



Vocational education and training policy briefs 2024

SLOVAKIA



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1. Introduction

This policy brief ⁽¹⁾ produced by Cedefop presents a snapshot of vocational education and training policy developments in Slovakia 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 [Slovakia'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

Despite a growing preference for general education, initial vocational education and training (IVET) remains a strong part of the education system in Slovakia. In 2023, IVET accounted for 67.7% of all upper secondary education (Cedefop, 2025a; Cedefop & State Institute of Vocational Education [ŠIOV]/Slovak National Observatory of VET [SNO], 2023).

The Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth oversees IVET. Coordination and policy implementation are supported by the State Institute of Vocational Education (ŠIOV). The governance structure operates at national and regional levels. Affiliated with and accountable to the government, the National VET Council acts as the main coordinating body for VET policy, discussing strategies (regional, sectoral, lifelong learning) and supporting adjustments to VET programmes via its working groups. Regional VET councils advise self-governing regions. Sectoral councils, established and coordinated by the Alliance of Sectoral Councils, offer a sectoral approach to VET and define skill requirements in their relevant sectors. Sectoral assignees - chosen from chambers and employer associations - play a key role in each VET study field, working with education authorities to ensure VET programmes match labour market needs. The Employer Council for Vocational Education and Training coordinates their activities (Cedefop & ŠIOV/ SNO, 2023).

Upper-secondary VET schools, including those maintained by self-governing regions, private, and church-affiliated, receive equal state funding. Upper secondary VET in Slovakia provides a range of programmes. There are two main types of 4-year programmes: one is primarily theory-based, leading to a *maturita* school leaving certificate and VET qualifications, the other includes extended practical training and leads to both a *maturita* school leaving certificate and a certificate of apprenticeship. Both types enable progression to higher education. Three-year programmes lead to a certificate of apprenticeship, while 2- to 3-year programmes designed for lower-achieving students can provide a certificate of apprenticeship and lower secondary education.

VET in Slovakia offers various work-based learning (WBL) arrangements, such as practical training in school workshops, apprenticeship schemes, and dual VET. In Slovakia, apprenticeship schemes involve work-based learning organised by schools, carried out both in school workshops and through institutional contracts with companies. Dual VET differs by

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

combining school-based learning with in-company training, established through individual contracts between learners and companies and supported by direct state funding. While both models follow the same national curricula, only dual VET receives dedicated fiscal incentives. Since 2015, legislation has promoted company participation in dual VET through targeted funding, and since the 2018/19 school year, all secondary VET programmes may be offered in either format (Cedefop & ŠIOV/ SNO, 2023).

Continuing vocational education and training (CVET) in Slovakia is semi-regulated. The education ministry regulates programmes for adults who need qualifications to start a business, as required by the Trade Licensing Act. The labour ministry, through its labour offices, regulates training focused on employment. The acquisition of some qualifications are regulated by sectoral authorities. However, many other training programmes and general adult education courses fall outside of these regulations (Cedefop & ŠIOV/ SNO, 2023).

2.2 Challenges

Slovakia's VET system faces such key challenges as improving its labour market relevance, reducing early school leaving (ESL) and inequalities, and strengthening adult learning and Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) education to better prepare learners for digitalisation and changes in the economy.

A major challenge in Slovakia is strengthening the labour market relevance of VET. This is reflected by Slovakia's performance in the [European Skills Index](#), with its weakest indicator being long-term unemployment (4.1%, rank 27th of 31 countries). Student performance is declining, as indicated by PISA results in reading comprehension, mathematics, and science. [PISA 2022](#), in particular, has shown the lowest scores on record in mathematics and among the lowest in reading and science. The proportion of low achievers is considerably higher than the OECD average in all three categories. These deteriorating learning outcomes have a negative impact on enrolment rates, especially in mechanical and electrical engineering VET programmes, leading to a shortage of technically skilled graduates in the national economy. Although the dual VET model was introduced to increase VET learner participation in practical work experience, actual participation remains modest - 7.4% compared to 19% in apprenticeship programmes. This limited involvement constrains the relevance of VET in meeting labour market needs and hampers the development of skills tailored to the economy (Cedefop, 2025b; OECD, 2023; Slovakia, 2024).

The proportion of early leavers from education and training has increased in Slovakia, from 4.7% in 2010 to 7.5% in 2024. While this is still below the EU average of 9.3% in 2024 and EU's 2030 target of less than 9%, it remains above the national target of 6%. ESL disproportionately affects young people from the Roma community: almost three out of four young Roma aged 18-24 leave education early, signalling that the inclusiveness of education remains a key concern. Data also reveal a geographical trend, with ESL rates deteriorating from west to east across Slovakia (Cedefop & ŠIOV/ SNO, 2023; European Commission, 2024a; OECD, 2020).

Slovakia faces the challenge of strengthening adult learning policies, especially regarding the twin transition. Insufficient basic and advanced digital skills are a barrier to the digital transition and call for measures. The COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted the insufficient provision of digital educational content at all levels of education, particularly in VET. Moreover,

Slovakia struggles with a shortage of graduates in STEM fields (Cedefop & ŠIOV/ SNO, 2023; European Commission, 2024b).

3. National VET policy priorities

In response to the 2020 Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück Declaration, Slovakia prepared a comprehensive national implementation plan (NIP) in 2022 and revised it in 2024. The plan outlines the key measures designed to address European priorities and achieve national targets in VET and lifelong learning in the coming years. While the NIP details eight specific measures, Slovakia's priorities can be categorised as follows for the purposes of this policy brief:

- (a) strengthening the labour market relevance of VET;
- (b) improving the education of vulnerable groups and reducing early school leaving;
- (c) facilitating labour market reintegration of adults.

Slovakia's [Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 \(LLCS 2030\)](#), adopted by the government on 24 November 2021, addresses all the priority areas outlined in the NIP. It includes comprehensive measures such as second-chance education programmes, VET and national skills improvement, and validation systems (for recognition of non-formal and informal learning). It also focuses on increasing flexibility in the qualifications system, introducing short-cycle tertiary programmes, creating a graduate tracking system, supporting sector council management, and promoting adult civic education. The LLCS 2030 includes an annex detailing estimated costs - totalling EUR 140 million. The [Lifelong learning and counselling strategy action plan 2022-24](#) was approved in April 2022, specifying activities, output indicators, implementing institutions, and estimated costs from national and EU sources.

4. Main policy developments 2020-24

4.1 Strengthening the labour market relevance of VET

Several policy initiatives were implemented in Slovakia between 2020 and 2024 to strengthen the relevance of VET to the labour market.

In 2021, an [amendment to the Act on VET \(61/2015\)](#) was adopted to better align VET with labour market needs, strengthen employer involvement and introduce more flexible conditions for dual VET. The Employer Council for Dual VET, whose responsibilities were expanded to cover the entire VET system, was renamed the Employer Council for VET. The amendment also granted sectoral assignees the authority to verify new VET programmes for alignment with labour market needs, a responsibility previously handled by the secondary VET schools. To promote dual VET, the amendment reduced administrative burden for participating companies by simplifying the verification of their capacity to provide practical training. Additionally, the legislation facilitated recognition of training completed abroad, such as through Erasmus+ mobility or intra-company agreements. It introduced higher flexibility for hiring professionals as (head) instructors in dual VET, provided they pass exams verifying professional competence, thus addressing the emerging staffing challenges in VET schools (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

The transformation of existing Centres of VET (CeVETs) into [Centres of Vocational Excellence \(CoVEs\)](#) has been a priority in Slovakia, guided by the LLCS 2030 and aligned with the European initiative of CoVEs. A 2023-27 ESF+ project, with a budget of EUR 15.6 million, is underway aiming for a minimum of eight fully functional pilot CoVEs. Implementation draws on international experience and quality instruments like EQAVET using 15 key dimensions of excellence and related key performance indicators (KPIs) including curriculum, educational process, and partnership cooperation. In October 2024, the government selected 12 candidate CoVEs, encompassing 18 schools across Slovakia, based on stakeholder evaluations and school potential. The selected schools will receive EUR 25 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for equipment, and as of December 2024, they have been developing quality strategies and investment plans to access these funds. This initiative aims to enhance the quality and relevance of VET, fostering regional development.

To address the limited training capacity of small companies and expand WBL opportunities, the 2021 amendment to the VET Act introduced a new type of in-company training centre known as the [supra-company training centre \(SCTC\)](#). Supra-company training centres provide practical training spaces for learners under contract with other small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) or self-employed individuals, enabling dual training placements that these smaller entities could not otherwise offer. Compliance with legal requirements and criteria set by the relevant sectoral assignee is essential for the SCTC certification, including developing a VET quality strategy aligned with labour market needs. The [Employer Council for VET](#) implemented assessment criteria for certifying supra-company training centres in 2022, and the first two SCTCs obtained certification by the end of that year. The main features of these SCTCs include securing advanced equipment, involving SMEs and self-employed experts, supporting the professional development of VET staff, providing training for in-company trainers, updating educational programmes, piloting validation of prior learning, and setting quality assurance standards. These measures enhance the labour-market relevance, attractiveness and quality of VET (ReferNet Slovakia & Cedefop, 2021; Slovakia, 2022).

Slovakia has started [transforming post-secondary industrial schools into higher industrial schools](#), as outlined in its NIP. The 2024-29 project, Improving quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training (VET) towards labour market needs, was launched in September 2024, supported by the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme with a budget of up to CHF 5.75 million (approx. EUR 6.2 million)⁽²⁾. The initiative aims to establish higher industrial schools from a selected group of 26 secondary VET schools and explore the recognition of learning outcomes from existing ISCED 554 programmes - particularly in the IT sector - through credits that can be counted towards bachelor-level studies. This approach is intended to create qualifications of greater value to employers.

Slovakia has made significant progress in VET quality assurance through the ESF+ project, [Introducing quality management in VET and adult education](#). Launched in December 2023 with a budget of over EUR 6.96 million, the project is led by the State Institute of Vocational Education (ŠIOV), the EQAVET national reference point. It aims to create a comprehensive quality management system for both IVET and adult learning, develop a national quality

(²) This budget is for the entire project and is not allocated solely for this measure, as the project includes other activities, such as the development of STCTs.

strategy, and expand peer review processes across VET schools nationwide. In 2024, a working group analysed existing legislation to identify core principles of quality assurance across different education sectors and proposed five quality areas for certifying adult education providers. Additionally, a manual for mutual quality assessment in initial VET was completed, with 99 VET schools committing to peer review using a common framework, alongside ongoing retraining of school quality assurance staff. These measures build on Slovakia's prior EQAVET experience, particularly the national EQAVET implementation report (2016–20), which established the foundations for quality assurance and piloted the peer review methodology in selected regions.

A renewed 'three-pillar' [VET graduate tracking system](#) is embedded in the LLCS 2030 and outlined in the NIP. The first pillar - administrative data pillar - links administrative databases across relevant sectors by integrating administrative data with survey information. A dedicated website for VET graduate tracking results gained from these data linkage was launched in February 2020. The data showed many graduates working outside their fields of study, highlighting the need for better decision-making tools to ensure the relevance of VET programmes. In December 2023, the project, Introducing quality management in VET and adult education, was approved to support the development of the second (national surveys pillar) and third pillars (schools pillar). The second pillar, capitalising on the experience with the [Eurograduate survey](#) (n.d.), consists of two national surveys: one targeting higher education graduates and the other targeting VET school graduates. The third pillar is centred on individual school surveys aimed providing a feedback loop for adjusting secondary and tertiary education programmes. Piloting and experience sharing to improve questionnaires have been planned for 2025. The goal is to aid education decision-making by reducing supply-demand mismatch and improving school performance (Jelínková & Vantuch, 2024).

4.2 Improving the education of vulnerable groups and reducing early school leaving

Slovakia has implemented key measures to make VET inclusive and reduce ESL.

An [amendment to Slovakia's Education Act \(245/2008\)](#), effective as of 1 January 2022, aims to reduce ESL by merging two previously distinct programmes and enabling students to obtain lower secondary (general) education during a VET programme. This integrated programme allows advancement to higher school years in related fields of study; for example, a student completing the new EQF 2 programme in construction production can enter the 2nd year of the EQF 3 bricklayer programme. These [integrated F-type programmes](#) last 2 or 3 years depending on the initial skills assessment of individual learners. Simultaneously, the amendment introduces [alternative ways for obtaining a lower secondary general education](#) (ISCED 2) certificate and accessing mainstream education through entry exams without participation in formal education. The programme is modular and inclusive, with an option to skip directly to the completion exam based on entry exam results. (Slovakia, 2022).

Further measures to address ESL include a 2024-27 project led by the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Patho-psychology, which is developing and testing an [early warning system and targeted support measures](#). This EUR 7.67 million project will map the ESL causes,

develop an early warning system for at-risk learners, pilot new support tools in 20 schools across four regions, and in the last phase, develop systemic recommendations for national authorities.

Slovakia has made significant progress in implementing its NIP objectives to strengthen career guidance and support learners at risk of early leaving from education and training (ELET). The 2021 amendment to the Education Act (245/2008) set out the [transformation of the guidance and counselling system](#) into five levels of support services, from individual specialists in schools to specialised centres, aiming to deliver tailored services. Additionally, new [regional networks of counselling institutions](#) aligned with a new counselling model began operating from 1 January 2023. [Dual points](#) established under the ESF project, Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET, provide guidance on dual VET pathways and lifelong learning. The talent centre in Nitra, piloted from 2016 and serving thousands of learners by 2020, has since served as a model for other regions, including Trnava (opened by 2022) and Žilina (planned to open in 2025). These talent centres serve as key hubs offering comprehensive guidance and support for young learners, parents, and educators, playing an important role in guiding students' career choices. These systemic reforms are complemented by capacity-building efforts: targeted training programmes have been delivered to VET teachers and trainers, focusing on career guidance, alongside retraining lower secondary teachers to understand and promote dual VET.

At the regional level, initiatives directly aligned with the NIP aim [to address regional disparities in ESL and improve career guidance](#). Within the 2021-23 project, Strengthening regional governance in VET, the Regional Vocational Education Platform was established in Banská Bystrica to connect schools with regional employers, improving employment prospects and targeted guidance. The SPACE Youth Centres, launched in seven cities, provide free, comprehensive youth counselling, including career advice, social and psychological support, and life skills development. They are intended to serve as systemic support points for youths not in education, employment, or training (NEETs). These initiatives reflect a strategic emphasis on early, holistic guidance, career awareness, and social inclusion, with a focus on addressing regional challenges of ESL.

Other national measures, although not explicitly included in the NIP, also contribute to reducing dropout rates and promoting inclusion in Slovakia. For example, the government's [Strategy for equality, inclusion and participation of Roma until 2030](#), and related action plans, emphasise multi-sectoral efforts such as social and cultural projects, infrastructure improvements, and financial literacy activities aimed at Roma communities. Between 2022 and 2024, targeted projects supported social inclusion, employability, and skills development, although most funds were allocated to infrastructure rather than directly to educational activities. Furthermore, the national project, [Support of assisting professions \(2023-25\)](#), targets support staff in schools, including those working specifically with vulnerable learners, ensuring a more inclusive and supportive educational environment. The ongoing [Catching-up regions initiative \(CURI\)](#), with activities in Prešov, Banská Bystrica, and Košice, also plays a crucial role in improving educational infrastructure, innovating vocational training, and creating inclusive learning environments, thus indirectly supporting vulnerable learners and reducing dropout rates.

4.3 Facilitating labour market reintegration of adults

Between 2020 and 2024, Slovakia made progress in improving learning pathways for adults with low basic skills, in alignment with its NIP. Key developments include enacting a new law on adult education, launching a financial scheme to support adult education providers in delivering basic skills, developing assessment instruments to evaluate employees' digital and green skills, and initiating a project to monitor and evaluate the performance of key competences of adults to better target adult learning schemes.

The Lifelong Learning Act of 2009 in Slovakia was outdated and did not fully align with European commitments and international challenges. In response, the government approved a [new Act on Adult Education](#) in August 2024, which came into force in January 2025, replacing the previous act. This legislation aims to establish a flexible and systematic framework for adult learning by introducing new regulations for the [Slovak Qualifications Framework](#) and the National Qualifications System. It also introduces individual learning accounts and microcredentials as new tools to support learning. The act creates conditions for recognising non-formal and informal learning in line with international recommendations. It also seeks to improve quality by requiring accreditation of adult education providers and programmes. The Sector Councils Alliance (SCA) has become the accreditation agency for adult education programmes and providers, taking over this role from the ministry. Its supervisory role is especially strong for programmes related to digital and green skills: under the new law, only certified educational institutions registered with the SCA are permitted to offer programmes for developing, updating, or deepening digital skills, to ensure relevance and quality in this strategic area.

Slovakia's NIP includes plans for a financial scheme to support adult education providers in delivering basic skills by the 3rd quarter of 2024. To realise this, the project, '[Development of basic skills of adults - the path towards inclusion and employability](#)', was launched in October 2024. It has a budget of EUR 6 million funded by Programme Slovakia 2021-27. It forms part of a wider national strategy and supports providers in offering programmes aimed at enhancing reading, mathematics, and digital literacy skills for adults aged 16 to 65 facing skill deficits that hinder their employability. While additional skills, such as financial, media, and health literacy, green skills, and communication skills may also be developed, they are addressed only as components of these core areas. The project encourages learning activities beyond traditional education, including counselling, and personalised or group learning sessions. This initiative incorporates lessons from previous projects (e.g. [Don't BE disQUALIFIED!](#), [Don't lose your job - educate yourself](#) (2021-22), and [Digital Seniors](#)), which all align with NIP objectives even if not explicitly listed as NIP projects (ReferNet Slovakia & Cedefop, 2023a; ReferNet Slovakia & Cedefop, 2023b; Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

Additionally, a new national project, [Digital skills for a green future \(2024–27\)](#), is underway in Slovakia. It aims to assess digital and green skills using diagnostic tools aligned with the DigComp 2.2 and GreenComp frameworks. The project also organises nationwide conferences on digital and green transformation and support the development of assessment instruments to evaluate employees' skills in these areas. Furthermore, Slovakia has launched a project, [Monitoring and evaluation of performance of key competences of adults](#), in August 2024, which is a national ESF+ initiative, with a EUR 4.25 million budget. It aims to improve the quality and

effectiveness of lifelong learning by analysing data collected from the first and second cycles of PIAAC international adult skills measurement. This initiative will help authorities better target financial schemes supporting adult learning and ensure more effective policy development.

Slovakia has made notable progress in establishing its system of [Individual Learning Accounts \(ILAs\)](#) through the Act on Adult Education of 2024 ⁽³⁾. The legislation defines two categories of ILAs. The first provides financial support - piloted with a EUR 200 account - for education in basic skills, key competences, green skills, digital skills, and career guidance services. The second category supports acquiring, enhancing, or expanding qualifications, as well as accessing career guidance and verifying learning outcomes, which may include assessments or recognition of prior learning. To manage these accounts, two major projects funded through the Programme Slovakia 2021-27 are underway: the EPIVU electronic platform, launched in January 2025 with a budget of EUR 2.3 million, will facilitate course search, registration, and account management; and an additional project, supporting adult education and testing the platform's functionality, is in progress with an estimated budget of EUR 12.75 million. The system is closely linked to quality assurance processes, with the SCA responsible for assessing the relevance and quality of education providers.

Slovakia has made significant progress in developing its [system for validating non-formal and informal learning](#). By the end of 2022, key frameworks, structures, and procedures were established, and a [peer review by EQAVET](#) in 2022 (EQAVET, 2022) provided valuable feedback for system improvement. During the pilot phase, 150 institutions, 376 validation specialists, and 111 national guarantors were authorised, with 314 manuals developed for 43 qualifications, leading to over 2 700 individuals earning formal qualifications through validation. In 2024, although some system concepts were incorporated into the Act on Adult Education, the national launch has been delayed. As the quality of the system depends heavily on the role of guarantors, responsible for methodology and assessment standards, a proposed national project aims to build personnel capacity by training around 500 experts in standards, accreditation, and validation.

5. Statistical information in relation to EU targets

Slovakia shows mixed progress in achieving EU targets related to VET and skills development. While the country demonstrates positive trends in certain areas, challenges remain in aligning with European benchmarks.

A significant strength is the decreasing NEETs rate among 15-29-year-olds, falling from 19% in 2010 to 10.7% in 2024. This figure is slightly below the EU average of 11% and indicates progress towards the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan target of below 9% by 2030. Moreover, the employment rate for recent IVET graduates (20-34-year-olds) has shown substantial improvement, increasing from 73.5% in 2015 to 85.6% in 2024, surpassing the EU

⁽³⁾ Although the NIP includes ILAs as an instrument to support lifelong learning, Slovakia has also introduced a [voucher scheme](#) to improve access to adult training. Launched in 2022, the scheme allows participants to receive vouchers to cover training costs at registered providers, supporting courses in digital, green, and other skill areas. Its implementation is currently being monitored to assess its effectiveness and inform future policies (ReferNet Slovakia & Cedefop, 2023a).

average of 80%. This progress underscores Slovakia's efforts to strengthen the labour market relevance of VET.

While Slovakia remains below the EU average of 9.3% and the EU target of less than 9% in ELET, its rate has increased from 4.7% in 2010, to 7.5% in 2024, contrasting with the EU improvement trend over the same period. To address this, Slovakia is implementing focused interventions and policies to stop this trend and prevent further increases, including integrated general and vocational programmes, an early warning system, enhanced guidance, and regional initiatives (see Section 4.2).

Slovakia has made significant progress in fostering a lifelong learning culture. The percentage of adults (25-64-year-olds) participating in learning experiences within the last 12 months has increased from 27.6% in 2011 to 49.5% in 2022. This exceeds both the EU average of 39.5% and the EU target of 47% by 2025, set by the European Education Area. Building on this success, Slovakia is implementing initiatives to strengthen adults' basic skills, including the development of Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) to further support this positive trend (see Section 4.3).

Data signal concerns regarding digital skills in Slovakia. Although the country initially exceeded the EU average in 2023, with 55.2% of adults (16-74-yearold) possessing at least basic digital skills, this declined to 51.3% in 2024, falling below the EU average of 55.6%. This calls for stronger measures to bridge digital skills gaps. On the positive side, the [Digital Decade 2024 report](#) shows that in 2023, Slovakia made notable progress in enhancing digital public services and e-Health initiatives, which underscore the importance of projects implemented by Slovakia such as improving digital skills of seniors and disadvantaged groups (see Section 4.3) in public administration (European Commission, 2024b).

Regarding WBL, Slovakia remains below the EU average, with 58.5% of recent IVET graduates having gained work-based experience in 2024, compared to the EU average of 65.3%. Policy measures to promote dual education and expand WBL opportunities for students have been introduced to address this, such as the establishment of supra-company training centres (see Section 4.1).

Finally, in terms of learners in IVET participating in learning mobility abroad, Slovakia's rate was 4.1% in 2021, indicating that further efforts are needed to meet the Council Recommendation targets of 8% by 2025 and 12% by 2030.

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

| Type of indicator ⁽⁴⁾ | Indicator | Last available year | SK | 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 | 49.5 | 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 | 18.6 ^u | 18.4 | Skills Agenda | 30% (2025) |
| Progress | Unemployed adults with a learning experience in the last 4 weeks (%) | 2024 | : ^u | 15.3 | Skills Agenda | 20% (2025) |
| Context | Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds (%) | 2024 | 78.1 | 75.8 | ESPR Action Plan | 78% (2030) |
| Context | Early leavers from education and training (%) | 2024 | 7.5 | 9.3 | Council Resolution on EEA | <9% (2030) |
| Context | NEET rate for 15-29 year-olds (%) | 2024 | 10.7 | 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 | 51.3 | 55.6 | Skills Agenda | 70% (2025) |
| | | | | | ESPR Action Plan | 80% (2030) |
| Progress | Employment rate for recent IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds) (%) | 2024 | 85.6 | 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 | 58.5 | 65.3 | Council Rec on VET | 60% (2025) |
| | | | | | Council Resolution on EEA | |
| Context | 25-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%) | 2024 | 37.2 | 44.2 | Council Resolution on EEA | 45% (2025) |
| Context | Gender employment gap (%) | 2024 | 8.9 | 10.0 | ESPR Action Plan | To be halved (2030) |
| Context | People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (1000s) | 2024 | 980 | 93 333 | ESPR Action Plan | 15 million decrease (2030) |
| Context | Employed ICT specialists (1000s) | 2024 | 121.3 | 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 | 4.1 | 2.1 ^{dv} | Council Rec on VET | 8% (2025) |
| | | | | | Skills Agenda | 12% (2030) |
| Context | Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET | 2023 | 1.3 | 1.2 ^d | Council Rec Europe on the Move | |

Available flags: 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](#).

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⁽⁴⁾ Definitions on the type of indicators are available.

6. Conclusion

Slovakia's progress towards priorities for VET, defined in its NIP in line with EU priorities, is marked by significant developments between 2020 and 2024. These priorities include strengthening the labour market relevance of VET, improving the education of vulnerable groups and promoting adult workforce reintegration through lifelong learning initiatives.

Slovakia has made significant progress in implementing measures to improve the relevance of VET. The progress in establishing at least eight CoVEs is in line with the NIP. 12 centres were pre-selected and investment plans are being prepared for these centres. Their next steps until 2027 will include implementing procedures for recognising prior learning, introducing micro-qualifications, supporting digital and green transitions, revising existing qualifications, and participating in international activities. The country also developed certification criteria for supra-company training centres that support WBL in SMEs, the first two SCTCs were certified in 2022. The NIP calls for the establishment of at least one SCTC in each main sector, and progress will be monitored over the next cycle.

The transformation of 26 secondary industrial schools into higher industrial schools, supported by a project launched in September 2024, aims to create qualifications that offer greater value to employers - particularly in the IT sector - by deepening labour market alignment and facilitating the recognition of learning outcomes towards bachelor-level studies.

Slovakia has also made progress in VET quality assurance. Launched in December 2023, the Introducing quality management in VET and adult education project aims to establish a comprehensive quality system based on EQAVET principles with a planned completion and rollout by 2027. A manual for mutual quality assessment has been completed, with 99 VET schools participating in peer reviews. The VET graduate tracking system and the adult education provider certification also show progress. Some measures outlined in the NIP, such as developing a national VET quality assurance strategy, proposing quality assurance for in-company training, creating qualification standards for school quality coordinators, and developing regional quality plans, have yet to show progress.

In 2022, Slovakia introduced integrated programmes to reduce ESL by combining vocational and general education; given its recent implementation, the outcomes are still to be evaluated. The new legislative framework for career guidance underscores a strategic shift towards more structured and accessible guidance services, supporting the country's efforts to better assist learners at risk of early leaving and enhance alignment with labour market needs at both national and regional levels. These efforts are complemented by broader social inclusion initiatives, such as targeted projects for Roma communities and support for vulnerable learners, and also include capacity building for teachers and trainers to promote inclusive and effective education. They all contribute to reducing dropout rates and fostering a more inclusive education system.

Slovakia has been strengthening lifelong learning by implementing comprehensive measures between 2020 and 2024. The new Act on Adult Education, effective as of 2025, establishes a flexible framework for adult learning, introducing ILAs, microcredentials, and regulations for recognising non-formal and informal learning while improving quality through accreditation. Several projects aim to improve adults' basic skills - such as reading, maths, and digital literacy - as well as broader key competences like problem-solving and personal or civic skills, for those facing skill deficits. To further support basic skills development, increased institutional capacity is needed, including the establishment of a National Network for Basic Skills and Regional Centres for Lifelong Learning and Guidance as set out by the country's NIP. Initiatives aimed at monitoring and evaluation of basic skills development of adults have started and will improve the quality and effectiveness of lifelong learning through data analysis. To support financial accessibility, ILAs are being established, however, their full implementation, including launching a digital platform and piloting access to learning programmes via the platform is still underway. Efforts to validate non-formal and informal learning have also progressed, with frameworks established and specialists trained, though wider application of validation requires further expansion of personnel capacity.

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