

Recovery and resilience plan promotes investing in VET

On 13 July 2021, Slovakia's [Recovery and resilience plan](#) (RRP) was approved by the EU economic and finance ministers. According to the RRP, funds will support reforming curricula at all education levels, improving schools' digital infrastructure, and the greening of schools. After the first successful step has been taken, what remains to be done is defining how suggested reforms are going to be carried out and achieving active stakeholder support.

The RRP, in line with the [2019](#) and [2020](#) country-specific recommendations, includes measures aiming to improve education quality at all levels. The main objective of the new curricular reform is to promote literacy, digital competences and 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, taking initiative and responsibility, and creating and implementing personal projects. Little is known, however, about how to translate these positive intentions into action. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the vulnerability of the existing teaching/learning environment, particularly in VET, raising concerns about the successful implementation of the reforms.

A significant part (21%) of the RRP budget will be allocated to investments focusing on the digital transition; EUR 187 million is earmarked for improving digital infrastructure in schools and improving digital skills. However, the long-awaited paper on the digital transformation of schools has not been finalised yet, and the envisaged central procurement of digital equipment and services is perceived by schools as obsolete. VET schools are very sensitive to digitalisation challenges and were first in promoting the Digital allowance initiative, which promoted the replacement of central purchasing of hardware, software and internet connection by decentralised leasing.

The RRP also suggests reforming higher education governance substantially, introducing increased power of governing boards over senates, and performance contracts between schools and the government. Both could contribute, if properly rethought, to the needed diversification in higher education, but the explicit support of universities of applied sciences is still missing.

These reforms may open the window for significant improvements in VET. However, the RRP does not include specific support for implementing systemic changes in VET and lifelong learning, nor for investments in the upskilling of the working-age population.

Slovakia's green transition is a focal point of the RRP; 43% of its total budget goes to measures related to climate objectives, including the greening of schools.

Read more

[Proposal for a Council implementing decision on the approval of the assessment of the RRP for Slovakia](#)

[Analysis of the Recovery and resilience plan of Slovakia](#)

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