



Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015–17

SLOVENIA



Cedefop monitoring and analysis of VET policies

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policy in 2015-17**

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Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, the proportion of upper secondary students enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) programmes in Slovenia was well above the EU average and on the increase: 65.9% in 2013 against 48.9% in the EU (European Commission, 2015, p. 8); 66.8% in 2014 compared to 48% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 121); 67% in 2015 compared to 47% in the EU ⁽¹⁾. However, the employment rate of recent upper secondary graduates was low: 62.5% in 2014 (European Commission, 2015, p. 2) compared to 70.8% in the EU. Adult participation in lifelong learning was high: 11.9% in 2014 (European Commission, 2015, p. 8) and 2015 compared to 10.7% on average in the EU in both years (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 121) (Table 1).

VET in the country faced the challenge of meeting the demand for skilled workers, particularly through improving practical training. Plans for reintroducing apprenticeship (which had been discontinued in 2006) were being considered. A 2013-20 adult education master plan had been adopted in 2013.

⁽¹⁾ Eurostat, data for 2015.

Table 1. Framework data: score on VET indicators in Slovenia and in the EU: 2010, last available year and recent trend

Indicator label	2010		Last available year		Recent trend (per year)			
	SI ^f	EU ^f	Yr	SI ^f	EU ^f	Range	SI	EU
Access, attractiveness and flexibility								
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	A	A	'14 66.8 ^b	48.0 ^b _{E1}	'13-'14	▪ 0.9	▪ -0.9	
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	A	A	'14 0.0 ^z	34.0 ^b _{E2}	'13-'14	▪ 0.0	▪ 0.1	
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET			'14 72.9	69.2 ^{E3}	'13-'14	▪ -0.3	▪ -1.4	
Employees participating in CVT courses (%)	43.0	38.0 ^e	'10 43.0	38.0 ^e				
Employees participating in on-the-job training (%)	25.0	20.0 ^e	'10 25.0	20.0 ^e				
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	16.4		'15 11.9	10.7 ^b	'13-'15	↘ -0.3	→ 0.0	
Enterprises providing training (%)	68.0	66.0 ^e	'10 68.0	66.0 ^e				
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	A	A	'14 59.7 ^b	42.7 ^b _{E1}	'13-'14	▪ 1.1	▪ -1.0	
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	24.0	25.0 ^e	'10 24.0	25.0 ^e				
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			'15 54.1 ^b	33.0 ^b	'14-'15	▪ -4.5	▪ -0.3	
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	7.8	5.3	'15 5.2	6.9	'10-'15	↘ -0.5	↗ 0.4	
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	3.5		'15 2.8 ^C	4.3 ^b _C	'13-'15	↘ -0.1	↘ -0.1	
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	18.6		'15 13.1	9.5 ^b	'13-'15	→ 0.0	↘ -0.4	
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)	12.0 ^B	9.5 ^e _B	'11 12.0	9.5 ^e				
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)	69.1 ^B	80.2 ^e _B	'11 69.1	80.2 ^e				
Skill development and labour market relevance								
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)			'13 0.60 ^b	0.56 ^b _{E4}	'12-'13	▪ 0.13	▪ -0.03	
IVET public expenditure per student (1 000 PPS units)			'13 7.3 ^b	6.4 ^b _{E5}	'12-'13	▪ 4.2	▪ 0.0	
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.6	0.8 ^e	'10 0.6	0.8 ^e				
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET			'14 1.3 ^b	1.0 ^b _{E6}	'13-'14	▪ 0.0	▪ 0.0	
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	A	A	'14 34.6 ^b	30.0 ^b _{E7}	'13-'14	▪ 1.8	▪ -0.4	
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates			'14 14.7	9.3 ^{E8}	'13-'14	▪ -0.1	▪ 0.4	
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)	44.4	41.5 ^{E9}	'12	41.6 ^{E9}				
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20- to 34-year-olds)			'15 78.1 ^b	77.2 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 0.7	▪ 0.3	
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)			'15 1.9 ^b	5.3 ^b	'14-'15	▪ -8.8	▪ -1.0	

Indicator label	2010		Last available year			Recent trend (per year)		
	SI ^f	EU ^f	Yr	SI ^f	EU ^f	Range	SI	EU
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)			'15	20.2 ^b	23.7 ^b	'14-'15	▪ -5.1	▪ -0.1
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)			'15	82.2	83.7			
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	47.8	55.2	'15	51.0	57.3	'10-'15	▪ 0.6	▪ 0.4
Overall transitions and labour market trends								
Early leavers from education and training (%)	5.0	13.9	'15	5.0 ^C	11.0 ^C	'10-'15	→ 0.0	↘ -0.6
30- to 34-year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	34.8	33.8	'15	43.4 ^C	38.7 ^C	'10-'15	↗ 1.5	↗ 1.0
NEET rate for 18- to 24-year-olds (%)	8.9	16.6	'15	12.4	15.8	'10-'15	↗ 0.8	↘ -0.1
Unemployment rate for 20- to 34-year-olds (%)	10.9	13.1	'15	13.2	12.9	'10-'15	↗ 0.7	↗ 0.1
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)	80.7	77.4	'15	71.5 ^C	76.9 ^C	'10-'15	↘ -1.8	↘ -0.2
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	16.7	27.3	'15	13.2 ^C	23.5 ^C	'10-'15	↘ -0.6	↘ -0.8
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds (%)	70.3	68.6	'15	69.1	70.0	'10-'15	↘ -0.3	↗ 0.3
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	50.5	53.4	'15	48.0 ^C	52.6 ^C	'10-'15	↘ -0.3	↘ -0.2
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2020 (% of total)			'16	91.7 ^D	82.8 ^D			

^(A) UOE (UNESCO OECD Eurostat) back reconstruction of 2010 values based on ISCED (international standard classification of education) 2011 not yet available.

^(B) AES (adult education survey) 2011, used as proxy for 2010 baseline.

^(C) 2014 b flags in Eurostat online tables ignored on the basis of other relevant Eurostat metadata.

^(D) Forecast made in 2016.

^(E1) Based on 28 countries; partial information for NL.

^(E2) Based on 25 countries (missing: ES, PL, RO); partial information for NL.

^(E3) Based on 27 countries (missing: NL); partial information for EL, IT.

^(E4) Based on 19 countries (missing: BE, DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT, SK).

^(E5) Based on 21 countries (missing: DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT).

^(E6) Partial information for NL.

^(E7) Based on 25 countries (missing: IT, HR, UK).

^(E8) Based on 23 countries (missing: BE, CY, FR, IE, UK).

^(E9) Based on 22 countries (missing: DE, IE, EL, NL, SI, UK).

^(b) Break after 2010, therefore baseline data not included.

^(u) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

^(z) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

^(e) Eurostat: 'estimated'.

NB: EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified. Arrows ↗ or ↘ signal a positive or negative trend based on more than two data points and of magnitude 0.1 per year or more. Trends based on more than two data points but of smaller magnitude are indicated by →; trends based on two points only are marked ▪. Trends are estimated by means of regression models.

Source: Cedefop, 2017a, p. 121.

CHAPTER 1.

MTD 1 – All forms of work-based learning with special attention to apprenticeships

1.1. Policy priorities for 2016-20

The country's priorities for 2016-20 in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training (DGVV), are to:

- (a) reintroduce an apprenticeship system (including the related programmes and adapting the legislation accordingly);
- (b) set specific arrangements for introducing the apprenticeship system in VET schools, alongside the work-based learning system already in place.

1.2. Main actions taken in 2015-17

1.2.1. The 2015-16 social pact

A 2015-16 social pact was concluded between representatives of the government, trade unions and employers. This acknowledges the need for apprenticeships and considers their reintroduction, especially in sectors where skills shortages are observed.

1.2.2. The 2015 thematic country review on apprenticeships in cooperation with Cedefop

A thematic country review on apprenticeship was initiated in 2015 with Cedefop. The aim was to carry out an in-depth analysis of the situation and prepare a decision on apprenticeship reintroduction. The review involved a broad range of VET stakeholders: directors of VET schools, students, recent graduates who are in employment, providers of in-company training, directors of intercompany training centres, company directors and in-company mentors. Several sectors were surveyed ⁽²⁾. A steering group has been nominated by the Education Ministry to discuss and validate the outcomes of the review and support discussions at national level: the group includes members from the education and labour ministries, the National Institute for VET, chamber of commerce and industry, chamber of craft and small business, VET providers. The steering group

⁽²⁾ Hospitality and tourism; masonry; carpentry; metal, glass and paper industry.

had three meetings ⁽³⁾ to validate the findings identified at each phase of the review. The steering committee has received the draft final report for validation.

1.2.3. Reforming upper-secondary VET and piloting apprenticeships

A project on the overall reform of upper-secondary vocational education, funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), started in March 2017. The main objectives are to test and identify the tools and methods to create a sustainable system that will reform school-based VET to match the needs of the labour market, develop flexible and individualised teaching methods and learning pathways in school-based VET, support companies to engage in work-based learning, test and evaluate the apprenticeship system, define learning outcomes for work-based learning, and improve the training of mentors in companies. Piloting a new apprenticeship system is a major part of the project and will start in school year 2017/18. It will cover four programmes in seven upper secondary VET schools ⁽⁴⁾. The reform aims to set in place two new VET models in upper secondary, a school-based system and an apprenticeship system, and commit social partners (chambers, unions) to providing practical training and creating and monitoring a register of placements. The reform activities will be continuously evaluated and monitored; results (an annual report) will be submitted to the expert council for VET and the ministries in charge. Financial incentives for companies to offer practical training in apprenticeship-type schemes (ESF project) or in school-based VET programmes are available from national and EU sources (EUR 28.4 million, of which 22.7 million from EU funds).

⁽³⁾ October 2015, June 2016 and January 2017.

⁽⁴⁾ Metal shaper-toolmaker (SC *Škofja Loka*, upper secondary VET school *Bežigrad*); mason (upper secondary construction, geodetic and environmental school *Ljubljana*); joiner (SC *Slovenj Gradec* SC *Novo mesto*); gastronomy and the hotel services (upper secondary school *Izola*, secondary school of catering and tourism *Radenci*).

CHAPTER 2.

MTD 2 – Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET ⁽⁵⁾

Appointed in 2008 as the quality assurance national reference point (EQAVET NRP in Slovenia), the Slovenian national institute for VET (CPI) covers publicly funded initial vocational education and training (IVET). The organisation and financing of education Act envisages the preparation of an annual self-evaluation report; the vocational education and training Act stipulates preparation of an annual quality assurance report, which VET providers should also post on their websites. The self-evaluation report is considered to be more detailed: it is intended for school employees and to support the school's development and further steps. The quality assurance report should contain short descriptions of the quality assurance activities carried out in the past year and summaries of the self-evaluation report findings, together with proposed measures. It must be posted on the school website every year. The vocational education and training Act additionally provides for the quality assurance committee, which shall be composed of a chair and members appointed from among the school's professional staff and representatives of employers, students and parents. The inspectorate carries out external evaluation based on whether the school is performing according to the law.

⁽⁵⁾ Sources:

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop):

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en>

ReferNet: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/refernet>

Priorities reported by Directors General for vocational training for the 2016-20 period;

EQAVET (2016 Secretariat survey, website, newsletters): <http://www.eqavet.eu>

2016 compendium of EQAVET NRP *Erasmus+* funding;

Council recommendations on the 2016 national reform programmes:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-semester/2016/#>

Education and training monitor 2016 country reports:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor_en

Since 2007, the national council of experts for VET has approved 11 national quality assurance indicators which are all in line with the European quality assurance in vocational education and training (EQAVET) recommended indicators. VET providers are supposed to take into account all 11 indicators during self-evaluation, and report on them to the EQAVET NRP, to allow for preparing the annual national quality report and presenting it to the council of experts for VET.

Similar to IVET, all adult education organisations that offer vocational training have to carry out self-evaluation. They establish a school quality commission and prepare a self-evaluation report every year. A model for self-evaluation *Offering quality education to adults* (OQEA) ⁽⁶⁾ was developed within a project funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). The role of quality counsellor in adult education has been developed to support quality development at provider level. The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (ACS) is in charge of coordinating the national network of quality counsellors ⁽⁷⁾.

According to EQAVET surveys, the national approach to quality assurance in VET does not yet include systematic collection of information relating to IVET and/or continuing vocational education and training (CVET) graduates. In 2010-11, pilot data collection and analysis took place for three large VET schools (covering destination, occupation, and salaries). A second pilot in 2012 evaluated VET graduate transitions and collected opinions about schools, programmes and work-based learning. The results and recommendations were provided to schools. Some schools regularly monitor transition to work, provide information on their webpages, and consider the data when designing their curricula.

2.1. Quality assurance in line with EQAVET

In the reporting period, Slovenia is running a national project to develop, by August 2018, a common model of quality assessment and quality assurance at all levels of formal education, from kindergarten to high school. This would include a common quality assurance framework with recommended standards and indicators on three areas: learning achievements, professional development and social climate. The project includes preparation and piloting the model on 32 schools/kindergartens from all included educational subsystems. The process of quality assessment and quality assurance will be scrutinised.

⁽⁶⁾ <http://kakovost.acs.si/oqea/>

⁽⁷⁾ <http://kakovost.acs.si/counsellors/>

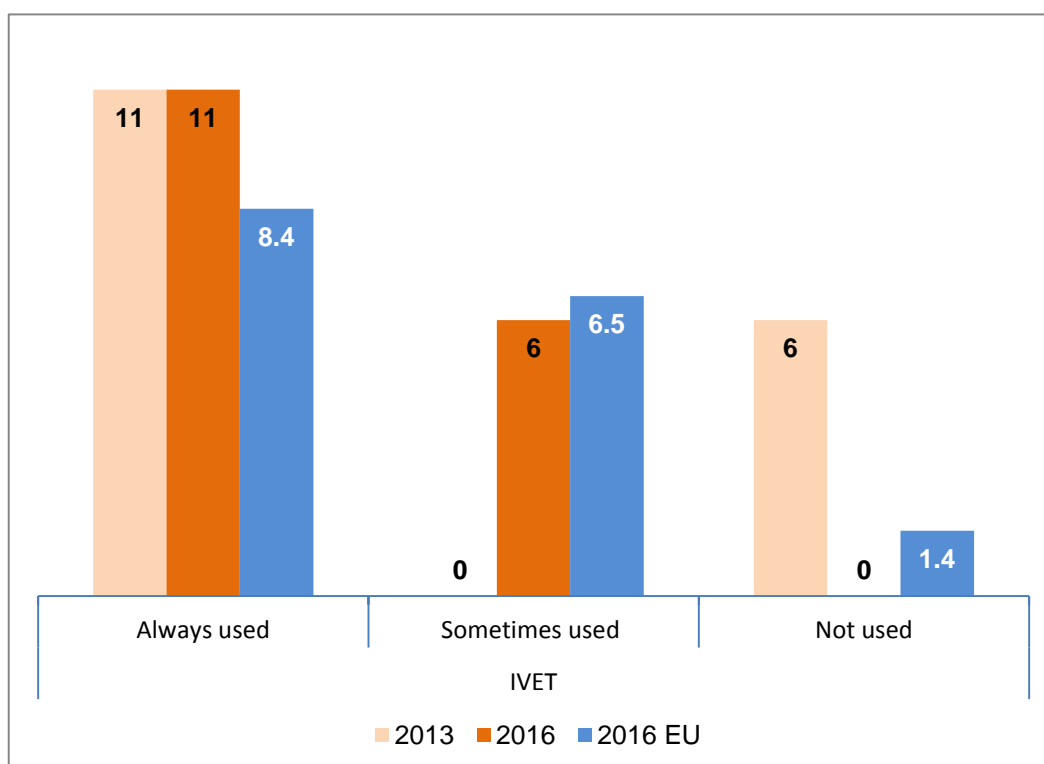
Standards/indicators for quality of quality assurance and leadership will be developed. Information from several supportive institutes (National School for Leadership in Education, the National Institute for VET, the National Education Institute and the national examinations centre) will be gathered in one common national website. The idea of systematic common and coordinated support to schools/kindergartens from all four institutes will be revised. The project has been ordered by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

The EQAVET NRP (located at the National Institute for VET) and National Institute for VET as a whole are using *Erasmus+* funding for different development projects on quality assurance in VET. Results are usually focused on both system and provider level.

Further support for VET providers to implement the EQAVET framework was developed – and is still being developed – through the *Erasmus+* project *Support for policy reform, action EQAVET network - restricted call for EQAVET NRPs*. Support activities include a manual for implementation of the EQAVET framework, a national conference on quality in VET, training for quality commissions at VET provider level, translation of case studies from the EQAVET website, development of national website for quality assurance in VET, and international peer-review.

The systematic use of EQAVET indicators to monitor the VET system ('always used' item in Figure 1), has remained unchanged compared to 2013. Slovenia was above the EU average in IVET in 2016. The overall use of indicators has improved since the last EQAVET Secretariat survey in 2013. All EQAVET indicators are used, including the destination of VET learners on completion of their training and the utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace.

Figure 1. Use of EQAVET indicators



NB: Of the 17 indicators suggested by the 2009 EQAVET Recommendation, 11 were 'always used' in IVET in 2013 and 2016 in Slovenia compared to 8.4 in the EU on average in 2016.

No information was provided for the use of EQAVET indicators in CVET.

EU average was calculated based on available information for 31 out of 35 VET systems.

Source: Cedefop calculations based on EQAVET Secretariat surveys for 2013 and 2016 data.

2.2. Continuous information and feedback loops in IVET

The country's priority in this matter for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to continue implementation of quality assurance mechanisms in schools

Catalogues for practical training will be prepared as part of the ESF project *Reform of upper-secondary vocational education* (Section 1.2.3). In March 2017, the first draft of the methodology for preparing these catalogues was presented.

2.3. Continuous information and feedback loops in CVET

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this matter, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to ensure collection of information on labour-market relevance of CVET courses and then carry out training of the unemployed in compliance with labour-market needs.

The ESF project *Further training programmes (VET specialisation)* started in March 2017. The project will develop training programmes for graduates of upper secondary VET which would like to get advanced training in a specific field inside the occupation. Graduates are to expand their professional knowledge or to gain knowledge in (parts of) the professions, but not to undertake additional education. These programmes will be prepared in close collaboration with employers and implemented with regard to labour-market needs.

CHAPTER 3.

MTD 3 – Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible/permeable systems, guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning

3.1. Policy priorities for 2016-20

The country's priorities in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, are threefold:

- (a) for young people:
 - (i) develop systemic solutions for recognition of non-formal and informal learning for IVET;
 - (ii) improve access to formal and informal education, training and employment for young people who left education and training early;
- (b) for adults:
 - (i) develop systemic solutions for recognition of non-formal and informal learning for CVET;
 - (ii) increase participation of older workers in lifelong learning to improve their employability and increase the employment rate of the 55-64 age group;
- (c) for refugees and migrants: develop, by the end of 2016, a high capacity solution that allows recently arrived refugees and migrants to have their skills and competences identified and documented in the quickest and best possible way.

3.2. Main actions taken in 2015-17

3.2.1. Guidance

In the reporting period, developments are continuing through ESF-funded projects coordinated by the national coordination point for lifelong career guidance within the employment service of Slovenia (ESS, the public employment service) and its branches:

- (a) the 2015-22 project *Strengthening counselling work with young people at the employment service of Slovenia* aims at finding new ways for reaching out

- unemployed young people and offering them individualised activation measures;
- (b) the 2016-22 project *Service development of lifelong career guidance and further strengthening of national coordination point for lifelong career guidance* ⁽⁸⁾ aims at supporting integration and coordination of stakeholders, and at developing new tools for career orientation of primary and secondary school learners;
 - (c) the 2016-22 project *Performing services for the unemployed, other jobseekers and employers* ⁽⁹⁾ is oriented towards:
 - (i) increasing the quality of counselling services;
 - (ii) finding new ways of supporting employers who are searching for employees;
 - (iii) encouraging the use of ICT and other communication channels in counselling.

ESF-funded projects coordinated by the national school for leadership in education also contribute to developing guidance:

- (a) the 2016-18 project *Leadership support programme for school staff*, produced for staff in schools and kindergartens in order to develop knowledge and skills in lifelong career guidance;
- (b) the 2016-19 project *Managing and leading innovative learning environments* aiming to design a model of comprehensive support to head teachers in pedagogical leadership and management, including developing head teacher capacities for critical thinking, problem learning, innovation, reflexion and cooperative learning. The model will be extended to career managements skills of head teachers.

The 2016-20 ESF-funded project *VET promotion* coordinated by the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for VET also contributes to developing guidance. The project aims to promote VET as an attractive education option and to support the young and talented in moving forward in their career.

Slovenia also participates in *Erasmus+* projects that refer to guidance:

- (a) the 2015-17 *Erasmus+* project *Guidance and orientation for adult learners (GOAL)* ⁽¹⁰⁾ to improve guidance and orientation for adult learners. The

⁽⁸⁾ http://english.ess.gov.si/about_ess/ess_projects/service-development-of-lifelong-career-guidance

⁽⁹⁾ http://english.ess.gov.si/about_ess/ess_projects/performing-services-for-the-unemployed-other-job-seekers-an

⁽¹⁰⁾ <http://www.projectgoal.eu/>

project focuses on those aged 50+, immigrants, and low-qualified job seekers and employees;

(b) the 2015-17 *Erasmus+* project *Lead career*. The main aim of the project was to develop school leadership knowledge and skills for career development of education staff;

(c) the *Erasmus+* project *Lead by Euroguidance* aims at making the expert community aware of cooperation and mobility options in the field of guidance.

Since 2008, the national cross-sector expert group for lifelong guidance (LLG) has been operational. This expert group, established by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, acts as an advisory body to guidance policy-makers and guidance practitioners. In 2015, the expert group published recommendations for policy-makers on the improvement of LLG in Slovenia.

Since 2017, Slovenia has been a member of Cedefop *CareersNet*.

3.2.2. Transparency, recognition, validation

3.2.2.1. National qualifications framework⁽¹¹⁾

The Slovenian qualifications framework (SQF) was developed in 2011. It comprises 10 levels, defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. It was linked to the European qualifications framework (EQF) and the qualifications frameworks in the European higher education area (QF-EHEA) in 2013. In January 2016, the Slovenian qualifications framework Act⁽¹²⁾ came into force, serving as the legal basis for SQF implementation and full operationalisation. The SQF register⁽¹³⁾ describes qualifications in accordance with SQF and EQF levels and contains 1 435 qualifications (1 209 educational qualifications and 305 national vocational qualifications). The adoption of the SQF Act in 2016 opens up the system to qualifications awarded on the labour market.

3.2.2.2. Validation⁽¹⁴⁾

Legislation from 2000 and 2007 provided for validation in different education and training subsystems but there is no single national strategy in place. There are

⁽¹¹⁾ Cedefop, 2017b.

⁽¹²⁾ The SQF Act is available in Slovenian at:

<http://www.uradni-list.si/1/content?id=124645#!/Zakon-o-slovenskem-ogrodju-kvalifikacij-%28ZSOK%29>

⁽¹³⁾ The SQF register: <http://www.nok.si/slovenian-qualifications-framework-register/>

⁽¹⁴⁾ Cedefop, 2017b; Cedefop et al., 2017.

two routes for validation of competences, especially for adults with working experience. They can either participate in formal VET or obtain a vocational qualification certificate within the national system (national vocational qualifications, NVQ). Procedures to grant exemptions in formal education and training vary. A single and comprehensive set of quality assurance mechanisms for validation has yet to be developed. In 2015, the NVQ regulations relating to methods and procedures for validating professional qualifications (those offered by the labour-market side) and the related register of responsible institutions were revised to improve quality and transparency of validation/recognition, reduce the number of institutions in charge, and clarify responsibilities and obligations. The Ministry of Education plans to prepare a system including common standards and quality assurance for all levels.

To help refugees and migrants integrate in the country, a two-stage procedure for validating the knowledge and skills of minors who do not have proof of their educational attainment has been introduced:

- (a) based on interviews, their personal (psychological) situation and (career) ambitions are identified;
- (b) then a process of testing their maths and science skills, as well as their social competences, is carried out, to identify the most suitable paths/programmes for them.

3.2.3. Training, reskilling and upskilling vulnerable groups, jobseekers and employees

3.2.3.1. The Youth guarantee implementation plan for 2016-20

The *Youth guarantee* implementation plan for 2016-20 (following the 2014-15 round) was adopted in May 2016. One of its activities targets those aged between 15 and 26 who left education and training early or dropped out, to help them complete their education and/or find a job. The activity consists of project work that combines work-related content with fun experience and encouragement for active job search, continuing education and achieving personal goals.

3.2.3.2. Training for the elderly

An *Elderly and the labour market in Slovenia* action plan was adopted by the government in December 2016. It provides for measures in support to lifelong learning and validation of non-formal skills for people aged 50+.

A 2016-22 project *Non-formal education and training* targeting the long-term unemployed aged 50+ with low qualifications was also adopted. It seeks to

improve employability through programmes training for competences in demand in the labour market.

A 2016-22 project *Comprehensive support to companies for active ageing of employees* targeting the employed over 45 (with emphasis on those older than 50) has also been carried out. The aim of the programme is to encourage delayed retirement and increase the employability of older workers. The programme aims to provide support to employers for more efficient management of the ageing workforce, improve motivation and skills upgrading of older employees, and to raise awareness of the challenges that an ageing workforce is facing.

Other projects targeting the unemployed older than 50 fall under the responsibility of Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLFSA):

- (a) the *On the job training programme 2017/18* that aims to provide new practical skills to the unemployed in a real-work environment, under the supervision of a mentor, financed by ESF and MoLFSA;
- (b) the 2017-22 *Practical employment promotion programme*, designed to increase employability by raising the qualifications of the unemployed. Training is provided by inter-company training centres and designed in line with labour-market needs. Programme is financed by ESF and MoLFSA.

3.2.3.3. *Training for refugees*

Calls for projects were carried out by the public employment service in 2016 and 2017 within the framework of the pilot programme *Integration for persons with international protection*. The aims of the programme were to organise four-month training courses for migrants: to help them integrate into the labour market through cultural integration; provide information to migrants on the employment system in Slovenia; help them identify their competences; and provide career guidance/individual development plans to migrants, and upskilling if necessary.

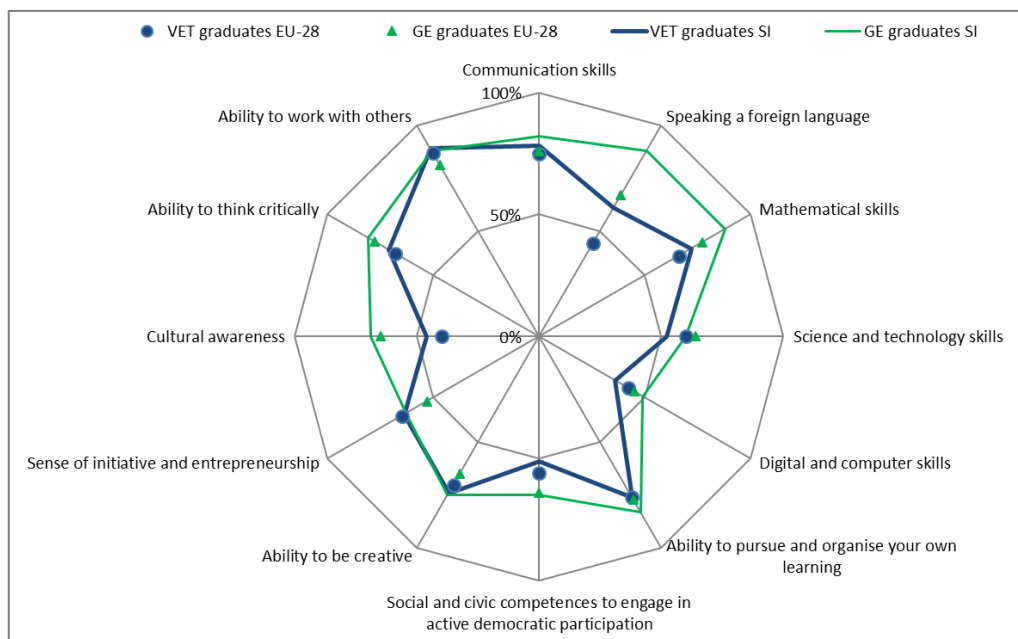
CHAPTER 4.

MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET

Compared with general education graduates, those who completed VET programmes feel they have slightly:

- (a) stronger (ranked by priority):
 - (i) sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
 - (ii) ability to work with others;
- (b) weaker:
 - (i) foreign language ability;
 - (ii) cultural awareness;
 - (iii) mathematical skills (Figure 2).

Figure 2. **Self-evaluation of acquired skills in general education and VET**



NB: GE stands for general education.

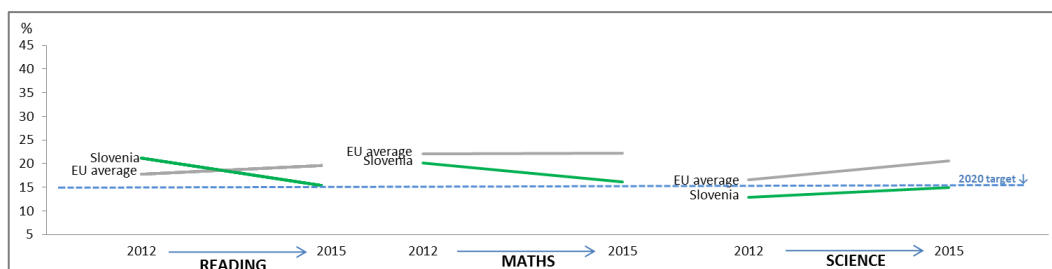
Respondents who attended upper secondary education. Interviewees were asked in summer 2016 about their overall experience in upper secondary education. Aggregated data do not take account of different types and sectors of VET and age groups of respondents.

Source: Cedefop, 2017c.

The context of key competences in 2015 was mainly characterised by a decreasing share of young low achievers in reading and maths, and increasing

share in science compared with 2012 (Figure 3). The share of low achievers in Slovenia was lower than in the EU on average, where the trend is the reverse (except for science).

Figure 3. **Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and science**



NB: Low achievement means failing level 2 on the PISA (programme for international student assessment) scale.

Source: OECD, 2014; OECD, 2016.

As VET enrolls 67% of all upper secondary learners in the country ⁽¹⁵⁾, this trend is likely to be reflected in the key competences trained for in VET programmes. Ten key competences in vocational and technical upper secondary education programmes form part of the so-called catalogues of knowledge of general education, specialised subjects, and specialised modules. There is no national monitoring of key competences in individual programmes. Indirectly, vocational *matura* examinations show levels of some key competences but excluding, for example, a social one ⁽¹⁶⁾.

4.1. Key competences in initial VET

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to continue promotion of key competences in IVET education programmes.

In 2016, learner performance in foreign languages at upper-secondary level, attested through *matura* exams, has been linked to the common European framework of reference for languages. Certificates are issued for English, Spanish, French, Italian and German languages.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Eurostat, data for 2015.

⁽¹⁶⁾ For more information on key competences in VET see Makovec Radovan et al., 2016.

4.2. Key competences in continuing VET

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to ensure recognition of linguistic competence in IVET and CVET.

The 2016-22 ESF project *Professional support for development of core competences of adults* focuses on encouraging participation in education and raising the quality of education for vulnerable groups. The project aims at developing education programmes, innovative learning materials, approaches and instruments for low-skilled, with a particular focus on employees and those above age 45.

CHAPTER 5.

MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors

5.1. Initial training for trainers and mentors in enterprises

The country's priority in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to raise the number of in-company mentors with the basic skills for workplace training.

A 50-hour training programme for in-company mentors/trainers was revised in 2016 to update the knowledge and competences required to plan, provide and assess workplace learning. This includes understanding characteristics of adolescence, pedagogy and psychological aspects of learning and teaching, organisational issues/methods to include learners in team and project work, communication and conflict-resolution skills, education and occupational safety legislation, preparing learning and assessment material. Since 2016, this training programme for in-company mentors has been available for free.

As part of the ESF project *Reform of upper-secondary vocational education* (Sections 1.2.3 and 2.2), a new training programme for in-company mentors is foreseen.

5.2. Continuing professional development for teaching/training staff in VET schools

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to increase the subject-related knowledge of teaching/training staff in VET schools.

A programme to improve the professional competences of teachers (2016-22) was launched in 2016, as part of an initiative of the Ministry of Education, jointly funded by ESF. It aims to improve teaching/learning quality by giving teachers and mentors the opportunity to update and complement their knowledge, skills and competences through job rotation: teachers of vocational modules and organisers of work-based learning will spend from two to four months in a company. During this period, they will be substituted by suitably

qualified and trained experts from the host companies or by previously unemployed teachers. A pilot job-rotation project, jointly funded by ESF, was carried out in 2014-15 including 20 VET schools: VET teachers were integrated in companies' regular work processes and, in most cases, were briefed and monitored by mentors.

The ESF shared-funded project *Strengthening the competences of professionals in the field of managing an innovative educational institute in the 2016-18 period* was also carried out. In this, teachers and other professional workers in upper-secondary vocational schools and higher vocational schools are trained to strengthen their competences in promoting entrepreneurship, innovative methods of teaching, quality completion of education, upgrading professional skills, working with special needs students, acquiring pedagogical/andragogical skills of higher-education lecturers, and supporting quality assurance in higher vocational schools.

5.3. Continuing professional development for trainers and mentors in enterprises

The country's priority in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to raise the number of in-company mentors skilled in training apprentices.

The 2016-22 exchange programme of the Education Ministry for the professional competence of teachers (Section 5.2) also accommodates in-company trainers and mentors and contributes to their continuing professional development.

Conclusion

Since 2015, Slovenia has taken actions to reintroduce apprenticeship to its IVET system. Steps have been taken to progress quality assurance mechanisms and the information system which guides the development of VET. Strong initiatives to boost guidance have been launched, the Slovenian qualifications framework has entered into force, the validation system was further developed, and training opportunities have been organised for groups in need (NEETs, the elderly, refugees). Development of key competences has been supported. Initiatives were also put in place to support the initial training of in-company trainers and mentors, and the continuous professional development of teachers and trainers.

The actions carried out show that the main lines of the Riga conclusions and the country's policy priorities for 2016-20 are being addressed, though information currently available to Cedefop suggests issues which could benefit from further consideration:

- (a) using EQAVET indicators to monitor the development of continuing VET;
- (b) taking initiatives in support to the initial training of VET school teachers.

Setting out policy priorities on:

- (a) quality assurance mechanisms;
- (b) initial training of VET school teachers

for the remaining period until 2020 could also be considered.

List of abbreviations

ACS	Slovenian Institute for Adult Education
AES	adult education survey
CPI	Slovenian national institute for VET
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
DGVT	Director General for vocational education and training
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
EQAVET NRP	quality assurance national reference point
EQF	European qualifications framework
ESF	European Social Fund
ESS	Slovenia 's public employment service
Eurostat	statistical office of the European Union
GDP	gross domestic product
GE	general education
ISCED	international standard classification of education
IVET	initial vocational education and training
LLG	national cross-sectoral expert group for lifelong guidance
MoLFSA	Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
NEET	not in education, employment, or training
NVQ	national vocational qualifications
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OQEA	offering quality education to adults
PISA	programme for international student assessment
PPS	purchasing power standards
SQF	Slovenian qualifications framework
STEM	science, technology, engineering and math programmes
UOE	UNESCO OECD Eurostat
VET	vocational education and training

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