Vocational education and training in Bulgaria - Fact sheet

Overview

Vocational education and training, characterised by a high degree of centralisation, is still at the initial stage of reform. Severe economic constraints may impede the reform plans. The current legal framework does not take account of the conditions of a social market economy, but concentrates only on the reform of vocational schools. Main challenges include the development of a coherent legal framework and the enhancement of institutional capacities.

Responsible bodies

The Ministry for Education and Science has the overall responsibility for the entire school system and is the main policy-making body with budgetary responsibility and control for initial training.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry for Education and Science are both responsible for adult education.

An accreditation agency for vocational education and training is at present under discussion.

Financing of vocational training

Vocational education and training is currently financed out of the state budget (4.27% of GDP in 1995). The Ministry for Education and Science allocates the money to schools, which have little autonomy. In 1995 of all the public funds for education, 33.53% were spent on the vocational and professional education of young people. Donors finance the upgrading of the system and pilot schools through bilateral and other international agreements.

Continuing training

The division of policy responsibilities on continuing training between the Ministries of Education and Labour is unclear. A major problem for continuing training is its separation from current reforms of initial school-based vocational education and training. The main current challenge in continuing training is to address the imminent redundancies of teachers through re-training in order to avoid unemployment.

International support activities

Through bilateral and multilateral international agreements, donors make very significant contributions to the vocational education and training system. A PHARE pilot project launched in 1993 targeted post-secondary vocational education and training and reviewed and developed principles for the reform of the whole vocational education and training system (for example curriculum development for 5 occupational profiles and a review of post-secondary system). This laid the foundations for expansion into much larger PHARE programmes in 1995 and 1996 on education and training, which include the development of standards and assessment procedures, teacher training, and preparatory work for the development of the legal framework. Significant bilateral vocational education and training projects are being carried out in partnership with Germany (establishment of 3 training centres, economics training in 5 vocational schools), Austria (training firms), and Denmark (economics curricula in post-secondary schools) and others are under development with amongst others France and the UK.
National priorities

In the absence of a coherent policy document at government level, the Board of the Ministry for Education and Science has adopted the following guidelines for the development of the vocational education and training sector (Concept for the Development of Secondary Education, 1996):

- to develop a system for teacher training;
- to establish an independent agency for vocational qualifications;
- to prepare a new list of occupations in the secondary and post-secondary vocational education and training;
- to develop new curricula;
- to develop a modular approach in vocational training.

Establishment of a National Observatory

The European Training Foundation has supported the establishment of a National Observatory in Bulgaria (hosted in the PMU-Education, ul. Graf Ignatiev 15, Sofia). The National Observatory gathers and analyses information on developments of the vocational training system and the labour market. On the basis of this information the National Observatory and the Foundation periodically produce country reports on vocational training developments in Bulgaria.
The Ministry of Labour is in charge of developing and implementing the government’s labour market policy, including active employment policy, through the labour offices.

Financing vocational training

State technical and vocational schools are funded out of the governmental budget, the principal share coming from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. The government also provides financial contributions to private vocational schools. These amount to 60-80% of the contributions provided to state vocational schools. Total expenditure on education amounted to 5.9% of GDP in 1995, expenditure on vocational education and training amounts to an estimated 1.3% of GDP.

With regard to continuing vocational education and training, there is a broad range of funding models, from governmental funding to individual investment. Companies are estimated to invest about 1% of the gross payroll cost in training and education of their personnel.

Continuing training

Although the market for continuing vocational education and training is well developed, activities in this area lack a coordinated and systematic approach. The supply side has reacted mainly to the demand of individuals who need to update their knowledge and skills to newly evolving labour market requirements. At present, there are approximately 1,500 institutions providing continuing training. They offer a wide range of short-term professional courses and seminars. These focus, in particular, on management, marketing, computer literacy, economics and languages.
Some sectors are addressed in a more structured way. Re-training programmes for the unemployed are organised through labour offices and usually financed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Large companies usually offer on-the-job training and in some cases apply a systematic approach towards staff development.

**National priorities**

The main priorities of the government are:
- to create a flexible, adaptable vocational training system that responds to the changing requirements of the labour market at national and regional level;
- to establish links between initial and continuing vocational education and training;
- to develop further post-secondary non-university vocational training (higher professional schools);
- to improve the quality of vocational education and training by setting up mechanisms for quality assurance and evaluation;
- to develop further and implement educational and professional standards comparable to those in the EU and to link them to the needs of the labour market;
- to foster systematic social partner involvement in vocational training at national, regional and local level;
- to encourage the decentralisation of vocational training by creating a regional level of educational administration;
- to revise the financing system of vocational training with a view to stimulating participation by enterprises.

**International support activities**

About 16.5 million ECUs of foreign assistance provided to the Czech Republic in 1993 and 1994 were granted for supporting vocational education and training.

Many PHARE programmes were focused directly on vocational education and training or contained major vocational education and training components. The 1991 Labour Market Restructuring Programme provided a Strategic Study for Reform of Vocational Education and Training. Approximately 50 million ECUs were allocated for Human Resource Development under different PHARE and Tempus programmes, including the upgrading of 19 pilot vocational education and training schools, as well as the National Training Fund and PALMIF (Pro-active Labour Market Intervention Fund), which was a labour market action aimed at providing grant support to employment projects with a continuing vocational education and training component. The 1992 Renewal of Education System Programme supported also the development of higher professional schools.

The vocational education and training component of bilateral assistance is usually targeted at specific projects such as curriculum development, student exchange programmes, etc. based on direct links with partner institutions.

**Establishment of a National Observatory**

The European Training Foundation has supported the establishment of a National Observatory in the Czech Republic (hosted by the National Training Fund, Václavské náměstí 43, 110 00 Prague 1). The National Observatory gathers and analyses information on developments of the vocational training system and the labour market. On the basis of this information the National Observatory and the Foundation periodically produce country reports on vocational training developments in the Czech Republic.
Vocational education and training in Estonia - Fact sheet

Overview

Since independence in 1991, successive governments have kept the country on the road towards a market-based system. The economy has been restructured and substantial progress has been made in the liberalisation of prices, removing trade tariffs and restrictions, and in attracting foreign investment.

Although a coherent policy for adapting the vocational training system to the needs of the labour market is not yet in place, the Ministry of Education is working on a policy document. The overall objectives remain:

- alignment to present-day labour market needs in a changing economy with full involvement of social partners;
- the establishment of trade councils; and
- reform by the extension of pilot programmes.

Responsible bodies

The Ministry of Education is responsible for all aspects of education including initial vocational training administration, approval of admissions, system development and planning, national curricula development, approval of school courses and study programmes, inspection of schools, supervision of final certificate issue and organisation of research work.

It was restructured in 1996, when the Vocational Education Department was re-established. The Department has three units - the Educational Management Service, Curriculum Service and the Adult Educational Service.

Some vocational training institutions are under the responsibility of sectoral ministries (for example the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Transport and Communications), local authorities or private organisations. Although schools act independently in matters of school management, the Ministry of Education lays down the policy and the rules.

Following a period of frequent re-organisation of research and pedagogical centres in 1993 the Estonian Teacher Training Centre was established. This has hosted the National Centre for Examination and Qualifications since January 1997, which co-ordinates training courses and training providers.

Financing vocational training

Costs for education and training are fully met at the state level. The law provides that schools receive private funding both from companies and individuals, but this is presently at a low level. There are no tuition fees in state schools or state institutions of higher education. Students in higher education are supported by state loans (since 1992). To improve financing in vocational training, a special fund has been suggested financed by a 3% tax on employers. Two-thirds would be used for training by employers and one-third for distribution by the capital committee.

Continuing training

Although the law provides for vocational schools to offer flexible short-term upgrading and re-training for adults, a coherent national training policy, comprising both initial and continuing training, does not yet exist. Neither is there a training system for the unemployed or redundant workers. During recent years, over 40 state-supported adult education institutions have been established. Many of these are based on private initiatives and focus mainly on management and foreign-language training. The state budget for 1996 includes a small budget for funding for planned adult education.
International support activities

The PHARE 1994-97 Vocational Training Reform Programme worth 3 million ECU has supported curriculum development, teacher training, learning material upgrading, partnerships with EU schools and policy development.

PHARE also provides assistance through sectoral programmes which often include training, for example, the Cross-border Co-operation programme for the Baltic Sea region and the Information systems programme.

PHARE and bilateral assistance to the Ministry of Social Affairs have focused on improving the employment service and the information system. The Ministry, with the executive National Labour Market Board (NLMB), aims at refining an active labour market policy to help people to find employment and support job creation.

During 1997 a series of preparatory measures for the EU’s Leonardo da Vinci programme have been carried out including the definition of the national financial contribution and several media events.

Bilateral activity mainly with Baltic partners includes demonstration centres for training in commerce metallurgy and electronics. The Nordic Council has launched a large teacher training programme.

National priorities

These include the following:

- to design and implement a coherent vocational education and training policy with a view to EU accession;
- vocational training school auditing and curricula development, national occupational competence guidelines and training standards, also for continuing vocational training;
- to establish a continuing education and training system integrated with initial training providing management training and support to SME development;
- developing a national labour market/manpower planning information system;
- upgrading equipment across the entire vocational training system;
- to improve teachers’ and trainers’ education;
- strengthening the involvement of social partners in training;
- developing a career guidance and counseling system;
- action to help disadvantaged and special groups and areas;
- the dissemination of the results of the 1994-97 PHARE Programme.

Establishment of a National Observatory

The European Training Foundation has supported the establishment of a National Observatory in Estonia (hosted in the Foundation for Vocational Education and Training Reform, Pärnu mnt.57, EE0001, Tallinn). The National Observatory gathers and analyses information on developments of the vocational training system and the labour market. On the basis of this information the National Observatory and the Foundation periodically produce country reports on vocational training developments in Estonia.
Vocational education and training in Hungary - Fact sheet

Overview

Alongside the progress that has been made in laying the foundations for a market economy, Hungary has defined strategies to align the vocational education and training system with the new needs of the economy. It has also made considerable progress in setting up the legislative and institutional framework to support these strategies.

Hungary has opted for an output control approach to training and set up instruments for quality standards. The latter concern the establishment of a National Vocational Qualifications Register, the identification of professional and examination requirements for each qualification included in the Register and development of central curricula (which will be adapted to the local needs by schools). It has also opted for a decentralised approach to the management of the training system and intends to involve all stakeholders in the decision-making process for training.

Remaining major challenges include:

- further strengthening the interaction between the economy and the training system;
- continuing modernisation of training standards and provision;
- supporting the participation of all parties to improve the quality of initial and continuing vocational training.

Responsible bodies

The Ministry of Labour has the overall responsibility for vocational education and training.

The Ministry of Education has responsibility for the definition of curricula and supervision of general subjects.

Sectoral Ministries are responsible for the identification of the qualifications and professional requirements for occupations in their economic sector.

The local governments (school owners and maintainers) have increased responsibilities in the management of vocational education and training.

The National Vocational Training Council is an advisory body to the Ministry of Labour in which all vocational training stakeholders (including social partners) participate.

Financing vocational training

In 1996, the education budget accounted for 7.8% of GDP. The two main sources of funding for vocational training are the state budget and a training levy on employers of 1.5% of their payroll cost. The state, through the local governments, provides a per capita subsidy which schools are free to spend as they consider appropriate. In 1995, 43% of the employers’ training levy was spent on training their own employees, 37% on financial assistance to vocational education and training schools and 20% remitted to the Vocational Training Fund.

Continuing training

Efforts for the promotion of continuing vocational training have mainly focused on the re-training of the unemployed or people in risk of unemployment due to industrial change. Regional Labour Development and Training Centres have been set up so as to ensure a flexible supply of vocational training responding to regional skill needs. Training and re-training of the unemployed can also be supplied by schools or private training providers. Current policy considerations also concern
the support of training activities for the employed.

International support activities

Several PHARE programmes have been wholly or partly concerned with vocational education and training reform. Important measures supported include the development of an information centre, study visits abroad for vocational teachers, setting up language training centres, restructuring apprenticeships, promoting active employment measures, improving adult training standards, reforming curricula in secondary vocational schools, as well as providing training in specific growth sectors and for middle and senior managers.

A ‘Human Resource’ World Bank development loan provided substantial support to the development of a new model for the secondary vocational school and the establishment of 9 regional training centres for youth and adult training. A large number of bilateral activities include management training, language training and development of a standardised examination system for secondary education (with the Netherlands), open learning resources (with the UK), personalisation of training, transferability of skills and mobility of workers (with France), training for disadvantaged youth, development of new curricula (with Germany) and mutual recognition of different skill qualifications (with Austria).

National priorities

The present priorities are:
- increasing the percentage of those with a vocational qualification;
- continuing modernisation of vocational education and training programmes taking into account training standards similar to those in EU countries;
- developing an accreditation system and appropriate training programmes for post-secondary vocational training;
- consolidating social partners’ involvement in vocational education and training;
- further involving the business sector in training;
- implementing a system for continuing vocational training for both the employed and the unemployed;
- developing a system for the identification of skills required by of the labour market.

Establishment of the National Observatory

The European Training Foundation has supported the establishment of a National Observatory in Hungary (hosted in National Institute of Vocational Education (NIVE), Berzsenyi D. u. 6, 1087 Budapest). The National Observatory gathers and analyses information on developments of the vocational training system and the labour market. On the basis of this information the National Observatory and the Foundation periodically produce country reports on vocational training developments in Hungary.
Vocational education and training in Latvia - Fact sheet

Overview

Latvia faces the challenge of developing a coherent national strategy in initial and continuing vocational education and training. Reforms are in their starting phase, with a focus on initial training. Reforms rely heavily on PHARE programme support. The main activities have been the modernisation of curricula for 10 occupational profiles and 5 general subjects, the upgrading of school equipment and the training for teachers and school managers in 18 schools. A new law for vocational training is being prepared to align Latvia with European standards.

Responsible bodies

The Ministry of Education and Science issues regulations, by-laws and guidelines for initial and continuing training. It coordinates the development of curricula, determines the proportion of general education subjects and their level and is responsible for the legislation affecting all professional training institutions. The Ministry’s vocational training department accredits the qualifications and the new vocational training programmes for state and private institutions and assesses the existing ones.

Sector ministries (Agriculture, Welfare and Culture) determine curriculum standards for professional subjects in the schools under their authority, administer funds and create legal documents which regulate issues specific to these schools.

The Ministry of Welfare is responsible for training and retraining of the unemployed.

Financing vocational training

The vocational institutions of Latvia are mainly financed out of the state budget, with the relevant ministries allocating money to the schools. There is a clear distinction between basic financing and development expenses. Basic financing accounts for 97% of the budget and covers expenses for maintaining an educational institution, fees for the employees of the educational branch, transportation expenses, energy and other resources. Development expenses are for major implementations and changes in educational activities and for strategic investments.

For continuing training the breakdown of financing is as follows: state budget for re-training unemployed people 47.5%, tuition fees paid by the students 38%, firms, organisations 10%, municipal budget 2.2%, other sources 2.2%.

Continuing training

The Department of Continuing Education of the Ministry of Education and Science has established 25 regional Adult Education Centres across the country in conjunction with the Latvian Adult Education Association. The Ministry of Welfare’s State Employment Service has the responsibility for unemployment registration, guidance, training and re-qualification. According to the figures of the State Employment Service, 7.6% of all unemployed people attended retraining courses in 1995. The private sector offers different kinds of courses providing a non-diploma education. In-company training in the newly established companies is under development without official quality control.

International support activities

Donor contributions made up 14% of the vocational training budget for 1996. The main international support is related to PHARE programmes (5.5 million ECU's...
between 1994 -1996) and its impact on initial training is already visible. The aim of these projects is to support modernisation and reforms of the initial vocational education and training system in curricula development, teacher training, upgrading of teaching equipment, partnership with EU schools, development of education policy and dissemination of results. One of the programmes concerns post secondary in-company and continuing training.

For the period 1997-2000, the Ministry of Education and Science will seek support from PHARE for the 'VET 2000' reform programme, to develop and implement a secondary and higher education and training system. PHARE is also promoting social dialogue and training of policy makers through its Staff Development and vocational training programmes and supporting the labour market survey prepared by the national statistics office.

Major bilateral co-operation projects exist with Germany, Denmark, Canada and the Nordic Council to assist in or develop projects for staff training, the development of a business training network, the creation of a training centre for metal technology, training for the unemployed and up-grading for adults, a teacher training system and the improvement of business education.

**National priorities**

The main national priorities are to:

- establish a concept for vocational training;
- prepare a vocational training law;
- disseminate the pilot phase of PHARE programmes;
- develop a national occupational and educational standards system;
- develop the post secondary and tertiary vocational training;
- develop training of teachers and school managers.

**Establishment of a National Observatory**

The European Training Foundation has supported the establishment of a National Observatory in Latvia (hosted in the Academic Information Centre; Valnu iela 2; 1098 Riga). The National Observatory gathers and analyses information on developments of the vocational training system and the labour market. On the basis of this information the National Observatory and the Foundation periodically produce country reports on vocational training developments in Latvia.
Vocational education and training in Lithuania - Fact sheet

Overview

The 1994 “General Concept of Education” government paper presented the global objectives of: strengthening vocational training institutions, decentralising vocational training policy formulation, identifying alternative private funding, improving standards and skill mis-matches and addressing the needs of disadvantaged people and areas. So far reform has concentrated on curricula modernisation and, beyond the draft law, no significant progress has been made in the legal framework. Future policy will propose the future structure of the vocational training system including: the licensing of vocational training institutions; counselling, initial and continuing training, financing. This framework will be based upon cooperation with the social partners.

Responsible bodies

The Ministry of Education and Science has overall responsibility for initial vocational education and training. Responsibility for post-secondary vocational colleges and vocational training schools lies predominantly with this Ministry, although some professions have specialist schools where other ministries have responsibility, for example the Ministry of Agriculture.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is responsible for continuing training.

The Lithuanian Vocational Training Council (composed of ministries, vocational training institutions and social partners) provides advice on strategic vocational training issues.

The Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority (AVTCC) organises labour market re-training via regional centres and services.

The Lithuanian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Crafts are seeking to establish a network of chamber training centres.

Financing vocational training

Vocational training is mainly financed from the state budget, with a limited amount from the labour exchanges, employers and charitable sources. In 1996, 71 million Litas (US$ 17.75 million) were allocated to 65 vocational schools and 62 million Litas (US$ 15.5 million) to 37 institutions of further education (an increase of 35% on 1995 levels). 56.5 million Litas (US$ 14.125 million) were allocated for labour market policy training in 1995. Continuing education and training is financed both through the state budget of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, and the Employment Fund, an inter-ministerial fund of state budget subsidies and wage fund contributions managed by the Lithuanian Vocational Training Council. In 1996, the estimated allocation for continuing training was 370,000 Litas (US$ 92,500) from the Ministry, and 52 million Litas (US$13 million) from the Employment Fund.

Education represented 22% of the national budget, 5.7% of GDP. The budget allocation to vocational training in 1995 was 0.67% of GDP. It is estimated that non-state sources represent about 5% of the budget.

Continuing training

Under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Labour Market Training Authority is responsible for continuing training, including the re-training of the unemployed. It has 6 regional labour market training services and 14 training centres which operate flexible (modular) curricula. Presently adult re-
training is only supported if a job is guaranteed afterwards. 95,000 adults participated in schemes in 1995 (4.5% of workforce). Paid leave for continuing training is foreseen within vocational training legislation. Currently 95 private institutions provide continuing training and a substantial amount is delivered within companies.

International support activities

The EU PHARE Programme has been the largest donor since 1991, supporting in 1993-94 a programme for the development of the labour market and unemployed training systems, in 1995 a 2-year programme on vocational education and training, and a multi-lateral programme for distance education.

Since 1992, the Tempus programme has supported the restructuring of university education in Lithuania. It is a full participant in the Leonardo da Vinci programme and a national coordination unit has been set up.

A Nordic-Baltic Co-ordination Group on vocational training teacher training has been set up. Single country projects include training of teacher trainers, ‘learning-company’ concept development, the establishment of an institute of vocational education, vocational training for disabled people, and a ‘dual-system’ for training in metal trades, employment services support and curriculum development in specific occupations. A World Bank loan has been agreed for the computerisation of the Lithuanian education system.

National priorities

The main priorities for Lithuania are:

- the establishment of the legal framework for vocational training;
- labour market studies on demand for specialists and the development of the relationship between schools, enterprises and the labour market;
- encouragement of the involvement of the social partners in vocational training;
- improving financial and management procedures, and information and telecommunication technologies, especially in rural areas;
- modernisation of equipment and materials;
- new methods of curriculum development;
- improvement of teacher training and teacher qualifications.

Establishment of a National Observatory

The European Training Foundation has supported the establishment of a National Observatory in Lithuania (hosted in the Methodical Centre for Vocational Education and Training, Gelezinio Vilkio g.12, LT-2600, Vilnius). The National Observatory gathers and analyses information on developments of the vocational training system and the labour market. On the basis of this information the National Observatory and the Foundation periodically produce country reports on vocational training developments in Lithuania.
Vocational education and training in Poland - Fact sheet

Overview

Reform efforts have mainly been initiated on the regional, local and school levels. Vocational education comprises: basic vocational schools (3 years), secondary technical schools (4 to 5 years), secondary schools of vocational education (4 years “lycea”), technical “lycea” (4 years) and post-secondary vocational schools (2 years).

The directions of educational changes were defined in the “Strategy for Poland”. It characterised investment in human capital, including education and science, as central to economic transformation and accession to the EU. Measures concerning vocational training include the involvement of social partners in curriculum development and accreditation schemes at national and local level.

Responsible bodies

The Ministry of National Education, Department for Vocational Education and Continuing Education, co-ordinates and implements the overall policy. At the request of sector ministries, it also determines the classification of professions. The ministries co-operate in: framework teaching plans; curricula for training in a given profession or a vocational profile; terms and conditions of endorsing curricula; textbooks and inventories of such curricula; and recommending teaching aids and textbooks.

The Office for Educational Strategy operates within the Ministry of National Education structure. Its tasks include design and co-ordination of long-term operations aimed at the restructuring and development of national education.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy manages the training and re-training of the unemployed as well as vocational guidance.

The following other ministries are responsible for delivering training: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry; Ministry of Transportation and Maritime Economy; Ministry of Protection of Environment, Natural Resources and Forestry; Ministry of Culture and Art; Ministry of Health and Social Security.

Financing vocational training

The state budget is the main source of funding. Vocational schools receive 22.5% of the total education budget, whilst 7.4% of the funds go to general secondary schools. Additional funds come from local administration budgets, donations and special funds. The law on education allows schools to establish their own special budgets. The size of such budgets depends on the school management’s entrepreneurial talents and the school’s assets, such as premises that can be let out or facilities and staff to run training courses for the public.

Regional labour offices are in charge of administering training schemes for the unemployed financed out of the Labour Fund and based on the Law on Employment and Counteracting Unemployment (1996).

Continuing training

Continuing training is the first segment of vocational training to have applied market principles. In 1996, there were 4,936 establishments for continuing training run by over 2,000 providers that offered training to over 1.65 million people. In 1996, 44,000 unemployed people participated in re-training courses, of
whom 60% subsequently found jobs. The scarcity of continuing training places in relation to the demand has led the national authorities to identify distance learning as a priority for the future, particularly in rural areas, as a means to increase access to continuing training.

International support activities

Support, largely from the G24 countries and organisations, includes the “Employment promotion and services” project; a US$ 8 million World Bank loan granted to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, including US$ 9 million for an Adult Training Component. Substantial bilateral support has also come from the USA, Germany, France and the UK.

The EU through PHARE is by far the largest foreign contributor to education and training reforms with about 33 million ECU's for education and training programmes.

National priorities

The government has set the following strategic targets:

- developing a national framework of qualification and curriculum standards, as well as quality assurance and evaluation systems;
- reducing training in basic vocational schools and increasing training in full secondary education, especially in rural and highly industrialised areas;
- increasing the percentage of students among the 20-24 age group to 33-35 %;
- diversifying and expanding post-secondary training opportunities through the introduction of professional post-secondary institutions offering bachelor degrees;
- developing lifelong learning to provide opportunities for training and re-training for all age groups;
- developing a vocational counselling and guidance system both inside schools and in specialised institutions.

Establishment of a National Observatory

The European Training Foundation has supported the establishment of a National Observatory in Poland (hosted in the Task Force for Training and Human Resources (BKKK), 79 Koszykowa, 02 008 Warszawa). The National Observatory gathers and analyses information on developments of the vocational training system and the labour market. On the basis of this information the National Observatory and the Foundation periodically produce country reports on vocational training developments in Poland.
Overview

Romania has made steps towards the modernisation of its system. Nevertheless, there is not yet a systematic, comprehensive and coherent approach to the reform process. To date, the vocational education and training system is characterised by a high degree of centralisation, a weak school infrastructure (due to under-investment for a long period), a lack of well trained administrative staff in the bodies responsible for vocational education and training, a lack of well trained teachers/trainers and an outdated and narrow curricula in the majority of schools. Limited financial resources are one of the major constraints for the continuation of reforms.

Major challenges include developing a legal framework for vocational education and training, institution building, and investing in equipment and human resources.

Responsible bodies

The Ministry of Education has the overall responsibility for vocational education and training within the formal education system. It develops strategies and policies, prepares legislation and manages public education. It also approves curricula, national assessment standards and the school network.

The regional representatives of the Ministry, the County School Inspectorates ensure the implementation of and compliance with the policies and decisions of the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and its regional branches, the County Labour and Social Protection Directorates, are responsible for the retraining and further training of the labour force.

Financing vocational training

The education budget is 4% of GDP. In 1995, the budget for vocational education and training (provided within the frame of the formal education system) was 0.52% of GDP. The main source of financing is the central budget. Local public administrations also contribute to building, repairing and maintaining schools.

Continuing training of the unemployed is financed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection out of the Employment Fund, made up largely of employers’ contributions (5% of their overall gross payroll costs) and employees (1% of their gross salaries). About 20% of the fund is used for continuing training of the unemployed. Budget subsidies also contribute to cover funding gaps.

Continuing training

Training activities are planned on the basis of an annual national framework programme which brings together individual programmes developed by each county. Continuing training courses are organised within County Training, Re-training and Further Training Centres, schools or other training units. The new government has planned a rapid restructuring of the economy which is expected to increase unemployment. Therefore, it also planning to support training for the workers who will become redundant and promote the training of the employed in order to adapt their skills to the new requirements of the economy.

International support activities

PHARE has supported developments in vocational education and training particularly with a 25 million ECU programme on vocational education and
training reform (1994-1997). The programme focuses on the national level and the policy framework of curriculum development, assessment and standards, teachers for vocational education and training strategy reviews, etc. At school level it supports implementation of new curricula and teaching methods, development of new teaching and learning materials, specification of appropriate school equipment for the new curricula, etc. A number of other programmes had vocational training components, such as the programme for Active Employment Measures, the Repede programme on management development, the Labour Market in Romania programme, and the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and Regional Development programme.

Within its programme on education reform, the World Bank Project (including a loan of US$ 50 million) has helped to establish the Council for Occupational Standards and Assessment. The World Bank has also started a programme on Employment and Social Protection (1996-2000) components of which concern the development of continuing training (with a loan of US$ 14.6 million, matched by a Romanian contribution of US$ 6.5 million) and career counselling for young people and adults (a loan of US$ 6 million)

A number of bilateral programmes have supported the setting up of training centres for the unemployed (Germany) and for management and business development (the USA, the UN and the UK).

National priorities

The main priorities for the government are to:

- build a comprehensive legal and institutional framework for vocational education and training;
- decentralise the management of the system;
- increase financial resources through a participatory financing system, which will pool funds from the central budget, budget of local authorities and other state and private agents and set up a vocational training fund;
- develop an information system and mechanisms for optimising the demand and supply for vocational training at national, regional and local level;
- base the training system on vocational standards as benchmarks for quality.

Establishment of the National Observatory

The European Training Foundation has supported the establishment of a National Observatory in Romania (hosted in the Institute for Educational Sciences (37, Stăricea Vodă str., sector 1 Bucharest). The National Observatory gathers and analyses information on developments of the vocational training system and the labour market. On the basis of this information the National Observatory and the Foundation periodically produce country reports on vocational training developments in Romania.
Vocational Education and Training in Slovenia - Fact sheet

Overview

Reforms combining EU practice and Slovenian traditions, are being introduced by legislation (Law on Vocational and Professional Education and Law on Adult Education, 1996). The main reforms should be fully implemented by the year 2000. The principal aim is to enable everyone, even those with weaker learning abilities, to acquire at least basic vocational education. Reforms also improve the links between the school system and the employment system and aim to facilitate the transition from education to work.

Responsible bodies

The Ministry of Education and Sport has responsibility for the school system and is the main policy-making body with budgetary responsibility and control. Some 14 school boards (administrative regions) are to be established as part of this Ministry.

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs has the responsibility of preparing a list of occupations/occupational groups, the level of their requirements and the main tasks performed within each of them. The list will be based on proposals and suggestions from the employers.

Financing vocational training

Vocational education and training is currently financed out of the state budget. The Ministry of Education and Sport receives the funds and allocates the money to schools. From all public funds for education in 1995 (5.85% of GDP), 11.3% went to secondary level vocational and professional education for young people. With the reform of the vocational training system and the introduction of the dual-system, the employers will contribute to its financing. The state budget funds for continuing training are mainly allocated by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (some programmes for adults are co-financed by the Ministry of Education and Sport). In the craft sector a fund has been established to support workers training. According to the collective agreement the craftsmen are obliged to pay 1% of gross wages into this fund.

Continuing training

The Employment Law (1990) guarantees employees the right to continuing training and education. Innovative training actions are being targeted at disadvantaged persons and regions. For the former, "job club" initiatives are training long-term unemployed in job application skills. A pilot Training Development Fund is being developed in Slovenia’s region of highest unemployment (Maribor). This will give incentives to training providers in the region to develop new flexible training programmes for skills in demand.

The certification system will be a major innovation in continuing training. It will be flexible and based on nationally adopted standards of knowledge and competence. The certificates will be nationally recognised.

International support activities

At present there are around 25 bilateral agreements between Slovenia and other countries and international organisations for co-operation in the spheres of education, culture and science.

PHARE programmes are making a major contribution (3 million ECU's on vocational training reform from 1995 to 1997, 14.79 million ECU's from Tempus from 1992 to
1996) to the vocational training reforms on all of the key issues: higher education; apprenticeship system; curricula modernisation; certification; non-university higher vocational training; dissemination; social partner involvement; vocational counselling and guidance; etc. The Ministry of Education is using the PHARE vocational training programme to stimulate the reform from basic vocational education at secondary level to the higher non-university professional level. To this end it implements projects for curriculum development, teacher training, policy development and establishment of new structures. In 1997, adult training reform is also being promoted through this programme.

National priorities

The main priorities for the Government are:

- further development of post-secondary colleges;
- the introduction of the dual-system;
- encouraging (and strengthening) social partnership with chambers and trade unions and transferring part of the responsibilities (and financing) for the vocational training system, especially to employers;
- curricula modernisation for all types and levels of training;
- development of master craftsman courses;
- development of a certificate system for continuing training based on standards (the regulation for this certificate system is under preparation as well as the list of occupations concerned, including qualification requirements for each occupation);
- encouraging decentralisation of vocational training policy and strengthening regional economic development in line with overall policy priorities.

Establishment of a National Observatory

The European Training Foundation has supported the establishment of a National Observatory in Slovenia (hosted in the Centre for Vocational Education, Kavciceva 66, Ljubljana). The National Observatory gathers and analyses information on developments of the vocational training system and the labour market. On the basis of this information the National Observatory and the Foundation periodically produce country reports on vocational training developments in Slovenia.
### Key indicators on Central and Eastern European countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Bulgaria</th>
<th>the Czech Republic</th>
<th>Estonia</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
<th>Lithuania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>110,993 km²</td>
<td>78,864 km²</td>
<td>45,227 km²</td>
<td>93,033 km²</td>
<td>65,200 km²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population/Population density</td>
<td>8.34 million per km²</td>
<td>10.3 million per km²</td>
<td>1,462,130 (1997)</td>
<td>10.2 million per km²</td>
<td>3.7 million per km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% urban population</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% population growth</td>
<td>-5.0</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP in billions of ECU</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita in purchasing power parity (ECU)</td>
<td>4209</td>
<td>9,410</td>
<td>3,920</td>
<td>3,343</td>
<td>4,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% GDP increase/decrease</td>
<td>-10.9% (1996)</td>
<td>+4.0 (1996)</td>
<td>+4.0 (1996)</td>
<td>+1.0 (1996)</td>
<td>+3.6 (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% young unemployed of all unemployed (age group under 25)</td>
<td>under 24: 22.7% (march 1997)</td>
<td>13.0 (1996)</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>27.7 (1996)</td>
<td>42.0 (16-29 year olds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants of initial vocational education and training as % of all students of secondary education</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>84.3 (1995 - age group 14-19)</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop-out rate as % of initial vocational education and training students</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>8.4 (1995/96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education budget as % of GDP</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>7.8 (1996)</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational education and training budget as % of GDP</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate % by educational attainment</td>
<td>higher education: 5.1% secondary level certificate: 8.7% primary, or lower secondary level education: 12.8%</td>
<td>university graduates: 0.7% (1996) full secondary education graduates: 1.3% (1996) primary and lower secondary education: 9.4% (1996)</td>
<td>higher education: 13.2% secondary level certificate: 18.4% primary, or lower level education: 10.6%</td>
<td>university degree holders: 3.2% acquired secondary level certificate: 11% primary, or lower level education: 7.5%</td>
<td>higher education: 5.21% secondary level certificate: 9.3% primary, or lower level education: 13.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate for EU membership</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Data refers to 1995 if not indicated. Data on Slovakia is not available.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Latvia</th>
<th>Poland</th>
<th>Romania</th>
<th>Slovenia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area</strong></td>
<td>64,589 km²</td>
<td>312,690 km²</td>
<td>237,500 km²</td>
<td>20,250 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population/Population density</strong></td>
<td>2,479,900 Million 38.4 per km²</td>
<td>38,609,000 119 per km²</td>
<td>22.6 million (1996) 123 per km²</td>
<td>2 million (1996) 90 per km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% urban population</strong></td>
<td>68.9 (1996)</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>54.4 (1992)</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% population growth</strong></td>
<td>-1.1 (1996)</td>
<td>1.97 (1994)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>between 0 and 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GDP in billions of ECU</strong></td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GDP per capita in purchasing power parity (ECU)</strong></td>
<td>3,159</td>
<td>2,359</td>
<td>4,100</td>
<td>7,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% young unemployed of all unemployed (age group under 25)</strong></td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants of initial vocational education and training as % of all students of secondary education</strong></td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>77.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drop-out rate as % of initial vocational education and training students</strong></td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education budget as % of GDP</strong></td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>6.2 (1994)</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational education and training budget as % of GDP</strong></td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployment rate % by educational attainment</strong></td>
<td>higher education: 2.46 secondary education: 7.04 primary education: 10.92</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>university degree holders 2.7 secondary level certificate 8.5 primary, or lower, level education 5</td>
<td>higher education: 2.4 secondary level certificate: 5.75 primary, or lower, level education: 8.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Signed the Europe Agreement with the European Union in</strong></td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Candidate for EU membership.</strong></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GDP per capita as % of EU average

Sources: European Commission, UN, World Bank, OECD

CEDEFOP