however, a window has been opened for non-university and short track professional education by Higher Education Act. No 131/2002 Coll.

ASSOCIATED SECONDARY SCHOOLS (ZŠŠ, ZDRUŽENÁ STREDNÁ ŠKOLA)

Give the population decreases, SOU and SOŠ have been encouraged to merge to form associated secondary schools.

0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

There is no typical apprenticeship training in Slovakia and there are no apprentices, although ISCED 3C students from secondary vocational schools (SOU, *stredné odborné učilištia*) are often considered and called apprentices. They are regular secondary school students, according to the law, and as a rule, with no contract with employers. Their practical training is usually school based. Even if organised outside the school, in centres (or workplaces) of practical training, it is ensured by a contract between the school with the provider. Nevertheless, students may be educated for individuals and legal entities at SOU in theory, receiving practical training at the workplace of this entity. This is however a marginal case, permanently below 1% in contrast to the 1980s, when SOU students were under contract with an organisation co-financing their training and offering students pocket money.

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

Slovakia is among the countries with the lowest number of dropouts and early school leavers. Nevertheless, this is not true for the Roma minority, in particular the Roma population living in segregated settlements. Specific intervention programmes are carried out by NGO's in co-operation with labour offices and/or assisted by international partners: a second chance schools pilot project has started in *Košice* and a pilot alphabetisation project is under way in *Lučenec*.

The PHARE sponsored Roma Educational Centre (*Rómske vzdelávacie centrum*), an integral part of the Methodological and Pedagogical Centre in *Prešov (Metodicko-pedagogické centrum v Prešove)*, is aimed at supporting the effective education of the Roma minority and includes the provision of advisory services for teachers at schools with a high Roma concentration in order to retain young Roma in education and training.

As a first step, specific pre-vocational education and training must be developed, in order to achieve a better qualification structure within the Roma population. Mainstream basic schools (*základné školy*), despite constant reminders by the Ministry of Education (*Ministerstvo školstva*) about the responsibility of pedagogical staff to provide individual intervention services for Roma minority pupils, often fail to do so.

Vocational schools (*učilištia*), affiliated with the secondary vocational schools (*stredné odborné učilištia*) should be considered an intervention programmes rather than a brick and mortar institutions with regular students. Although officially indicated in the statistics, vocational school students are low achievers with learning difficulties or

social disabilities enrolled in a less demanding educational programme and based on officially adjusted curricula.

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

Traditionally, there are two types of post-secondary non-tertiary programmes in Slovakia.

Follow-up programmes are offered to ISCED 3C graduates from secondary vocational schools (*SOU, stredné odborné učilištia*). As a rule, the course of study lasts two years and finishes with a *maturita* examination certifying an ISCED 3A level of education. This kind of programme is offered to adults of all ages as a part time study. Quite often, 18-year old graduates of ISCED 3C programmes enter this programme in full-time study immediately after finishing the ISCED 3C programme.

Post-*maturita* programmes (full-time and part time) are offered in three forms:

- refresher programmes;
- specialising programmes;
- qualifying programmes.

Refresher programmes are of at least 6 months in length and are completed by a final exam. These studies are rated as an ISCED 4A level of education. The programmes are aimed at the updating of previously acquired knowledge and skills.

Specialising programmes are of at least 1 year in length and completed by an *absolutorium*. These studies are rated as an ISCED 5B level of education. The programmes are aimed at acquiring new specific knowledge and skills usually related to the previously received education and training.

Qualifying programmes are of at least one year in length and completed by a *maturita* examination. These studies are rated as an ISCED 4A level of education. These programmes are aimed at gaining additional qualification.

In all these cases ISCED codes are assigned by the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (*Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva*) with regard to the content and exit procedure of the programmes. There is no legislative backing for this rating. Refresher programmes and qualifying programmes are certified at the same level of education as ISCED 3A certificates according to Slovak legislation.

However, even specialising programmes certified at ICSED 5B are not recognised as tertiary education, according to the Slovak legislation.

There is also a specific type of education, the so-called complementary pedagogical study (*doplňujúce pedagogické štúdium*), aimed at acquiring pedagogical qualification for trainers. These studies for ISCED 3C students wishing to serve as trainers at *SOU* or centres of practical training are rated as an ISCED 4C level of education.

0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

All Slovak higher education institutions were expected to provide university type education in accordance with Act No. 172/1990 Coll. on Higher Education. Within the new Higher Education Act No. 131/2002 Coll. (*Zákon č. 131/2002 Z.z. o vysokých školách*), it is proposed to allow for the existence of non-university education and non-research based tertiary education. Short track tertiary education should be promoted in order to change the attitude of the population of graduates of secondary schools that usually consider it as uncompleted master study. Currently, the master study in Slovakia usually lasts five years, and sometimes four, or six years. Bachelor studies lasting three years have limited popularity, partly due to the fact that tertiary education is free. All higher education institutions have reshaped their studies to a three-cycle model: with bachelor, master and doctoral studies in order to be compatible with the Bologna declaration.

In 2006, there were 20 public universities, 10 private universities and 3 state universities (military academy, police academy; and the former institute of post-graduate studies in the health sector, which was transformed into the Slovak Medical

University (*Slovenská zdravotnícka univerzita*)). In addition to the two traditional universities in Bratislava and Košice, new universities have emerged around teacher training colleges in many regional seats. Traditional VET providers are the technical universities in Bratislava and Košice (*Slovenská technická univerzita v Bratislave*, *Technická univerzita v Košiciach*) and the University of Economics in Bratislava (*Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave*). Besides these institutions, new technical universities have emerged from branch higher educational institutions; for example, the Technical University of Zvolen (*Technická univerzita vo Zvolene*) was previously the higher school of forestry. The current network of universities is considered too large with only ten universities with more than 9 000 students in the 2006/2007 academic year. The friendly merging of universities is promoted by the Ministry of Education (*Ministerstvo školstva*) but there is no instrument for making the network more efficient. In 2002, the Catholic University in Ružomberok (*Katolícka univerzita v Ružomberku*) offering Catholic religion-based education and in 2004 Selye University in Komárno (*Univerzita J. Selyeho v Komárne*) serving the Hungarian minority in Hungarian as the language of instruction, were established. Worth mentioning is also the Dubnica Institute of Technology (*Dubnický technologický inštitút v Dubnici nad Váhom*) accredited in 2005, offering as the first private university three years Bachelor studies for teachers of vocational/practical subjects, VET administrators and instructors.

05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

0501 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

There is a long tradition of adult education in Slovakia, however, with a focus on serving adult learners' personal interests rather than increasing their employability. Continuing vocational education and training (CVET) was originally provided predominantly at training centres linked to enterprises and branch industries. In the early 1990s the two systems - adult education and CVET, underwent dramatic changes. Sectoral industry-affiliated CVET centres closed down or after privatisation, widened their scope of services beyond education and training. Similarly, traditional adult providers started to operate as any other private body offering education and training demanded by the market. Many new players established under diverse legislation such as the Trade Code (*Obchodný zákonník*), the Act on Foundations (*Zákon o nadáciách*), the Act on Associations of Citizens (*Zákon o združovaní občanov*), the Trade Licensing Act (*Zákon o živnostenskom podnikaní*) emerged. The latter act considers the provision of training as a free trade and when filing for registration, no professional qualification and experience is requested. As a consequence, many small free trade license holders nominally involved in education and training do not provide this kind of services. 2004 estimations of the Ministry of Education (*MŠ, Ministerstvo školstva*) indicate about 2 800 entities with registered educational services; however less than a half, including schools, deliver education and training actively. The largest from the non-state training institutions and the only one with a regional network is the Academy of Education (*Akadémia vzdelávania*) with centres in 38 cities spread over the whole country. Higher education institutions gradually expand their provision of education and training for inhabitants under the umbrella of lifelong learning deriving from the study programmes of their faculties. Institutionalised centres of lifelong learning or continuing education have been established at several universities. With progressing restructuring and an inflow of strategic investors, enterprise-based education and training has revived, predominantly based on the company culture of the investor.

The Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance and Counselling till 2015 (*Stratégia celoživotného vzdelávania a celoživotného poradenstva do roku 2015*) was adopted by the government on 25th April 2007 however without elaborated tools and clear measures in support of LLL. The Strategy reflected trends in EU, the Lisbon strategy and Copenhagen process and recognise importance of adoption of Copenhagen principles and development of Copenhagen tools. Nevertheless, creation of working groups and institutions to develop and adopt these tools were proposed rather than concrete know-how discussed and innovative measures identified. Subsequently, respective law should be prepared by the end of 2007. Important deadlines were however set in 15 measures, of which the following ones are worth stressing:

- LLL act should be elaborated till September 2007, according to measure 8.2;
- identifying an institution responsible for managing integral system of LL counselling and establishing a working group of experts for setting quality standards for Lifelong Guidance and Counselling (LLCG) till July 2008 (8.5 and 8.6);
- establishing a national authority for recognition of non-formal and informal learning till September 2008 (8.7);
- introducing the quality management system in LLL and LLCG till September 2008 (8.8);
- introducing monitoring and forecasting educational needs reflecting labour market needs till 2009;
- establishing a national qualification system and national qualification framework till 2009 in draft version (8.11).

Although CVET is under the responsibility of MŠ, two of the three fundamental acts pertain to the sector of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family (*MPSVR, Ministerstvo práce, sociálních věcí a rodiny*). Act No. 386/1997 Coll. on Further Education (*Zákon č. 386/1997 Z.z. o dalším vzdělávání*) elaborated by MŠ provides the general institutional framework while Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services (*Zákon č. 5/2004 Z.z. o službách zaměstnanosti*) stipulates instruments of active labour market policy including labour market training provisions, and Act No. 311/2001, the Labour Code (*Zákon č. 311/2001 Z.z. Zákonník práce*), regulates employers' and employees' responsibility for upgrading skills.

ACCESS TO LEARNING

Although there is a solid provision of CVET/LLL on the market and education is highly valued by the population, the share of adult population in training (5.0% in 2005) is lagging behind the EU25 average (10.8% in 2005) and 2010 EU benchmark (12.5%).

The reason for this is the low purchasing power of the inhabitants and a lack of capital in a predominant share of companies facing a permanent need of investment in their businesses and mainly in new technology. There are no fiscal incentives for inhabitants or employers to invest in education and training. The government considers the introduction of the flat 19% tax rate a sufficient stimulus for enterprises to invest, leaving the decision about the kind of investment up to them. Nevertheless, a shift from the corporate and personal income tax burden to the consumption taxes and VAT (19% for all goods and services, except medicaments and medical aids where 10% is applied since 2007) does not make citizens, in particular those in the most urgent need of education and training, positive towards personal investment in this area. The share of those below the poverty line was 11.6% in 2005, according to EU SILC 2006 data. Children and young people are the most vulnerable groups, as 16.6% of children aged 0-15 and 14.1% of young people aged 16-24 are risk of poverty according to EU SILC 2006. The rapidly increasing indebtedness of households (18% of disposable income in first half of 2005 in contrast to 10% in 2000) stimulated by consumption loans aggressively promoted by the banking sector could make the issue of fiscal incentives a hot topic of political discussion soon.

In contrast to initial VET, there is no obligatory provision of continuing VET. In all items of legislation CVET/LLL is considered an option or possibility. There are no measures that guarantee learning opportunity in terms of number of days and there is no financial scheme support of learning or delivery of education and training.

Provision of quality distance learning making use of ICT is developing slowly and hampered by a lack of means within the public education sphere, digital divide in particular of older and rural population; and by the insufficient purchasing power of potential clients concerning private educational institutions. On the other hand, part-

time studies at the tertiary level are often organised in the form of distance learning in order to save costs. Distance and lifelong learning centres at universities are the most dedicated promoters of e-learning. On the other hand, there is no legislative backing for the validation and accreditation of prior and experiential learning. This topic is developing into the agenda as a consequence of the Copenhagen/Maastricht process. However, only limited experience has been collected in this field; mostly within the Leonardo da Vinci projects.

PLANNING AND FORECASTING MECHANISMS

The lack of ability and experience in the early identification of skill needs as well as the pending restructuring of regional economies in particular in Central and Eastern Slovakia make the efficiency of specific professional training questionable. With the high unemployment rate and the slowly reviving rate of job creation, there are however no signals expected for specific professions related to education and retraining in regions lacking foreign investment. Specific training in the support of self-employment and the programme of loans for unemployed wishing to start business should make self-employment more attractive.

Furthermore, the training needs of small and medium-sized enterprises and small entrepreneurs are generally not yet sufficiently known. With increasing stability and the continued high growth of the national economy, a new market could soon emerge. National and regional authorities therefore face the urgent need to reinforce efforts to adopt efficient know how for identifying skill needs and for the adoption of quality assurance system for education and training.

It is hoped that establishment of regional VET/LLL councils will bring about closer co-operation between regional authorities, education and training providers and different trades and businesses. In parallel to administrative efforts 'learning region partnerships' were established in seven out of eight regions cofunded from the European Social Fund. In six regions monitoring of learning needs has been declared within the mission statements of partnership and in some regions results already achieved are respectable, e.g. in *Banská Bystrica* region (see www.celozivotne.sk). LLL Department of the Ministry of Education expects emerging of the national LLL strategy from such regional strategies in a bottom-up process. Indeed, the framework national LLL strategy already adopted by the government can be enriched and complemented by detailed analyses and measures coming from regions. In contrast to original expectations the European Social Fund project a "Creation, Development and Implementation of an Open System of Life-long Learning in the SR for the Labour Market" contributed to identification of future policies and recommendations concerning urgency of respective measures rather than to the development of planning and forecasting know-how. In fact the Ministry of Education initiated analyses on labour market needs in regional schools, and surveys on secondary schools graduates and higher education graduates assertion at the labour market, to be carried out in 2007 by *ŠIOV* and *UIPŠ*, respectively. No doubt, all these activities will result in a need of methodological improvement of standardized instruments. Expected methodological discussion could be fruitfully assisted by Cedefop's Skillsnet project.

0502 - PUBLICLY PROMOTED CVET FOR ALL

According to Act No. 386/1997 Coll. on Further Education (*Zákon č. 386/1997 Z.z. o ďalšom vzdelávaní*), continuing vocational education and training has become a legitimate part of the education system of the Slovak Republic. Everyone, regardless of age and education, has the right to continue his/her education in accordance with his/her abilities and interests. The act specifies the establishment of continuing training institutions, conditions of accreditation, issuance of certificates of completed training, etc. However, no mandatory sources for financing continuing training have been stipulated. Sources that could be earmarked for financing training are listed, but this is just a demarcation of financing possibilities and no funds are secured and no incentives for allocation of own means towards companies and individuals have been set. Thus, the declarative essence of the law simply provides for the institutional backing of the establishment of educational institutions and their activities.

In contrast to statistical data in the initial VET, which has been gathered in the standard way for many years and currently is fully harmonised with UOE standards, available

national CVET statistics are not reliable. Although statistical instruments developed by the Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education (*ÚIPŠ, Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva*) have been legislatively anchored since 1996 and CVET providers are obliged by law to provide required data, the response rate is very low. In 2005, the institute addressed 3 340 providers and received a total of 482 positive responses and 244 negative responses. Thus, just some partial data is available. On the other hand, positively responding institutions are considered the most important players on the market.

The following table offers a distribution of training providers calculated from the positive responses.

Table 1: Educational institutions offering CVET/LLL in 2005 by type/sector

TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (EI)	EI		TRAINEES		GRADUATES	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
SECONDARY SCHOOLS	59	12.24	9 866	2.70	8 506	3.66
HIGHER EI	20	4.15	25 264	6.91	15 675	6.74
EI OF STATE ADMINISTRATION BODIES	29	6.02	176 229	48.22	82 877	35.65
EI OF MUNICIPALITIES AND CITIES	15	3.11	5 482	1.50	2 023	0.87
EI OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION	27	5.60	10 511	2.88	8 654	3.72
EI OF CO-OPERATIVES	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
EI OF CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS	20	4.15	2 259	0.62	1 761	0.76
EI OF TRADE UNIONS	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
EI OF CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES	3	0.62	634	0.17	110	0.05

EI OF ENTITIES FROM CULTURE SECTOR	7	1.45	7 566	2.07	2 764	1.19
EI OF INDIVIDUALS AND LEGAL ENTITIES	252	52.28	86 169	23.58	74 461	32.03
OTHERS	48	9.96	41 116	11.25	35 279	15.17
EI NOT INCLUDED – MISSING DATA	2	0.41	404	0.11	376	0.16
TOTAL	482	100	365 500	100	232 486	100

Source: ÚIPŠ

A dominant share of institutions are private institutions. The number of domestic private institutions increased from 199 in 2004 to 259 in 2005. The number of institutions owned by municipalities increased from 44 to 56, those owned by associations increased from 28 to 43, while state owned institutions decreased from 99 to 89. The 2005 data can be seen from the following table.

Table 2: Educational institutions offering CVET/LLL in 2005 by ownership

OWNERSHIP OF EI	EI		TRAINEES		GRADUATES	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
NOT KNOWN	12	2.49	5 444	1.49	5 332	2.29
INTERNATIONAL WITH PUBLIC MAJORITY	2	0.41	93	0.03	8	0.00
PRIVATE DOMESTIC	259	53.73	102 083	27.93	89 263	38.40
CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY	4	0.83	327	0.09	73	0.03

STATE	89	18.46	201 625	55.16	94 150	40.50
MUNICIPAL	56	11.62	25 103	6.87	16 574	7.13
ASSOCIATIONS*	43	8.92	14 509	3.97	11 985	5.16
FOREIGN	7	1.45	3 411	0.93	3 349	1.44
PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL	3	0.62	10 221	2.80	10 013	4.31
NOT AVAILABLE (DATA ARE MISSING)	7	1.45	2 684	0.73	1 739	0.75
TOTAL	482	100	365 500	100	232 486	100

Source: ÚIPŠ

* Including political parties and churches

The following is the data describing the aforementioned institutions from the networking point of view.

Table 3: Educational institutions offering CVET/LLL in 2005 by form of networking

NETWORK OF EI	EI		TRAINEES		GRADUATES	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
INDEPENDENT EI, LOCAL OPERATION	172	35.68	60 336	16.51	53 291	22.92
INDEPENDENT EI, R/NW OPERATION	241	50.00	258 139	70.63	136 660	58.78
NETWORK OF EI IN REGIONS	17	3.53	29	8.05	27 700	11.91

(NUTS 3)			433			
NETWORK OF EI IN EACH DISTRICT (NUTS 4)	9	1.87	2 866	0.78	2 856	1.23
OTHER	37	7.68	11 386	3.12	8 784	3.78
NOT AVAILABLE (DATA ARE MISSING)	6	1.24	3 340	0.91	3 195	1.37
TOTAL	482	100	365 500	100	232 486	100

Source: ÚIPŠ
R/NW - regional/nationwide

It is easy to see from the table above (Table 3), that there is much room for the restructuring of institutions on the market, in particular for vertical networking. A modest share of institutions spread throughout the country are trying to cover the market as a whole with subsidiaries in all sub-markets (districts). Training institutions with a chain of facilities in various Slovak regions represent some 4% and in every district some 2%.

There are no detailed analyses available concerning programme types as well as the quality of programmes, trainers, working methods, etc.

In 2005 according to the aforementioned limited statistical data of ÚIPŠ, 11% of educational activities were aimed at entrepreneurship and administration training in contrast to 13.5% in 2004; 15.1% were related to diverse aspects of the humanities, including soft skills training (15.5% in 2004), 9.9% to computers (9.4% in 2004), 7.6% to health-related topics (7.8% in 2004). A surprising increase up to 7.3% in agriculture, forestry and fishery was found in contrast to 3.2% in 2004.

Despite criticism, e.g. within the consultation process to the Memorandum on LLL, the quality of service remained unmonitored, unregulated and left up to market forces only. In 2005, 1 221 out of 3 323 (36.74%) educational programmes were neither accredited nor regulated by other means compared to 862 out of 2 711 (31.8%) educational programmes in 2004. In 2005, 1 025 programmes were accredited by the Ministry of Education (*MŠ, Ministerstvo školstva*) and 1 077 developed complying with other legal regulations, e.g. decrees of the Ministry of Economy (*MH, Ministerstvo hospodárstva*), Ministry of Health (*Ministerstvo zdravotníctva*), etc.

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

Education and training is offered within the National Programme of Education and Training for the Labour Market (*Národný program vzdelávania a prípravy pre trh práce*) elaborated and implemented by the employment services headquarters of the Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*ÚPSVaR, Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) and/or by regional offices, according to identified regional priorities (which should be included in the comprehensive Regional Training Plan) and through training providers selected by public procurement. Furthermore, agreement on training must be based on a specific procedure finalised by a written agreement. Both public and private

providers are accepted. There is however no specific statistics on types of providers, except overall CVET statistics offered in 0501.

Paragraph 44-47 of the Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services (*Zákon č. 5/2004 Z.z. o službách zamestnanosti*) stipulate the provision of labour market training distinguishing between job seekers, people interested in employment, and employees. Disadvantaged job seekers are in detail identified by the paragraph 8(1) as follows:

- a. A citizen below 25 years of age, who has completed his/her systematic vocational preparation in full-time study courses less than two years ago and failed to acquire his/her first regularly paid employment (hereinafter referred to as “graduate”);
- b. A citizen older than 50 years;
- c. A citizen maintained in the register of job seekers for at least 12 months in the last 16 months (hereinafter referred to as “long-term unemployed citizen”);
- d. A citizen who did not perform gainful activity not even prepared for a profession in the framework of systematic vocational preparation or further education, due to inability of harmonizing duties at work with his/her parental obligations;
- e. A citizen, who is a parent, or a person, pursuant to a special regulation, who cares for three or more children, or a lone citizen caring of a child;
- f. A citizen who has lost the ability to carry out his/her current employment for health reasons and who is not a disabled citizen;
- g. A citizen moving or moved within the territories of Member States of the European Union, or a citizen staying in the territory of a Member State of the European Union in order to carry out an employment;
- h. A disabled citizen;
- i. An alien who has been granted asylum.

Active labour market policy aimed at labour market assertion of aforementioned disadvantaged groups is explicitly stated as employment service target according to paragraph 11(1)d, and substantially co-funded by the European Social Fund (see also *Table 1* in 1101). ESF related national projects addressing groups at risk were designed and managed by ÚPSVaR. Within the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources National Project I “Support for employing the unemployed with an emphasis on the long-term unemployed and disadvantaged groups in the labour market” with project realisation period: 1st February 2004 to 31st December 2008 and the budget EUR 40 259 249 (SKK 1 529 851 450) 4 650 jobs were created for disadvantaged groups and 12 350 persons started business. Similarly, within the National Project II “Employment support for disabled persons” with project realisation period: 1st February 2004 to 30th April 2007 and the budget EUR 12 165 959 (SKK 462 306 428) disabled persons were served with placement in protected workshops, supported in order to maintain their jobs and supported in starting the independent business.

Analogously, two similar national projects, however substantially smaller in budget were implemented within the Single Programming Document NUTS II Bratislava Objective 3. Training for unemployed people is financed and organised within ESF. The SOP HR National Project III “Education and training of the unemployed for the

labour market” with project realisation period 1st February 2004 to 30th April 2006 and the budget EUR 16 974 000 (SKK 645 012 000) is aimed at training of unemployed in all regions except the Bratislava region. The SPD Bratislava National Project III “Education and training of the unemployment for the labour market” with project realisation period 1st February 2004 to 30th April 2006 and the budget EUR 1 774 737 (67 440 000 SKK) is aimed at the training of the unemployed in the Bratislava region.

In 2005, together within SOP and SPD programmes there were 35 689 registered unemployed out of 71 646 interested placed in training (49.8%). Thus out of 340 401 registered unemployed in average it represents 10.5% according to ÚPSVaR active labour market monitoring data. In 2004, there were 6.6% of the registered unemployed placed in training, compared to 5.6% in 2003 and 9.4% in 2002. For 2006, the change in policy is expected, in order to prevent from high dead weight. Co-financing of training by trainees and recommendation by counsellor stated in Individual Action Plan of respective job seeker might be required. Furthermore, there were 21 092 trainees out of all 35 689 placed trainees identified as disadvantaged job seekers, which were categorised into following (overlapping) groups: 2 994 school graduates, 5 425 citizens older than 50 years, 13 268 long-term unemployed citizens, and 1 264 disabled citizens.

In 2005, 3 550 trainees were placed in jobs within 1 month after completing training, 7 983 up to 3 months and 10 657 up to 6 months. In total there were 12 369 placed in total which represents 36.5% of 33 918 registered unemployed with finished training in 2005. Success in placement varied strongly as the most successful labour office in *Pezinok* district placed 95 % of all trainees, while the least successful labour office in *Rimavská Sobota* only 5%. The absolute data is as follows: There were 636 registered unemployed placed in training in *Pezinok* and 776 in *Rimavská Sobota* of which 518 and 560 finished training, and 492 and only 28 were placed, respectively. It is significant that *Pezinok* district belongs to the Capital city vicinity with a high level of education and the lowest unemployment rate, while *Rimavská Sobota* district belongs to the most vulnerable regions with one of the highest unemployment rates and for investors less attractive areas, due to weak infrastructure including a low level of education, in particular among Roma minority.

The National Project III data for 2004 offers more detailed information about course types split into [two tables](#) interestingly indicating the difference between two parts of Slovakia: the rich Bratislava region with almost no unemployment and the less developed rest of the country with the high unemployment rate. In both parts of the country the greatest interest was in training focused on information technology (21.4% and 33.6% of the total number of applications), followed by accounting and trade/services in the Bratislava region and trade/services and blue-collar professions in the rest of the country.

Paragraph 48 of the initial wording of Act No. 5/2004 Coll., stipulating the accreditation of learning activities by the Accreditation Commission of the Ministry of Education (*Akreditačná komisia Ministerstva školstva*) has been cancelled. Although in current practice accreditation is as a rule required by labour offices, the only legal obligation is set by paragraph 46(13), stipulating the condition of the agreement between the office and the service supplier of VET, where it is left to discretion of the labour office. In practice labour offices within the calls for tender require a certificate of accreditation and a list of lecturers (trainers).

0504 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISES OR SOCIAL PARTNERS

According to § 153 of the Act No. 311/2001 Coll. the Labour Code (*Zákon č. 311/2001 Z.z. Zákonník práce*), as amended, an employer “shall attend to deepening the employees’ qualification, or to its increase ... employer shall negotiate with employees’ representatives measures aimed at attending to the employees’ qualification, its deepening and increase”. According to § 155(1) the employer can make a written agreement with the employee enabling “the employee for increasing his/her qualification by providing time off, wage compensation and reimbursement of other costs pursuant to study, and the employee commits himself/herself to remaining in an employment relationship with the employer for a determinate period upon completion

of study, or to repay costs associated with the course of study, even when the employee terminates the employment relationship prior to the completion of study.”

Thus, it is up to employer and employees who might be assisted by their representatives whether or under what conditions the training is enabled and carried out. The act obliges the employer to ensure the upgrading of skills of employees' only in the case of the newly employed and in the event of relocation to a new working place and/or new job.

On the other hand, according to § 154(3) “employee shall be obliged to systematically deepen the qualification for work performance agreed in the employment contract“. Consequently he/she may be forced to undergo further education, for which he/she is entitled to receive wage compensation.

In addition to generally valid legislation there are specific measures for continuing training within a specific profession, e.g. a pedagogical staff, which is stipulated in detail by decrees of the Ministry of Education (*MŠ, Ministerstvo školstva*), health staffs, diverse financial sector professions, justice professionals and others.

A specific example of the effort to increase the quality and efficiency of training is the Concept for Training in Civil Service (*Koncepcia vzdelávania štátnych zamestnancov*). This document defines the general framework of civil servant training, the tasks of educational subjects, the objectives of training and training type priorities. The measures for the institutional, financial and personal provision of civil servant training should finish in 2007. The training will predominantly focus on the training of superior officers, the training of civil servants on issues relating to the integration of the Slovak Republic into the EU, and the training of newly hired civil servants. The concept was approved on 28th January 2004 by the Government Resolution No. 79/2004.

The national legislation concerning regulated professions is fully harmonised with EU legislation.

Company collective agreements could contain a detailed list of obligations on education/learning. In practice, social partners have different approaches: Learning programmes for individual employees are mainly implemented by large employers, predominantly those with foreign capital. Middle-sized employers occasionally provide education/learning. In small companies learning is usually carried out by recruiting new employees.

There are demand driven projects in support of training of employees promoted within Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Priority 3 “Increasing the qualification and adaptability of employees and persons”, Measure 3.2 “Increasing the scope, improvement and broader provision of further education with the aim of improving the qualifications and adaptability of employees”, and within SPD Bratislava Priority 2 “The development of lifelong learning and the support for research and development in the context of human resources quality improvement“, Measure 2.1 “Stimulating and improving provision for qualifications relevant to employers and businesses”.

There is no detailed analysis available concerning enterprise-based training in Slovakia. And there are neither annual statistics, nor instruments promising any improvement. Slovakia did not participate in CVTS 2 survey. Thus, there is no national data on particular target groups subjected to training in respective enterprises and about types of providers of such training. First relevant data are expected from 2006 CVTS3 survey.

There is however anecdotal evidence indicating a trend similar to other neighbouring countries: Share of training enterprises decreases with the size class of enterprises. Large enterprises offer more training opportunities than SMEs, usually due to introduction of already developed investor's training culture into privatised enterprises. In contrast, many SMEs did not train due to a lack of disposable funds for training. In enterprises, besides obligatory training (e.g. safety at work) and specific workplace-related training, soft skills training is in progress, as well as diverse management training for middle and top management staff.

0505 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Despite the developed CVET/LLL market, the share of adult population in training is insufficient. The reason for this is the low purchasing power of inhabitants (see 0501).

Only 9% (64.7 out of total 718.3 thousand) trainees of population aged 15 years and more were identified as participating outside paid working hours in the first non-formal learning activity and 12.6% (20.2 out of 160.2 thousand) in the second non-formal learning activity within ad hoc LFS module on lifelong learning in the 2nd quarter of 2003. Only 7% of this survey respondents participated in training for personal or social reasons, compared to 15.9% on the EU level. Job related reasons are more dominant in Slovakia than in EU as a whole.

There is no statistics offering precise distribution of training initiated by individuals by type of training. Nevertheless it could be seriously assumed that foreign language training (predominantly English) and ICT related training dominate. Office administration, in particular accountancy, which offers a good opportunity for self-employment is also very popular. Among those popular and at the same time driven by personal interest, diverse nature knowing and healthy lifestyle focused courses are mentioned by providers.

06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

0601 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN VET

CLASSIFICATION OF STAFF

Within Measure No. 16/2001 Coll. of the Statistical Office on the Classification of Occupations (*Opatrenie č. 16/2001 Z.z. Štatistického úradu*), the pedagogical staff is comprised of 2 groups – category No. 23 Professional Pedagogical Staff (*odborní pedagogickí zamestnanci*) and category No. 33 Pedagogical Staff (*pedagogickí zamestnanci*). The former category is divided into 5 groups and 17 subgroups comprising a total of 81 occupations including teachers at all types of schools; the latter is divided into 4 groups and 9 subgroups comprising a total of 42 occupations including trainers in formal education, tutors, instructors, and trainers in continuing education.

Furthermore, the legal status of teaching and training occupations depends on their relation to educational institutions. Those in VET schools and establishments are called pedagogical staff by law (§ 50 of the School Act No. 29/1984 Coll. (*Zákon č. 29/1984 Zb. o sústave základných a stredných škôl (školský zákon)*)), and specified as teachers, trainers, tutors and sport instructors.

There are three categories of VET school teachers officially recognised by education sector legislation: teachers of general subjects, teachers of vocational subjects and teachers of practical instruction. The latter category of teachers is involved in practical lessons at school, e.g. in laboratories and practical lessons connected to workplaces specified within the curricula and aimed at applying theoretical knowledge gained during theoretical subjects.

Trainers are responsible for assisting in the gaining of respective skills (predominantly manual) during practical training. Although VET in Slovakia is dominantly school-based, in some cases practical training is offered outside the school. The first option comprises centres of practical training (*SPV, stredisko praktického vyučovania*) which is originally aimed at the practical training of students of secondary vocational schools (*SOU, stredné odborné učilište*), and centres of vocational practice (*SOP, stredisko odbornej praxe*) originally aimed at the practical training of students of secondary specialised schools (*SOŠ, stredná odborná škola*).

The second option is according education sector legislation an originally unintended and not institutionalised approach, which is however naturally based on common interest and professional contacts between schools and enterprises. Based on agreement between the school and company and often initiated by students, practical training can be provided directly by a company under the supervision of the school, however on company premises and performed by company staff. These professionals are often called instructors.

Tutors serve students residing at affiliated dormitories and take care of diverse activities of the students' personal interest.

Sport instructors are in fact specialists at schools dedicated to the education of students who are at the same time (pre)professional sportsmen and sportswomen.

Table 1: Role of VET teachers and trainers in the VET system

TYPE	PLACE OF TEACHING/ TRAINING	CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT	ASSESSMENT
TEACHER OF GENERAL SUBJECTS	school	Limited autonomy	Ministry of Education (MŠ, <i>Ministerstvo školstva</i>)
TEACHER OF VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	school	Limited autonomy	MŠ
TEACHER OF PRACTICAL TRAINING	school, workplace	Limited autonomy	MŠ
TUTORS	school, dormitory, specialised out-of-school facility	Limited autonomy	MŠ
TRAINER AT EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS OF EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITIES	school, centre (SOP, SPV), workplace	Limited autonomy	MŠ
TRAINER AT EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS OF COMPANIES	centre (SPV at companies), workplace	Limited autonomy	MŠ
INSTRUCTORS	workplace	Limited autonomy	MŠ
IVET LEVEL 5+			
TEACHER	higher education institution	Full autonomy	Accreditation Commission (<i>Akreditačná komisia</i>)

CVET			
ADULT EDUCATION TRAINER	educational establishment, facilities leased by provider	Full autonomy	Provider (could be based on feedback from client)
PROFESSIONAL TRAINER	based on agreement with respective company/institution	Full autonomy	Provider/Client
TRAINER AT COMPANIES/INSTITUTIONS	company, training facilities of company	Full autonomy	Company
PROFESSIONAL INSTRUCTOR	based on agreement with respective company/institution, usually at workplace	Full autonomy	Provider/Client

Teachers and trainers have the right to change curricula, to influence profiles of programmes, and subsequently the qualifications of graduates, and they do so, however only within the framework of official documents. Currently, the *MŠ* approves all curricula; in the case of VET, they are finalised under the supervision of sectoral expert commissions affiliated to the State Institute of Vocational Education (*ŠIOV, Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania*). Nevertheless, 10% of weekly instruction hours and up to 30% of the subjects' content may be changed by schools. Schools interested in more extensive innovations must submit a project for approval and comply with the procedure regulated by *MŠ* Decree No. 376/2005 Coll.

Teachers and trainers have full freedom in deciding on “pedagogical” tools. Their repertoire is based on their training and peer learning. Pedagogy skills should be improved and enhanced by in-service training offered by five regional in-service training institutions and *ŠIOV*. Currently, teachers are busy with the elaboration of “packages” of school leaving exams themes and questions that can be used by examiners. Since the 2005 school leaving examination reform is in progress.

Within the VET system, very likely due to influence of the general education system of which the VET system is often considered a derivation, trainers are paid less attention than teachers. This is visible from government regulations as well as training possibilities offered by the public sector. The situation can be changed by a revival of guilds and professional associations that have started to take interest, but are short in human and financial resources.

There is no system of monitoring training relevance introduced in Slovakia. So far, the accreditation processes of all kinds have been exclusively input based. In the future, the Accreditation Commission will also carry out a “complex accreditation of activities of higher education institutions” (according to § 84 of Higher Education Act), which is expected to provide for a deeper evaluation of the quality of study programmes at

institutions over a six years period. Quality assurance model affecting regional schooling (and respective training in pedagogy) and other diverse courses (including in-service ones) has not been yet developed.

REFORMS OF VET TEACHER/TRAINER TRAINING

Reforms of teacher training are predominantly bottom-up driven and substantially influenced by demographic changes. As a consequence institutions originally less interested in teacher/trainer training develop new teacher and trainer training programmes to attract students. Furthermore, a dispute emerged concerning the dominant model in the preparation of VET teachers (i.e. the one containing complementary pedagogical studies). Complementary pedagogical studies were labelled an outdated model initially inevitable due to the lack of qualified VET teachers and insufficient for acquiring “pedagogy skills” and specialised teacher training programmes were marked the only appropriate model. As a consequence, universities of technology and economics started to develop specialised teacher training programmes and have redesigned their complementary pedagogical studies.

It is worth mentioning, that the VET teacher training providers led by the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava (*Slovenská technická univerzita v Bratislave*) developed VET teacher standards with regard to pedagogical competences: Graduates from teacher training in pedagogy must comply with 6 complex standards, represented by 40 indicators with explicitly set proofs. There are no similar standards set for trainer training.

Another important impulse came from the Bologna process and subsequent reform of study programmes. All higher education institutions have redesigned their programmes according to Bologna process, which also contributed to emerging of new programmes – bachelor studies for trainers.

The most important top down policy reform concerns profession definition and consequently in-service training. By the MŠ established working group consisting of representatives of the ministry and pre-service and in-service teacher training institutions developed the Methodology Proposal for Developing Professional Standards for Individual Categories of Pedagogical Staffs (*Návrh metodiky tvorby profesijných štandardov jednotlivých kategórií pedagogických zamestnancov*). The proposal reflects “Education and Training 2010” goals as well as the work of European Commission Working Group B. The crucial policy paper aimed at development of professional standard of pedagogical staff and new design of career path is however still pending. On the other hand a “Draft Concept Paper for the Professional Development of Teachers in a Career system (*Koncepcia profesijného rozvoja učiteľov v kariérovom systéme*)” was elaborated and was approved by the government on 18th April 2007. It aims to improve teacher qualification by using a model of continuous professional development (CPD). Four career levels are recognised in four categories (teacher, trainer, tutor and counsellor). Respective professional standards, as well as a credit system based continuous education are in a process of elaboration. A new act on the status of pedagogical staff of schools and school establishments should be prepared by the end of 2007 following the aforementioned draft concept.

0602 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

OVERVIEW OF TYPES OF IVET STAFF

The following table offers an overview of types, numbers and places of activity of respective IVET teachers and trainers. A specific category of managers (directors and deputy directors) is added here; as a rule they act as teachers/trainers at the same time. The number of other learning facilitators (tutors, counsellors mentioned in 0601) is marginal and therefore not included into the table.

Table 1: Internal staff by type of school and type of occupation in the 2005/2006 school year

TYPES OF OCCUPATION	SOŠ	ZŠŠ	SOU, U	SPV,
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				SOP
MANAGERS	605	445	515	28
TEACHERS OF GENERAL SUBJECTS	3 241	2 077	1 674	-
TEACHERS OF VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	3 820	2 076	1 580	
TEACHERS OF PRACTICAL TRAINING	203	112	-	
TRAINERS	-		2 718	123
INSTRUCTORS	-			75
NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS	245	126	210	29

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (*ÚIPŠ, Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva*)

Notes:

SOŠ - secondary specialised school (*stredná odborná škola*)

ZŠŠ – associated secondary school (*združená stredná škola*)

SOU – secondary vocational school (*stredné odborné učilište*)

U - vocational school (*učilište*)

SPV – centre of practical training (*stredisko praktického vyučovania*)

SOP – centre of vocational practice (*stredisko odbornej praxe*) providing for practical training, usually outside the school

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

SCHOOL MANAGERS

Directors and deputy directors are university graduates and as a rule teachers trained in management usually at methodological-pedagogical centres or universities within in-service training programmes regulated by Ministry of Education (*MŠ, Ministerstvo školstva*) Decree No. 42/1996 Coll. on the In-service Training of the Pedagogical Staff. Two-year courses must be approved by *MŠ* and participants have to defend a thesis and pass an examination (in a form of discussion) with members of the committee appointed by *MŠ*.

Individuals who have the title of manager may appear besides the director of school at private and/or church affiliated schools. They report to the establisher of the school, but are not considered pedagogical staff.

TEACHERS

All secondary teachers must be graduates of higher education institutions. Teachers of general subjects are prepared at universities within teacher training programmes designed for all types of schools, usually in two fields corresponding to respective subjects (e.g. Mathematics and Physics). There is no specific initial training for

teachers of general subjects at VET schools. They adjust to VET schools demands within the first years of service, assisted by appointed experienced colleagues.

Teachers of technical education serving at the lower secondary level within basic schools also have to graduate from university teacher training programmes in two subjects.

Teachers of vocational subjects at VET schools are usually graduates from technical universities (with an Engineer's degree - Ing.) and from specific complementary pedagogical study (*DPŠ, doplňujúce pedagogické štúdium*) offered at universities for those interested in teaching careers. This study is aimed at the full provision of training in "pedagogy". There is no specific initial training for teachers of vocational subjects differentiating between the needs of ISCED 3A and ISCED 3C programmes. Although students of secondary specialised schools are as a rule more academically oriented than students at secondary vocational schools, no specific training in pedagogy is offered.

Rarely, teachers of vocational subjects are graduates from teacher training programmes at universities with other priorities than teacher training. In the 2005/2006 academic year there were in total 20 student-teachers of vocational economic subjects at the University of Economics in Bratislava (*Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave*), and 15 student-teachers of technical subjects at the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava (*Slovenská technická univerzita v Bratislave*).

Worth mentioning is the amendment No 374/2005 of the *MŠ* Decree No. 41/1996 Coll. stipulating that newly introduced subject Introduction to the World of Work must be taught by regular teacher or technical university graduated with aforementioned *DPŠ* and specialised qualification study (*špecializačné kvalifikačné štúdium*) aimed at this topic, however just with terminated validity till 2010.

TRAINERS AND OTHER LEARNING FACILITATORS

Trainers and other learning facilitators at VET schools must also fulfil the minimum requirements of aforementioned *MŠ* Decree No. 41/1996 Coll. otherwise they are considered unqualified and paid less than qualified staff.

Professional (vocational) and pedagogical requirements concerning trainers are as follows: full secondary vocational education, certificate of apprenticeship, at least three years of practice and graduation from *DPŠ*. Qualification levels are uniform; they do not differ according to the school or subject, with one exemption: Trainers at special VET schools must be qualified for work with special education needs students and e.g. graduate from a four-semester programme at the university.

Here is an example of a typical trainer's background: graduation from ISCED 3C training at SOU in order to receive a certificate of apprenticeship, with subsequent ISCED 3A follow-up studies in order to receive a "*maturita*" school leaving certificate, and usually after some time in business and upon deciding to become a trainer at school, graduation from a training programme in pedagogy completed at methodological-pedagogical centre (*MPC, metodicko-pedagogické centrum*) within in-service training, which will be recognised as a substitute for *DPŠ* until 2010.

Bachelor's studies for trainers are newly emerging, as a consequence of the reform caused by the Bologna declaration.

Tutors are trained at universities within specific study programmes, however graduation from a teacher training programme or some other training programme offering teacher qualification as well as graduation from secondary level education in pedagogy (upbringing) is also considered appropriate. Furthermore, graduation from any secondary level education in pedagogy (upbringing) is also sufficient in coincidence with graduation from complementary study at methodological-pedagogical centre. This possibility will exist up to 2010 and offers qualification in pedagogy in addition to any secondary education level (ISCED 3A). This profession is in decline due to the reduction of dormitories for *SOU* and *SOS* students.

Counsellors are trained in service. However, pre-service university training programmes for them are under the discussion for decades and currently in process of preparation.

In contrast, instructors are skilled practitioners and no in-service training was offered or under discussion for them. They are in fact just complementing trainers and if any training is considered appropriate for them, it is offered ad hoc within in-service training.

A full list of study branches which can be subjected to accreditation and consequently offered for training of teachers, trainers and other learning facilitators is available within the Decree of the Statistical Office SR No. 571/2006 Coll. (*Vyhlaska Štatistického úradu SR č. 571/2006 Z.z., ktorou sa vydáva Štatistická klasifikácia odborov vzdelania*).

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

IVET TEACHERS (INCLUDING MANAGERS)

In-service training for IVET teachers is regulated by Decree No. 42/1996 Coll. of MŠ on the In-service Training of the Pedagogical Staff. The following are the officially recognised forms of in-service training:

- introduction of new teachers to practice, organised internally at schools under the supervision of the director in cooperation with the methodological-pedagogical centres (*MPC, metodicko-pedagogické centrum*), National Institute for Education (*ŠPÚ, Štátny pedagogický ústav*) or other ministry affiliated training providers; it usually lasts one year, but could be prolonged by one additional year;
- refresher work (*priebežné vzdelávanie*) in-service training, which could be organised by specialised in-service training institutions of the MŠ - the MPC, State Institute of Vocational Education (*ŠIOV, Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania*), ŠPÚ, other ministries' affiliated training institutions and all kinds of schools and school establishments; the content is broadly connected to the improvement of professional competences of pedagogical staff and innovations in learning; the length of the course is determined by the provider only;
- specialised innovative study (*ŠIŠ, špecializačné inovačné štúdium*) for selected staff leading to the achievement of the first qualification exam (*prvá kvalifikačná skúška*) and followed by a salary increase. This can be organised by the MPC, ŠIOV, ŠPÚ, universities and other ministries' affiliated training institutions upon approval of MŠ; as a rule, the length of study is two years;
- specialised qualification study (*špecializačné kvalifikačné štúdium*) expanding the competence of qualified teachers to teach selected subjects and/or deal with children with special needs for a limited period. It is organised in obligatory cooperation with universities by the MPC, ŠPÚ, other ministries' affiliated training institutions and upon approval of the MŠ; the length of study is two years;
- training in leadership (*príprava vedúcich pedagogických pracovníkov*) for future or newly-appointed managers (directors or deputy directors) leading to achievement of the second qualification exam (*druhá kvalifikačná skúška*), which could be organised by the MPC, ŠIOV, ŠPÚ and other ministries' affiliated training institutions in cooperation with a university, upon approval of the MŠ based on a submitted project for study; the length of the study is usually two years;

- extended study (*rozširujúce štúdium*) is a special service of universities exclusively and aimed at acquiring additional qualification (with unlimited validity in contrast to specialised qualification study) to teach selected subjects and/or deal with children with special needs.

Participation at refresher courses, a typical form of in-service training for both regular teachers of general subjects and teachers of vocational subjects, is usually based on the individual interest of the teacher. There is neither a duty (e.g. due to officially identified low performance) nor a right for in-service training guaranteed by law. Participation at the latter three forms of training is indirectly enforced by higher remuneration. The first qualification exam (and by the decree specified substitutions) leads to a higher wage tariff, the second qualification exam is a must for directors and deputy directors and qualification study is necessary for qualification in serving students with special needs or for expanding one's competence to teach a subject not originally selected in the initial training.

The provision of in-service training is only partly demand driven; all MPC distribute their catalogues of courses among schools wishing to attract teachers by the provision of demanded courses. On the other hand, these in-service training institutions are privileged on the market, because being directly funded by MŠ, they offer training for free. Consequently, other institutions including universities can hardly compete (except in the case of qualification studies, and partly the studies leading to qualification exams), as they need to cover the costs of training from participants' fees.

TRAINERS AND OTHER LEARNING FACILITATORS

There is no compulsory in-service training for trainers and other learning facilitators. They can however participate in the following forms of in-service training stipulated by the aforementioned Decree No. 42/1996 Coll.: introduction of novices into practice, refresher work, specialised innovative study, specialised qualification study, training in leadership for trainers with higher education. This in-service training should be organised by specialised in-service training institutions of MŠ - methodological-pedagogical centres, or the State Institute of Vocational Education. However these institutions focus on pedagogy-related training, having limited capacities for provision of training aimed at increasing the professional competence of trainers. Thus, it is up to schools to look after the improvement of the quality of trainers in cooperation with businesses, private training providers and professional bodies (e.g. guilds or chamber of commerce).

ASSESSMENT AND QUALITY MONITORING

Higher education institutions are the only institutions awarding qualifications to IVET teachers. Thus, their training is accredited by the Accreditation Commission (AK, *Akreditačná komisia*) established by the government as its advisory body.

The assessing, awarding and accrediting of formal qualifications for IVET trainers in VET schools and school establishments are fully regulated by MŠ, as it is a consequence of graduation from regional schools and graduation from DPŠ, approved by MŠ.

There is no specific guidance available to advise IVET staff on how to improve their skills, as there is no real pressure to improve skills, except the intrinsic motivation of staff people themselves. No official quality assurance system has been introduced; as a rule, it is up to the director of the school and the school establishment to monitor the quality of service as well as arrange for guidance on improving their skills. Only a limited quality assurance system in schools is in place since the 2005/2006 school year. It is expected that schools' self-assessment reports, due for the first time in first half of 2006, will help address the training needs of teachers in a comprehensive way. Furthermore, a new act on the status of pedagogical staff of schools and school establishments which should be submitted to the government till the end of 2007, should contribute to the substantial change in this field as it should stipulate setting of professional standards.

0603 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

OVERVIEW OF TYPES OF CVET STAFF

Pursuant to Measure No. 16/2001 Coll. of the Statistical Office on the Classification of Occupations (*Opatrenie č. 16/2001 Z.z. Štatistického úradu, ktorým sa vyhlasuje Klasifikácia zamestnaní*) teachers and trainers in CVET are categorised within major group 2 Professionals, with explicitly mentioned eight occupations (e.g. 235908 Driving School Instructor) and within major group 3, where diverse “associate” professionals are categorised as well as “lecturers of courses and practical training”; and “pedagogues in the field of continuing education” among which “in-service trainers of pedagogical staff” are explicitly mentioned.

It is not appropriate to differentiate between teachers and trainers in CVET in Slovakia. CVET professionals are usually called lecturers, regardless of the content of their education or training and their status; and sometimes instructors, in particular when training affects practical skills. Terms teacher and trainer are related rather to the initial formal education system. Lecturers are predominantly professionals of diverse occupations who are contracted for CVET by training providers or directly by institutions interested in training for their employees. Thus, lecturing is often a job rather than an occupation. A level of education of lecturers from 482 positively responding organizations within regular annual data collection can be seen from the following table.

Table 1: Lecturers in continuing training in 2005

LECTURERS	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL	TOTAL	OF WHICH WOMEN
TRAINED (ISCED 3C)	209	374	583	263
OF WHICH WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION	67	130	197	95
WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION (IN %)	32.1	34.8	33.8	36.1
SECONDARY EDUCATED (ISCED 3A)	356	905	1 261	478
OF WHICH WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION	136	177	313	161
WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION (IN %)	38.2	19.6	24.8	33.7
TERTIARY EDUCATED	3 421	9 368	12 789	6 800

OF WHICH WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION	2 381	5 488	7 869	4 311
WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION (IN %)	69.6	58.6	61.5	63.4
TOTAL	3 986	10 647	14 633	7 541
OF WHICH WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION	2 584	5 795	8 379	4 567
WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION (IN %)	64.8	54.4	57.3	60.6

Source: ÚIPŠ

For comparison a similar table is offered about private institutions. A lower share of lecturers with pedagogical qualification among internal staff is apparently visible in contrast to external lecturers, except tertiary educated lecturers, as visible from following table offering data from 259 positively responding organizations of the aforementioned data collection. Both these differences are naturally explicable, as private institutions are targeting enterprises which value professional focus rather than pedagogical qualification.

Table 2: Lecturers of private training providers in continuing training in 2005

LECTURERS	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL	TOTAL	OF WHICH WOMEN
TRAINED (ISCED 3C)	98	184	282	119
OF WHICH WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION	9	85	94	46
WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION (IN %)	9.2	46.2	33.3	38.7

SECONDARY EDUCATED (ISCED 3A)	155	291	446	155
OF WHICH WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION	27	74	101	44
WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION (IN %)	17.4	25.4	22.6	28.4
TERTIARY EDUCATED	272	1 336	1 608	874
OF WHICH WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION	117	633	750	475
WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION (IN %)	43.0	47.4	46.6	54.3
TOTAL	525	1 811	2 336	1 148
OF WHICH WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION	153	792	945	565
WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION (IN %)	29.1	43.7	40.5	49.2

Source: ÚIPŠ

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

Continuing training education is not a regulated trade and thus no evidence of professional qualification is needed for setting up an educational institution and a certificate of lecturing (pedagogical or andragogical) competence is not required by law. Although professional competence is required, the criteria and the value of certificates for proving professional competence have not been set. Submitting proof of professional competence is only consistently required in some specific cases, such as training in the field of occupational safety, fire protection, arts, healthcare, where such proof must be submitted in accordance with regulations stated by the Trade Licensing Act No. 455/1991 Coll. (*Živnostenský zákon č. 455/1991 Zb.*) or sectoral legislation (e.g. Act No. 124/2006 Coll. on Occupational Safety (*Zákon č. 124/2006 Z.z. o bezpečnosti a ochrane zdravia pri práci*), Act No. 125/2006 Coll. on Labour Inspection (*Zákon č. 125/2006 Z.z. o inšpekcii práce*), the Act No. 93/2005 Coll. on Driving Schools (*Zákon č. 93/2005 o autoškolách*)). In such cases a certificate of lecturing competence (the so-called lecturing minimum) is usually also required. Thus, lecturers

in the field of blue-collar professions, who generally have only secondary education, often complete complementary pedagogical study (*DPŠ, doplňujúce pedagogické štúdium*) pursuant to such a sectoral legislation or based on their own initiative. *DPŠ* is however originally designed for trainers in formal IVET, thus it is a substitution of a genuine training in pedagogy.

While teachers of basic schools and secondary schools receive full qualification just after completing training in pedagogy and psychology, this kind of training is not required from higher education teachers. A great number of lecturers in continuing education are from this group. As a consequence, due to insufficient training in methodology and psychology, lecturers recruited from the group of higher education teachers and practitioners do not know how to adjust their style of instruction to adults.

Thus, systematic initial training for lecturers does not exist, nor is it officially required from a lecturer. Courses have been developed to improve lecturer skills; however, educational institutions usually do not require a certificate on the completion of training for lecturers.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Systematic in-service training for CVET trainers and other learning facilitators does not exist and continuing training is not officially required from a lecturer. In-service training of internal lecturers may be set by individual training providers or companies in accordance to their training culture, however, no official evidence or impact surveys about these activities exists.

It is often hardly possible to label existing fragments of training as pre-service or in-service training. In fact, courses on lecturing could be considered the latter or the former depending on the status of the participants, i.e., novice or lecturer already in-service.

ASSESSMENT AND QUALITY MONITORING

There is no lecturer output control and assessment system in the field of continuing training. The assessment of lecturers is performed based on inquiries after completing an educational/training activity and usually does not have any impact on the lecturer's formal career. The lecturers' career path is fully his/her business, influencing and influenced by the demand for their services and the honorarium. The career path of an internal lecturer fully depends on the training provider, or company, where he/she is internally employed to provide training of employees.

With the rising competitiveness on the market, efforts to establish quality control and quality self-regulation have come from the lecturing staff itself and an unofficial system for the certification of lecturers has been developed. This system is not legally binding, since Association of Adult Education Institutions (*AIVD, Asociácia inštitúcií vzdelávania dospelých*), which takes care of it, is not a certifying or accrediting authority. This kind of certification is proposed within a preliminary draft of the act on lifelong learning, which should be submitted to the government in 2007. It is intended to set certification of lecturers as obligatory requirement, which is heavily disputed and can be changed within the forthcoming public debate.

Output requirements of the certification course for lecturers provided by *AIVD* include mastery of adult education theory; a video taped lecturing subject to the analysis of performance; and a final paper in the form of the lecturer's course design and/or manual.

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

The transformation to a market driven economy has created new challenges for regional VET schools. School policies, which were originally purely supply-driven, had to be aligned to the changing regional labour markets but also to the newly emerging educational services market.

The VET school input market has been created as a consequence of the introduction of freedom and democracy. Students and their parents are fully aware of their right to free choice of profession and access to education and training. They are more active in pressing towards opening positions in VET schools corresponding to their desires. A

significant demographic decrease is adding an additional dimension to the demand/supply interaction in this market. Schools must be more sensitive to student demands in this more competitive environment and they have to fight hard for students, in particular with grammar schools (*gymnázia*). VET schools therefore show two tendencies: preferences for ISCED 3A over ISCED 3C programmes and the introduction of new programmes.

The output market of VET schools has been volatile. Regional economies are subject to dramatic changes; many large enterprises have declared bankruptcy and some traditional sectors are in irreversible decline. New strategic investors are still mapping the territory and the new regional economy priorities for the next 15 years are currently being developed. Also, small and medium size enterprises are far from becoming stabilised. Business people fighting for their daily survival usually offer very broad signals concerning labour force needs. Employers' typical remarks are that they require flexibility, reliability, ICT skills and language skills, together with a general criticism of the low quality of graduates. Only the most successful and restructured sectors offer clear signals to VET schools (e.g. the automotive industry and financial services).

Until recently, VET schools have not been very output focused. They have considered recruitment activities and meeting the needs and desires of students and parents in formal qualifications more important than labour market analyses. With accession to the EU, increasing political stability and economic improvement, regional economic policies are more visible and in more advanced regions with new investments and plants, human resource policy development is in progress assisted by EU structural funds. There is however a large gap between western Slovakia and the Capital region, and other regions, especially southern and eastern Slovakia. Since accession into EU attractiveness of labour market in rich European countries heavily influence the labour market in Slovakia. Suddenly, there is a dramatic lack of professionals. People with low employability or reluctance to mobility dominate in labour offices, even in regions with high unemployment rates.

The early identification of skill needs in regions has developed into urgent policy and all regions indicate efforts to start surveys to gather relevant data. In support of forecasting labour market needs ESF SOP measure 3.3.B has been set, however, there was no project submitted till March 2007 and as a consequence nationally recognised methodology has not been agreed. There is no institution involved in research in this field nationwide. Sectoral and regional initiatives will soon create demand for comparison of used methodologies and development of sophisticated know-how.

0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Two separate institutions directly managed by the Ministry of Education (*Ministerstvo školstva*) provide (mainly curricular) support for regional schooling:

- National Institute for Education (*Štátny pedagogický ústav*) for general education; and
- State Institute of Vocational Education (*Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania*) for VET.

The two institutions must co-operate to provide basic pedagogical documents for general subjects of VET schools and in the introduction of the new form of school leaving exams at secondary schools. With the increasing recognition of the importance of measuring educational output and the implementation of quality assurance, the co-operation of the two institutions will be strengthened.

Co-operation between secondary schools and institutions of higher education is foreseen with the nationwide introduction of standardised tests within the school leaving exams. While higher education institutions still set their own entrance exams a natural field of co-operation between the two levels will develop.

There are traditionally close links between VET schools and corresponding faculties of technical universities in their respective sectors. Similar to VET schools, technical

universities, facing a decline in population and a shift in interest towards humanities and arts, are trying to attract VET schools graduates; as a consequence diverse activities among these institutions are emerging. Nevertheless, there is no institutional co-operation between tertiary and secondary levels in the content of education; tertiary level specialists participate in curricular innovations in secondary VET education on a personal basis. With the establishment of the National Curriculum Board (*Národná kurikulumná rada*), the institutional backing of co-operation appears possible in the future.

Furthermore, it is assumed that modularisation and introduction of credits will enhance permeability of the system. Traditionally, changing pathways is a rare case and almost exclusively it is an indicator of stepping down from academically more demanding to less demanding studies, e.g., from grammar school (*G, gymnázium*) to VET schools or from VET ISCED 3A to VET ISCED 3C programmes. Although there are no legislative barriers and the decision on moving to other school is fully at discretion of two school directors changes are hampered by reluctance of school to lose student and relevant per capita funding.

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

The National Curriculum Board (*NKR, Národná kurikulumná rada*) composed of 10 experts was established in April 2007 with the aim to coordinate a curricular reform. With regard to VET the standpoints of NKR concerning results of experiments aimed at introduction of modular approach in secondary VET study and training branches will be of crucial importance. Modular curricula have been experimented for more than 10 years however dissemination of experience did not happen. It might be further boosted by the Copenhagen process, such as the introduction of credits in secondary VET (ECVET).

Currently, curricula design is educational sector driven, which may not reflect business sector needs. Although social partners were invited to contribute to curricula development, employers and trade unions have not yet been of substantial influence (except for within the automotive and financial sectors). Curricula renewal is a permanent process which in more recent years aims to cover a wider range of specialisations: new curricula are more widely constructed and overarch former sub-specialisations while, at the same time, trying to provide more room for individual tailoring.

Fifteen expert commissions on curricula have been established at the national level to cover all sectors of the economy. They are affiliated to the State Institute of Vocational Education (*Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania*) providing administrative infrastructure as well as methodological advice. Curricula agreed within the commissions must be approved (and are subject to change) by the Ministry of Education (*Ministerstvo školstva*). While there are no regional bodies involved in curricula development, all schools have the opportunity to adjust curricula to regional/local needs. Schools are free to change 10% of the weekly hours of instruction and 30% of the content within certain subjects.

New curricula contain explicitly stated competences, among which new basic skills are embedded. Although the importance of new skills is fully recognised and the importance of the introduction of new methods such as e-learning is recommended and supported, progress in this field has been hampered by a lack of equipment and an insufficiently developed learning environment as well as by rather traditional teacher and trainer training. Digital resources are limited and despite the successful fulfilment of the PCs for Schools project (all basic and secondary schools are wired to the Internet as a result of massive investment in 2004) computer assisted learning and e-learning is applied very selectively and promoted predominantly by highly motivated individuals. Despite solid policy papers and activities (*Infovek project*) mainstreaming in this field is a challenge for both secondary and tertiary education.

On 6th June 2007 the government approved a "Concept of Two-level Model of Educational Programmes in VET". A state level curriculum should set state education policy requirements based on the already adopted National Programme of Training and Education in the Slovak Republic for forthcoming 15 – 20 Years, as well as requirements based on sectoral analysis of national economy. National educational

programmes (state level curricula) will be issued by the Ministry of Education after cooperation with respective sectoral ministries. School educational programmes will be elaborated by respective schools in cooperation with regional players within the framework of national educational programmes. Alignment with regional labour market needs and regional development and subsequent successful assertion of graduates at the labour market is the highest priority in curricula development at the school level.

The ESF co-funded project “Improving the Quality of Vocational Education and Training in the Slovak Republic at ISCED 3C level” carried out by the State Institute of Vocational Education (*ŠIOV, Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania*) is aimed at creating of 15 state educational programmes covering respective fields of national economy and training of teachers – future multipliers of know-how for development of school educational programmes. DACUM methodology adopted by *ŠIOV* within the cooperation with the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAS), Canada, supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), can be used for the development of curricula based on the analysis of professions. DACUM is an abbreviation of the term “Developing a Curriculum”, however the methodology is based on analyses of professions and jobs in cooperation with employers, and can be very supportive for the development of the competence based qualification system.

08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

0801 - ACCUMULATING, ACCREDITING AND VALIDATING FORMAL LEARNING

BACKGROUND

The VET national qualification system is very strictly regulated by in detail elaborated basic pedagogical documents stipulating educational requirements, and diverse sectoral legislation setting additional professional/occupational requirements on graduates of schools, which may but do not have to be fulfilled by graduates when receiving a graduation certificate.

The validation of formal learning in primary and secondary education level is regulated by School Act No. 29/1984 Coll. (*Zákon č. 29/1984 Zb. o sústave základných a stredných škôl (školský zákon)*), as amended, Act No. 596/2003 Coll. on State Administration in Education and School Self-government (*Zákon č. 596/2003 Z.z. o štátnej správe v školstve a školskej samospráve*), as amended, and by subsequent decrees, and it follows a traditional pattern. Schools providing primary and secondary education have to adopt the curricula (represented by basic educational documents (*ZPD, základné pedagogické dokumenty*, see 0703 for details) in essence approved by the Ministry of Education (Ministerstvo školstva, MŠ) and subjected to supervision by the State School Inspection (*Štátna školská inšpekcia*). In order to align education output to employers' requirements, representatives of employers are allowed to participate in both curriculum development and final exams. Methodology for creation *ZPD* was elaborated by the State Institute of Vocational Education (*ŠIOV, Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania*) and approved by MŠ.

Within *ZPD*, the profile of graduates is described including occupations and/or professions explicitly listed. In specific cases, additional exams according to sectoral legislation might be required, e.g. *MPSVR* Decree No. 718/2002 Coll. regarding safety at work.

There is no specific institution involved in accumulating learning and facilitating the transfer and there are no partial qualifications recognised and registered. However, individual schools can offer studies of individual subjects followed by individual subjects exams and eventually by final exam leading to certificate of apprenticeships or a “*maturita*” certificate. The “*maturita*” certificate entitles graduate for applying for higher education.

In addition to the aforementioned education sector legislation, labour market is regulated by the Trade Licensing Act No. 455/1991 Coll. (*Živnostenský zákon č. 455/1991 Zb.*) and subsequent Ministry of Interior Decree No 323/2001 Coll. specifying the details on required knowledge and skills, examining and certifying. The Slovak Chamber of Craftsmen is authorised to organise qualifying exams (in extent corresponding to respective VET study curriculum) in cooperation with the Ministry of

Interior regional authority. In period of 2001-2007 3 792 out of 3 897 applicants received certificate on passing the exam and at the same time certifying professional competence for running respective small business (trade). This kind of exam entitling for receiving a license could be also considered in practice as an instrument for recognition of prior learning.

Influence of labour market on education and training is becoming stronger in particular due to the lack of qualified workers escalating after accession in to EU. During 1990s, in the period of restructuring economy, links between VET schools and businesses were interrupted and schools evolved autonomously regardless the real need of industries. With progressing restructuring in respective industries and involvement of strong investors looking for new labour force the cooperation of schools and businesses is becoming more pronounced by all players.

Tertiary VET programmes are accredited by the Accreditation Commission (*AK, Akreditačná komisia*) of the Slovak Government, pursuant to criteria laid down for the individual branches of studies. This accreditation is only relevant to input; the mechanisms of educational output assessment and quality assurance are still in the process of development. Similarly, continuing training institutions submit to an accreditation process at Accreditation Commission of the Ministry of Education (*Akreditačná komisia Ministerstva školstva*), pursuant to Act No. 386/1997 Coll. on Further Education, as amended. The quality of the output of CVET is purely market driven with no nation-wide requirements for the implementation of quality assurance.

Since the run-up to EU accession, private providers have increasingly offered VET with compatible qualification requirements to other EU countries. Thus, graduates of these programmes receive qualifications that are recognised by private enterprises co-operating or managed by international entrepreneurs but not necessarily by Slovak legislation.

It can be summarised that there are accreditation procedures to become a provider (input accreditation), and there are also standards and criteria gradually developed and refined, which have to be met, but there are no reliable external mechanisms developed to check a quality of learning outputs (output accreditation – evaluation). There are some changes in this, visible in formal secondary education, but there is still no progress in tertiary education and CVET.

MECHANISMS

Accreditation of formal learning is strictly education institutions based. Secondary schools are accredited as institutions by registration in the network of schools by the *MŠ* and education programmes are automatically accredited by adoption of official basic pedagogical documents approved by *MŠ*. Vertical and horizontal mobility between schools, access to specific exams and exemption from part of courses is in full responsibility of the director of school within limits of curricula (basic pedagogical documents).

Modular systems and credit points are in experimental form only – tested by some schools. There is no officially recognised secondary IVET programme in a modular and credit form.

In the tertiary education sector the Bologna declaration has been reflected and the credit system in all studies introduced, however alignment of the number of credits to learning outcomes and study load of respective courses is not generally achieved.

IMPACT OF POLICY

European policies on accumulating, accrediting and validating learning have still a limited impact on education/learning in IVET. Reforms in secondary education are hampered by insufficient promotion of modularisation of VET and a lack of fiscal incentives to transform programmes into a modular form. Thus, an important precondition for introduction of instruments of recognition and validation learning is not fulfilled.

On the other hand, it is expected that the legislation to be prepared following in 2007 adopted policy papers on training VET teachers and trainers, and on guidance and counselling, will reflect EU policies.

0802 - ACCUMULATING, ACCREDITING AND VALIDATING NON-FORMAL/INFORMAL LEARNING

BACKGROUND

Validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning is still only addressed by particular activities, e.g. within Leonardo da Vinci projects (e.g. the Czech project *Epanil* within which cooks were for the first time in Slovakia certified by the Secondary Specialised School using evaluation standards developed within this project aimed at recognition of non-formal and informal learning), ESF projects (e.g. SOP HR 2004/1-189 of *Atena - Centre for development of non-formal learning and personal development*); and/or it is a subject to academic discussions. Nation-wide, this discussion was opened by the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning and the subsequent consultation process.

Despite the positive approach towards the Copenhagen process and the recognition of the importance of this topic, no policy has been implemented so far.

MECHANISMS

There is no mechanism to accredit non-formal/informal learning established nation-wide and backed by legislation. Non-formal/informal learning cannot be accredited to give access to further formal education, unless by the director of school within the framework of curricula, as mentioned in 0801. Furthermore, within section 0801 mentioned qualifying exams induced by Trade Licensing Act No. 455/1991 Coll. organised in cooperation with regional state authorities and the Slovak Chamber of Craftsmen could be seen as a scheme to access regulated professions via recognition of non-formal/informal learning.

IMPACT OF POLICY

As policies on accumulating, accrediting and validating learning have not yet been implemented it is not possible to assess the impact on other parts of the training system. It will be however very important to avoid over-regulation concerning a new model of continuing professional development of teachers and trainers, and find appropriate balance between non-formal/informal learning and formal in-service teacher training in the law on the status of pedagogical staff which is already under preparation.

0803 - IMPACT OF EU POLICY COOPERATION

Creation of prerequisites for recognition of non-formal and informal learning by the end of 2008 has been explicitly set as a medium-term objective within the Position of the SR towards Lisbon Strategy (*Pozícia Slovenskej republiky k Lisabonskému procesu*), approved by the Government Resolution No. 251/2004 of 24th March 2004. The Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance (*Stratégia celoživotného vzdelávania a celoživotného poradenstva*) adopted by the government on 25th April 2007 again stressed the importance of validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning. The institutional infrastructure was proposed, however no details on methodology have been set so far. Subsequently, LLL Act to be prepared by the end of 2007 will legislatively back the establishment of the National Authority and respective certification rules. It is expected that afterwards discussions about appropriate methodologies to recognise and validate experiential learning will be boosted. Agreement on this is more important than legislative backing itself, as formal education system representatives are rather suspicious about the accreditation of non-formal and informal learning.

A working group for implementation of EQF composed of 20 experts including social partners' representatives has been created. The national system of qualifications linked to EQF should be elaborated till 2009 supported by the ESF project. It is planned that the project will be managed by the State Institute of Vocational Education (*ŠIOV, Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania*).

The consultation process on ECVET resulted in a preliminary deadline for implementation of ECVET, however the introduction of a credit system in secondary VET is considered controversial and questioned by some experts. Modularisation of programmes is a necessary precondition for introduction of ECVET and therefore a valid debate about ECVET could start after wider introduction of modules into secondary VET.

0804 - FACILITATING EU MOBILITY

National legislation has been harmonised with EU Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications. Transposition of this directive was executed by the Act No. 293/2007 Coll. on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (*Zákon č. 293/2007 Z.z. o uznávaní odborných kvalifikácií*) adopted by the parliament on 17th May 2007. A lists of professional associations or organizations, where membership is a sufficient proof, study programmes and qualifications directly recognised, is annexed. The recognition based on professional experience and practice is stipulated by §22 of this law.

Mobility of students depends on the flexibility of respective schools and is hampered by low remuneration of participants. See also National Report on Implementation and Impact of programmes SOCRATES and Leonardo da Vinci in the Slovak Republic 2000-2006 (*Národná správa o implementácii a dopade programov Socrates a Leonardo da Vinci v Slovenskej republike*) and the MoVE-iT comparative study on mobility in IVET in 33 European countries elaborated by CINOP in 2006.

09 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

Guidance and counselling is provided within the traditional guidance system of the educational sector, which is represented by individual counsellors at schools and by specific counselling institutions.

- School counsellors (*výchovní poradcovia*) are appointed to all basic schools (*základné školy*) providing both primary and lower secondary level education (they are not appointed at small rural schools providing primary education), grammar schools (*gymnaziá*) and most VET schools. Occasionally, they are supported by a school psychologist (*školský psychológ*). There were 151 psychologists appointed to schools in 2004, only 17 of which were appointed to VET schools. Special pedagogues (*školskí špeciálni pedagógovia*) provide special care for special educational needs (SEN) children which could also include guidance services. The services of school special pedagogues traditionally working at special schools (*špeciálne školy*) is also required by mainstream schools as a consequence of the growing integration of SEN children into basic schools. Such counsellors provide a wider range of support services than guidance.
- 79 educational and psychological counselling centres (*pedagogicko-psychologické poradne*) with 754 professional, of which 414 were psychologists, 238 pedagogues and 102 social workers in 2005. Among these centres 8 regional centres are serving prominently secondary school youth (usually up to 19/20 years of age), the rest is serving predominantly pre-school children and basic school pupils up to age 16. All centres provide guidance services as part of their wider mission, which includes consultations for students, parents and educators, psychological diagnoses and submitting proposals for the improvement of the psychological and social development of students. In 2004/2005 school year centres served 217 317 clients of which 28% were individual interventions, 32% group interventions, 22% seminars and tutorials for school counsellors and coordinators of drug addiction prevention and 18% other activities, e.g professional consultations. For 19 706 clients out of 72 574 clients who

visited centres the purpose of the visit was professional guidance and counselling.

- 75 special education counselling centres (*špeciálnopedagogické poradne*), of which 6 private and 1 church affiliated, served SEN children and youth attending special schools in 2005. There were also seventeen child integration centres (*detské integračné centrá*), of which 9 private, for children with various types of disabilities. This sub-system started to emerge in early 90s and first four centres were established in 1991.
- Four school computation centres (*školské výpočtové strediská*) with an education information system provide information about higher education institutions and secondary schools and their admission procedures.

Within the education sector, the Methodological Council for Educational and Psychological Counselling and Prevention (*Metodická rada pre výchovné a psychologické poradenstvo a prevenciu*) has been established as an advisory body of the Ministry of Education (*MŠ, Ministerstvo školstva*). It is composed of representatives of educational and psychological counselling centres, educational counsellors and school psychologists, and other experts from the field. Its role is to monitor activities of schools and their facilities in the area of counselling, to comment on policy papers and draft laws and to propose interventions.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING WITHIN WIDER FAMILY COUNSELLING SERVICES

The 46 regional branch offices of the Psychological Counselling Centre (*Centrum poradensko-psychologických služieb*), traditionally offered services to adults and their families. Since the 1990s they have been confronted with increased vocational guidance and counselling requirements for unemployed people or those at risk of unemployment. However, their original agenda was different and this target group should have been primarily addressed by the first contact staff of labour offices. Following the Act No. 305/2005 Coll. on social and legal protection of children and social curatorship (*Zákon o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele*) regional branch offices were integrated into offices of labour, social affairs and family and the Psychological Counselling Centre into the Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*ÚPSVaR, Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*).

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING WITHIN THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Guidance and counselling is an integral part of the services provided by 45 Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*úrady práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) headed by *ÚPSVaR*, which in turn is directly managed by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family (*MPSVR, Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*). Since January 2004, this network replaced the public legal National Labour Office (*Národný úrad práce*) with eight regional and 79 district offices.

OTHER INITIATIVES

Public sector services are complemented by private sector activities. Internet-linked services are the most popular. Predominantly university educated individuals make use of specific portals, e.g. www.profesia.sk or www.askforjob.sk. The co-operation of public employment services with this kind of digital service provider, as well as district labour offices with private local service providers is gradually increasing. The Regional Chamber of Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry (*Slovenská obchodná a priemyselná komora*) in *Žilina*, which has been engaged for long years in promotion of cooperation of businesses with VET (e.g. in final exams of graduates of secondary vocational schools (*SOU, stredné odborné učilištia*)), has created the school leavers labour exchange website www.absolvent.sk.

The Euroguidance Centre (National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance) was established in 1998 and is affiliated to the National Agency of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme. Other instruments have been developed with international co-operation. In cooperation of private Czech and Slovak companies under surveillance of the

MPSVR, an Integrated System of Typical Positions was developed with a registry offering

- a set of information describing the structure, contents and requirements of typical “representatives” of real jobs across all sectors of the Slovak national economy;
- describing aspects of job practice (activities, conditions) and defining requirements to be met by the job practitioner.

The register is available at <http://www.istp.sk>.

The Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance and Counselling (*Stratégia celoživotného vzdelávania a celoživotného poradenstva*) adopted by the government on 25th April 2007 proposed to interlink the currently autonomous system of lifelong guidance and counselling (LLGC) and declared urgent need to increase the number of professionals experienced in policy making in this field. Some measures identified within this policy paper address explicitly LLGC. The most relevant are the introduction of the integrated system of LLGC backed by the governmental institution (8.5), the establishment of the national expert group to set quality standards for LLGC (8.6), the introduction of the quality assurance system in LLGC (8.8), and the development of university study programme at the master level in LLGC (8.13).

A little bit earlier two policy papers concerning two aforementioned subsystems of future modern LLGC were adopted by the government.

The Concept of the Pedagogical and Psychological Guidance System and its Implementation into the Practice (*Koncepcia pedagogicko-psychologického poradenského systému a jeho implementácie do praxe*) was adopted on 21st March 2007 stressing importance of career guidance and counselling that should complement for long-year existing systems of educational and psychological counselling in schools (and redefined the role of education counsellor and school psychologist) and in educational and psychological counselling centres. 678 professionals in these centres, of which 389 psychologists, are considered missing, compared to the optimal number of employees of centres in 2006.

The Concept of Special Education Counselling (*Koncepcia špeciálnopedagogického poradenstva*) complementing the Concept of the Pedagogical and Psychological Guidance System was also adopted by the government on 21st March 2007. As already mentioned earlier special education counselling is evolving strongly. As of September 2006 there were 19 917 children in special basic schools, 6 922 children in SEN classes of mainstream basic schools, and 13 074 SEN pupils individually integrated in mainstream schools (in total 39 913 at primary and lower secondary level) and 4 645 students in (upper) secondary schools, of which 709 in special school and 3 936 individually integrated students. As there are still less than 50% SEN students individually integrated, gradual demand for counselling services can be expected. The paper envisaged the need to specify missions of especial education pedagogues/counsellors in schools and field special education counsellors.

0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

As indicated in 0901, guidance and counselling services are provided in the education and social sectors simultaneously.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

School counsellors (*výchovní poradcovia*), school psychologists (*školskí psychológovia*) and special pedagogues (*školskí špeciálni pedagógovia*) provide guidance services to children and young people. School counsellors should offer information about subsequent educational possibilities, professions for which schools offer VET, and about the situation on the labour market. In practice, the educational counsellor's ability to provide good quality information depends on their co-operation with the next level of schools and the local labour office. Educational counsellors are not expected to assess individual abilities and aptitudes, this is offered in co-operation with specialists from Educational and Psychological Counselling Centre (*školská pedagogicko-psychologická poradňa*) of which there are 77 with two affiliations serving

all schools in the 79 administrative districts and 8 serving educational institutions (predominantly secondary schools) within the 8 administrative regions in Slovakia. Education counselling is regulated by Ministry of Education Decree No. 43/1996 Coll. (*Vyhláška Ministerstva školstva č. 43/1996 Z.z. o podrobnostiach o výchovnom poradenstve a o poradenských zariadeniach*). Although all Educational and Psychological Counselling Centres serve educational institutions, they are also open to parents and students looking for advice and they cover a wide range of services to prevent mental, emotional and social disorders among pupils and students of primary and secondary school age.

Higher education institution students are served by psychological counselling centres established at university seats, however vocational guidance and counselling represents a rather a marginal segment.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING WITHIN THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The information and counselling services of labour offices for the job seekers and persons interested in employment are stipulated by Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services (*Zákon č. 5/2004 Z.z. o službách zamestnanosti*), as amended, and the related Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family No. 31/2004 Coll. (*Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny č. 31/2004 Z. z.*).

These services provide assistance in selecting professions and occupations suitable for individuals, and in the selection of employees for employers. According to § 43 of the act, the office may organise professional consultancy in the form of individual and group consultations and guarantees the preparation of an individual action plan (IAP) to support jobseekers on file in the register for a specified time. The individual action plan is based on an evaluation of personality, abilities and professional skills of the applicant and is prepared by the jobseeker in co-operation with the professional consultant. It determines the type and scope of assistance required for facilitating his/her occupational reintegration. According to § 8 of the act, disadvantaged job seekers include school graduates; citizens older than 50 years; long-term unemployed; citizens who did not perform gainful activity not even prepared for a profession in the framework of systematic vocational preparation or further education, due to inability of harmonizing duties at work with his/her parental obligations; parents, or persons, pursuant to a special regulation, who cares for three or more children, or lone citizens caring of a child; citizens who have lost the ability to carry out his/her current employment for health reasons and who are not disabled citizens; citizens moving or moved within the territories of Member States of the European Union, or citizens staying in the territory of a Member State of the European Union in order to carry out an employment; disabled citizens; and aliens who have been granted asylum (see also 0503).

Over 200 000 of the registered unemployed (representing over 40% of the total number) developed IAPs in 2003. Since then, preparing individual action plans has become a standard tool and assistance in the development of IAP is offered up to 6 months after the day of registration, according to the aforementioned decree.

Two European Social Fund mirror projects managed by the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*ÚPSVaR, Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) were set to improve employment services by means of career counselling. Within the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources National Project VII "Increasing the scope and quality of employment services via information and advice and career advice instruments and services" with the project realisation period 1st July 2004 to 30th June 2005 and the budget EUR 3 684 211 (SKK 140 000 000) individual action plans were drawn up for 85 940 job seekers (122.77% of the target number of 70 000 job seekers) and other career advice services were offered to 18 427 job seekers. In contrast to this success within Single Programming Document NUTS II Bratislava Objective 3 National Project VII "Extension and improvement of employment services through information and counselling and specialised counselling tools and services" with the project realisation period 1st June 2004 to 30th June 2005 and the budget EUR 414 473.68 (SKK 15 750 000) long-term career advice services were not demanded due to high client turnover and a strong absorption capacity on the labour market.

The National Project VII was followed by two national projects within SOP and two within SPD:

- SOP HR National Project VIIA aimed at the development of tools and forms of information services and career guidance and counselling for all interested clients with the budget EUR 2 289 474 (SKK 87 million) for the period 1st August 2005 to 31st December 2006;
- SOP HR National Project VIIB aimed at professional counselling for job seekers, with the budget EUR 6 315 789 (SKK 240 million) for the period 1st December 2005 to 31st December 2007;
- SPD Bratislava national Project VIIA with the budget EUR 333 342.10 (SKK 12.667 million) for the period 1st August 2005 to 31st December 2006;
- SPD Bratislava national Project VIIB with the budget EUR 263 157.89 (SKK 10 million) for the period 1st December 2005 to 31st December 2007.

Till 30th June 2006, 110 837 clients were served within NP VIIA, of which 27 889 students were served with career guidance and counselling services.

Till 30th June 2006, out of 27 248 job seekers served within NP VIIB, 3,467 were placed in jobs.

Computer based services and specialised Internet portals (see also 0901) attract the young and better educated, while job fairs and print publications including specialised weeklies remain popular with the older and less educated. ESF offers considerable opportunity for the development of ICT linked services, e.g. publicly accessible points of Internet based services are to be established.

0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

- Educational (school) counsellors (*výchovní poradcovia*) at schools are qualified subject teachers, often with special in-service training but without special qualifications. As a rule, an experienced teacher is identified by the school head for this service and sent to a part-time training course provided within in-service teacher training and/or specific lectures. In-service training programmes are usually offered by methodological-pedagogical centres and approved by the Ministry of Education (*MŠ, Ministerstvo školstva*) after reviews by two independent experts. There has been a lengthy discussion about the qualification requirement for counselling services. For example, a proposal of the association of school counsellors has established qualification requirements, which will be discussed at the Methodological Council for Educational and Psychological Counselling and Prevention (*Metodická rada pre výchovné a psychologické poradenstvo a prevenciu*), an advisory body of *MŠ*; in 2005.
- Special pedagogues (*školskí špeciálni pedagógovia*) working at the Educational and Psychological Counselling Centre (*školská pedagogicko-psychologická poradňa*) are graduates from special pedagogical master degree programmes. Traditionally, the Comenius University Faculty of Education (*Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity*

Komenského) was the only higher education institution offering this programme.

- School psychologists (*školskí psychológovia*) are graduates from university masters programmes in psychology or educational psychology.

Currently there are no pre-service study programmes focusing on career information, guidance or counselling. Within the State Institute of Vocational Education (*ŠIOV, Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania*) led Leonardo da Vinci MODILE-EUROCARGO project, a professional guidance and counselling educational programme has been developed. The programme is based on eleven modules: Module 1 – General Aspects, Module 2 – Information Management, Module 3 – Quality Management, Module 4 – Community Cooperation, Module 5 – Labour Relations, Module 6 – Occupational, Educational and Career Counselling Psychology, Module 7 – Sociology, Module 8 – Minority Groups in Career Counselling, Module 9 – Ethics in Career Counselling, Module 10 – Marketing in Career Counselling, Module 11 – Statistics. A part of the Educational Program includes the Handbook of Applicable Legislation and the Terminological Dictionary. It is already accredited for in-service training of career counsellors and education (school) counsellors and was used in Technical University in *Košice* within ESF project. It depends on the universities whether they make use of this product in order to turn it into an accredited bachelor's study programme.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING WITHIN THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Counsellors at labour offices are required to have at least a bachelor's degree with a major in social or human science. At the moment, there are many graduates from the university social work study programme working in the field, however, many of the counsellors employed in the 1990s had no more than secondary school education. Counsellors of former psychological counselling centres are also graduates from university master programmes in psychology or educational psychology.

10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

HOW MUCH TO INVEST IN EDUCATION

The Slovak government has declared its commitment in policy documents (National Programme of Upbringing and Education in the Slovak Republic (*Národný program výchovy a vzdelávania v Slovenskej republike na najbližších 15 až 20 rokov*, see 0201)) to increasing public expenditure on education from less than 4% of GDP to a minimum of 5% until 2006 and to a minimum of 6% until 2010. Specific commitments were also made to increasing expenditure on tertiary education (according to article 10 (2a) of the Concept for the Further Development of Tertiary Education for the 21st Century (*Koncepcia ďalšieho rozvoja vysokého školstva na Slovensku pre 21. storočie*)) by 0.1% of GDP measured on a yearly basis for 2001, 2002 and 2003. Nevertheless, such policy statements have been revised in the context of the need to reduce the state budget deficit to below 3% to meet the Maastricht criteria and Slovakia has remained at the bottom of the EU in expenditures on education (expressed as a share of GDP). In 2006 it was 4.5% GDP and in 2005 only 4.15% GDP. Moreover, the Convergence Programme of Slovakia for Years 2006 to 2010 as well as indicative state budget proposal for three consecutive years do not suggest an originally projected increase in expenditures on education.

DEBATING THE REFORM ON FINANCING VET

Despite many reforms, there were no substantial changes in the origin of funding IVET which has remained predominantly a state (public) budget issue. Reform involving the business sector in both direct IVET co-financing and consequently the quality check of VET is pending.

A number of financing reforms have been suggested. From the perspective of practitioners they have wanted:

- unify school management modes - removing the current division between contributory and budgetary organisations (see 1002);

- enable the establishment of schools as non-profit organisations;
- establish a VET Development and Support Fund.

Opinions of the Ministry of Finance (*MF, Ministerstvo financií*) have differed. They have stressed:

- fiscal discipline and the introduction of hard budget constraints (managers cannot expect that the government will bail them when they incur losses);
- on-line monitoring of expenditures in all public organisations by the State Treasury (*Štátna pokladnica*).

MF did not support the creation of the levy type VET fund nor any other tax-linked fiscal incentives in support of VET/LLL by enterprises and individuals. The only appropriate tool according to MF was the reduction of corporate and income tax (now at a flat rate of 19%).

Similarly, there were also all proposals to introduce fiscal incentives in support of CVET rejected.

FUNDING FLOWS CHANGES TO VET

In 2004, the funding system changed whereby state funds were distributed to school establishers, i.e. municipalities, self-governing regions, and newly created regional (school) offices (*krajské školské úrady*). For explanation of establishers' responsibilities see 0301. Funds are distributed from:

- Ministry of Education (*MŠ, Ministerstvo školstva*) and its budget chapter (over 76% of the total regional schooling budget) via eight regional school offices, which cannot redistribute funds received but must earmark the funds and pass them to establishers (inclusive private and church affiliated) for financing wages and operational expenditures of schools (regional school offices are at the same time establishers of some educational institutions – see 0301);
- MF directly to establishers (i.e. local municipalities and/or regional governments) for financing additional activities e.g. school clubs, canteens, etc.

Establishers receive means calculated exactly according to per capita normatives (see 1002) but they could partly redistribute them. They must transfer to schools 80 % of the wage normative and 75% of the operational normative. In order to prevent hard impact of per capita funding to respective schools (predominantly small rural schools) a minimum guaranteed funding is envisaged for the next three years, e.g. 95% of previous year expenditures for current expenditures are guaranteed by *MŠ*; in 2004.

From 2005, fiscal decentralisation came into force through redefinition of income tax revenue: 70.3% was earmarked for municipalities, 23.5% for self-governing regions and 6.2% remaining with the state as the reserve. Municipalities and regions also became responsible for setting the amount of some other taxes (predominantly the property tax).

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

As explained in 0401, there are two main types of upper secondary schools providing VET qualifications: secondary specialised schools (*SOŠ, stredné odborné školy*) and secondary vocational schools (*SOU, stredné odborné učilištia*). In recent years, the main VET providers (*SOŠ and SOU*) have been merging to form associated secondary schools (*ZSŠ, združené stredné školy*) and/or joined schools (*SŠ, spojené školy*).

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT TYPES

The funding for these schools has differed. *SOŠ* have been classified as budgetary organisations whereby they were purely state funded whereas *SOU* have been

classified as contributory organisations whereby they were only co-funded by the state (due to their historical links with enterprises and the funding they used to receive from them). ZŠ and SŠ tend to be contributory organisations, however, it is up to educational authorities to decide on the financial management type in the phase of the merging of original schools.

The most important difference in management was this: budgetary organisations were due to return their income to the state budget, while contributory organisations were not. The most important difference affecting the accountancy of contributory organisations concerns depreciation, which is not applied within the accountancy of budgetary organisations.

CURRENT EXPENDITURES

All VET schools are legal entities and have their own budgets, albeit, operated under strict regulations. Budgets are set through a formula comprised of normatives. Since a reform in 2003, this has meant that all schools regardless of type and ownership (i.e. also private schools) are subsidised from the state budget equally based on normatives figures. Class normatives introduced in 2001 were later replaced by per capita normatives (for funding flows see 1001). The following tables offer an overview of current expenditure normatives (per student contributions from the state budget).

Table 1: Current expenditure normatives per student in 2004 - 2006 (in EUR****)

SCHOOL CATEGORY***	WAGE NORMATIVE			OPERATIONAL NORMATIVE (MINIMUM)			NORMATIVE TOTAL (MINIMUM)**		
	2004	2005	2006	2004	2005	2006	2004	2005	2006
REGULAR ZŠ	409.0	458.1	486.7	98.2	112.9	122.4	507.2	571.0	609.1
G	490.5	549.3	632.3	99.8	115.2	126.1	590.2	664.6	758.4
SOŠ	682.6	764.5	812.3	103.6	120.7	130.7	786.2	885.2	943.0
CA	682.6	549.3	659.8	103.6	115.2	126.8	786.2	664.6	786.6
SOŠ OF HEALTH	792.5	1014.4	1077.8	105.8	127.0	137.5	898.2	1141.5	1215.3
SOŠ OF ART	792.5	1171.5	1484.0	105.8	131.0	147.9	898.2	1302.5	1631.9
CONSERVATORIES	1707.9	1912.9	2371.1	123.8	149.9	170.6	1831.7	2062.8	2541.7
SOU AND U	746.7	836.3*	888.6	120.6	142.7	153.2	867.4	979.0*	1041.9

SPV	309.3	346.4	368.0	96.2	110.1	119.4	405.5	456.5	487.4
SŠ FOR DISABLED	1056.6	1198.6	1489.2	142.5	165.1	226.04	1199.2	1363.7	1715.3

Source: Ministry of Education (*MŠ, Ministerstvo školstva*)

* In case of *SOU* and *U* without practical training normatives were only 394.5 and 505.8 respectively

** sum of two normatives (wage and operational); the range in operational normatives (only minimum is presented in the table) is in detail regulated according to specific variables (one of variables was represented by eight climate categories with different heating requirements), the maximum normative was higher in each category by EUR 22.3 in 2004 and 21.6. in 2005. In 2006, it represented EUR 24.5, however in case of special schools normatives varied more (also depending on the category of disability) with maximum Euro 5721.8

*** *ZŠ* - basic schools (*základné školy*). *G* - grammar schools (*gymnázia*). *CA* = Commercial academies. *U* – vocational schools (*učilištia*). *SPV* – centres of practical training (*strediská praktického vyučovania*); *ZŠ* and *G* data are presented for the sake of comparison

**** 2004 data according to the exchange rate EUR 1 = SKK 41.16 as of 31st December 2003; 2005 data according to the exchange rate EUR 1 = SKK 38.796 as of 31st December 2004, 2006 data according to the exchange rate EUR 1 = SKK 37.848 as of 30th December 2005

Table 2: Funding of the learning environment* in 2004-2006 (in EUR****)

SCHOOL CATEGORY***	MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT, ETC.			CONTINUING TRAINING OF PEDAGOGICAL STAFF*****	
	2004	2005	2006	2005	2006
REGULAR ZŠ	14.2	16.4	17.6	2.3	2.4
G	15.8	18.3	20.6	2.8	3.2
SOS	19.6	22.7	24.3	3.8	4.1
CA	19.6	18.3	21.2	2.8	3.3
SOS OF HEALTH	21.8	27.8	29.8	5.1	5.4
SOS OF ART	21.8	31.0	38.1	5.9	7.4

CONSERVATORIES	39.8	46.1	56.4	9.6	11.9
SOU AND U	20.9	24.2**	25.9	4.2**	4.4
SPV	12.2	14.1	15.1	1.7	1.8
SŠ FOR DISABLED	27.0	24.1	44.1	6.0	7.5

Source: MŠ

* means out of total normatives per student intended for direct funding of learning environment

** In SOU and U not offering practical training normatives were reduced - only 15.1 and 2.0 respectively

***for abbreviations explanation see the previous table

**** For exchange rates see the previous table

**** No means were specified for staff training in 2004

CAPITAL BUDGETS

Capital investment is sensitive to the state budget capacity and the limits set by the fiscal policy of the Ministry of Finance (*MF, Ministerstvo financi*). Before funds are sent to school establishers a certain amount is deducted for centrally supervised activities. In case of public VET schools funds are funnelled and finally allocated by offices of self-governing regions. Schools' requirements have exceeded these limits for a long period. Thus, a modernisation dept is even officially proclaimed. For an example of capital funding with detailed figures see Thematic Overview 2006 section 1002

IMPACT OF FUNDING CHANGES FOR IVET

While the introduction of normative funding has meant a more transparent allocation of funds to schools as well as a more realistic allocation reflecting the real costs of educational programmes, in practice the normative figures have been set and adjusted to the possibilities of the state budget. For three consecutive years, after having set normatives the Ministry of Education allowed further negotiation in order to tamper the effect of normative funding for some (predominantly small) schools. Within these three years school establishers (in particular municipalities and self-governing regions) have had the possibility to adjust to normative financing and resolve the problem of schools at risk by merging or closing schools unable to survive. Nevertheless, fighting for students is coupled with softening of educational standards, as there is no efficient quality assurance introduced in schools.

PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN IVET

Parents pay for school supplies and special textbooks (e.g. foreign language books printed abroad and considered by the school to be more appropriate than those available for free). They are also usually required to contribute to the budget maintained by the Association of Parents (*Rodičovské združenie*) by a small lump sum about EUR 10 yearly. There are no detailed analyses of these marginal sources.

2% of the income tax and corporate tax could be allocated for activities of NGO's, school-affiliated NGO's earn from this source successfully for the improvement of the learning environment. There are no direct mandatory contributions to IVET from businesses to VET schools.

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

Funding for CVET is not regulated by any specific legislation. Few institutions report systematically on their CVET activities. Therefore distribution of means is offered rather than the absolute numbers in the following table. Analysed data does not cover

part-time studies in formal education. 2005 nominal data are added to indicate the total amounts within respective lines.

Table 1: Distribution of sources of financing of CVET* in 1997-2005
(%, in 1000s EUR)

TYPE OF SOURCES	1997	1999	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2005
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	1000s EUR
STATE BUDGET SUBSIDIES	17	19	21	24	23	36.36	21.34	5115.4
EXTRA-BUDGETARY SOURCES	2	4	4	-	-	-	-	-
EMPLOYERS	30	16	18	13	14	13.34	22.04	5282.1
TRAINEES	25	37	36	43	38	39.30	35.09	8410.0
LABOUR OFFICES	9	1	6	10	8	7.07	9.15	2193.6
DONATIONS OF NATURAL AND LEGAL PERSONS	1	0	2	2	2	0.46	0.23	55.3
MUNICIPALITIES	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.11	504.8
OTHER ACTIVITIES OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS	7	8	4	-	-	-	-	-
OTHERS	9	15	9	8	15	3.47	10.03	2404.5
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	23965.7

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education (ÚIPŠ, Ústav informácií a

prognóz školstva)

Note: EUR 1 = SKK 37.848 as of 30th December 2005

* Data from well-disciplined institutions (e.g. 366 in 2004) and at the same time the most important providers

These data do allow for the identification of some trends such as citizens needs to use their own resources to fund their training either to improve or maintain their potential employability. The highest share in financing of CVET came from trainees (with a gradual increase from 25% to over 30% in share), followed by subsidies from employers and the state budget. It could be expected that the share of state subsidised training will decrease and share of employers' investment will increase, as indicated in 2005 data.

It is estimated, that per-trainee expenditures are similar to per-student costs in initial VET, in the case of training similar to comparable programmes of formal education.

Eurostat LLL data on participation of 25-64 olds in education and training with 4,6% in 2005 confirmed three consecutive years below 5%. It is far from surprisingly highest share (8,5%) among acceding countries in 2002. Changes in the methodology of measuring in 2003 could explain the difference, but not the steadily low figure. Thus, the promotion of CVET/LLL and re-thinking fiscal incentives are gaining in importance.

There are no specialised instruments for the promotion of CVET, except for specific professions (e.g. in-service training of teachers or civil servants in administration). In general, CVET is not a crucial topic of social dialogue, except in the chemistry sector, due to the individual efforts of the trade union's head negotiator.

Slovakia did not participate in the international survey CVTS 2, and therefore there are no reliable EU comparable data about enterprise-based CVET. CVTS 3 data should appear in 2007.

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

In early 2000s, active labour market policies were regulated by respective paragraphs of Act No. 387/1996 Coll. on employment (*Zákon č. 387/1996 Z.z. o zamestnanosti*), as amended, and managed by the public legal National Labour Office (*NÚP, Národný úrad práce*).

Table 1: Funding active labour market policies in 2002 and 2003

ALMP TOOLS	ALMP IN 2002		ALMP IN 2003	
	BUDGET ASSIGNED (IN EUR)	PEOPLE AFFECTED OR PLACES CREATED	BUDGET ASSIGNED (IN EUR)	PEOPLE AFFECTED OR PLACES CREATED
§ 82	10 494 950.90	48 143	4 904 197.11	24 711
§ 84	297 375.10	1 513	47 941.59	329
§ 86	2 840 944.34	17 719	82 409.14	530

§ 88	16 354 205.44	9 122	10 098 240.96	7 588
§ 89	14 667 219.95	11 815	6 710 036.39	4 185
§ 90	2 809 962.29	1 309	952 490.14	444
§ 90	191 678.96	410	28 698.06	54
§ 90B	1 137 826.41	4 428	655 731.20	2 738
§ 91	20 012 853.40	22 973	13 162 997.04	11 718
§ 91A	8 281 871.40	17 472	929 300.53	1 696
§ 92	4 370 782.68	2 191	2 050 306.78	998
§ 93	5 899 967.57	4 871	1 458 858.75	1 332
§ 107	7 314 322.13	1 960	4 494 681.71	1 361
§ 108	551 180.76	157	468 882.77	151
TOTAL	95 225 141.33	144 083	46 044 772.16	57 835

Source: NÚP and Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (2003 data)
Notes: EUR 1 = SKK 41.16 as of 31st December 2003

§ 82 - Re-training of Registered Unemployed, § 84 - Re-training of Employees, § 86 - Travel Costs Reimbursement, § 88 - Negotiated Placement in Self-employment, § 89 - Negotiated Placement with Employer, § 90 - Negotiated Placement for Graduates and Youth, § 90a - Short-term Negotiated Placement for Graduates and Youth, § 90b - Graduates' Placement, § 91 - Negotiated Placement in Community Service, § 91a - Negotiated Placement in Community Service for Long-term Registered Unemployed, § 92 - Specific Negotiated Placement, § 93 - Short-term Negotiated Placement, § 107 - Sheltered Places Created by Employers, § 108 - Sheltered Places Created by Self-employers

In 2004, National Labour Office was replaced by a state-managed network of 45 Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family headed by the Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*ÚPSVaR, Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) and labour market policies became regulated by Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on employment services. Since 2004, active labour market policies were paid from the budget of the Central

Office as well as from European Social Fund. Via respective national projects SKK 880 million (Euro 22.683 million, exchange rate as of 31st December 2004) was used of which the largest share of 450 million was spent within National project V – Activation of the long-term unemployed and the unemployed with low motivation dependent on the social assistance benefit related to § 52 of the Act on employment services. The following table offers the list of active labour market policies in 2004 and 2005.

Table 2: Funding active labour market policies in 2004 and 2005

ALMP TOOLS	PEOPLE AFFECTED OR PLACES CREATED		BUDGET ASSIGNED (IN EUR)		AVERAGE CONTRIBUTION PER PLACE OR PER PERSON (IN EUR)	
	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005
§ 46	27 208	35 689	5 455 898.5	6 967 597.8	200.5	195.2
§ 47	0	64	0.0	13 125.4	0.0	205.1
§ 49	5 618	9 908	8 250 424.5	15 882 106.6	1468.6	1603.0
§ 50	1 778	3 087	2 823 537.4	6 049 290.3	1588.0	1959.6
§ 51	14 462	24 838	5 152 065.6	8 832 972.4	356.2	355.6
§ 52	219 876	137 446	25 414 077.6	21 894 778.4	115.6	159.3
§ 53	51	77	11 820.5	18 706.3	231.8	242.9
§ 56	138	362	359 044.6	1 447 851.6	2601.8	3999.6
§ 57	107	271	275 596.0	1 114 856.6	2575.7	4113.9

§ 59	18	58	53 850.9	239 812.3	2991.7	4134.7
§ 60	0	2 731	0.0	2 881 544.5	0.0	1055.1
§ 110	4 098	1 891	3 269 257.3	144 738.1	797.8	76.5
TOTAL	273 354	216 422	50 789 976.9	65 487 380.2	185.8	302.6

Source: ÚPSVaR

Note: EUR 1 = SKK 38.796 as of 31st December 2004; EUR 1 = SKK 37.848 as of 30st December 2005

§ 46 Education and Training for the Labour Market of the Job Seeker and Person Interested in Employment, § 47 Education and Training for the Labour Market of Employee, § 49 Contribution for Self-Employment, § 50 Contribution for Employing a Disadvantaged Job Seeker, § 51 Contribution for the Graduate Practice, § 52 Contribution for Activation Activity, § 53 Contribution for Commuting to Work, § 56 Contribution for Establishing and Maintaining the Sheltered Workshop or Sheltered Workplace, § 57 Contribution for Operating or Performing Self-Employment to Disabled Citizens, § 59 Contribution for Activities of the Assistant at Work, § 60 Contribution to Cover Operating Costs of the Sheltered Workshop or Sheltered Workplace and Employees' Transport Costs;

§ 110 of the older act on employment (387/1996 Coll.) subsidies for sheltered workshops and workplaces

Since the late 1990s, expenditure on labour market training was not of substantial importance either in budgetary volume or in the number of trained individuals (except for 2002). Training for unemployed people was not considered an efficient tool for fighting unemployment as a consequence of the high dead weight and low absorption of the labour market. Within the new model of employment services following the Act No. 5/2004, budgets are provided for specific pro-active incentives; e.g. an activation bonus will also be given to those in re-training. Job seeking should also be stimulated by reimbursement of training costs to providers of VET.

Table 3: Distribution of Active labour market policies means in 2004 and 2005

ALMP TOOLS	2004	2005
§ 46	10.7	10.6
§ 47	0.0	0.0

§ 49	16.2	24.3
§ 50	5.6	9.2
§ 51	10.1	13.5
§ 52	50.0	33.4
§ 53	0.0	0.0
§ 56	0.7	2.2
§ 57	0.5	1.7
§ 59	0.1	0.4
§ 60	0.0	4.4
§ 110	6.4	0.2
TOTAL	100.0	100

Source: ÚPSVaR

Five largest items (§ 46, § 49, § 50, § 51, § 52) represented over 90% of all means in both years. In 2005, significant changes affected controversial tools of § 52 and § 49. The decrease of funding of “activation” tool can be considered a positive feature as this tool is seen controversial and even less successful than earlier “minor works for municipalities” tool. Increase in use of “Contribution for Self-Employment” tool can be seen negatively as the sustainability of self-employment proved low. On the other hand classic instrument training for labour market (§ 46) stagnated.

Labour offices may by written agreement refund costs in amount as follows: According to:

- § 46(4) up to 100% (75%, 50%) of the costs of first (second, any further) provision of education and training for the labour market of the job seeker;
- § 46(6) up to 100% of the costs of one education activity in the course of two years of the registration as a person interested in employment;

- § 47(5) up to 90% of the justified costs of the employee's education and training "... if upon their completion the employer continues employing him/her for at least 12 months, or when the employee's education ... is being organised within measures toward precluding or restricting collective redundancy".

According to § 46(7) unemployed in such training may receive reimbursement of boarding, accommodation and travel expenses. According to § 46(8) the same apply to persons interested in employment belonging to specific target groups: parents with children in pre-school age and elderly over 50 years of age.

As ESF has become the crucial instrument for co-funding public services, the government is trying to prevent the exclusion of low capitalised but capable applicants from the competition. Hence, no co-financing is required from non-profit institutions and by central government directly managed public institutions, 5% from other public institutions and minimum 5% (and in practice exactly 5%) from private subjects, when applying to ESF.

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

Most VET is funded from the state budget and a debate on the need to increase the amount and efficiency of public investment and how to attract more private funding goes on without results. In 2004 promising changes were visible, e.g. The National Action Plan of Employment for 2004 –2006 explicitly mentioned recommendations of the Council of EU on "more effective investment in human capital and lifelong learning" and "greater incentives to invest in training and to facilitate access to education".

Reflecting Guideline 4 on human capital development and lifelong learning measures were set in line with The Concept of Lifelong Learning in the Slovak Republic (*Koncepcia celoživotného vzdelávania v Slovenskej republike*) adopted by the government in February 2004. The Concept within six strategic goals explicitly listed goal 2 "Increasing investment in education as confirmation of EU priority people being its main asset", completed by activities concerning investment in education.

NAPE 0406 put stress on enhancing investment in lifelong learning by planned measures related to Guideline 4, e.g.:

- developing the strategy of multi-source financing of lifelong learning with the aim to increase the amount of financial means invested in education/training;
- implementing possible tax relief for employers aimed at increasing their investment in the training of their employees; and
- providing advantages for employers (financial, via tax relief, etc.) who cooperate with higher education institutions in developing study programmes and the provision of student practice.

In contrast to previous years this was clearly influenced by EU documents, and it was hoped that it indicated a real change. However, the shift from rhetoric to practice did not happen.

The Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance (*Stratégia celoživotného vzdelávania a celoživotného poradenstva*) adopted in 2007 again reiterated introduction of financial tools for development of LLL in measure 8.15, however without any concrete proposal of financial scheme. In measure 8.1 structural funds were identified as a source for implementation of the accepted strategy. Thus, the debate is going on, however apparently dominated by two untouchable fundamentals and a basic reluctance of all Slovak governments

- sticking to fiscal restrictions in order to achieve Maastricht criteria and adopt Euro as soon as possible (currently in 2009);
- considering efficient tax policy incompatible with any kind of tax related incentives for VET/LLL;
- inability of governments to reduce government costs and/or redirecting more resources to investment in education, LLL and R&D at the expense of other public expenditures.

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

Further to 2005 Spring summit of the European Council and re-launching the Lisbon strategy the National Reform Programme (NRP) for 2006-2008 was adopted by the Government Resolution No. 797/2005 of 12th October 2005. It reiterated reform programme main principle: responsible macroeconomic and fiscal policy; and two main goals: completing structural reforms and development of knowledge economy. There are three parts of the document highly relevant to VET: III.1. "Modern education policy"; IV.2. "Science, research and innovation"; IV.3. "Information society". For more details see [here](#).

European commission assessment of the NRP expressed criticism that it was "not always clear that measures presented are sufficient to meet objectives set out". Nevertheless, VET//LLL related issues were not mentioned among the points requiring further attention. Only three such points were identified: stimulation of R&D and innovations; tackling regional disparities and structural unemployment; and integration of vulnerable groups, in particular Roma.

However, assessment of the NRP within the Commission's document from 12 December 2006 is more focusing on educational issues.

Priority given to ICT in education was marked positively; and there is really an improvement in both - infrastructure and attraction of teachers to ICT bounded methodologies, i.a. stimulated by grants and competitions of telecommunications providers.

Furthermore, the Commission noted that there was little progress in raising participation rates of adults in training. Indeed, this rate is very low, in particular due to lacking financial stimulation of population which is not used to pay for education and has doubts on value added from further training. It is important to stress that the Slovak population is among the top EU countries in the share of ISCED 3 level educated.

The Commission correctly recognised that LLL strategy had been ongoing for several years. It must be confirmed that despite progress in 2007, adoption of the respective policy paper (see 0501 and 1005) and elaboration of first legislative principles of the new LLL act, there are no clearly set measures identified and policies able to introduce changes agreed. It is clear that for the elaboration of working LLL strategy labour market intelligence instruments must be developed and experts with relevant know how identified.

Indication of the Commission to increase investment in human capital is correct, however likely not reflected by the government in effort to reduce the budget deficit. In fact, regional schools reform as well as curriculum reform is hampered due to the lack of resources to boost reform activities among educators, and due to inability to employ businesses in substantial support of VET.

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND AS EXPRESSION OF IMPLICIT NATIONAL STRATEGIES

MPSVR became the main stakeholder in the field of VET/LLL through the ESF programming phase. Priorities and measures indicated within the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources (*Sektorový operačný program Ľudské zdroje*) and the

Single Programming Document NUTS II Bratislava Objective 3 (*Jednotný programový dokument NUTS II Bratislava cieľ 3*) have led to the development of concrete measures in support of VET and LLL and in fact replace the specialized lifelong learning policy paper. MPSVR is the managing authority which empowered MŠ to implement selected specific measures.

For detailed information on priorities and projects see Thematic overview 2006 section 1101.

For the sake of clarity four VET and employment relevant national projects designed and managed by the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family (*ÚPSVaR, Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*), are summarised in the following table (Table 1).

Table 1: VET related ESF funded national projects managed by <i>ÚPSVaR</i>	
TITLE OF THE NATIONAL PROJECT (NP)	RELEVANCE TO THE ACT NO. 5/2004 COLL. ON EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
NP III – Education and training of the unemployed for the labour market followed by NP IIIA)	§ 46 education and training for the labour market for the job-seeker and the job changer
NP V – Activation of the long-term unemployed and the unemployed with low motivation dependent on the social assistance benefit	§ 52 allowance for activation
NP VII – Extension and improvement of employment services through information and counselling and specialised counselling tools and services (followed by NP VIIA and NP VIIB)	§ 43 provision of reimbursement of part of travel costs relating to the jobseeker's participation in the activities determined in the individual action plan
NP IX–School leaver's job experience ("graduate practice")	§ 51 allowance for carrying out school leaver's job experience

Source: *ÚPSVaR*

Similarly, national projects carried out by institutions directly managed by the Ministry of Education (*MŠ, Ministerstvo školstva*) are summarised in the following table (Table 2).

Table 2: ESF National projects in the education sector	
PROJECT NAME, MANAGING	PROJECT OBJECTIVES

INSTITUTION AND DURATION	
<p>Creation, development and implementation of an open system of life-long learning in the SR for the labour market <i>Academia Istropolitana</i>, Bratislava 01/12/2004 – 31/12/2006</p>	<p>Creating and implementing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - system for monitoring, research and design of educational needs, derived from technologies applied in individual sectors of the economy; - system of quality management and certification for further-education establishments and programmes; - mutual horizontal and vertical cohesion of the further-education system and the formal education system with the help of introducing credits - system for financing further education and LLL
<p>In service-training of VET teachers regarding completing the study in secondary schools State institute of VET 01/12/2005 – 31/12/2008</p>	<p>VET teachers training in support of reform in completing the study in secondary schools, development of school leaving exams procedures, design and assessment methodology</p>
<p>Provision of secondary-school stipends for secondary-school students whose parents are dependent on welfare benefits Institute of Information and Prognoses, Bratislava, 01/06/2004 – 28/2/2006</p>	<p>Improving access to education for students of parents in material need by provision of secondary-school stipends.</p>
<p>Curricular transformation of teaching the general-education part of the secondary-school education in the process of preparing young people for the needs of the labour market National Institute for Education, Bratislava, 01/12/2004 – 31/12/2006</p>	<p>Transformation of the vocational training system in general-education subjects with regard to the needs of the labour market, with an emphasis on the needs of a knowledge-based society and increasing the quality of vocational training</p>
<p>Improving the level of measuring and monitoring the quality of education in the process of the preparing young people for the needs of the labour market National Institute for Education, 01/12/2004 – 31/12/2006</p>	<p>Building an expert workplace ensuring regular monitoring of the quality of primary and secondary education; improvement of instruments of quality measurement</p>
<p>Improving the effectiveness of</p>	<p>Ensuring links between teaching foreign</p>

<p>teaching foreign languages in connection with Slovakia's accession to the European Union National Institute for Education, 01/12/2004 – 31/12/2006</p>	<p>languages at individual levels and types of schools for the purpose of improving the overall level of results achieved and thus to prepare graduates for the needs of European labour market.</p>
<p>Increasing the qualification potential of members of the Romany community by introducing a new study field "Romany studies" in the secondary school education system National Institute for Education, 01/12/2004 – 31/12/2006</p>	<p>Creating of a new study field; graduates from "Romany studies" will be qualified to master the Romany language, know Romany literature and history, as essential preconditions for operating in Romany communities and institutions dealing with Romany issues.</p>

In 2007, new programming documents are being developed. The government has defined four priorities: infrastructure and regional accessibility, knowledge based economy, human resources and education. Nine operational programmes will be financed from the Cohesion Fund and European Fund of Regional Development, and two programmes from the European Social Fund. The Operational Programme Education has proposed budget EUR 617 801 578, with the managing authority the Ministry of Education. The Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion has proposed budget EUR 881 801 578, with the managing authority the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family (*MPSVR, Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*). Thus, in contrast with the previous programming period *MŠ* became independent from *MPSVR* in managing projects.

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Slovakia is fully involved in all community programmes, with Leonardo da Vinci projects decisively supporting bottom-up reforming steps in VET. In fact, contacts with institutions abroad are together with employers' requirements the two most significant stimulators of innovations in VET schools.

The importance of mobility is recognised as an important tool for the dissemination and sharing experience. Nevertheless, the volume of mobility and access to other countries' courses and qualifications are limited and as a rule only specific project-based.

Slovakia participates in the process of transparency improvement; including the introduction of EUROPASS related documents with the national reference point established at the ENIC/NARIC centre. Unfortunately, there is no functioning dedicated Europass website of the Slovak National Europass Centre and only detailed information in the Slovak language is available within the standard website of Cedefop.

After years of stagnation, significant improvement is visible in ICT introduction in schools, which should be followed by ICT-supported learning promoted by specific programmes. The ECDL infrastructure is already established, with a set of accredited bodies and specialists placed nationwide.

Despite strong commitment to Copenhagen process and already set deadlines, e.g. national qualification system compatible with EQF elaborated by 2009 (which is very vulnerable), the progress is rather slow and incoherent. The most visible weaknesses regarding the Copenhagen process are the lack of a nationally recognised quality assurance model(s), lasting reluctance to expand the national qualification system beyond IVET and the education sector, and slow progress with regard to the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

1103 - AUTHORS, SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

110301 - AUTHORS

The report was prepared by Juraj Vantuch with support of Dagmar Jelínková.

110302 - SOURCES, REFERENCES AND WEBSITES

For the Sources and Bibliography please see [here](#).