



Vocational education and training policy briefs 2024

CROATIA



This vocational education and training (VET) policy brief was produced by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), Department for VET and Qualifications under the supervision of [Jürgen Siebel](#), Acting Head of Department/Executive Director.

The report was drafted by [Veronika Leiner](#), Cedefop expert, and peer reviewed by [Anthie Kyriakopoulou](#), Cedefop expert.

This report is part of Cedefop's monitoring of vocational education and training policies and systems. It is based on detailed information on VET policy implementation submitted by Cedefop's European network of expertise on VET (ReferNet) and other sources. For additional information please visit Cedefop's online tool [Timeline of VET policies in Europe](#).

Please cite this publication as:

Cedefop. (2025). *Vocational education and training policy briefs 2024 – Croatia*. National VET policy developments 2023-24.
<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/0940569>

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<https://european-union.europa.eu/>).

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2025.



© Cedefop, 2025.

Unless otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). This means that reuse is allowed provided appropriate credit is given and any changes made are indicated.



ISBN 978-92-896-3893-7 doi: 10.2801/0940569 TI-01-25-078-EN-N

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	4
2.	National VET context and challenges.....	4
2.1	National VET context	4
2.2	Challenges.....	5
3.	National VET policy priorities	5
4.	Main policy developments and progress 2020-24.....	6
4.1	Strengthening the relevance of VET.....	6
4.2	Improving the quality of VET	8
4.3	Raising the attractiveness and internationalisation of VET	9
5.	Statistical information in relation to EU targets	10
6.	Conclusion	12
	References	14

1. Introduction

This policy brief ⁽¹⁾ produced by Cedefop presents a snapshot of vocational education and training policy developments in Croatia between 2020 and the end of 2024. It presents the context and the challenges the country faces, a selection of the latest VET-related statistics, as well as the national priorities until 2030 identified in [Croatia's national implementation plan](#). This VET policy brief provides information from Cedefop monitoring and analysis on the implementation of the [Council Recommendation on VET](#) and [Osnabrück Declaration](#) and contributes to shaping new EU priorities in VET as of 2026 and informing the mid-term evaluation of the Council Recommendation on VET.

2. National VET context and challenges

2.1 National VET context

Croatia has a strong tradition in VET, with one of the highest [shares of learners at upper secondary VET level](#) in Europe (70.6% in 2023). Vocational schools in Croatia primarily offer IVET for students aged 14 to 18 years. Around two-thirds of learners are enrolled in 4-year programmes, which are mainly school-based but can also include dual education, leading to qualifications at EQF level 4 and offering pathways to tertiary education after completing the state *Matura* exams. About one-third of students are in 3-year VET programmes, which also lead to EQF level 4 qualifications, and facilitate entry to the labour market. These shorter programmes include school-based education, apprenticeships and dual education arrangements. IVET is publicly financed and free of charge. All VET programmes combine professional and general competences, to varying degrees (Cedefop & AVETAE, 2023; Cedefop, 2020).

Adult education and training in Croatia lead to educational attainment at EQF levels 1 to 5 for learners older than 14. Most programmes are VET-related, ranging from short training and professional development to programmes leading to qualifications equivalent to those in IVET. Vocational schools can offer vocational education for adults; in this case, they must follow the Law on education, the Law on VET and the Law on adult education (Cedefop, & AVETAE, 2023; Cedefop, 2020).

The Ministry of Science and Education is responsible for overall VET policy. The Agency for VET and Adult Education (ASOO) is an executive body in charge of the overall development and organisation of the VET system. The Ministry of Labour and Pension System is responsible for monitoring labour market needs. The role of the Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts and the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts is focused on apprenticeship programmes and the experimental programme in dual education launched in the 2018/19 school year. Other stakeholders contribute to VET developments, for example, sector skills councils and the VET Council are involved in curriculum development (Cedefop, & AVETAE, 2023; Cedefop, 2020).

The Croatian VET system is transforming from being input oriented to becoming learning outcome oriented. Many elements of the reformed system are currently in development and were introduced in the [2018 amendments to the VET Act](#). These include occupational

(1) See also the previous edition: Cedefop. (2024). [Vocational education and training policy briefs 2023 – Croatia](#). Cedefop monitoring and analysis of vocational education and training policies.

standards, qualification standards, sectoral curricula, and outcome-based VET curricula (Cedefop, 2020).

2.2 Challenges

The main challenges faced by Croatia have revolved around the relevance, quality and attractiveness of VET.

Croatia's overall ranking in the [European Skills Index \(ESI\)](#) is moderate ranking 14th out of 31 countries in 2024, two indicators reveal challenges in aligning the workforce with labour market needs. The recent training indicator (4.4%, rank 29th) suggests that the workforce does not keep sufficiently up to date with labour market developments. Additionally, the recent graduates in employment (78.5%, rank 27th) indicate a misalignment between VET programmes and labour market demands. These issues are reflected in the outdated nature of VET programmes, which have been in place for more than two decades and require substantial modernisation. The absence of crucial data on labour market needs and employment outcomes hinders effective adaptation. Personnel capacities at the school level have resulted in duplication of programmes within the same regional areas: schools primarily based their programme offerings on the specialisations of their VET teachers rather than aligning them with labour market demands. Additionally, there are significant disparities in the quality and availability of adult education programmes across different sectors. Although (Croatia, 2022).

Croatia's VET system does not have a comprehensive quality assurance system. It is also not aligned with other evaluation processes such as accreditation, supervision, and the state Matura exam. Challenges exist in the system for evaluating and strengthening teacher competences and motivation, and in the support provided to mentors in companies who accept students for work-based learning. All these factors have a direct impact on the quality of vocational education and training. These challenges are particularly pronounced in continuing vocational education and training (CVET) and addressing them requires special attention (Croatia, 2022).

Croatia continues to face challenges regarding the attractiveness of VET. Although the overall share of learners in vocational education and training is high, demographic shifts are reducing the number of learners, particularly in apprenticeship programmes (JMO). The number of students in apprenticeships, previously the most popular three-year program, halved between 2013 and 2018. However, enrolment in JMOs began to recover, increasing again by 30% by 2023. Despite this growth, there remains a shortage in certain professions that require three-year education, contributing to a mismatch between VET offers and labour market demand. Low participation in lifelong learning accelerates skill obsolescence by limiting skill updates and acquisition (Cedefop, & AVETAE, 2023; Croatia, 2022). More broadly, low levels of basic skills, research and innovation (R&I), and skills shortages are holding back productivity and slowing down the green and digital transition (European Commission, 2024a).

3. National VET policy priorities

As a response to the 2020 Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück Declaration, Croatia prepared a National implementation plan for VET, selecting the following priorities to

address the above challenges:

- (a) strengthening the relevance of VET, to adapt to the rapid economic changes and innovations and better align with labour market needs and skills demand;
- (b) improving the quality of VET, by setting up a more coherent system of VET quality assurance to enable evidence-based decision-making regarding the design and delivery of VET programmes;
- (c) raising the attractiveness and internationalisation of VET, to improve VET's image and address the perception of VET as a second choice not valued as highly as gymnasium education.

4. Main policy developments and progress 2020-24

4.1 Strengthening the relevance of VET

Between 2020 and 2024, Croatia implemented comprehensive measures to strengthen the relevance of its VET system. This included a major reform of VET curricula, based on the development of occupational and qualification standards, the enactment of regulations to recognise knowledge and skills gained through non-formal and informal learning, and the promotion of work-based learning through support for apprenticeships and the dual education experimental programme. Additionally, significant investments upgraded regional centres of competence, fostering innovation, enhanced training, and broad-based partnerships across the education, business, and public sectors.

In 2023, Croatia completed the first phase of its major [VET curriculum reform](#) (ReferNet Croatia & Cedefop, 2023a). This included [finalising the entry of occupational and qualification standards](#) into the CROQF register (ReferNet Croatia & Cedefop, 2022). By October 2024, there were 587 occupational standards with over 4 800 competences registered, and 405 qualification standards with more than 12 000 units of learning outcomes. The process is guided by a revised methodology that uses labour market data and sector profiles to keep standards relevant. The reform also introduced an e-curriculum database that links all vocational curricula with standards. A [revision of the general education subject curricula supporting key competence development](#) was finalised for IVET qualifications at EQF levels 3 and 4. Vocational curricula were modularised, creating outcome-based profiles that focus on skills development. The new curricula balance general and vocational education, and allow learners to delay specialisation after early years. VET providers now have more freedom to adapt their programmes (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025). In 2024, [public consultations on 148 new curricula](#) (ReferNet Croatia & Cedefop, 2024) confirmed that they meet current labour market needs. While stakeholders generally acknowledged the benefits of integrating theoretical and practical teaching, the harmonisation of general education content raised concerns. Pilot testing in 2023/24 and 2024/25 received positive feedback from learners and teachers, who found the modular approach engaging and useful. However, they also raised concerns about scheduling, resources, and student progression. Croatia plans to support schools with ongoing training, visits, and conferences until 2029 to help with implementation, financed from the ESF+ project, 'Further implementation of the VET curricula reform'.

The [enactment of the Adult Education Act in 2021](#) enhanced the relevance of adult education by creating a legal basis for the validation of prior learning, aligning it with the

national qualifications framework and occupational standards. This Act facilitates the [validation of non-formal and informal learning](#), recognising skills and knowledge gained outside formal education. Between 2022 and 2024, the project 'Establishing a validation system of prior non-formal and informal learning in Croatia' was carried out in cooperation with the OECD. In 2024, a regulation was adopted on the application of prior learning validation, along with related [guidelines and a methodology for developing validation programmes](#). These support the recognition of knowledge and skills for micro-qualifications, partial qualifications, and full qualifications at EQF levels 2-5 although no programmes have been developed in 2024.

Croatia promotes work-based learning through [incentives for SMEs and learners to participate in apprenticeships](#) (nationally known as JMOs - Unified Model of Education programmes for crafts). ESF funds have supported SMEs in covering apprenticeship costs and mentor fees, while scholarships for students in skilled and shortage occupations also help support their training. Additionally, lifelong learning grants are available for individuals and SMEs to gain craft and trade skills, certificates, and licenses needed for employment or self-employment. During the 2014-2020 ESF period, significant funding was allocated to these grants, however, as this programming period ended in 2023, funding became less stable and depended on remaining ESF and national funds. A new programming period with ESF+ funds is planned. Despite funding fluctuations, enrolment in IVET apprenticeship programmes has increased - by 30% between 2018 and 2023 - and a further 2.6% increase in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24, reaching 12 948 learners.

Croatia has continued to implement its [dual education experimental programme](#), introducing a work-based learning model across various VET qualifications. VET schools collaborate with businesses to plan and implement work-based learning, providing continuous professional development for teachers and in-company mentors, facilitating technology exchange, monitoring student progress, and organising final exams. Participation has steadily increased, from 159 students and 11 VET schools in 2018/19 to 1 845 students and 25 VET schools in the 2024/25 school year, with company involvement reaching 892. To ensure uniform standards, revision of dual education curricula started in 2023, in line with the methodology for developing sector curricula, vocational curricula and VET provider curricula. Furthermore, ASOO held training for company trainers involved in dual education, designed in line with the new model of CPD for VET teachers, and aimed at enhancing their pedagogical competences.

By December 2023, EUR 260 million from the European Structural and Investment Funds supported the development of 25 VET schools into [regional centres of competences](#) (RCC), appointed in 2018 in five priority sectors: tourism, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and ICT, agriculture, and healthcare. These centres feature innovative learning models, high-quality infrastructure, skilled teachers, and collaborations with partners. The investments focused on developing practical training workshops, laboratories, and simulated work environments, as well as enhancing quality assurance, guidance, curriculum development, international cooperation and mobility. Support extends to cooperating VET providers, enhancing the impact of these centres. These centres were reaffirmed in July 2023 for an additional five years, with funding planned through the ESF until 2029. Objectives will

focus on green and digital transitions and connecting RCCs with the European platform of centres of excellence in VET.

4.2 Improving the quality of VET

Between 2020 and 2024, Croatia improved VET quality by refining the self-assessment system in IVET and its connection to external evaluation, standardising quality indicators, establishing quality assurance for adult education, and strengthening its graduate tracking system to support evidence-based decision-making.

Croatia has made significant progress in enhancing VET quality through the implementation of the EQAVET framework. Recent developments include the [2022 system-level peer review](#), with reviewers from Spain, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia, and Finland focusing on the efficiency of the self-assessment system, support for IVET providers, and its connection to external evaluation. Reviewers acknowledged VET provider capacity in self-assessment and recommended complementing it with external evaluation to [strengthen Croatia's quality assurance system](#). Within the framework of the EQAVET national reference point (NRP) activities, a mapping of quality indicators in VET was completed in 2023. This resulted in key performance indicators benchmarked to EQAVET indicators. Guidelines for IVET providers on internal QA were developed, incorporating best practices from provider input and self-assessment experiences, and differentiating between internal and external quality assurance processes. The 2nd and 3rd national VET QA conferences held in 2023 and 2024, presented the internal quality assurance concept, each gathering about one-third of all IVET providers in Croatia.

Significant progress was also made in adult education. Between 2020 and 2024, the ESF project, [Development of a quality assurance system in adult education](#), established a methodological framework for self-assessment and external evaluation of adult education providers, including manuals, guidelines, and tools. This framework covers areas of institutional management, educational programmes, learning achievement, resources, and public relations. ASOO supported these procedures through workshops, symposia, and advisory visits, while pilot testing was conducted with over 20 providers in 2022-23. Now, regular self-assessment and external evaluation practices are in place. The ESF+-funded project (2024-2029), in the amount of EUR 10.5 million, aims to further strengthen these mechanisms and promote lifelong learning.

To assess graduate employment outcomes and ensure VET is aligned with the labour market, Croatia plans to implement [graduate tracking](#) at the provider level, linked to VET provider self-assessment. Implementation began in 2018, and has since been piloted through four cycles with a growing number of VET providers. Key milestones include the drafting of a handbook for VET providers (2019) and a peer-learning activity with EQAVET NRPs. To further increase the programme's reach, a VET graduate tracking app was developed in 2022-23. Participation has grown, reaching 15 schools in the 3rd pilot cycle in 2023 and 34 schools in the 4th cycle in 2024, alongside development and training in the methodology and tools. Survey results show a high proportion of VET graduates (over 92%) progressing to further education or employment, with a low unemployment rate. These results were analysed, and reports were prepared at the level of each participating provider, though they are not indicative of the whole population. To ensure survey reliability, the survey design has been streamlined

based on EQAVET indicators and guidance from a European Commission expert group.

Croatia has [modernised its VET teacher continuous professional development \(CPD\) system](#) since 2017. This initiative, built on analyses and best practices, involved the development of a new CPD model, the creation of training content, and the delivery of training sessions, with the project, 'Modernisation of the continuing professional development (CPD) system for VET teachers' ending in September 2021. ASOO continues to deliver state-budget financed training in line with the reformed CPD model, contributing to enhanced teaching quality. Between 2022 and 2024 training has been organised for hundreds of VET teachers and more than 450 novice teachers in a variety of subjects such as digital skills, new VET curricula, learning assessments and teaching gifted students.

4.3 Raising the attractiveness and internationalisation of VET

Croatia has raised the attractiveness and internationalisation of VET through initiatives such as supporting the mobility of learners and educational staff, the reformed World Skills Croatia competitions as well as by fostering lifelong learning through dedicated events and programmes.

Croatia has made significant progress in the [internationalisation of VET](#), exceeding initial mobility targets for learners and staff - measured by the number of participating learners and educational staff as part of the National Education System Development Plan for the period up to 2027. This is achieved through leveraging the Erasmus+ programme and investment in transnational cooperation projects, with learner mobility reaching 2.31% in 2023. However, further progress, in line with EU recommendations, is planned to 2027, but there are concerns that Erasmus+ budget constraints could limit mobility.

Croatia has [reformed its approach to skills competitions](#) aiming to boost the attractiveness and excellence of VET (ReferNet Croatia & Cedefop, 2023b). Aligning with international competitions such as WorldSkills and EuroSkills, the WorldSkills Croatia competitions now focus on practical skills, teamwork, and close links to VET curriculum, demonstrating high professional standards. These yearly events involve VET schools, businesses, and government bodies. The fifth edition of the competition in 2024 involved over 350 VET teachers and trainers, 400 competitors, and included 42 skills competitions, supported by more than 50 companies. In 2024, 6 000 visitors attended, including primary school pupils who can explore VET pathways through try-your-skill guidance activities. Croatia has also gained international recognition, winning a bronze medal at EuroSkills Gdansk in 2023, a medal of excellence at the 2024 WorldSkills global competition in Lyon, and welcoming guest competitors from Austria, Finland, and Montenegro to increase international dimension. To further strengthen the initiative, an ESF+ funded project, 'Support for excellence, innovation, and visibility of VET' is running from 2024 to 2029.

Croatia has been [promoting lifelong learning](#) and adult education through initiatives that raise awareness and build capacity. The annual Lifelong Learning Week and the International Andragogy Symposium have been key in improving the attractiveness of adult education. With completion of the project, 'Promotion of lifelong learning' in 2023, efforts continue through the ESF+ funded project, 'Further development of the quality assurance in adult education and promotion of lifelong learning'. This project which is planned for 2024-2029 with a budget of EUR 10.5 million, aims to improve quality assurance mechanisms and promote lifelong

learning opportunities.

5. Statistical information in relation to EU targets

Croatia presents a mixed picture with regards to the achievement of EU targets related to VET.

The Croatian education system is successful in preventing early leaving from education and training, keeping it at a low rate of 2% in 2024. This is the lowest in the EU and significantly below the Council Resolution on the European Education Area's target of below 9% by 2030. Since 2015, this rate has declined from 2.7% to 2%, which suggests that Croatia is working to retain students in school. On the other hand, Croatia is below the EU-27 average in the contribution of VET in developing a lifelong learning culture. In 2022, only 23.3% of adults (aged 25-64) had a learning experience in the last 12 months, much lower than the EU average of 39.5 % and the 47% target set by 2025 in the Council Resolution on the European Education Area, indicating that Croatia needs to substantially increase its efforts to achieve its lifelong learning goals.

The Council Recommendation on VET sets out a target 82% employment rate for recent IVET graduates (20 to 34-year-olds) by 2025. In 2024, Croatia stands at 75.7%, which is below the EU average of 80%. However, Croatia's rate has greatly increased, from 46.7 % in 2015. This suggests better alignment of VET with labour market needs, although the rate has not improved consistently each year. Croatia is also decreasing the amount of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) which substantially fell from 19.8% in 2015 to 10.6% in 2024, and slightly below the EU average of 11%. The aim is to further reduce the share of NEETs to a value below 9% by 2030, as set out in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.

Although Croatia scores above the EU average on adults with at least basic digital skills (59% of individuals aged 16-74 in 2023 vs an EU average of 55.6%), it is lagging behind on the share of households with a high-speed internet connection (67.8% of households in 2024; EU average: 78.8%). Croatia made notable progress (+ 16.2% compared to 2023) in increasing the number of ICT specialists, but is still behind the EU average (4.3% vs 4.8% in 2024) (European Commission, 2024b).

Work-based learning is still limited in Croatia. In 2024, only 38.3% of recent IVET graduates (20 to 34-year-olds) had work-based learning experience as part of their vocational education and training. This is significantly below both the 2024 EU-27 average (65.3%) and the Council Recommendation on VET's target of 60% for 2025. Despite programmes like dual education experimental programme and apprenticeship incentives, Croatia has been stagnating around 39% since 2021.

In 2021, 3.4 % of learners in IVET benefitted from learning mobility abroad. While this was an increase from 2.5% in 2020, Croatia needs to promote learning mobility to reach the Council Recommendation on VET's target of 8% by 2025 and the Council Recommendation Europe on the Move's target of 12% by 2030.

Table 1. **European vocational education and training policy dashboard: Croatia**

Type of indicator ⁽²⁾	Indicator	Last available year	HR	EU-27	Policy Document	EU target (year)
VET for developing a lifelong learning culture						
Progress	Adults (25-64 year-olds) with a learning experience in the last 12 months (%) [*]	2022	23.3	39.5	Skills Agenda	50% (2025)
					Council Resolution on EEA	47% (2025)
					ESPR Action Plan	60% (2030)
Progress	Low-qualified adults with a learning experience in the last 12 months (%) ^(*)	2022	: ^u	18.4	Skills Agenda	30% (2025)
Progress	Unemployed adults with a learning experience in the last 4 weeks (%)	2024	6 ^u	15.3	Skills Agenda	20% (2025)
Context	Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds (%)	2024	73.6	75.8	ESPR Action Plan	78% (2030)
Context	Early leavers from education and training (%)	2024	2 ^u	9.3	Council Resolution on EEA	<9% (2030)
Context	NEET rate for 15-29 year-olds (%)	2024	10.6	11.0	ESPR Action Plan	9% (2030)
VET for Resilience, transitions, sustainability and excellence						
Progress	Adults (16-74 year-olds) with at least basic digital skills (%)	2023	59	55.6	Skills Agenda	70% (2025)
					ESPR Action Plan	80% (2030)
Progress	Employment rate for recent IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds) (%)	2024	75.7	80.0	Council Rec on VET	82% (2025)
Progress	Recent IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds) with a work-based learning experience as part of their vocational education and training (%)	2024	38.3	65.3	Council Rec on VET	60% (2025)
					Council Resolution on EEA	
Context	25-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	2024	39.4	44.2	Council Resolution on EEA	45% (2025)
Context	Gender employment gap (%)	2024	5.9	10.0	ESPR Action Plan	To be halved (2030)
Context	People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (1000s)	2024	810 ^b	93 333	ESPR Action Plan	15 million decrease (2030)
Context	Employed ICT specialists (1000s)	2024	83.4 ^e	10273.6 ^e	2030 Digital Compass	20 million, with convergence between men and women (2030)
VET for the European Education Area						
Progress	Learners in IVET who benefitted from a learning mobility abroad (%) ^{**}	2021	3.4	2.1 ^{dv}	Council Rec on VET	8% (2025)
					Skills Agenda	
					Council Rec Europe on the Move	12% (2030)
Context	Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET	2023	1.2	1.2 ^d		

Available flags: b – break in time series, d – definition differs, e – estimated, u – low reliability, V – Cedefop estimate.
Special value: : - not available

^{*}Eurostat data (Adult Education Survey, special calculation excluding guided on-the-job training).

^{**} Provisional estimates affected by the Covid19 pandemic.

Source: Cedefop. (n.d.). [European VET policy dashboard](#).

(²) Definitions on the type of indicators are available at <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/european-vet-policy-dashboard/methodology>

6. Conclusion

Croatia has pursued three national priorities in line with the EU priorities for VET, each marked by significant developments and progress between 2020 and 2024. These priorities are strengthening the relevance of VET, improving the quality of VET, and increasing the attractiveness and internationalisation of VET. The predominant focus of VET reforms and initiatives is to align programmes with labour market requirements.

Croatia has made significant progress and reached major milestones set in its NIP for strengthening the relevance of its VET system between 2020 and 2024. The VET curriculum reform included the development of occupational and qualification standards, as well as modularised, outcome-based vocational curricula. Further steps will include ongoing support for schools through teacher training and conferences in preparation for the planned reform rollout in 2025. Croatia expanded work-based learning between 2020 and 2024 through incentives for apprenticeships and the dual education experimental programme. Though transitions between ESF programming periods caused fluctuations in funding, apprenticeship enrolment increased and the dual education programme expanded. The Adult Education Act in 2021 aimed to boost lifelong learning by establishing a legal basis for recognising prior learning. While rules and guidelines on validation programmes have been created, no programmes have been implemented yet. Croatia has also invested heavily in expanding its regional centres of competence which aim to bridge knowledge gaps. Continued operational progress and resources will promote the digital and green transitions and further reinforce the relevance of VET.

Croatia has made significant progress in improving the quality of its VET system between 2020 and 2024. Croatia has improved its VET quality assurance framework by refining the self-assessment system in IVET and linking it to external evaluation. The country has also mapped and standardised quality indicators. A methodological framework for self-assessment and external evaluation of adult education was introduced and guidelines for VET providers were developed both in IVET and CVET. Further improvements will be funded by ESF+ until 2029. The country expanded the scope of the pilot tracking of VET graduates and initiated measures to apply it at national level. Continuing efforts will contribute to improving the quality of VET and aligning it more closely to labour market needs. Croatia has continued implementing its reformed CPD model for VET teachers. A model of hybrid teachers and trainers, ensuring experts from the world of work can teach in VET providers, is planned for introduction in 2027 and will further contribute to strengthening the quality of VET provision.

Croatia has made significant progress in implementing its plans to increase the attractiveness and internationalisation of VET. The country has reformed skills competitions, aligning them with international standards and achieving success at EuroSkills and WorldSkills. These yearly national events and international participation boost the attractiveness of VET. An ESF+ funded project from 2024 to 2029 will continue to raise the visibility and attractiveness of VET through yearly national skills competitions and media campaigns. Croatia also promoted lifelong learning and adult education through events like Lifelong Learning Week and the International Andragogy Symposium. Building on these, an ESF+ funded project from 2024 to 2029 will further improve quality assurance mechanisms and promote lifelong learning opportunities. Croatia has also made significant

progress in the internationalisation of VET, exceeding initial mobility targets for learner and staff mobility through the Erasmus+ programme and investment in transnational cooperation projects. While learner mobility is growing, a new VET internationalisation strategy to integrate the international dimension into teaching and learning at both system and provider levels is expected by 2027. Furthermore, the planned link between the Europass Certificate Supplement and the national education IT system, expected in 2025, will further contribute to the VET attractiveness and internationalisation.

References

[accessed 27.7.2025]

Cedefop. (n.d.). *European VET policy dashboard* [Online tool].

Cedefop. (2020). *Vocational education and training in Croatia: short description*.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Cedefop, & Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE). (2023). *Vocational education and training in Europe - Croatia: system description*. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2024). *Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database - detailed VET system descriptions* [Database].

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe (2024 update)* [Online tool].

Croatia. (2022) *National Implementation Plan of the Council recommendation on VET: Croatia*.

European Commission. (2024a). *2024 Country Report - Croatia Accompanying the document Recommendation for a COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on the economic, social, employment, structural and budgetary policies of Croatia* (SWD/2024/611 final)

European Commission. (2024b). *Croatia 2024 Digital Decade Country Report*.

ReferNet Croatia, & Cedefop. (2022, December 20). *Croatia: follow-up on Croatian qualifications framework register*. *National news on VET*.

ReferNet Croatia, & Cedefop. (2023a, July 13). *Croatia: VET curriculum reform nears final stage*. *National news on VET*.

ReferNet Croatia, & Cedefop. (2023b, September 26). *Croatia: skills competitions celebrating the 2023 European Year of Skills*. *National news on VET*.

ReferNet Croatia, & Cedefop. (2024, August 20). *Croatia: VET curricula reform in public consultation stage*. *National news on VET*.