



# Vocational education and training in Slovenia

## Short description





Cedefop

Vocational education and  
training in Slovenia  
Short description

The **European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training** (Cedefop) is the European Union's reference Centre for vocational education and training. We provide information on and analyses of vocational education and training systems, policies, research and practice. Cedefop was established in 1975 by Council Regulation (EEC) No 337/75.

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*‘Ob specifičnem znanju, ki ga šola da dijaku za posamezen poklic, je potrebno dati tudi široko paleto splošnih kompetenc, saj ni mogoče pričakovati, da bodo mladi delali celo življenje na enem področju ali celo na istem delovnem mestu, zato se bodo njihove poklicne poti nepredvidljivo spreminjale in za prilagajanje bo potrebna široka paleta splošnih kompetenc.’*

*‘Apart from the specific knowledge for a profession, which the pupils receive from school, they also need a variety of general competences. It is impossible to expect that the young generation will spend their whole life working in the same field of work or even in the same profession. There is no way to predict where will their professional way take them, thus they will need a whole spectre of general competences to be able to adjust.’*

Milan Zver, Minister for Education and Sport, December 2007



# Foreword

Slovenia is reforming its vocational education and training (VET) system to ensure that it responds to economic and social change. In this short report we have tried to capture the main features of this system as they stand today.

The present reforms are aimed at reducing the dominance of the State in the VET system and to set major targets for the system itself: to raise the level of basic education to improve employment; to encourage people's autonomy and their ability to work in a team; to expand the study of foreign languages; to develop private initiative; and to forge closer links between education and the world of work.

These goals require Slovenia to modernise teaching and learning in VET, improve the quality of VET provision, create links between learning pathways, recognise non-formal and informal learning, develop individualisation and flexibility, make VET more attractive, and shift to modern governance – especially through new partnerships and financing arrangements. The ultimate goal of this ambitious reform is to position the VET system as a significant factor of employability, employment and entrepreneurship in a modern, technologically advanced, globalised and competitive economy.

The Slovenian Presidency ushers in the second three-year cycle (2008-10) of the renewed Lisbon strategy, and will continue to emphasise its strategic priorities: research, innovation, developing a competitive business environment, adapting the labour market and demographic change. For Slovenia, the key to success is to stay the course of modernisation and continue to implement the appropriate national reform programmes.

This report on vocational education and training in Slovenia, published during the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, is part of a series of reports that the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) publishes regularly on national vocational education and training systems <sup>(1)</sup>. Further information on the subject can also be found in Cedefop's databases, which are regularly updated by ReferNet <sup>(2)</sup>. Various descriptions of national vocational education and training systems (thematic overviews, thematic analyses, etc.) can be consulted on Cedefop's website (see European training village) <sup>(3)</sup>.

Aviana Bulgarelli  
Director

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<sup>(1)</sup> These publications available from:  
[http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information\\_resources/Bookshop/publications.asp?section=22](http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/Bookshop/publications.asp?section=22)

<sup>(2)</sup> Cedefop's European network of reference and expertise.

<sup>(3)</sup> [www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu) and [www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information\\_resources/NationalVet/](http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/)





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## Slovenia



# **1. General policy context – Framework for the knowledge society**

## **1.1. Political and administrative structure**

Slovenia is a democratic republic. The Head of State is the President of the Republic whose authority is mainly representative. Parliament consists of the National Assembly (*Državni zbor*) with 90 members (elected by general election every four years) which is the highest legislative authority, and the National Council (*Državni svet*) which is mainly an advisory body composed of representatives of different social interests. The government is composed of the president and 16 ministers. It is responsible for its policies to the national assembly. In 2004 Slovenia became a member of the EU.

Slovenia is divided into 210 municipalities which are local self-governing communities. They are established by law following a referendum of the residents in a given territory. As a consequence, the number of municipalities grows periodically. A legislative base to establish 14 provinces is before parliament, but not yet accepted. The government's tasks at local level are performed by 58 administrative units.

In 2005, the government adopted Slovenia's development strategy<sup>(4)</sup>, which defined objectives, development priorities, and corresponding action plans. Improving the quality of education and encouraging lifelong learning are among the priorities.

## **1.2. Population and demography**

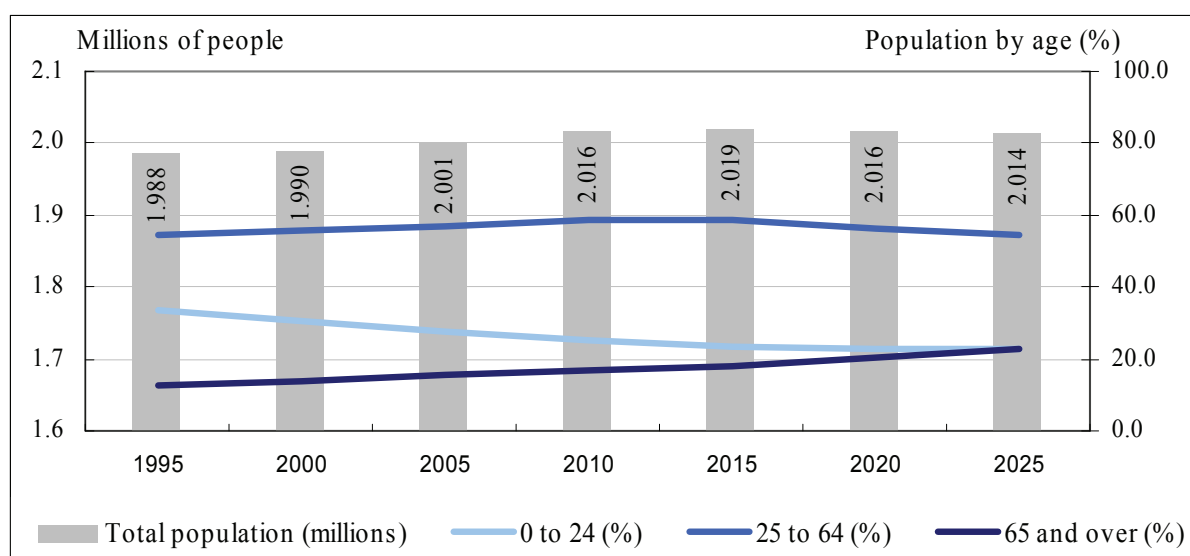
The surface of Slovenia is 20 273 km<sup>2</sup>. Its population on 30 June 2006 was 2 008 516. The official language is Slovenian. In areas where Italian or Hungarian ethnic communities reside, the official language is also Italian or Hungarian.

Since 1999 the population of Slovenia has grown every year, due to a rising net migration which in 2005 reached 3.2 per 1 000 inhabitants. According to the latest figures, net migration was at the same level or even higher in 2006. The natural population increase has been negative since 1997 (-0.3 per 1 000 in 2005). The fertility rate, falling almost continuously since 1980, increased in 2004 but it is still low (1.26 in 2005). However, life expectancy continues to increase (74.1 years for men and 81.3 years for women in 2005). Consequently, Slovenia's population is ageing. Due to rising net migration, the share of working age population will continue to grow until 2010, when it will start to decline (see Figure 1).

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<sup>(4)</sup> Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development, 2005. See Annex 4.

Figure 1: Population by age, 1995 to 2025 (in '000 and %)



Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, population statistics, 2007; Eurostat, population and social conditions, online database, 2007; calculations by the Institute for Macroeconomic Analysis and Development, Ljubljana.

### 1.3. Economy and labour market indicators

Slovenia's GDP has grown at an annual rate of around 4 % for more than a decade. In 2005 Slovenia reached 87 % of the EU-27 average GDP per capita in PPS (purchasing power standards). GDP growth continued in 2006 (5.2 %). The economic structure of employment is changing towards a more service-based economy, although this process is still relatively slow. Employment rates have been increasing since 2004, when Slovenia entered the EU. Slovenia's male employment rate is constantly slightly below the EU average while the female employment rate is slightly higher. Employment rate in the age group 55 to 64 is still low (32.5 % in 2006). The unemployment rate increased to 6.5 % in 2005, firstly due to a higher participation rate which continued to increase in 2006, while the unemployment rate fell to 6.0 %. For the past 10 years the female unemployment rate is constantly higher than the male one and this difference is becoming wider (see Table 1).

Public expenditure on education in Slovenia is relatively high. In 2004 it amounted to 5.85 % of GDP (EU-27: 5.07 %) and only four EU Member States (Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Belgium) spent a higher proportion of GDP on education. This can be explained partly by the high enrolment rate and also by the high transfer of public subsidies to the private sector, which is, however, decreasing. Private expenditure on education, which is also high in Slovenia, amounted in 2003 to 0.9 % of GDP. Private expenditure is spent mainly on tertiary education and preschool institutions.



Table 1: Selected labour market indicators, 1995 to 2006 (in %)

	1995		2000		2005		2006	
<b>Employment by sector of activity (%)</b>	<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>EU-27</b>	<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>EU-27</b>	<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>EU-27</b>	<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>EU-27</b>
Agriculture	14.2	9.3	11.9	7.9	10.1	6.4	9.7	6.3
Industry and construction	39.9	27.9	38.1	26.5	35.4	25.2	35.1	25.0
Services	45.9	62.8	50.0	65.6	54.5	68.4	55.3	68.6
<b>Total employment rate of people aged 15-64 years (%)</b>	<b>61.6*</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>62.8</b>	<b>62.2</b>	<b>66.0</b>	<b>63.4</b>	<b>66.6</b>	<b>64.4</b>
Men	66.0*	:	67.2	70.8	70.4	70.8	71.1	71.6
Women	57.1*	:	58.4	53.7	61.3	56.2	61.8	57.2
<b>Total unemployment rate of people aged 15 years and more (%)</b>	<b>6.9*</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>8.2</b>
Men	7.0*	:	6.5	7.8	6.1	8.3	4.9	7.6
Women	6.7*	:	7.0	9.8	7.0	9.6	7.2	8.9
15-24 years	17.5*	:	16.3	17.4	15.9	18.3	13.9	13.9

(:) Data not available.

(\*) Data for 1996.

Source: Labour market statistics (different sources), Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia; Eurostat, Population and social conditions, online database, 2007.

## 1.4. Educational attainment of population

The educational structure of the Slovenian population is improving because more young people and adults are enrolling in secondary and tertiary education. The percentage of those aged 25 to 64 who have attained a tertiary level of education is growing and has been slowly approaching the EU average. Conversely, the percentage of those not completing primary education or completing their education at primary level is decreasing. The participation rate of young people and adults in the formal education system continues to rise, especially in tertiary education (see Table 2).

Table 2: Population aged between 25 and 64, by highest level of education in the EU-27, 2006 (in %)

	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
<b>EU-27</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>EU-25</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>23</b>
Belgium	36	36	28
Bulgaria	31	51	18
Czech Republic	16	72	11
Denmark	25	45	29
Germany	25	55	20
Estonia	21	52	27
Ireland	35	36	26
Greece	42	40	19
Spain	50	22	26
France	35	41	23
Italy	50	39	11
Cyprus	34	39	28
Latvia	24	58	18

	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
Lithuania	20	57	22
Luxembourg	39	40	21
Hungary	27	58	15
Malta	72	17	11
Netherlands	32	41	26
Austria	25	60	15
Poland	21	64	15
Portugal	71	17	12
Romania	32	58	10
<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>18</b>
Slovakia	19	69	12
Finland	26	45	29
Sweden	20	50	25
United Kingdom	26	42	26

ISCED: International standard classification of education.

ISCED 0-2: Pre-primary education, primary education, lower secondary education, including 3c short (preparatory vocational and vocational education of less than two years duration).

ISCED 3-4: Upper secondary education without 3c short, post-secondary non-tertiary education.

ISCED 5-6: Tertiary education.

Source: Eurostat, population and social conditions, online database, 2007.

## 2. Policy developments

After entering the European Union in 2004 and adopting the euro in 2007, Slovenia has been rapidly developing a service-based economy, with the main emphasis on knowledge and creativity. In 2006 the Slovenian government adopted a framework for economic and social reforms to increase welfare in Slovenia (see Annex 3), within which effective development of new knowledge, lifelong learning, two-way flow of knowledge for economic development and social inclusion and quality jobs all have a central role. This is also reflected in new legislation (see Chapter 3). The following education acts were adopted: Vocational and Technical Education Act, Post-secondary Vocational Education Act, Act on Changes and Completion of National Occupational Qualifications and the National Programme on Adult Education (see Annex 3).

### 2.1. The main aims and priorities of VET policy

New legislation has the following aims at the centre of it:

- (a) develop VET to meet the needs of modern technological and social developments, as well as the needs and interests of individuals participating in it, considering the growing role of international cooperation and multiculturalism;
- (b) improve quality in schools and in work-based learning and the international comparability of vocational and technical education and qualifications;
- (c) provide greater flexibility of programmes in upper secondary vocational and technical education through modularisation and development of a credit transfer system in VET and opening up the curricula for regional needs. The goal is to prepare flexible and openly structured curricula, which will enable students and in particular adults to undertake step-by-step education, by combining modules and competences already acquired in formal, non-formal and informal settings;
- (d) further develop validation of non-formal and informal learning and competences and strengthen the link with the formal education system within the national qualifications framework <sup>(5)</sup>;
- (e) strengthen social partnerships at all levels and in all phases of planning, development and implementing VET programmes;
- (f) develop new methods of teaching and learning and provide other educational conditions in upper secondary schools, as well as companies, to improve early intervention and reduce the drop-out rate in vocational and technical education;

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<sup>(5)</sup> The foundation was laid down by the Decree on the introduction and use of a classification system of education and training (Klasius) (see 2.2.4).

- (g) enable transition between different types of schools, especially between vocational and technical and general secondary education, while at the same time systematically opening pathways for acquiring qualifications in different occupations (vocational courses);
- (h) promote entrepreneurship by improving links between education and working life, enriching teachers' knowledge in using information and communication technology and ensuring better educational content and methods;
- (i) provide support and guidance for each individual as well as for pupils with special educational needs and immigrants;
- (j) increase the accountability and responsibility of providers by setting up a new VET financing system;
- (k) develop teachers' and trainers' competences.
- (l) ensure that by 2010 all young people complete initial vocational education or at least a partial qualification, namely a national vocational qualification (see glossary);
- (m) ensure that by 2013 the proportion of those aged 18 to 22 years with at least an upper secondary qualification will rise to 95 %. The aim for 2007 is 91 % (Ministry of Education and Sport);
- (n) ensure that by 2013 all VET providers will have a quality development and assurance system in place.

## **2.2. Measures**

Measures that the Ministry of Education and Sport will take to achieve its aims are discussed below.

### **2.2.1. Curricular reform**

An extensive reform programme has been in place since 2002, cofinanced by the ESF. New VET programmes are based on professional standards and reflect the assessed needs of the economy for new knowledge and competences. New framework national curricula have a modular structure and are based on competences evaluated in terms of credit points (credit transfer system). Some 20 % of the curriculum is flexible, depending on local needs. Learning outcomes are specified in terms of obtaining professional competences (linking theory and practice) and building on key competences and general knowledge. New programmes enable students' easier vertical and horizontal transition between programmes and institutions. Adults can undertake step-by-step education to obtain certificates of non-formal knowledge that are recognised in further education, by combining modules and competences already acquired in non-formal or informal settings.

### **2.2.2. Governance and leadership of education and training institutions**

In 2004, the Ministry of Education and Sport began to modernise the financial and management systems for secondary education. The current/new system is based on lump sum financing per capita. It allows schools greater professional and financial autonomy and enables them to react more quickly to the needs of the labour market and the environment. At the same time it imposes greater responsibility for educational outcomes and encourages schools to seek solutions, which will improve both the quality of their education and their economic situation. The project was introduced on a pilot basis and the number of schools involved in the project is increasing each year; 31 VET schools were included in 2006/07 and there were around 55 at the end of 2007.

### **2.2.3. Quality assurance systems**

A comprehensive system of quality assurance in VET has been developed. It includes existing national standards, curricula, qualifications and teacher training, entering schools in the register, final examinations and vocational *matura*, and adds self-evaluation and compulsory founding of quality management groups in schools, and annual reporting on progress. Quality monitoring indicators were adopted in October 2007 by the National Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education (see 3.1).

### **2.2.4. Developing a national qualifications framework**

In 2006, the government adopted a Decree on the introduction and use of a classification system of education and training (Klasius) <sup>(6)</sup>, which represents one of the formal foundations for creating Slovenia's framework of qualifications. This classification is based on eight levels. All qualifications are included in these levels, from primary school to doctoral qualifications. Classifications cover teaching activities, learning outcomes, entry conditions and duration of courses.

### **2.2.5. Developing learning partnerships with stakeholders**

New curricula (20 % of which are open and flexible) encourage schools to cooperate intensively with the local economy and local companies. With the aid of ESF funds, regional councils for human resource development have been created which include employees' representatives, schools, regional development agencies and chambers of commerce.

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<sup>(6)</sup> *Uredba o uvedbi in uporabi standardne klasifikacije izobraževanja* / Decree on the introduction and use of a classification system of education and training (Klasius). Statistični urad RS / Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia. Available from Internet: <http://www.stat.si>.

#### **2.2.6. Education and training of teachers and trainers**

Since 2003 several projects have been developed to upgrade systematically the skills and competences of teachers. The projects are mostly cofinanced with ESF funds, and include team planning and implementation of the school curriculum, advising and supporting the individual in obtaining new knowledge (individualised teaching plans and portfolios). Other features include project and problem learning, learning to learn, use of ICT, literacy, e-learning, and schools networking, companies and teachers. Programmes of cooperation between schools and the local economy have been developed and introduced, with emphasis on training teachers and mentors to support practical work.

#### **2.2.7. Improving access and opportunities for adult participation in lifelong learning and learning for the disadvantaged**

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs is improving access and opportunities for learning for the disadvantaged (unemployed, disabled, Roma and persons with particular barriers to employment) through the measures of the active employment policy programme, which include activities involving local organisations and human resource departments (see Annex 3).

All activities will be further developed in the human resources development operational programmes 2007-13 (education and training for competitiveness and employability, stimulating the employability of job-seekers and the economically inactive, equal opportunities in the labour market and strengthening social inclusion) (see 11.1).

## **3. Institutional framework**

### **3.1. Administrative structure**

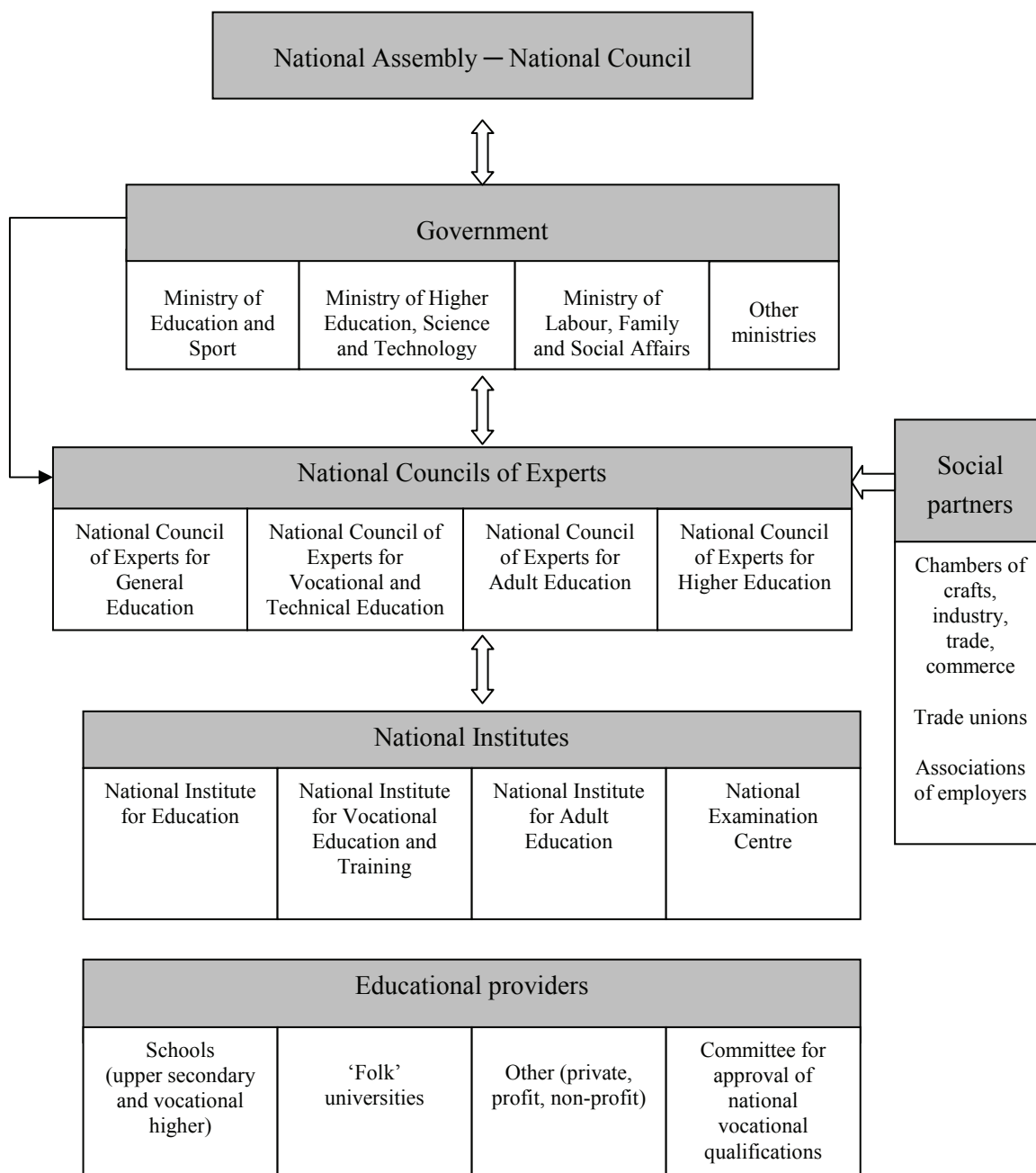
(See Figures 2 and 3.)

Responsibility for the administration of education is divided among national authorities, local authorities and schools. The former Ministry of Education, Science and Sport was split (at the beginning of 2005) into two new ministries: the Ministry of Education and Sport and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. The Ministry of Education and Sport is responsible for: developing pre-university education policies; inspection procedures; allocating funds; implementing laws and administrative decisions relating to pre-primary institutions, compulsory, upper secondary and higher vocational colleges. Local authorities are responsible for the administration of pre-primary and basic education establishments. Schools councils (*sveti šol*) act at local level, autonomously. They play an important role in the process of administrative decentralisation. The education inspectorate is the responsibility of the National Inspectorate for Education and Sport, which comes under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Sport. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology is responsible for higher education, universities and single higher education institutions (faculties and colleges).

Four national councils of experts have been set up by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia: the Council of Experts for General Education, the Council of Experts for Adult Education, the Council of Experts for Higher Education and the Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education. The councils offer assistance in the decision-making process. In addition they are responsible for preparing new laws and regulations.

The main responsibilities of the councils are to: adopt new publicly recognised education programmes and cooperate in the decision-making process for new programmes (such as producing the new curriculum); make decisions on new text books and handbooks in schools; decide on the standards in private schools; prepare proposals for changes to the Minister for Education and Sport. The councils of experts can nominate special commissions as working bodies in various areas of their authority.

Figure 2: Administration of education and training in Slovenia



Source: ReferNet consortium team, 2007.



Expert and research work in pre-university education is carried out by three public institutions: the National Institute for Education for general education, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education and the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training. Implementation of maturity exams and technical education is the responsibility of the National Examination Centre. Its other responsibilities include: implementing State exams in compulsory schooling (together with the National Institute for Education); and developing methodologies and procedures of assessment and validation of professional knowledge and competences. It is also the main body responsible for monitoring the work of the examination bodies for validation and assessment of national vocational qualifications; it prepares and carries out the exams to test the level of knowledge in foreign languages. The national councils of experts define standards of knowledge, approve new programmes and propose them for adoption to the government. They determine the contents of educational programmes, approve textbooks and educational material, and propose criteria and standards for school equipment.

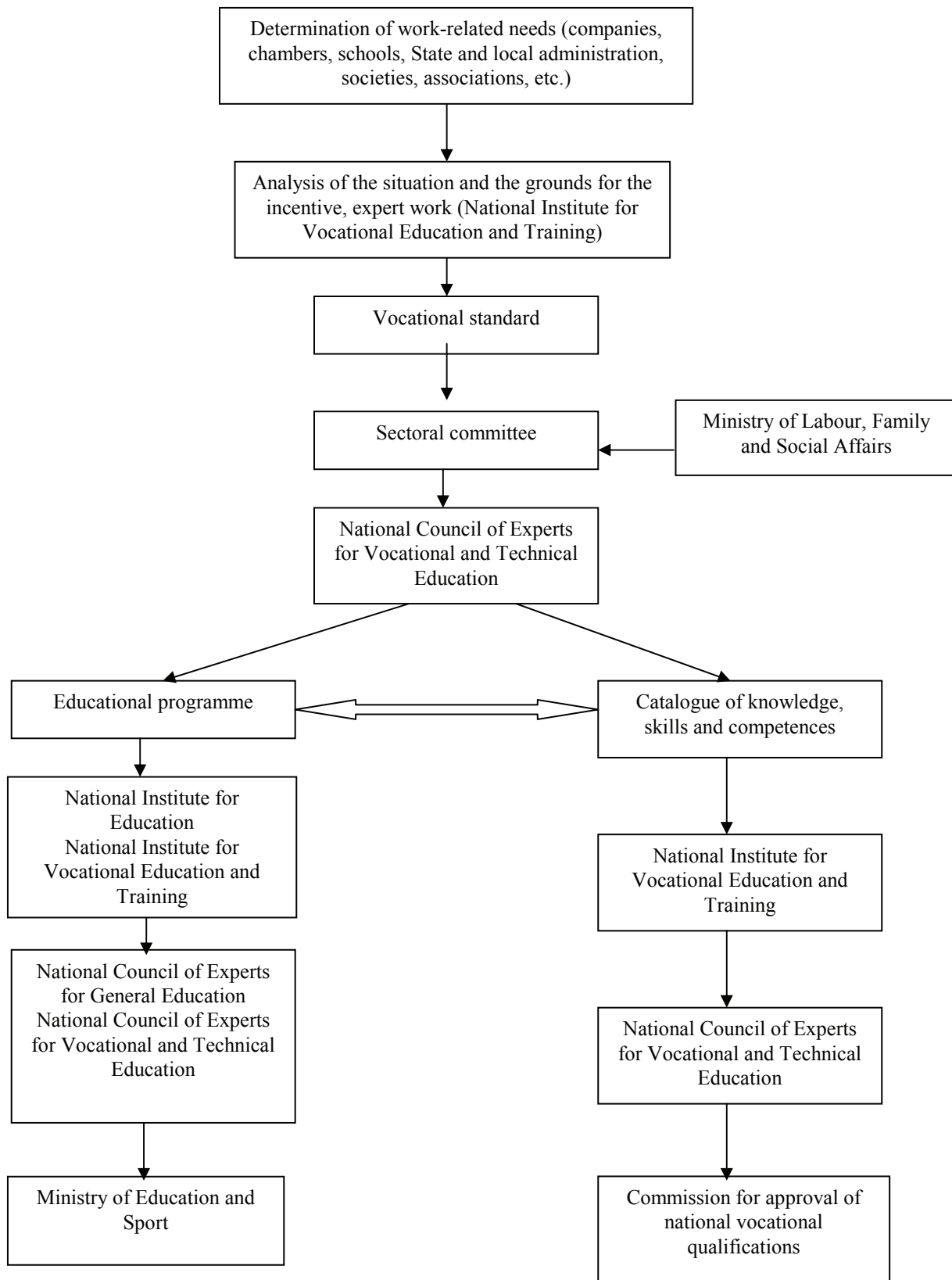
In continuing education and training, an important role is also played by the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS), which is the main organiser, coordinator and provider of education and training for the unemployed and those made redundant.

### **3.2. Legal framework**

There are four main acts which regulate the publicly-approved certification process in vocational education and training: the Organisation and Financing of Education Act, the Vocational and Technical Education Act, the Post-secondary Vocational Education Act and the Adult Education Act. Other laws on employment, social policy and industry also address non-formal education and training, plus State-regulated (continuing vocational) education and training of adults, for example by requiring licences, proof of professional skills and competences, etc. (for legislative references, see Annex 3).

The rights and duties of individual social groups to access training are mostly regulated by employment and social welfare legislation (see Annex 3). The Labour Relation Act (42/2002) defines the right to training for employed and redundant workers, as well as the role of collective agreements in implementing this right in practice. The Pension and Disability Insurance Act lays down the right to vocational rehabilitation of the disabled, while the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act regulates the rights of the unemployed to education and training and their duties linked to these rights. This last act also defines the basic principles of active employment policy and the status and responsibilities of the different actors involved. Finally, an important role is played by legislative documents which regulate individual economic activities. These set the conditions for carrying out an activity or profession, one of the most common of which is the requirement for advanced professional training.

Figure 3: Decision-making process on the content of education



Source: ReferNet consortium team, 2007.

### **3.3. Role of social partners**

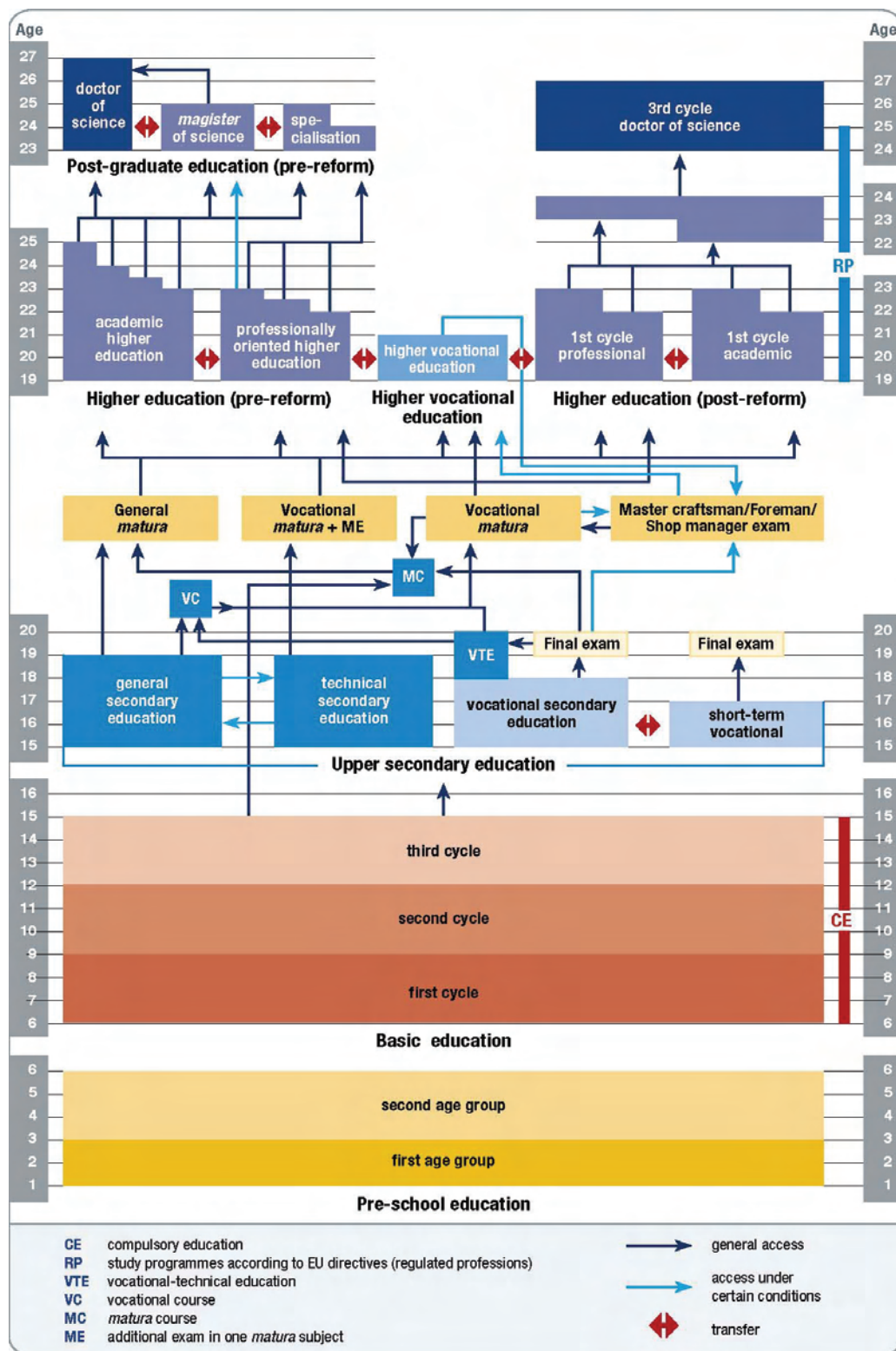
The role of social partners in continuing vocational education and training (CVET) and adult education is coordinated by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. This ministry is also responsible for preparing methodology for the standards of knowledge and skills in the certification system and regulates the assessment and certification procedures for national vocational qualifications obtained in the certification system.

The Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Crafts of Slovenia are the employers' organisations which represent employers in the social dialogue and carry out technical, developmental and counselling work in vocational education. They prepare the standards of knowledge and skills for the certification system. Examinations for master craftsmen, foremen and managerial examinations, which represent the most common forms of continuing vocational education, take place under their authority. They organise testing and certification of qualifications for craft-related activities which do not require a master craftsmen examination. Both chambers also function as organisers and providers of non-formal vocational education and training which do not offer nationally valid certificates.

Trade unions are legally limited to being a partner in the procedure of certification of national vocational qualifications. They independently organise and provide education and training for trade union activists.

With the introduction of social partnerships in vocational education and training, representatives of employers and employees play an increasingly important role, and they are also represented in national bodies.

Figure 4: The structure of the education system in Slovenia, 2006/07



Source: Adapted from Eurydice, 2007.

## 4. Initial vocational education and training

### 4.1. Overview

The Slovenian education system includes pre-school education, compulsory basic education (a single structure of primary and lower secondary education), upper secondary education, higher vocational education and higher education (see Figure 4). In the school year 2005/06 the percentage of privately-owned pre-school education institutions reached 2.3 %, while these institutions provided pre-school education to 1.5 % of children. In 2007 there was only one privately-owned elementary school in Slovenia (the Waldorf school). In upper secondary education only six *gimnazije* are privately-owned (four Catholic, the Waldorf school and the European school). There are no privately-owned vocational or technical secondary schools. The share of privately-owned higher vocational colleges is 58 % (2007/08).

#### 4.1.1. Compulsory basic education

Compulsory education (single structure of primary and lower secondary education – *osnovna šola*) lasts nine years. It is divided into three cycles:

- first cycle (6-9 years of age, grades 1-3),
- second cycle (9-12 years of age, grades 4-6),
- third cycle (12-15 years of age, grades 7-9).

Access to compulsory education is free for all children whose sixth birthday occurs in the calendar year of entry into first grade. Parents have a legal duty and a right to choose a public or private school or home schooling. The school located in the school district of their residence is required to enrol their children, however parents are free to choose another elementary school as long as they have that school's consent. Pupils who finish their legal compulsory education and successfully complete at least seven classes, can continue their education in short-cycle vocational education.

There is no initial vocational education at lower secondary level.

#### 4.1.2. Upper secondary and post-secondary education

Upper secondary education is free and caters for young people between 15 and 19 years of age.

Types of upper secondary education are:

- general upper secondary education (*gimnazija*) (four years) – 15-19 years of age;
- technical upper secondary education (four years) – 15-19 years of age;
- vocational upper secondary education (three years) – 15-18 years of age;
- vocational/technical upper secondary education (three plus two years) – 15-20 years of age;
- short-cycle vocational upper secondary education (two-and-a-half years) – 15-17/18 years of age.

#### **4.1.3. General upper secondary education**

The educational reforms of the mid-1990s made a clear distinction between general, technical and vocational upper secondary education. The *gimnazija* was reintroduced, initially providing only general and classical programmes in preparation for further studies. Students complete *gimnazija* by passing an external examination in five subjects, called a *matura*. The *matura* was introduced in 1995, replacing the former final examinations. At the same time, it serves as an entrance examination to higher education. Those *gimnazija* students who, for various reasons, do not wish to continue their education can enter the labour market by attending a vocational course (*poklicni tečaj*) and obtaining a qualification in the chosen occupation.

#### **4.1.4. Vocational and technical upper secondary and post-secondary education**

Vocational and technical initial education comprises: programmes of short-cycle vocational education (two and a half-year programmes); secondary vocational education (three-year programmes); technical education (four-year programmes); vocational-technical education (two years after secondary vocational education); and post-secondary non-tertiary vocational courses (*poklicni tečaji* – up to one year).

#### **4.1.5. Higher vocational education**

Higher vocational education is provided at higher vocational colleges (*višje strokovne šole*) which offer two-year higher vocational education at subdegree level (short-cycle, ISCED 5B). The Higher Vocational Education Act (2004) determines the organisation of higher vocational colleges and places them within the tertiary education area, establishing links with further professional studies at degree level through the possibility of vertical 120 credits which can be used towards a higher education qualification. Higher vocational colleges issue a diploma, stating the nature of education, and a diploma supplement in Slovene and another EU language.

The entrance requirement for higher vocational colleges is completion of an appropriate four-year secondary technical school or *gimnazija*. It is also possible to enrol after completing an appropriate three-year secondary vocational school course, or three years of relevant work practice, with an additional entrance exam.

In vocational colleges, studies end with a diploma exam (*diplomski izpit*). Graduates can start to work in specific occupations. From 1998/99, it became possible to transfer to the second year of a professionally oriented higher education course.

#### **4.1.6. Higher education**

Higher education is offered by universities and single higher education institutions: faculties and professional colleges. Universities and single faculties usually offer academic as well as professionally-oriented courses, while professional colleges offer mainly professionally-oriented courses. If they meet academic standards relating to staff and equipment, they may also be accredited to offer doctorate programmes, otherwise such

programmes must be carried out in cooperation with universities. According to the amendments to the Higher Education Act (2004), the new structure of higher education in accordance with the proposed Bologna patterns is being gradually implemented (see Figure 4). The new structure is not classified as binary anymore. It includes the first cycle (equivalent to a bachelor programme), three to four years of theoretically or professionally oriented studies, both leading to second-cycle master programmes. In principle, all the master courses provide opportunities to study at doctoral level. In the new structure, specialisation programmes are no longer foreseen. The general *matura* certificate is required for entry to academic higher education. A vocational *matura* examination (*poklicna matura*) with an additional exam at the end of secondary technical education is an alternative route to gain admission to academic programmes. Candidates who passed the vocational *matura* have access to professionally-oriented higher education. It is understood that professional higher education is open to general *matura* candidates as well. If specific abilities are required for certain courses, results of special tests of skills or talents are also taken into account.

## **4.2. Vocational education and training at upper secondary level**

Initial vocational and technical education at upper secondary level comprises:

- short-cycle vocational education (two-and-a half-year programmes),
- secondary vocational education (three-year programmes),
- technical education (four-year programmes),
- vocational-technical education (two years after secondary vocational education).

### **4.2.1. Short-cycle vocational education**

Short-cycle vocational programmes admit applicants who have successfully completed elementary school or completed a modified education programme for children with special needs, as well as applicants who, although they have attended elementary school for nine years, have failed to complete it successfully. As a rule, these programmes last for two-and-a-half years, ending with a final examination. Students' general knowledge acquired in the last years of elementary school is developed, while new general and vocational knowledge and qualifications for simple jobs are gained. The final examination certificate enables students to enter the labour market or to enter the first year at any other (upper) secondary school.

### **4.2.2. Secondary vocational education**

Pupils who have successfully completed elementary school can enrol in three-year vocational programmes. These programmes can be provided by vocational schools or in cooperation with employers as a dual system of apprenticeship and in-school education. They typically last for three years, ending with a final examination. The final examination certificate enables students to enter the labour market or to continue education in two-year vocational-technical programmes, which end with a *poklicna matura* (vocational *matura* examination), leading to a qualification at the level of a secondary technical school. New education and training



programmes in secondary vocational education include at least 24 weeks of practical training with employers and are designed on the principles of modules and open curricula.

There are also two-year further technical courses for those who have completed three-year secondary vocational courses. This course is at an equivalent educational level to four-year technical courses. The equivalency is provided by the content and quantity of general and technical subjects and by the final examination.

However, graduates who find a job immediately after completing a three-year vocational programme can reenter education after at least three years of employment to obtain a qualification at the level of a secondary technical school by passing examinations. By passing the master craftsmen/foremen/managerial examination, they demonstrate a higher level of competence in their occupation. If they also pass examinations in general subjects of the vocational *matura* examination, they can continue their studies in higher vocational education.

#### **4.2.3. Technical education**

Technical programmes last four years and are designed primarily as preparation for vocational higher education and professionally-oriented higher education. Education ends with the *poklicna matura* (vocational *matura* examination), a school-leaving examination in four subjects, prepared in part externally but assessed internally. This course grants students access to professional types of higher education and by passing one additional subject in the general *matura* examination they have access to some academic programmes. The vocational and technical education system offers various paths to occupational qualifications. Transfers between vocational and technical programmes are allowed. Transfers from technical education programmes to any academic higher education programme are made possible by the *maturitetni tečaj* (*matura* course).

Two core aims are built into the curricula of four-year technical education:

- preparation for professionally-oriented higher education;
- sufficient knowledge to enter the job market and to start to work in industry, trade or service activities.

#### **4.2.4. Programmes and pathway transfers**

Transfers between programmes and types of vocational and technical education are well designed.

Students who complete short-cycle vocational programmes can enter the labour market or enter the first year at any other (upper) secondary school.

Graduates of three-year vocational education programmes have various possibilities:

- they can enter the labour market;
- they can continue education in special two-year vocational-technical programmes (the '3+2' scheme) and, after passing a vocational *matura* examination, obtain a secondary technical level of education;



- after a minimum of three years' work experience they can reenter education and obtain a secondary technical level of education by passing the master craftsman, foreman or managerial examinations, or they can sit general subject exams in the vocational *matura* or they can enrol in the *matura* course.

Students completing four-year technical education programmes have the following options:

- they can enter the job market;
- they can continue their education in higher vocational education programmes or a professional type of higher education;
- in addition to the vocational *matura* examination, they can complete a general *matura* exam in one subject and then enrol in undergraduate or university-type higher education programmes that allow such transfers.

#### **4.2.5. Assessment and certification**

The school year is divided into three assessment periods. Tests are usually oral, written and numerical. The assessment scale is from 1 to 5, where 1 means the pupil did not show a satisfactory level of knowledge. At the end of the school year, an overall achievement grade is awarded depending on all grades in individual subjects. Pupils go on to the next class if they have passed all the subjects and met all other conditions set by the curriculum. At the end of the school year, pupils can retake exams in a maximum of three subjects they have failed.

#### **4.2.6. Participation of young people**

In recent years more than 98 % of pupils finished compulsory education have continued in upper secondary education. The share of pupils enrolled in short-cycle vocational education and secondary vocational education has been decreasing for the last years, while there has been a significant increase of enrolments in general secondary education (*gimnazija*).

Table 3: *Enrolment in all grades and types of upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (youth) from 2001/02 to 2005/06*

Programme	2001/02		2002/03		2003/04		2004/05		2005/06	
	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female
Short-cycle vocational	2 872	773	2 539	699	2 358	591	2 121	544	1 804	454
Secondary vocational	22 801	8 850	20 895	7 903	19 566	7 194	18 137	6 396	17 077	5 911
Technical	30 896	15 747	30 740	15 485	31 773	15 830	31 841	15 946	32 049	15 683
General (gimnazija)	35 676	21 086	36 368	21 510	37 978	22 605	38 009	22 575	38 368	22 558
Vocational/technical	7 727	3 592	7 071	3 142	7 135	3 103	7 132	2 971	6 897	2 813
Vocational post-secondary (poklicni tečaj)	153	132	218	144	260	169	242	155	334	200
General post-secondary (maturitetni tečaj)	484	308	937	611	1 062	746	1 096	744	1 356	923
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 609</b>	<b>50 488</b>	<b>98 768</b>	<b>49 494</b>	<b>100 132</b>	<b>50 238</b>	<b>98 578</b>	<b>49 331</b>	<b>97 885</b>	<b>48 542</b>

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2007.

Table 4: *Graduates of upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (youth) from 2001/02 to 2005/06*

Programme	2001/02		2002/03		2003/04		2004/05		2005/06	
	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female
Short-cycle vocational	842	216	798	226	742	203	672	212	601	153
Secondary vocational	6 422	2 657	5 912	2 396	5 801	2 332	5 447	2 122	5 054	1 945
Technical	6 616	3 767	6 198	3 456	6 675	3 535	6 442	3 480	6 725	3 608
General (gimnazija)	7 546	4 476	7 674	4 628	8 375	5 046	8 223	5 103	8 269	5 290
Vocational/technical	2 543	1 240	2 629	1 233	2 589	1 251	2 637	1 242	2 355	1 098
Vocational post-secondary (poklicni tečaj)	72	69	95	72	124	95	94	70	176	121
General post-secondary (maturitetni tečaj)	220	156	376	273	582	398	494	350	481	340
<b>Total</b>	<b>24 261</b>	<b>12 581</b>	<b>23 682</b>	<b>12 284</b>	<b>24 888</b>	<b>12 860</b>	<b>24 009</b>	<b>12 579</b>	<b>24 021</b>	<b>12 555</b>

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2007.

### **4.3. Other youth programmes and alternative pathways**

(See Chapters 5 and 9 for descriptions of alternative pathways.)

### **4.4. Vocational education and training at post-secondary (non-tertiary) level**

Post-secondary non-tertiary education includes courses that aim to broaden students' knowledge base. The *matura* course (*maturitetni tečaj*) is designed for pupils who have not completed *gimnazija*, and wish to enter university to study an academic course. This course lasts one year.

Vocational courses (*poklicni tečaji*) are designed for those who have not passed *matura* or wish to obtain a vocational qualification and employment. These courses also last one year.

Master craftsmen exams (*mojstrski izpiti*) are designed for those who have completed a three-year secondary vocational school and attained a minimum of three years' experience. By passing such an exam, plus a short 'bridging' exam for general education subjects, master craftsmen can enrol in higher vocational colleges.

### **4.5. Higher vocational education**

Higher vocational education is provided at higher vocational colleges (*višje strokovne šole*). The colleges offer two-year post-secondary vocational education at subdegree level (short-cycle, ISCED 5B). The new Higher Vocational Education Act (2004) regulates this level of vocational education separately from the upper secondary level. It clearly places higher vocational education within the tertiary education area and establishes links with further professional studies at degree level through the possibility of vertical 120 credits which can be used towards a higher education qualification.

Higher vocational education is undergoing changes imposed by new legislation and the new 'Starting points for higher vocational study programmes' (2006). The Bologna process has been extended to higher vocational education: programmes will be modularised, broader in contents, comprising compulsory and optional subjects, and described by the European credit transfer system (ECTS). The quality assurance system of higher vocational education will be harmonised and linked to the other parts of tertiary education.

Table 5: *Enrolment of students in higher vocational education from 2000/01 to 2005/06*

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
<b>Total enrolment</b>	<b>4 760</b>	<b>6 170</b>	<b>8 796</b>	<b>11 099</b>	<b>12 621</b>	<b>14 246</b>
Full-time	1 966	2 361	2 974	3 470	4 096	4 785
Part-time	2 794	3 809	5 822	7 629	8 525	9 461
<b>Total new entrants</b>	<b>2 994</b>	<b>3 773</b>	<b>5 216</b>	<b>6 110</b>	<b>6 765</b>	<b>8 210</b>
Full-time	1 277	1 335	1 774	2 158	2 541	3 057
Part-time	1 717	2 438	3 442	3 952	4 224	5 153
<b>Graduates</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>1 250</b>	<b>1 829</b>	<b>2 330</b>
Full-time	121	181	308	374	465	480
Part-time	94	232	565	876	1 364	1 850

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia. Available from Internet:  
[http://www.stat.si/pxweb/Database/Dem\\_soc/Dem\\_soc.asp#09](http://www.stat.si/pxweb/Database/Dem_soc/Dem_soc.asp#09))

## **5. Continuing vocational education and training**

### **5.1. Background information**

Upgrading education and qualification levels of the population by ensuring access to lifelong learning is a priority in national economic, social and sustainable development policies. These are further developed in labour market and education documents <sup>(7)</sup> as well as highlighted in other fields (health, culture, etc.).

Adult education was identified as the key element of lifelong learning by the Slovenian Parliament in 2004 in the adult education master plan <sup>(8)</sup>. The strategic goals (to improve general education of adults, increase educational levels, set 12 years of successfully completed schooling as the basic educational standard, increase employability and learning opportunities and participation in education) and the operating goals (measurable strategic goals) of adult education were defined until the year 2010.

#### **5.1.1. Main forms of continuing training and adult education**

Adults can obtain formal education or upgrade their qualifications by taking part in: special programmes for adults; programmes designed for young people but adapted to the needs of adults; modules or parts of programmes leading to a national occupational qualification; or by obtaining a new title of vocational/technical education. Entry criteria to enrol in formal education programmes are the same for young people and adults with work experience.

The National Vocational Qualifications Act of 2006 allows adults to gain national vocational qualifications also by accreditation of prior learning (see Annexes 2 and 3).

The largest share of adult and continuing vocational education and training is provided in non-formal programmes or courses and training and learning activities. About one third of non-formal training consists of training programmes publicly accredited through authorised national bodies, composed of social partners and representatives of the State. The rest are programmes and courses of various length often tailored to specific target groups. Non-formal education and training carried out as part of the active employment policy represents an important part of CVET directed at the needs of the labour market.

According to the 2004 study on the participation of adults in education and training, conducted by the National Institute for Education of Adults, on a representative sample of the population aged 16 to 64 years, 8 % of adults took part in formal education and about 34 % of them took part in non-formal education (Mohorčič Špolar et al., 2005a).

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<sup>(7)</sup> Lifelong learning strategy (2007); National strategy for raising the level of literacy (2005); Strategy of education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia (2004).

<sup>(8)</sup> Resolution on the national programme on adult education in the Republic of Slovenia until 2010 (see Annex 3).

### **5.1.2. New learning forms targeted at specific needs**

In recent years special education and training programmes aimed at certain marginalised groups were developed or modernised (Project learning for young adults – PUM, literacy programmes for various target groups, computer training courses). A network of specialised teachers and mentors was developed to support access of these groups to training. In addition, a network of local information and counselling centres (15 centres) for adults was consolidated and is now available across Slovenia. Development of e-learning was strongly promoted as well. Available data show that in 2005/06, 22 providers of adult education and training offered around 110 e-programmes, most of them accredited (56 %) (Zagmajster, 2006). Moreover, nine providers of e-programmes were on the web portal WWW.e-studij.net in 2005. Private organisations and ‘folk’ high schools are the most important providers of e-learning. Access to education and training for the main target groups was improved through establishment of 13 lifelong learning centres. They were established in 11 of the 12 regions in Slovenia.

## **5.2. Publicly promoted continuing training for all**

### **5.2.1. Target groups**

No separate data exist on continuing training and adult education, funded or cofunded from public finances or supported by special State incentives. The exception is education and training, supported by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs carried out as part of the active employment policy, directed at the unemployed, disabled, drop-outs, redundant workers, and workers threatened with redundancy due to their inappropriate qualifications.

In general, public sources are used to support development of educational provision. Public funding, supported by the Ministry of Education and Sport is mainly aimed at developing education for basic skills, ICT skills, communication skills, improvement of educational levels, upgrading the occupational and professional skills of the labour force and development of an adequate infrastructure to reach the main aims set out in policy documents.

Although Slovenia has increased participation in education in all categories of the population, there are some groups with outstandingly low participation rates. These are poorly educated adults, the elderly, the middle-aged with low educational achievements, and other disadvantaged groups in and outside the labour market (the disabled, drop-outs, etc.).

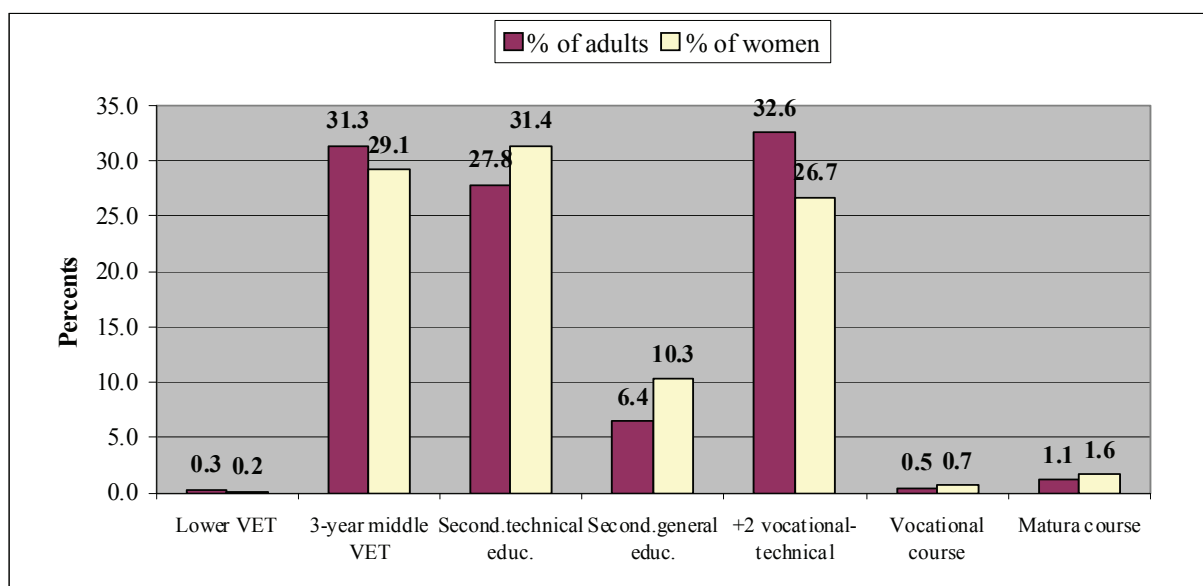
In Slovenia in recent years, key strategic and developmental documents have stressed the importance of developing education and training supply for specific target groups and establishing mechanisms to support their access to education and learning. These include literacy programmes for some new target groups (people in the countryside, persons with special needs and those who need support regarding job requirements). Great efforts have been also invested to overcome the intergenerational gap in ICT skills. The elderly have also become recognised as a priority target group. Until recently in Slovenia only ‘third age’ universities had catered for their needs. At present there are 31 local third age universities with over 17 000 elderly persons taking part in their training programmes and activities.

## 5.2.2. Types of providers and types of courses/qualifications

### 5.2.2.1. Formal education and training

Data on the supply of adult education programmes show an increased number of programmes for acquiring a certificate or diploma in formal school education. Such programmes increased from 373 in 1999 to 1 040 in 2006 (17 % of the total supply of adult education programmes) (Brenk, 2006, p. 22-23). According to statistical data (9) 18 942 adults were enrolled in formal secondary education programmes at the end of the 2004/05 school year. Of these 32.6 % took part in secondary vocational-technical programmes, 31.3 % participated in three-year secondary vocational programmes, and 27.8 % in secondary technical programmes (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Participation of adults in formal secondary education and training by types of programmes and gender, end of school year 2004/05



Source: SORS, *Rapid reports*, No 203/2006.

In 2004/05, women accounted for 47 % of all adults taking part in secondary education. Of the women taking part in secondary education and training, 63 % were enrolled in programmes on economics, 12 % in health, followed by catering and tourism with 9 %, teacher training with about 8 % and agriculture 7 %. In technical subjects, over 90 % of students were men (see Table 6).

Sample-based research shows that approximately half of all adults participating in formal education programmes are enrolled in tertiary studies (Mohorčič Špolar et al., 2005a). The statistics show that part-time students represent about 29 % of students (59 678 students) enrolled in higher professional and university programmes, while the proportion of part-time students in post-secondary vocational education reaches two thirds of all students (SORS, *Rapid reports*, No 114/2006).

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(9) SORS, *Rapid reports*, No 203/2006.

Table 6: *Enrolment of adults in secondary education by types of training programmes and fields of education, end of school year 2004/05 (%)*

Training field	Total						Women					
	Short-term vocat.	3-year second. vocat.	4-5 year secondary	+2 vocational -technical	Vocat. + <i>matura</i> course	Total	Short-term vocat	3-year second. vocat.	4-5 year secondary	+2 vocational -technical	Vocat. + <i>matura</i> course	Total
Agriculture	8.3	9.2	2.5	5.9	5.9	5.7	14.3	13.6	2.1	7.0		6.7
Forestry		0.2	0.2			0.2						
Textiles		0.3	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.3		0.7	0.1	1.3		0.6
Chemistry, pharmacy, rubber processing and non-metals		0.1	1.0			0.4		0.2	0.9			0.4
Wood processing	66.7	1.5	0.9	1.6	1.6	1.5	85.7	0.3	0.2	0.1		0.3
Construction		1.9	0.7	1.6	1.6	1.4		0.1	0.2	0.1		0.1
Catering and tourism		14.1	8.7	6.1	6.1	9.4		14.5	8.5	5.7		9.3
Economics		42.9	46.6	50.2	50.2	46.2		60.1	52.8	84.3	29.8	62.8
Paper and printing		0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1		0.0	0.1	0.1		0.1
Electrotechnics and computers		3.7	6.2	8.5	8.5	6.0		0.2	0.2	0.5		0.2
Metallurgy and mechanical engineering	25.0	10.1	2.1	18.9	18.9	10.1		1.8	0.1	1.3		0.9
Transport and communication		4.8	4.7	3.2	3.2	4.2		0.2	1.4	0.6		0.8
Mining		0.1		0.3	0.3	0.1						
Health care		9.8	7.3	3.0	3.0	6.6		19.7	10.9	6.1		11.9
Teacher training			10.6			3.9			17.4		24.5	7.8
Social sciences			0.4			0.1			0.6			0.2
Culture			2.0			0.7			1.9			0.8
Grammar schools			5.7			2.8			4.7		45.7	3.0
Personal services		1.1				0.4		2.2				0.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

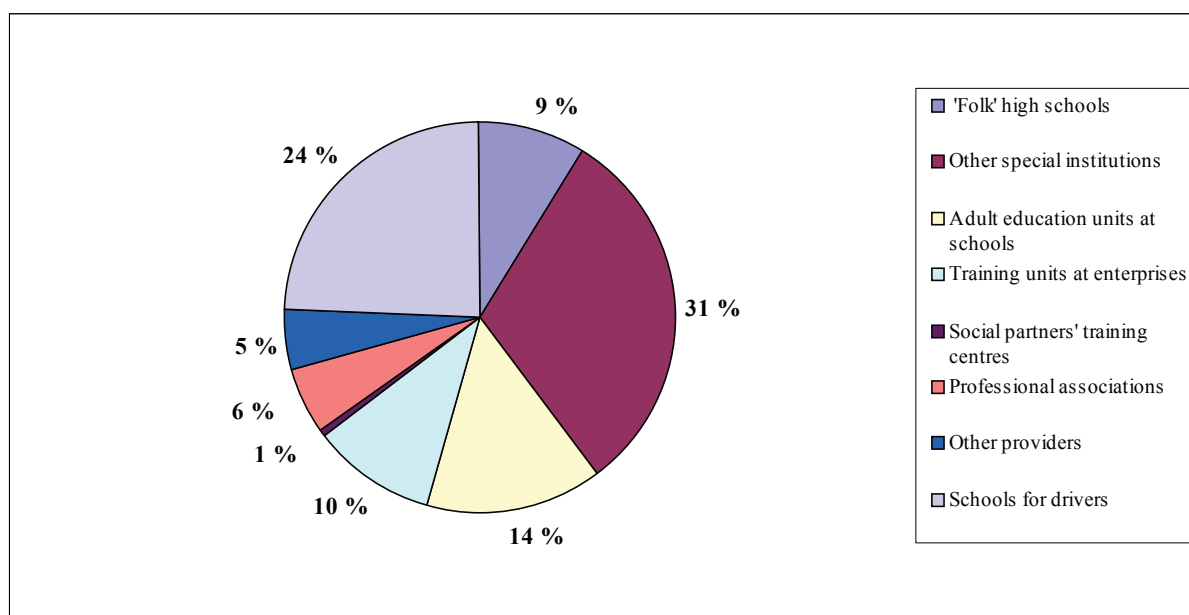
Source: SORS, *Rapid reports*, No 2003/06.



#### 5.2.2.2. Non-formal education and training

In 2004/05 non-formal education and training was offered by 272 specialised adult education providers and 80 schools for drivers (see Figure 6). The remainder were NGOs, museums, libraries and other occasional providers.

Figure 6: Providers of non-formal education and training in Slovenia, school year 2004/05 (%)



Source: SORS, *Rapid reports*, No 205/2006.

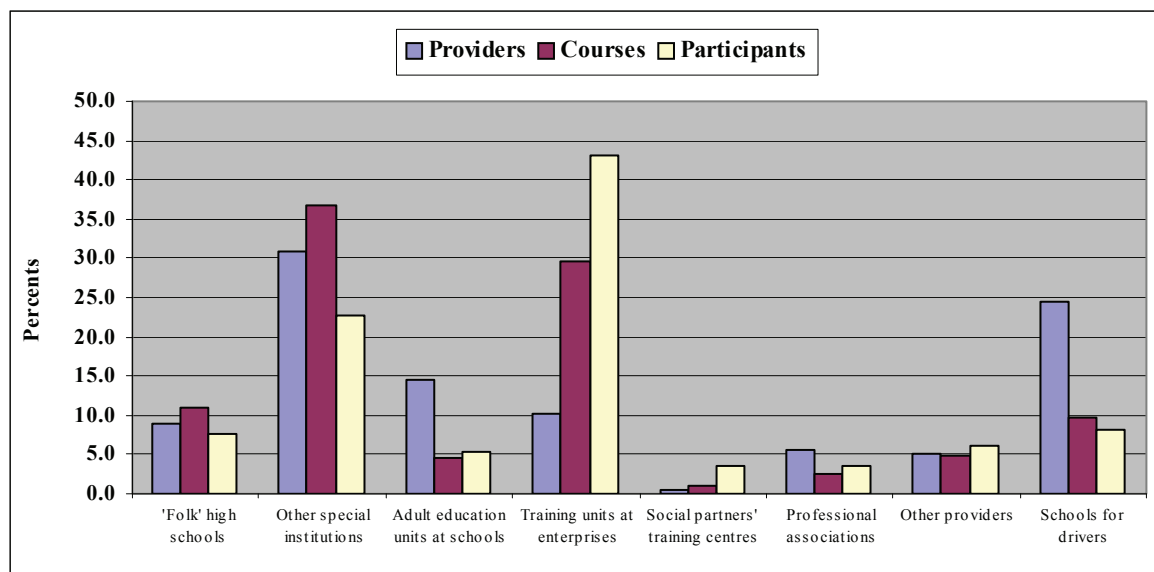
All these providers together carried out 18 406 training programmes and courses, of which 20 % were language courses and 10 % courses for drivers.

Private providers carried out 36.6 % of all education and training programmes. They were followed by companies with 29.6 % and 'folk' high schools with 11 %, while the proportions of other providers were much lower.

Of all non-formal training courses carried out in 2004/05, 22.3 % were publicly approved.

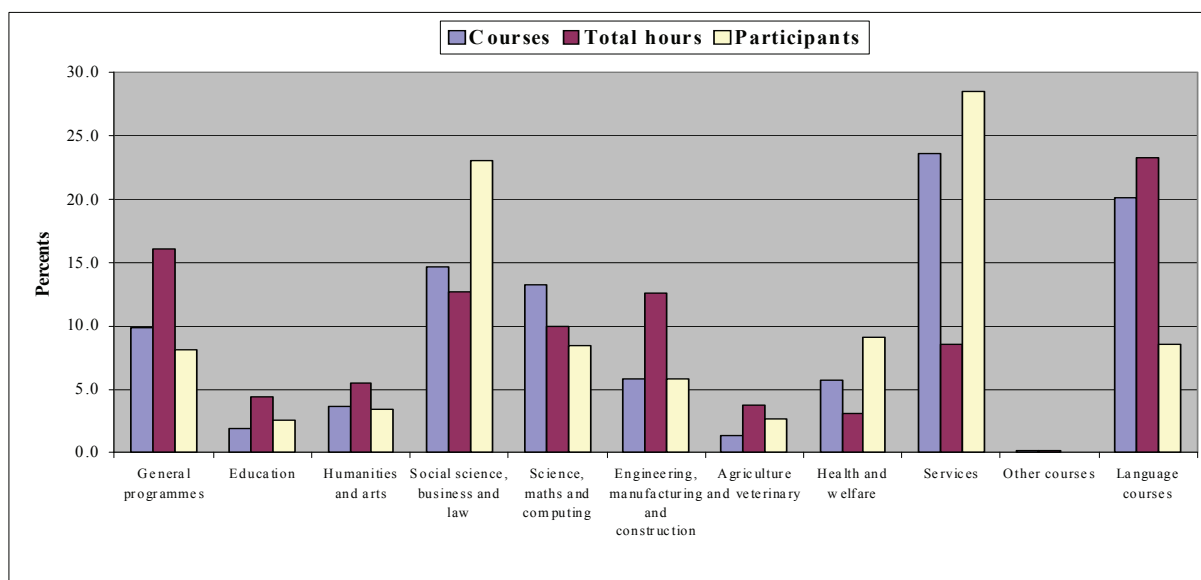
In the same school year, 303 864 persons took part in non-formal education and training. Of these 84 % attended work-related training and 11 % attended training in line with their personal needs and interests. The highest share of participants (men and women) was from the 25 to 29 age group (17.5 % and 15.3 % respectively). The proportions of participants from other age groups ranged between 13 % and 14 % (SORS, *Rapid reports*, No 205/2006).

Figure 7: Shares of delivered non-formal programmes, hours of training and participants by main providers, school year 2004/05 (%)



Source: SORS, Rapid reports, No 205/2006.

Figure 8: Shares of all programmes, hours of training and participants by field of non-formal training, school year 2004/05 (%)



Source: SORS, Rapid reports, No 205/2006, own calculations.

### 5.2.2.3. Types of training and quality assurance

There are significant differences in the quality assurance systems between formal education and training (which results in a national certificate or diploma), publicly accredited non-formal training courses and non-formal training without public accreditation. Formal systems to assure the quality of formal CVET do not differ from those in IVET.

Publicly accredited programmes have to meet guidelines laid out by legislation and specific guidelines of the minister. Providers of these programmes must be accredited and enlisted in the national register, and managed by the Ministry of Education and Sport. To be accredited, they need to prove their capacity (teachers, premises) to implement the programmes.

In addition recent adult education projects, supported by the European Social Fund, have focused on self-evaluation by providers. A special award for organisations and individuals for extraordinary achievements in adult education quality assurance was established.

For non-formal training which is not publicly accredited, quality assurance is often linked to public funding. The relevant ministries determine the conditions for implementation and supervise their fulfilment. Usually providers of publicly-funded non-formal training are selected based on public tenders.

### **5.3. Training for unemployed people and others vulnerable to exclusion in the labour market**

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs is primarily responsible for providing education and training for the unemployed and other vulnerable groups in the labour market. The rights of individual target groups of adults, their access to education and training programmes are laid down in labour and social legislation<sup>(10)</sup> and in active employment policy programmes. Implementation of the programmes is the responsibility of the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS). Every year the ESS selects providers via public tenders.

Training supply for the unemployed and other vulnerable groups in the labour market consists of formal and non-formal educational programmes as well as informal learning. Some non-formal training courses exclusively target the unemployed. There is often a 'standard' supply of programmes (formal and non-formal) adapted to the needs and specific characteristics of the unemployed. Wherever possible providers of formal education and training organise separate classes for the unemployed.

The following types of education and training activities are offered to the unemployed:

- education and training for occupational and personal development. Programmes last up to 12 months and up to 18 months for disabled people and the long-term unemployed;
- formal education and training programmes and preparatory training for obtaining national vocational qualifications. They are carried out in the 'Programme 10 000+';
- on-the-job training and integrated training programmes;
- project learning for young adults (PUM) designed specially for drop-outs, the European social policy champion 2007 (11);

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<sup>(10)</sup> Labour Relation Act, Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act, Act on Employment Rehabilitation and Employment of the Disabled (see Annex 3) .

<sup>(11)</sup> <http://www.regionalreview.eu/categories/default.htm>.

- literacy and key competences training for the unemployed with less than 10 years of education, with special needs and those from less developed areas. The programmes are conducted by specially trained literacy teachers;
- advice and assistance for employment such as help in planning a professional career and job-seeking skills; short courses, lectures, job-seeking workshops and clubs, etc.

*Table 7: Participation of the unemployed in education and training activities, 2005*

<b>Types of training activities</b>	<b>numbers</b>	<b>%</b>
Total	22 840	100
Assistance in planning a professional career and job-seeking	4 985	21.8
Job clubs	1 278	5.6
Information centres	2 078	9.1
Work trial	1 897	8.3
Institutionalised training	3 981	17.4
Programmes of formal education and acquisition of NVQs	6 087	26.7
On-the-job training	2 064	9.0
Project learning for young adults and literacy training	470	2.1

*Source:* <http://www.ess.gov.si>.

### **5.3.1. Programme 5 000/10 000+**

The government programme 10 000+ represents the most outstanding government-supported measure for providing formal education for the unemployed. It has been carried out since 1997 (initially as the Programme 5 000) in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Sport and social partners. It primarily targets unemployed people: young drop-outs; those with no vocational qualifications or with vocational qualifications not in demand in the labour market who have been unemployed for more than six months; and those made redundant following the end of a training contract. A special steering group, composed of the key national agencies in this field, monitors and supervises Programme 10 000+.

### **5.3.2. Education and training the disabled**

Unemployed disabled people can take part in all forms of education and training provided by the Employment Service of Slovenia in the framework of active employment policy measures. Further, special measures for integrating disabled people were introduced. They aim to preserve and develop the working skills of the disabled, increase the rate of employment and social inclusion and encourage development of new jobs. In 2005, according to ESS data, 1 528 disabled people took part in this special measure, including 29 people in on-the-job training and integrated training programmes for disabled people, 156 people in learning workshops and learning enterprises, 1 124 people took part in employment rehabilitation

programmes and 273 unemployed disabled people were involved in work participation programmes (ESS, *Annual report 2005*).

#### **5.4. CVET at the initiative of enterprises or social partners**

There are no specific training funds provided by social partners in Slovenia to support education and training of employees. Neither is there any State-provided tax or other incentive to encourage employers to increase investment in education and training of their employees. The exception is the Craft Educational Fund, which supports education and training of employees in the craft sector. It was established and funded by craftsmen to the amount of 1 % of gross income of their employees.

The main legal basis for investments of employers and employees into education and training is the Labour Relation Act (see Chapter 10).

Employers provide training to their employees internally or externally or from both sources, depending on the type of training. Formal education is provided in public or private organisations accredited to deliver these programmes and issue national certificates and diplomas. Non-formal education and training, however, is mainly delivered either by private providers or in combination with companies.

According to CVTS3 data collected in 2005, of all firms and enterprises in Slovenia, 66.7 % provide formal and non-formal education and training for their employees (SORS, 2007). Of all employed in these enterprises, 53.8 % participated in training; in comparison with 1999, this makes an 11.3 percentage point increase. Some increase in participation is registered in virtually all economic activities, most notably financial services. Mining represents the only industry demonstrating a slight decrease of participation.

Excluding the public sector somewhat changes the picture; the share of training enterprises decreases to 58.6 % and the share of employees participating in training to 49 % of all employed in training enterprises.

From the European perspective, Slovenia is catching up on certain points. In 1999, training enterprises in the commercial sector spent 12 hours per employee on training, placing Slovenia rather low among European countries, while in 2005 this increased to 17 hours, which is close to countries such as France, Belgium and Norway.

The share of employees participating in training increases with firm size. In firms employing 1 000 and more workers, about 73 % of employees participated in training; in firms with 50 to 249 employees the share was about 51 %, while in firms with fewer than 20 employees it reached about 28 %. However the number of paid hours for training per participant was higher in small enterprises (fewer than 50 workers), from 43 to 48 hours. The smallest number was registered in firms with 250-999 employees (around 28 hours). Enterprises with 1 000 and more employees spent about 33 paid hours per participant. The average of all enterprises was 31.6. Such outcomes are connected to various factors. Usually middle-sized and especially large companies

have human resource development units as well as trained personnel and they approach the issue of training more systematically. Often they organise shorter in-service training courses for larger numbers of their employees. Further, they are also much better equipped to use public funds provided through active employment policy and apply for available European funds.

Small companies generally lack financial and human resources to deal systematically with human resource development and training their employees. They mostly depend on the external training market, which makes training their employees more costly.

## **5.5. CVET at the initiative of the individual**

No official data exist on individuals who choose to pay for their own training. Only tentative conclusions may be made, based on national research. According to the findings presented in Mohorčič Špolar et al. (2005a, p. 39), around two thirds of adults who take part in formal education bear the costs of education themselves. The proportion of individuals who bear the costs of non-formal training is much lower and ranges between 16 % and 20 % (ibid., p. 68).

## 6. Training VET teachers and trainers

### 6.1. Types of VET teachers and trainers

The types of teachers and trainers are the same in IVET and CVET. The categories of teaching and training staff recognised by educational legislation are as follows:

- lecturers and instructors at vocational colleges;
- teachers of general subjects;
- teachers of vocational-theoretical subjects;
- teachers of practical training;
- laboratory assistants, instructors, practical training managers;
- trainers: master craftsmen, foremen and shop managers who work as responsible trainers in companies providing apprenticeship training.

Staff in companies who work as instructors, trainers and mentors of various kinds are not regulated by educational legislation.

Lecturers and instructors at vocational colleges are usually required to have passed a second-cycle degree and have some years work experience. They have to pass a special application procedure in which their qualifications and achievements are carefully examined. Their teaching workload of lectures is 16 periods per week, while that of instructors is 20.

Teachers of general subjects may teach in all departments and schools with the same conditions regardless of the field or length of VET programme. Their degree requirements are mainly the same as *gimnazija* teachers – a university degree. No work experience is required. They have traditionally been educated at universities with a strong subject-specific focus on knowledge of the academic discipline, general pedagogical knowledge and teaching methodologies. In some cases they may also teach vocational-theoretical subjects (for instance, teachers of physics may teach vocational subjects in mechanical engineering).

Teachers of vocational-theoretical subjects are required to have either a university or professional degree together with work experience. They have traditionally been educated consecutively. They acquire their non-teaching degree first, find a job in the labour market and after some years of work experience opt for a teaching position. They obtain a teaching specialisation later, often after they have started teaching. They usually teach in a multilevel and multifield school centre and teach their specialist subject. The full-time weekly workload of VET teachers is 40 hours, the weekly teaching load is 20 periods (45 minutes) for teachers of general and vocational-theoretical subjects.

Teachers of vocational practice, laboratory assistants, practical training managers and apprentices' trainers have traditionally been recruited from the ranks of practitioners, experienced technicians, master craftsmen, foremen, shop managers, etc. although there are exceptions to this rule. In some fields of vocational education, such as veterinary occupations or agriculture, practical training is provided by university-graduate teachers as well. The main

differences between VET teachers and VET trainers relate to legal requirements in terms of their qualifications, work experience, workload and salary.

Teachers of vocational practice and laboratory assistants teach mainly in school-based environments, while others teach in working environments. Their full-time weekly workload is 40 hours, while their weekly teaching load is 25 periods. They usually possess higher technical qualifications.

Trainers in apprenticeships must possess at least a master craftsman qualification (foreman or shop manager), which can be acquired after three years of work experience in the relevant trade or business by passing a special examination. They have a 40-hour weekly workload and must respect workplace regulations.

The qualifications of non-school training staff (instructors, trainers and mentors of various kinds working in companies) are not regulated. Internal company regulations may exist.

## **6.2. Training, evaluation and accreditation of teachers and trainers**

In Slovenia there is no separation between IVET and CVET teacher training systems. All VET teacher education takes place in higher education, regardless of whether it is for teachers of general subjects or vocational-theoretical subjects or lecturers and instructors.

The teacher training system starts from initial (preservice) education, mostly university-based, organised concurrently or consecutively. This stage is followed by initial on-the-job training during the traineeship period, considered as the final 'on-the-job' qualifying phase that ends with the teaching certification examination (*Strokovni izpit v vzgoji in izobraževanju*) before the State examination board.

Preservice training of all categories of teachers takes place at higher education institutions (universities, higher professional colleges). The entry requirement to a university study programme is a *matura* (external examination in five subjects at the end of *gimnazija*) or a vocational *matura* (combined internal/external examination at the end of upper secondary technical education) and general *matura* examination in one additional subject. The entrance requirement to professional studies is at least a vocational *matura*.

Preservice training for apprenticeship trainers takes place at upper secondary level. Candidates who have completed at least a three-year vocational education programme in the initial phase of their education and have mastered their occupational skills during three years or more of work experience may turn to a local chamber to verify their skills are at the level of master craftsman. The necessary preconditions to become a trainer are: completing a three-year vocational qualification, at least three years work experience, mastery of occupational skills, successful completion of a pedagogical preparatory course and master craftsman's examination.

In-service training in Slovenia is linked to the system of promotion of all categories of teachers. Participation in training is voluntary, with the exception of training for the purpose of reforms. The



Ministry of Education and Sport publishes every year public tenders for in-service programmes. A special ministerial Programme Council for the Professional Development of Educators conducts the professional selection of submitted in-service programmes and determines their value with points for promotion. The minister takes the final decision on programmes fully or partly funded by the ministry. Selected programmes are published in a special catalogue at the beginning of the school year to inform schools and teachers of opportunities.

Annual internal evaluations of the system show that the quality of the system improves every year. Priorities include new forms and approaches to further education training; programmes of in-service training alongside the introduction of new educational programmes; training mentors of new teachers and mentors in companies; development and implementation of an open curriculum; new approaches to assessment and testing; development of didactic materials; vocational guidance and counselling; new skills and competences; training trainers.

The new approaches developed include more active teachers' involvement in creating and planning training opportunities, including organisation of coursework in schools. New partnerships are to be established – between teacher training institutions and schools, teachers' unions and associations involved. Courses linked to the new curricular contents are commissioned by the education authorities, courses to support the ongoing professional development of teachers (offering training for new competences, career development, etc.) are provided through an official public invitation for tenders s also open to schools, other organisations, private institutions, etc. Changes made recently include the social partnership (integration of work and learning), responsiveness to labour market demands, transparency of qualifications and international mobility of work, efficient implementation of a wide range of practical training which demands quite different methods of teaching and a teaching process approach. Based on teachers' suggestions, the programme of VET in-service was prepared and carried out in enterprises successfully. Project and research work has expanded. One of the most successful projects is called 'Hidden treasure'. It has already yielded excellent results. Participants – VET teachers, students and social partners – seek best practices and developments and introduce them into schools directly. Based on networking, such transfer is fast and effective.

Teachers of vocational-theoretical subjects and practical subjects are linked in study groups (*Študijske skupine*, SGs), funded by the Ministry of Education and Sport and supported by the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training. Teachers in SGs organise seminars, workshops, lectures and study visits in their vocational fields; they participate in modernisation of curricula, textbooks, teaching aids, classroom equipment; they prepare examination assignments; they participate in innovative projects, knowledge competitions and international projects. The school-networking project includes development of new concepts of VET, key competences and key qualifications and networking schools.

Evaluation of training sessions is obligatory. At the end of each training course, participants fill in the prescribed evaluation form. All courses are evaluated by participants after they have first been completed and then at the end of each course. Course evaluations include evidence of participants' feedback.

There are general regulations for accreditation and evaluation in teacher education institutions applicable to all higher education. Teacher organisations are not involved in this process.

- the Minister for Education and Sport is responsible for determining the appropriate fields of study for future teachers of specific subjects. The minister decides after obtaining the opinions of the National Council of Experts for General Education on teachers of general subjects and of the National Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education on VET teachers;
- the academic validation of study programmes is the responsibility of universities. The senates of higher education institutions adopt the curricula after the accreditation procedure managed by the National Council of Experts for Higher Education. This council decides on the professional suitability of programmes, the Ministry of Education and Sport only plays the role of employer and issues its opinion;
- internal evaluations are the responsibility of higher education institutions and their quality assessment commissions which prepare annual self-evaluation reports. They are assisted by the National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission;
- external evaluations are the responsibility of the National Council of Experts for Higher Education.

Before teachers are regarded as fully-fledged professionals, they must pass the teaching certification examination. This examination includes an oral examination of knowledge of the constitutional order and legislation regulating human and children's rights and fundamental freedoms, legislation on education and knowledge of the official language of instruction. Head teachers and mentors are responsible for assessing teaching practice. At least 30 lessons of a new teacher must be evaluated before the teaching certification examination is undertaken. A final evaluation report made by a mentor is sent to the State Teaching Examination Board. The report contains an overall evaluation of the new teacher's performance in the 30 lessons observed, the progress achieved and the ability to teach independently.

Amendments to the Vocational Education and Training Act were adopted in 2006. The main changes involve more workplace training and strengthening the role of workplace trainers; increasing the amount of learning at work; stressing the importance of social partnership. The role of chambers is to become more important, especially in conducting master craftsmen's examinations and evaluating the practical part of final examinations; and the knowledge, skills and competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning shall also be recognised in the process of formal education.

Information on trainers outside the school system is fragmented and unreliable. These trainers, instructors and mentors of various kinds supervise student workers in on-the-job learning periods or give lectures to groups of employees. Their pre-service training and admission requirements vary considerably from ISCED 3 to ISCED 6. Their qualifications range from master's level to a doctorate.

At the end of 2004/05, 1 025 teachers were employed in organisations offering educational programmes, while 8 515 teachers, counsellors, managers and other professional workers worked in institutions offering continuing adult education programmes.

Within these numbers, most are part-time teachers, with around 60 % in the educational programmes. The figure was similar in continuing education programmes for adults (part-time employees or external collaborators).

Companies which educate and train their employees, employed over 4 000 organisers of education and training in 2000, of which just fewer than 900 were employed full time. For employees taking part in training, companies paid 28 hours of their working time, intended for education and training.

### **6.3. Pre-service and in-service education of teachers in adult education programmes**

Teaching an adult education programme is a regulated occupation. Regulation is one of the key mechanisms for quality assurance in education. Teachers and professional workers in adult education, who teach approved educational programmes or programmes cofunded from public sources, have to fulfil the criteria determined by education legislation. Usually they are required to have completed a university programme and professional examination. If they have not acquired pedagogic-andragogic knowledge during university studies, they need to enrol in a one-year pedagogic-andragogic course provided by faculties with the appropriate licence.

Continuing (in-service) education of teachers and professional workers in adult education is carried out in the framework of the system for permanent professional education of workers in education, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Sport and on a fully market basis. The system is composed of training and advanced training programmes, prescribed programmes, modernised programmes for specific professional fields, thematic conferences and education in networks. Participation is voluntary (except in prescribed programmes where teachers get special knowledge in accordance with the decree of the minister and provisions of an individual verified educational programme for adults). Points important for promotion at work are awarded to participants in permanent professional education.

The National Institute for Adult Education, the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training and the National School for Leadership in Education play an important role in the continuing vocational training of teachers. The programmes offered by the Institute for Adult Education are compulsory for teachers and mentors who want to carry out its various publicly-funded developmental projects in quality assurance, counselling, independent learning, literacy, and young people's project learning programmes, etc. The programmes last from 16 to 200 hours. Special education for school principals is also compulsory and is carried out by the National School for Leadership in Education.

## **7. Skills and competence development**

### **7.1. Anticipating skill needs**

Actual demand and short-term labour market needs have been followed by the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS). The ESS provides information on demand on the labour market and its needs. They provide data on jobs available on the labour market, advertised by employers, and the results of a questionnaire on annual labour market needs, which targets companies with over 10 employees. Data on labour market needs are complemented by data on foreigners who obtained work permits.

Comparison of data on demand and the numbers of unemployed people (actual supply) provides information on short-term educational and occupational discrepancies on the labour market. But it does not give a full picture of the knowledge, skills and competences required by employers. The ESS does not deal with mid-term and long-term forecasting of labour market needs and there is no other research or institution in Slovenia which works on the issue systematically. Labour market forecasts and assessment of trends at macro and aggregate levels are done by the Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development and presented in its short-term and long-term development documents (see Annex 4).

### **7.2. Bridging pathways**

The comprehensive curriculum reform, initiated in 2002 and cofunded by the ESF, is being carried out to develop new occupational standards in all fields (see 2.2.1). The new national curricula are based on modules and competences and lead to credits.

It is possible to acquire wide basic general and vocational knowledge and also begin to develop special knowledge by choosing modules. Of the curriculum, 20 % is flexible and can be adapted to regional and local needs, which strengthens cooperation between schools and local enterprises. In general, new programmes are prepared which determine the study results expected in order to gain occupational competences (the emphasis is on linking theory and practice, training in companies is compulsory) and upgrade key competences and general knowledge, for which standards are prepared for all levels. The study results (knowledge, skills and competences) of individual modules and the numbers of credits are determined too. New programmes are structured to enable vertical and horizontal mobility among programmes. Students with poor knowledge, who are not able to complete an overall educational programme successfully, can acquire a certificate on a national occupational qualification (see Glossary, Annex 2) based on successfully completed modules. By linking school and certificate systems, adults who obtained a certificate through certification of informally acquired knowledge, can use it in further education. Vertical and horizontal mobility by branches is a solid basis for lifelong learning, where one can enter and leave the school system 'with no loss', with a vocational qualification. It enables individuals to upgrade basic and vocational knowledge and skills more easily in lifelong learning.

### **7.3. Designing curricula**

Based on VET legislation the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training is responsible for developing VET educational programmes. The Ministry of Education and Sport is responsible (see Chapter 3 and Annex 3).

The school curriculum is a document which documents process and developments in schools. It covers all features relating to preparation of the education and schooling process. The curriculum is prepared based on a vocational standard which reflects labour market needs. The basic elements are:

- school development strategy (pedagogical and didactical concept of the school and strategic thinking how to achieve the planned outcomes);
- annual preparation of the educational process, including open curriculum;
- assessment plan;
- regular monitoring based on self-evaluation.

In every school a project team is set up. All teachers and trainers are involved. They translate the learning goals into units of learning, define content, duration, learning, teaching and assessment methods, organise the units in an integrated approach (theoretical knowledge, practical training in schools, key competences, cooperation with companies), develop organisational models, evaluate and support students.

The independent development of school curricula is an entirely new process for schools, which leads to overall changes in the paradigm and style of work of the school and every teacher. The added value of the new programmes is in a team approach which strengthens the integration of knowledge and peer learning, shapes the curriculum in terms of the process, promoting intersubject integration, planning and implementation of teaching and learning and opening up to, and reinforcing connection with, the local environment.

The education reform strongly emphasises the importance of student-centred approaches, individualisation and learning support to individuals (preparation of individual study plans) and development of key competences (ICT, business competences, learning to learn). More and more schools are becoming learning organisations. They increase their cooperation with enterprises and enter into cooperative partnerships with local businesses.

## 8. Validation and certification of learning

### 8.1. Validation and certification of formal learning

The National Vocational Qualifications Act (2007, see Annex 3) defines that a vocational qualification may be acquired within the formal education system or through validation of non-formal learning. The act also determines the possibility of obtaining national vocational qualifications in parts. Educational programmes based on vocational standards and which lead to vocational qualifications are provided by lower VET schools, secondary vocational and technical education schools, and post-secondary vocational schools. It is also now possible to obtain a vocational qualification in higher education programmes (in faculties and higher professional schools). Social partners are actively involved in preparing vocational standards, defining the contents of educational programmes (with the exception of general education programmes). Most occupations are not regulated, except mainly branches which are of general interest: health, security, social services.

Institutions and bodies involved in a procedure for preparing and adopting an educational programme are as follows:

Expert group for preparation of educational programme	Programme planning: analysis of vocational standard, formation of modules
Expert group for preparation of educational programme	Proposal of educational programme with catalogues of knowledge, skills and competences and certificate supplement
Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education	Approval of programme
Ministry of Education and Sport	Adoption of programme and public announcement

In vocational and technical education, a credit points-based assessment is determined by the Vocational and Technical Education Act (see Annex 3). It is also planned to harmonise it with the European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET) <sup>(12)</sup>.

According to the Vocational and Technical Education Act (2006, Art. 14), a credit transfer model based on competences and students workload was developed (see Annex 3). In accordance with this act, new vocational and technical education programmes have a modular structure. A module or subject is the smallest unit of an education programme/qualification, to which credit points are allocated for the following: the value of the volume of learning outcomes, work invested, and learning activities (including various forms of instruction, exercises, and practical education at school or in a company, ongoing work, project work, preparation for exams). A module/subject has a relative value compared to the value of the overall qualification. Vocational and technical education programmes are evaluated in terms of credit points by the National Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education (see Chapter 3).

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<sup>(12)</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/education/ecvt/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/ecvt/index_en.html)



In accordance with the Vocational and Technical Education Act, education programmes are allocated a number of credit points corresponding to the type of qualification they lead to:

- lower vocational qualification: 120 credit points;
- secondary vocational qualification: 180 to 240 credit points;
- secondary technical qualification: 240 to 300 credit points;
- vocational/technical qualification: 120 credit points;
- vocational course: 60 to 90 credit points.

Master craftsman, foreman and manager examinations are worth 60 credit points. In accordance with the National Vocational Qualifications Act (OJ RS 1/2007) a similar system will also apply to the evaluation and recognition of informally acquired knowledge, where greater emphasis will be placed on the actual or estimated effort invested in achievement of learning outcomes.

## **8.2. Validation and certification of non-formal/informal learning**

The National Vocational Qualifications Act enables applicants to prove vocational qualifications by producing a document portfolio which consists of formal and non-formal education evidence and informal or occasional learning evidence. The policy and proceedings are determined at national level by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and are agreed with social partners and among the branches. Social partners also take part in the bodies for accrediting occupational standards and catalogues.

Assessment and validation of non-formal and informal learning can take place in different ways for individuals who want to enter formal education. These issues are partly dealt with in education acts and partly, even in more detail, by different executive regulations such as rulebooks, guidelines, methodological starting points and guidelines for adapting educational programmes to adults. The Vocational and Technical Education Act enables individuals to have their previously acquired knowledge and skills validated. However in practice these mechanisms are still quite rigid, since the types of appropriate documents, issued by educational institutions and which can be considered, are prescribed in detail.

Implementation of the system of verification and validation has led to an increase of counselling activities in schools and other educational institutions, the Employment Service of Slovenia, companies, etc. Additional training for counsellors on the system of national vocational qualifications has been required. It has also been necessary to train members of commissions for verification and validation of national vocational qualifications. These are the experts who fulfil certain criteria and are trained to work in a commission in accordance with prescribed regulations and law, to assess document portfolio and other documents proving knowledge and skills and to learn of different methods of verification and work with candidates. In Slovenia there are about 300 licensed members of commissions for different qualifications and about 200 counsellors with specific knowledge of the certification system and procedures.

## **8.3. Impact of EU policy cooperation**

The National Vocational Qualifications Act envisages establishment of a qualification framework (QF) to enable horizontal and vertical transferability between qualifications both

in the formal education system and in the system of verification and certification of national vocational qualifications. Emphasis will be on finding equilibrium between wide qualifications acquired mainly in the formal education system and independent qualifications, acquired mainly through the certificate system.

In vocational education and training, a credit points-based assessment is also envisaged in Article 14 of the Vocational and Technical Education Act. It is planned to harmonise it with the European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET) and with already adopted principles for assessment of informal and occasional learning within the European qualifications framework, Europass and the European framework for quality assurance in vocational and technical education (see Chapter 11).

In post-secondary education, assessment in accordance with the European credit transfer system (ECTS) is arranged by Article 24 of the Post-secondary Vocational Education Act (see Annex 3). In practice, a credit points system in this field does not yet function. Renewed programmes are in the preparation phase, however individual educational institutions already acknowledge knowledge and skills acquired by non-formal or occasional learning, mainly as part of completed practical training, while more rarely as a part of theoretical subjects.

We can expect that the National Examination Centre, the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training, social partners and national councils of experts will be responsible for credit points-based assessment of non-formal and occasional learning in the certification system of national vocational qualifications as well as for its implementation. In the system of formal education, individual educational institutions, whose work will be coordinated by a competent ministry, will be responsible for validating national vocational qualifications.

Since the credit points system has not been implemented yet, vertical transferability is determined by completing the previous level of education. In case of limited enrolment to a programme, the number of collected points is taken into account. Details of transferability and enrolment possibilities are described in 4.2.4.

## **8.4. Easing EU mobility**

In November 2007, the Act on the Recognition of Qualifications for EU Member States Citizens relating to access to regulated occupations and occupational activities in the Republic of Slovenia (see Annex 3) was harmonised with the Directive of 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications <sup>(13)</sup> by adaptation of existing legislation (see Annex 3).

Individual occupation-specific ministries determine the criteria which citizens of other EU Member States, EEA countries and Switzerland and other non-EU citizens who obtained qualifications abroad need to fulfil for their qualifications to be recognised.

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<sup>(13)</sup> Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications; OJ L 255, 30.9.2005, p. 22. Available from Internet: <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11065.htm> [cited 4.1.2008].



## **9. Guidance and counselling**

### **9.1. Strategy and provision**

The main providers of career guidance services in Slovenia are schools and the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS). In both settings professional counsellors are employed. They provide a broad range of guidance services (personal, social, vocational). Guidance in schools is provided by school counsellors who work in school counselling services. Schools have at least one school counsellor, bigger schools have two or three.

Guidance in the Employment Service of Slovenia is provided by local and regional offices throughout Slovenia and is coordinated by the department for vocational guidance at the central office. The first vocational information and counselling centre (CIPS) was established in 1999. Now more CIPS operate in the frame of ESS (there are two larger centres) and two in partnership with other partners. Career counsellors in ESS and CIPS provide guidance service for the unemployed and students. In principle, guidance service is also offered to other adults (employed) but in practice they represent only 2 % of all clients.

Since 2001 small adult educational guidance centres (ISIO) have been created within adult training. They are coordinated by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) and provide guidance to adults during and after the education and training process. Adult training centres employ full-time counsellors (in ISIO centres) while information is also provided by other staff in the centre. SIAE has developed a professional doctrine, maintains databases on training and guidance opportunities and provides training for ISIO counsellors.

There are other organisations operating in the field of guidance. The Chamber of Crafts is responsible for the apprenticeship system (crafts). Its role is to find suitable employers, license them, arrange contracts, place apprentices, etc. The chamber also produces information on apprenticeship (apprenticeship system, learning opportunities) and actively promotes craft occupations and job prospects (fairs, etc.). The Chamber of Commerce and Industry is not very active in guidance. Most contacts between schools and employers are arranged the participation of the chamber. In the last few years the chamber has shown growing interest in guidance and began to cooperate in guidance projects. The Centre for Vocational Educational and Training (CPI) has become an important actor in the field of guidance, providing information material on occupations and vocational training. CPI promotes several guidance projects and is very active in the national project for drop-out prevention.

Provision of guidance (specialised for students) in higher education is limited or non-existent. Students can get guidance and counselling in the Employment Service of Slovenia and vocational information and counselling centres (CIPS) but this is not specialised.

Responsibility for management of guidance services is divided between the Ministry of Education and Sport which finances school counselling services (providing salaries for counsellors) and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs which finances guidance services in the Employment Service of Slovenia. There is no special budget for other guidance activities in schools. Therefore it depends on schools themselves how many resources are spent

on guidance activities (information material, etc.). There is also a special budget for guidance activities (information production, collection and dissemination, ICT, training, etc.) including a national contribution for the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance (NCIPS), which operates at the ESS central office. The Employment Service of Slovenia also provides a limited number of guidance activities for school students in primary and secondary schools.

In the early 1990s, some private counselling agencies, which mostly provide vocational training or placements, but also some guidance activities, have emerged. Some bigger companies provide guidance services for their employees.

Career guidance is not part of the educational pathway in Slovenia. The reason is that career education is not developed and is not integrated in the school curriculum.

Since 2005, both ministries have made some steps for better coordination and faster development of guidance services in Slovenia. The first is a project on developing the concept of lifelong training and guidance centres. The second is the National Guidance Policy Forum which was established in 2005 in the frame of a joint action project with the same name. The main result of the forum is a proposal for further development of guidance services in Slovenia with the support of the European Social Fund (human resources development operational programme 2007-13). Implementation activities were expected to start in January 2007. In 2007 Slovenia made a third important step by joining the recently established European lifelong guidance policy network (ELGPN) – a network which aims at developing guidance policy and practice at Member State level and also contributes to development of effective guidance policy at EU level.

## **9.2. Target groups and modes of delivery**

### **9.2.1. Students at primary and secondary schools**

All public schools operate school counselling services. They provide counselling to apprentices, pupils, students, teachers and parents and cooperate with tutors, teachers and school management in planning, following-up and evaluating development of the school in performing educational tasks, and provide vocational guidance. School counselling services are carried out by school counsellors in liaison with the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS).

Career guidance activities are part of the annual plan of the school. The plan content depends on the school but usually further activities are included: visits to employers, a visit to a local vocational information and counselling centre (CIPS, career centre), individual counselling sessions, activities related to enrolment procedure (from primary to secondary schools). Some schools organise additional activities, such as work experience, work with parents, etc.

### **9.2.2. Higher education students**

Guidance activities in Slovenian higher education institutions are modest and in some cases do not exist. However, there are some cases of good practice. Where guidance activities exist, they are limited to visits of students to prospective employers or discussions between students and relevant professionals. Some private providers run job-search sessions for students at universities.

Universities and other higher education institutions mostly do not provide specialised career services for their students. There are two exceptions: Faculty of Economics (University of Ljubljana) with its career centre for students (CERŠ) and another centre (in development) at the University of Maribor.

Students' organisations are quite active in guidance. They organise student career fairs (Student arena, GetWork, etc.) which are becoming more popular every year among higher education students. The number of career fairs for students increased in 2006 with new fairs organised by private agencies.

### **9.2.3. Unemployed**

The unemployed are a priority target group of the ESS. The main methods used in guidance for them are:

- information: ESS publishes a wide range of information (leaflets, brochures, etc.) on ESS activities, occupations and job opportunities. Information is available at local offices and some is also in the media (newspapers). ESS also maintains an Internet site, where the unemployed and others can access job vacancies and information on ESS activities, opportunities for the unemployed, etc. The level of information activities increased after introduction of vocational information and counselling centres (CIPS), which are usually operated by the ESS;
- advice and counselling: there are two levels of (vocational) counselling provided by the ESS. The first, employment advising, is provided by employment advisers, who also provide job-broking. At an interview the adviser identifies possible barriers to employment. If advisers identify problems related to the vocational choice (lack of information, career indecision, lack of career planning, skills, etc.) they refer the person to career counsellors (the second level of counselling). Two months after registration the adviser produces an 'employment plan' with the unemployed person;
- group information sessions: obligatory for the unemployed and are usually provided by employment advisers. Sessions include information on opportunities provided by ESS and meetings with potential employers usually take place at local employment offices;
- job-search seminars: (two-day seminars) are partly provided by ESS employment advisers or career counsellors, partly by external providers;
- guidance in employment programmes: there are many guidance services for the unemployed, like training and other employment programmes, provided by external providers. These guidance services providers are mostly private agencies financed by ESS based on public tenders.

### **9.2.4. Adults**

The Adult Education Act (1996) in Article 24 defines counselling as the activity which is a part of the annual programme of adult education, adopted every year by the government. Article 29 of the same act defines standards for financing guidance staff.

## **9.3. Guidance and counselling personnel**

### **9.3.1. Schools**

Guidance in schools is provided by full-time school counsellors. Educational profiles of counsellors in schools are regulated by law. School counselling services can be provided by psychologists, pedagogues, social welfare workers, social pedagogues and 'defectologists'.

School counsellors have a special training system which involves many subjects relevant to their work (relationship between parent and child, drug abuse, etc.). Usually these are short courses which counsellors can choose according to their interests and needs. Some training courses are relevant to career guidance (counselling techniques, etc.), some not. Specialised courses on career guidance are rare. Some guidance issues, such as knowledge of the labour market, are not covered at all by the courses available.

Further training for school counsellors is also organised in 'study groups' coordinated by the National Institute of Education. Counsellors participating in a study group choose a subject they are interested in and then work on this subject.

### **9.3.2. Employment Service of Slovenia**

Employment advisers traditionally have higher levels of education (three years of post-secondary education) but the number of advisers with a four-year university diploma is growing.

Career counsellors in ESS are mostly psychologists with a few exceptions who have been working in the field for many years. At vocational information and counselling centres (CIPS) there are very few extra staff at information desks who have secondary education or a university degree (where only one person covers all tasks). They provide information to clients, help them find information resources, refer them to counsellors, etc. (counselling service in CIPS is provided by ESS counsellors).

In recent years (from 1999 to 2005) all ESS career counsellors have had intensive training in guidance lasting three weeks a year from 1997 to 1999 (as part of Phare vocational information and counselling pilot project) and one week from 2000 to 2005. Five training modules on guidance have been developed: counselling interviews, counselling for adults, labour market training, module on use of new guidance methods (computerised career guidance tool *Kam in kako*) and a train-the-trainers module. Experts of ESS have developed some other training modules, for example on the psychological theories of career development, etc. In 1998 a team of four internal trainers were nominated to train all ESS employment and career counsellors. The number of training days decreased in 2005 due to a reduced budget and now one internal trainer works at ESS.

### **9.3.3. Centres for guidance in adult education**

Staff providing counselling in centres for adult guidance (ISIO centres) have university degrees. They are andragogues, paedagogues, sociologists or psychologists.

Initial and further training for these counsellors is provided by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. Each year 50 hours of staff time are devoted to counsellors training.

## **10. Financing vocational education and training**

### **10.1. Background information**

The main acts regulating financing of vocational and technical education and training are the Organisation and Financing of Education Act (2005) and the Adult Education Act (2006).

Financing vocational and technical education and training is highly influenced by regulations on wage policy. Salaries represent the highest spending category for schools (over 80 % of all funds) (National VET Observatory, 2003).

### **10.2. Funding for initial vocational education and training**

As public institutions, public vocational and technical schools are funded from the national budget. Funds are provided by the Ministry of Education and Sport in the framework of its financial plan which is an integral part of the national budget. Schools report to the ministry on the number of students and propose the organisation of jobs by categories according to the corresponding norms and standards. If justified, the ministry signifies its agreement with the systematisation of jobs which are, in accordance with the regulations on wages and corresponding collective agreement, determined by quotients and related allowances. Based on the systematisation of jobs and the number of classes, schools receive funds for salaries and running costs on a monthly basis.

Investments and upkeep are determined by an annual plan that, on the proposal of schools, is defined by the Ministry of Education and Sport based on certain priorities and the scope of funds in the national budget. For these purposes, the government adopts special annual plans and budgets.

Under the law, schools as public institutions can also carry out activities not determined as public services. The scope of these activities depends on the space and human resource capacities of schools. In this way, schools are able to obtain additional funding by selling their products and services on the market. Additional funds received in this way should be used to strengthen basic school activities (running costs, upkeep and investments). If the minister agrees, part of these additional funds can be used for salaries.

Vocational education and training is also financed by other State sectors, as well as individuals and employers/companies. The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs is responsible for providing scholarships to pupils. Through the Chamber of Crafts and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Economy provides funding for practical training of apprentices in companies.

### **10.3. Funding for continuing vocational education and training and adult learning**

Total public expenditure for education represented 5.96 % of GDP in 2004, decreasing from 6.02 % in 2003 (SORS, 2004; see Annex 4). Data on expenditure for continuing vocational education (CVE) and adult education (AE) as a percentage of GDP has been estimated to be less than 0.1 % (1999).

The only direct and indirect costs that are fully covered by public finances are those for primary education of adults and education and training of unemployed. All other adult education is financed via three main financial sources: employers, individuals and public finances. No reliable evidence of the contribution from each source is available. Regarding data from the international adult literacy survey (IALS) and research of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) in 2004, employers (nearly 70 % in 1998 and 2004) and individuals (25 % in 1998 and 20 % in 2004) bear the largest share of the costs of education and training.

#### **10.3.1. Publicly funded continuing vocational education and training and adult education**

The funds from different public sources intended for financing CVT and adult education are administered and allocated by different ministries, responsible for human resource development. The Ministry of Education and Sport and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs decide on use of the funds, including European funds, in the adult education annual plan adopted by the government. In 2005 the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs spent SIT 5419 million (of which SIT 2607 million came from the European Social Fund and the Phare programme) and the Ministry of Education and Sport spent SIT 1 698 million (of which SIT 302 million came from the European Social Fund) <sup>(14)</sup>.

The instruments used for distribution are programmes of public agencies. For the labour market, it is the ESS. For adult and continuing education the agencies are the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training, the National Examination Centre and other authorised institutions. Public tenders and public invitations to AE providers are also, used for distributing funds.

Funds under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Sport are still directed exclusively at the supply side, either to providers of training programmes or research and development institutions. Development of new training programmes/courses, new approaches in adult education, carrying out infrastructural activities, etc. are also financed from this source <sup>(15)</sup>.

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<sup>(14)</sup> Annual financial statement of the budget of the Republic of Slovenia for 2005. Available from Internet: [http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r04/predpis\\_ZRDP14.html](http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r04/predpis_ZRDP14.html).

<sup>(15)</sup> Even vouchers for foreign language teaching used to be allocated to providers and not adult learners. This changed and now the costs that adults pay for language exams passed to providers licensed by the National Examination Centre are refunded.



The funds of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs are directed at the demand side (individuals and/or enterprises, such as travel costs, learning material, meals, activity contribution) and the supply side (development of new initiatives, programmes and projects).

A new reallocation fund for CVE and AE was established in 2007 – the public fund for human resource development and study grants (Public fund). Funds earmarked in budgets of different ministries (Labour, Education, Higher Education, Science and Technology, and Industry) will be distributed by the Public fund, with the aim of improving employability, developing excellence in science, strengthening cooperation with industry and science, and for study grants. In addition to public funds there are plans to secure funding from enterprises, European Funds, and other sources. Among instruments determined by the Public fund, the most significant are those aiming at developing top knowledge and putting its achievements into practice. It seems that CVE and AE will remain marginalised and key problems in financing and distributing funds will not be overcome.

With development of the knowledge-based economy, it is important that the gap in access to education and training between those with higher levels of qualifications and those with lower levels be addressed within the funding mechanisms. It is also important that funding addresses the problem of increasing educational achievements among adults. Inefficient allocation of funding for continuing and adult education represents a major obstacle in ensuring quality, access and equity. The two financial instruments for allocating funds to AE, annual plans and public tenders, have tended to hinder realisation of the objectives defined in the adult education master plan and measures aimed at improving employability by education and training. The procedures for approving annual plans and implementing public tenders take several months (up to eight or nine months) and place providers in a difficult position regarding both implementation of programmes (only a couple of months is left for conducting some programmes) and their own financial situation (they are not paid for several months and have to take bank loans). Inefficiency in allocation of funds is also reflected in spending the national budget: the Ministry of Education and Sport distributed and spent 76 % of its funds for CVT and AE and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs less than 70 % in 2005, mainly due to underspending of the European Social Fund (see footnote (<sup>14</sup>)).

The same problem of inefficiency of funding and instability of activity conditions holds true for non-financial incentives in continuing and adult education (the network of information and counselling services, quality assurance, adult and vocational teachers training).

### **10.3.2. Enterprise/social partner-funded training**

Restructuring firms and enterprises in the period of transition significantly reduced the investment of employers in workers' training. Official data show that those employed in the public sector have the best opportunities for education and training. In 2005 more than 70 % of employees in public, financial services and education participated in training, while in agriculture, manufacturing and construction participation was far below the national average (between 20 % and 30 %).

According to the Labour Relations Act, it is the right and duty of workers to participate in education and training, maintain and expand their professional skills and competences, and

remain in employment. Employers are obliged to provide education and training to their employees when it is required and when training helps to maintain their staff in jobs. However, the Labour Relations Act does not directly address the issue of financing the training of those in employment. It does so indirectly. It is left to collective agreements to specify the types of costs of training borne by employers and those borne by individuals.

Employers are obliged by collective agreements to cover direct costs (tuition fees, learning materials, travel and subsistence costs) as well as indirect costs of training (wages and salaries for the time of absence from work due to training). Individuals finance education and training mainly when it is not at the initiative of their employer. Sometimes, they are also obliged to cofinance training required at work.

When training is organised outside work time, the employer and employee should agree who is to bear the costs. To reduce indirect costs of training, employers attempt to place training outside work time and shift the costs to employees.

Data on education and training in enterprises were collected in 1999 through the CVTS2 survey carried out by the Statistical Office of Slovenia, and the same methodology was applied in 2005 (Eurostat, 2006). The comparison shows the rise in enterprises which provide training (from 48 % to 66.7 % of all enterprises), rise of participation of employees in training (from 43 % to 54 %). However at the same time there was a decline in the amount of funds allocated for formal and non-formal training in total labour force by 0.17 percentage points (from 1.3 % to 1.13 % of total labour expenditure) as well as a decline of average costs of training per participant by 15 %, from SIT 64 000 to SIT 54 583. In 2005, employers provided about 17 hours paid training per employee (SORS, 2005). The CVTS2 data further show that 38 % of firms and enterprises invest in the qualifications of their workforce according to their global human resource development strategies; about 40 % of organisations had such strategies developed in their own organisations (SORS, *Rapid reports*, No 83/2002). Generally, employers and managers decide what kind of training is in the interest of the enterprise and who is to undertake training. Recent research findings have shown that the vast majority of education and training – formal and non-formal – financed by employers is related to work (Mohorčič Špolar et al., 2001).

The same findings reveal that employers tend to invest primarily in their core workers who are expected to contribute most to the productivity and competitiveness of the firm. Poorly educated workers in less-skilled positions who are easily replaceable have only limited access to paid education and training. There are no measures promoted by the State or social partners to stimulate employers to invest more in the qualifications of this last category.

Public funds partially finance groups of employees who are either in danger of losing their jobs or who are already temporarily or permanently redundant. There are no joint funds from social partners dedicated to education and training of the employed. A private fund exists only in the crafts sector. It is financed exclusively by employers; they contribute 1 % of gross earnings.

The Social Agreement 2007-09 (see Annex 3) signed in 2007 by representatives of the government, employers and trade unions may bring new developments to improve investment in education and training in enterprises. For example, on financial support for developing key competences of workers,



new incentives to support employers who invest in the education and training of their employees, establishing a training fund of employers and further implementing the investors in people standard.

## **10.4. Funding for training the unemployed and other vulnerable groups**

The rights connected to the status of unemployed people – including the right to education and training – are financed by public funds, partly through contributions of the employed from their wages and salaries, partly from employers as a percentage of payrolls collected in the national budget, and partly from other State budget sources. Approximately 10 % of the funds needed to finance the rights connected to unemployment are collected in this way. As a rule, full direct and indirect costs of training of the unemployed are covered by public finances.

The measures and public funds intended for financing education and training of the unemployed are determined in the budget of the Ministry of labour, family and social affairs and further developed by the active employment policy programme <sup>(16)</sup>, and the plan and regulations for its implementation. The Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS) is in charge of preparing the catalogue of active employment policy measures (based on the above documents). Funds for implementing the catalogue are transferred to the ESS. The ESS is in charge of selecting the unemployed for training and the providers of education and training. The providers are selected via public tenders, public invitations or directly by ESS, while unemployed people have the right to education and training based on their individual employment plan.

Participants in these programmes are entitled to free health and safety insurance. Since they lose the status of an unemployed person, they also lose the material benefits connected to that status. As students they obtain the right to study grants in line with the regulations on study grants in initial education. The catalogue of active employment policy measures brings a new instrument to offer activities to the unemployed – the ‘activity grant’, which entitles all unemployed people to take part in any employment active policy programme longer than 100 hours (employment excluded) <sup>(17)</sup>.

People who terminate their training before completing the programme for unjustified individual reasons are required to return all or part of the costs of the training programme together with a defined interest rate.

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<sup>(16)</sup> The period covered by the active employment policy programme has changed from one year (in 2006 and before) to seven years (active employment policy programme 2007-13) and documents that determine its implementation, to two years.

<sup>(17)</sup> It means that the unemployed received EUR 48 in 2006 (20 % of the minimum wage).

*Table 8: Public funds for education and training programmes for the unemployed (in SIT '000)*

	Amount
1997	2 031 882
2004 total	2 153 435
Education and training for enhancing employment	1 732 498
Education and training of the employed	420 938
2005 total	1 153 255
Education and training for enhancing employment	853 334
Education and training of the employed	299 921

*Source:* Annual plans, ESS 2003-05.

## 10.5. Perspectives and issues: from funding to investing in human resources

Although Slovenia ranks among countries with a relatively high percentage of GDP spent on education, it is worth stressing that Slovenia is also a country where public expenditure on education has decreased, while two areas – primary and tertiary education – show an increase in public expenditure. The negative trend can also be observed in the costs covered by enterprises. The gap between recommendations for a substantial increase in funding continuing vocational training and adult education and the facts on investment is widening, and public expenditure favours initial education (primary and tertiary).

Insufficient public investment in CVT and AE is accompanied by inefficient mechanisms for reallocating funds. There is also no stable funding of CVT and AE; the investment largely depends on the yearly availability of public finances, even for vulnerable groups, defined as priorities in national strategies.

Additionally, changes in financing youth education and decentralisation do not address CVT and AE.

Further, the State has still not introduced a levy scheme, deduction of taxation, individual learning accounts and the like to motivate greater private investment in human resource development by employers or individuals, though the adult education master plan (2004) outlined some projects for stimulating enterprises, communities and individuals to invest more. Efforts to introduce investors in people standard failed at the very beginning of their implementation<sup>(18)</sup> while the individual learning account only reached a development phase. No private training funds have been established to finance the education and training of adults (except in the crafts sector).

In addition to EU indicators, some national (financial) indicators of investment in training are necessary to capture the most important national particularities. However, the most urgent measures needed are those contributing to raising public and enterprise investment in adult and continuing education as well as improving efficiency and stability of budget distribution. This will contribute to realisation of the national goals set out in the adult education master plan (2004) and the lifelong learning strategy in Slovenia (Ministry of Education and Sport, 2007).

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<sup>(18)</sup> Nine enterprises participated, eight were accredited the investors in people standard.

# 11. European and international dimensions

## 11.1. National strategies related to EU policies and programmes

Implementing lifelong learning is at the heart of the single programming document, which is the basis for carrying out activities supported by the European Social Fund (ESF) for the period 2004-06.

In January 2007, Slovenia prepared a draft lifelong learning strategy, which was presented for public discussion<sup>(19)</sup>. In spring 2007, it was discussed by the three most senior expert government bodies in education, the Council of Experts for General Education, the Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education and the Council of Experts for Adult Education (see 3.1).

The proposed strategy speaks of ‘strategic cores’ for implementing lifelong and lifewide dimensions of learning:

- a comprehensive and coherent systemic design for all learning;
- a range of opportunities and purposes for learning;
- learning in its lifewide dimension;
- diversity and flexibility of provision;
- access to learning tailored to the individual’s needs;
- key competences for learning and personal growth;
- learning for successful professional careers and quality work;
- learning as a source and driving force of community development;
- possibilities to validate and certify all knowledge and competences however obtained;
- guidance;
- advisory help and information.

The strategy proposes the following measures:

- improving the quality of education and training by modernising programmes, curricula and catalogues of knowledge from a lifelong learning perspective, developing educational and teaching strategies and providing quality training for professional staff;
- developing various forms, methods and pathways of learning and suitable systems for recognising knowledge;
- improving access to education and learning;
- creating a suitable normative environment;
- strengthening research and development and the non-governmental sector as a partner of the State;
- creating suitable infrastructure, securing financial resources, preparing operational programmes to implement measures and promoting the strategy.

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<sup>(19)</sup> Ministry of Education and Sport, 2007. See Annex 4.

The strategy highlights the need to increase and stimulate investment, especially private investment in learning. Education and development of key competences can be more effective by adjusting how lifelong learning is organised and by developing innovative teaching methods and techniques adapting them to the needs of individuals or social groups. Special measures are needed for disadvantaged groups, to increase their involvement in various forms of lifelong learning. It is also necessary to divide responsibility for education between employers and employees and to strengthen equity in education and training.

This strategy gives the framework for human resources development operational programmes (HRDOP) 2007-13 (education and training for competitiveness and employability, stimulating the employability of job-seekers and the inactive, equal opportunities in the labour market and strengthening social inclusion), which will be cofinanced by ESF.

New VET curricula are developed following the principles of the Copenhagen declaration and Maastricht and Helsinki communiqués. Curricula are flexible, modularised and competence-based. Greater transparency in defining learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) for qualifications (and the units - modules - which are transferable between VET programmes and can contribute to a full qualification) allows more flexibility, bringing many advantages to students. Open-structured national curricula support development and innovation in schools, cater for teamwork and peer-learning among teachers and schools. The flexible VET system supports individualised learning pathways and schools must provide more support to individuals (individualised learning plans). Certificate supplements are being developed for all new VET programmes. Under the new VET law individuals have the right to have their non-formally and informally acquired competences validated and recognised when entering the school system. All qualifications are classified in accordance to Klasius (a classification of education and training, the government adopted in 2006) (see 2.2.4).

Tools to improve transparency are being implemented successfully. The National Institute for Vocational Education and Training (NIVET) produces Europass certificate supplements. A Europass Centre was set up and a national project group to implement Europass established. Activities to promote and coordinate a common framework for Europass transparency are underway.

NIVET is the contact point for networks, such as Cedefop's ReferNet and TTnet. The Centre for International Mobility and Programmes (CMEPIUS) is responsible for implementing the integrated lifelong learning programme (European Parliament; Council of the European Communities, 2006).

Slovenian educational institutions and organisations actively participated in the Leonardo da Vinci programme and benefited greatly from transnational mobility, building partnerships across Europe to improve the quality of education and training, stimulate and transfer innovation, strengthen the European dimension and acquire knowledge and competences in different settings. International mobility is an important element of the HRDOP 2007-13 and the integrated lifelong learning programme (see Annex 4).

## **11.2. Impact of internationalisation on education and training**

Internationalisation aspects of VET aim to improve the quality of education and training and make Slovenia's education and training system and qualifications more transparent and comparable on the European labour market.

The variety and diversity of international cooperation, characteristic of educational institutions in Slovenia, is the result of the systematic encouragement and support at national level. It was an integral part of Slovenia's EU accession. International cooperation has become a constituent element of short and long-term planning by educational institutions, including content, organisational, financial and human resource development aspects.

Cooperation in the Copenhagen process has a significant impact on current VET curricular reform. New VET curricula are flexible, modularised and competence-based. Credit points are allocated to modules and students can be accredited for previous studies at other institutions, when study objectives are in line with the curriculum. The credit transfer system allows integrated learning pathways to be built. Study abroad can be included in learning pathways.

To strengthen the European dimension to prepare students for work in an international environment and develop key competences (languages, tolerance) is an objective of the national core curriculum in vocational and technical education. In upper secondary vocational and technical education, it is compulsory to study native languages and at least one foreign language. In the open curriculum, schools can offer more foreign languages according to the interests of student and industry. An additional module on intercultural competence is being prepared to help schools prepare students for international mobility by acquiring additional language skills and cultural knowledge of the country they will study in.



## Annex 1      Acronyms and abbreviations

CIPS	<i>Center za informiranje in poklicno svetovanje</i> vocational information and counselling centre
CPI	<i>Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje</i> National Institute for Vocational Educational and Training
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
CVTS	continuing vocational training survey
ECTS	European credit transfer system
ELGPN	European lifelong guidance policy network
ESS	Employment Service of Slovenia <i>Zavod Republike Slovenije za zaposlovanje – ZRSZ</i>
EU	European Union
GDP	gross domestic product
ISCED	international standard classification of education
IVET	initial vocational education and training
MoLFSA	Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs <i>Ministrstvo za delo, družino in socialne zadeve</i>
NRCVG	National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance <i>Nacionalni center za informiranje in poklicno svetovanje – NCIPS</i>
PUM	<i>Projektno učenje mladih</i> project learning for young adults
RS	<i>Republika Slovenija</i> Republic of Slovenia
SIAE	Slovenian Institute for Adult Education
SIT	Slovene tolar (replaced by the euro 1 January 2007)
SORS	Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia <i>Statistični urad Republike Slovenije</i>
VET	vocational education and training

## Annex 2 Glossary

**Adult education** (*izobraževanje odraslih*) – Education provided for adults, often intended for general purposes rather than vocational education.

**Baccalaureate** (*matura*) – An exam which is undertaken as a conclusion of secondary education; it is supposed to indicate, acknowledge and publicly recognise achievements of pupils. We distinguish between general baccalaureate and vocational baccalaureate.

**Certificate** (*certifikat*) – confirmation of the attained vocational qualification in the national vocational qualifications system (see below). It can be acquired through a procedure determined by the National Vocational Qualifications Act. Candidates acquire only a national vocational qualification, not a full level of education.

**Competence** (*kompetenca*) – Ability to apply knowledge, know-how and skills in a habitual or changing situation.

**Continuing education and training** (*nadaljevalno izobraževanje usposabljanje*) – Education or training after initial education or entry into working life aimed at helping individuals to improve or update their knowledge and/or skills, acquire new skills for a career move or retraining, continue their personal or professional development.

**Diploma** (*diploma*) – A formal document attesting that an individual has successfully concluded an educational programme. It is also a formal document proving that individuals have successfully concluded their studies at a post-secondary level.

**Drop-out rate** (*osip, stopnja osipa*) – The percentage of people withdrawing from an education or training programme before its completion.

**Examination catalogue** (*izpitni katalog*) – An essential part of the educational programme, which determines the necessary standards of knowledge required for undertaking the school leaving examination (vocational or general baccalaureate).

**Mentor** (*mentor*) –

- (1) An expert, who guides, leads pupils and acts as their adviser.
- (2) An expert worker responsible for practical education at the workplace.

**National framework of competences** (*nacionalni sistem kompetenc*) – Specification of competences required for undertaking various jobs or professions on the (national) labour market.

**National vocational qualification** (*nacionalna poklicna kvalifikacija*) – Formally/nationally recognised skills and knowledge needed for effective performance in a specific occupation.



**National vocational qualifications system** (*nacionalni poklicni sistem*) – Represents the legal framework, procedures and key partners in development, verification and approval of national occupational qualifications.

**Professional skills** (*poklicne spretnosti*) – The knowledge and experience needed to perform a specific task or job.

**Social partners** (*socialni partnerji*) – Employers' associations and trade unions forming both sides of (bipartite) social dialogue.

**State examination** (*strokovni izpit*) – Examination undertaken by professional staff after finishing their traineeship. It is also an obligatory examination to be employed in the education sector as teacher, adviser, etc. The minister determines the details. It consists of three parts: expert, linguistic and legislation.

**Training profile** (*izobraževalni profil*) – Description of education or training needed for a particular employment or profession.

**Transparency** (*transparentnost*) – The degree to which the value of qualifications can be identified and compared on the (sectoral, regional, national or international) labour and training markets.

## Annex 3 Legislative references

Act amending the Act on the Recognition of Qualifications for EU Member States Citizens relating to access to regulated occupations and occupational activities in the Republic of Slovenia (*Zakon o spremembah in dopolnitvah Zakona o postopku priznavanja kvalifikacij državljanom držav članic Evropske unije za opravljanje reguliranih poklicev oziroma reguliranih poklicnih dejavnosti v Republiki Sloveniji*), OJ RS 92/2007. Available from Internet: [http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r00/predpis\\_ZAKO5030.html](http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r00/predpis_ZAKO5030.html) [cited 4.1.2008] <sup>(20)</sup>.

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<sup>(20)</sup> OJ RS = Official Journal of the Republic of Slovenia.

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## Annex 5 Main organisations

### Ministries

Ministry of Education and Sport  
(Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport)  
Kotnikova 38  
SI-1000 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 478 42 00  
[gp.mss@gov.si](mailto:gp.mss@gov.si)  
<http://www.mss.gov.si/>

Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs  
(Ministrstvo za delo, družino in socialne zadeve)  
Kotnikova 5  
SI-1000 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 478 34 50,  
<http://www.gov.si/mddsz/>

### Government departments and public institutes

National Institute for Vocational Education  
and Training  
(Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje)  
Ob železnici 16  
SI-1000 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 586 42 00  
[info@cpi.si](mailto:info@cpi.si)  
<http://www.cpi.si/>  
<http://www.refernet.si/>

CMEPIUS – Centre of the Republic of Slovenia  
for Mobility and European Educational and  
Training Programmes; Leonardo da Vinci  
programme  
(Center Republike Slovenije za mobilnost in  
evropske programe izobraževanja in  
usposabljanja; Leonardo da Vinci programme)  
Ob železnici 16  
SI-1000 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 586 42 51  
[info@cmepius.si](mailto:info@cmepius.si)  
<http://www.cmepius.si/>

Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS)  
(Zavod Republike Slovenije za zaposlovanje)  
Glinška ulica 12  
p.p. 2962, 1001 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 200 23 50  
[info@ess.gov.si](mailto:info@ess.gov.si)  
<http://www.ess.gov.si/>

Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and  
Development  
(Urad za makroekonomske analize in razvoj)  
Gregorčičeva 27  
SI-1000 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 478 10 12  
[gp.umar@gov.si](mailto:gp.umar@gov.si)  
<http://www.gov.si/zmar/splosno/splosinf.php>

Eurydice Unit Slovenia  
(Eurydice enota Slovenija)  
Kotnikova 38  
SI-1000 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 478 42 83  
[eurydice@gov.si](mailto:eurydice@gov.si)  
<http://www.mszs.si/eurydice/>

Slovenian Institute for Adult Education  
(Andragoški center Slovenije)  
Šmartinska 134a  
SI-1000 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 584 25 60  
[info@acs.si](mailto:info@acs.si)  
<http://www.acs.si>

National Institute for Education  
(Zavod RS za šolstvo)  
Poljanska cesta 28  
SI-1000 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 300 51 00  
[info.zrss@zrss.si](mailto:info.zrss@zrss.si)  
<http://www.zrss.si>

National Examination Centre  
(Državni izpitni center)  
Ob železnici 16  
1000 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 548 46 00  
[info@ric.si](mailto:info@ric.si)  
<http://www.ric.si>

Statistical Office of RS (Statistični urad RS)  
Vožarski pot 12  
SI-1000 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 241 51 00  
[gp.surs@gov.si](mailto:gp.surs@gov.si)  
<http://www.stat.si>

## **Social partners**

Chamber of Commerce and Industry of  
Slovenia  
(Gospodarka zbornica Slovenije)  
Dimičeva 13  
SI-1504 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 589 80 00  
[infolink@gzs.si](mailto:infolink@gzs.si)  
<http://www.gzs.si>

Chamber of Crafts of Slovenia  
(Obrtna zbornica Slovenije)  
Celovška cesta 71  
SI-1000 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 583 05 00  
[info@ozs.si](mailto:info@ozs.si)  
<http://www.ozs.si>

Association of Employers of Slovenia  
(Združenje delodajalcev Slovenije g.i.z.)  
Dimičeva ulica 9  
1000 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 563 48 80  
[delodajalci@zds.si](mailto:delodajalci@zds.si)  
<http://www.zds.si>

Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia  
(Zveza svobodnih sindikatov Slovenije)  
Dalmatinova 4  
SI-1000 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 434 12 00  
[zsss@sindikat-zsss.si](mailto:zsss@sindikat-zsss.si)  
<http://www.sindikat-zsss.si>

Association of Craft Employers of Slovenia  
(Združenje delodajalcev obrtnih dejavnosti  
Slovenije)  
Celovška 71  
SI-1000 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 583 05 72  
[zdods@zdods-giz.si](mailto:zdods@zdods-giz.si)  
<http://www.zdods-giz.si/>

Confederation of trade unions of Slovenia Pergam  
PERGAM konfederacija sindikatov Slovenije  
Trg Osvobodilne fronte 14  
SI-1000 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 230 22 46  
[pergam@siol.net](mailto:pergam@siol.net)  
<http://www.sindikat-pergam.si/>

Education, Science and Culture Trade Union of  
Slovenia  
Sindikat vzgoje in izobraževanja (SVIZ)  
Oražnova 3, p.p. 196  
SI-1102 Ljubljana  
Tel. (386-1) 244 09 00  
[info@sviz.si](mailto:info@sviz.si)  
<http://www.sviz.si>



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## Vocational education and training in **Slovenia**

### Short description

Globalisation and EU membership have raised new challenges for Slovenia; the ensuing reforms have also affected vocational education and training. The Slovenian VET system must enhance employability, employment and entrepreneurship in the perspective of a modern, technologically advanced, globalised and competitive economy.

This report sums up the main features of the Slovenian VET system as it stands at this stage of the reform process. It describes the country's institutional and educational background and recent developments in VET policy (quality, permeability, recognition of nonformal and informal learning, individualisation and flexibility, attractiveness and governance). Particular features of the Slovenian VET system, such as the training of VET teachers and trainers, the role of social partners, and the system of guidance and counselling, are also presented. Issues of current importance, especially the introduction of Europass and of a qualifications framework, and the reallocation of VET financing so as to better support employability and cooperation between industry and science, are also discussed.



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