

Slovakia

VET in Europe - Country Report

2010

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Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in Slovakia. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General context - framework for the knowledge society
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities
3. VET in times of crisis
4. Historical background, legislative and institutional framework
5. Initial vocational education and training
6. Continuing vocational education and training for adults
7. Training VET teachers and trainers
8. Matching VET provision (skills) with labour market needs (jobs)
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment
10. Financing: investment in human resources
11. National VET statistics - allocation of programmes

This overview has been prepared in 2010 and its reference year is 2009. Similar overviews of previous years can be viewed at:

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Information-services/browse-national-vet-systems.aspx>

More detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can also be found at:

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Information-services/detailed-thematic-analyses.aspx>

Keywords:

vocational education and training (VET) systems; initial vocational training; continuing vocational training; lifelong learning; VET policy development; financial crisis and VET policies; VET legislative and institutional frameworks; validation of non-formal and informal education; teachers and trainers; anticipation of skill needs; vocational guidance and counselling; VET financing mechanisms; allocation of national VET programmes; national and international qualification systems.

Geographic term:

Slovakia

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1. GENERAL CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

1.1 POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Slovakia was established on 1st January 1993 after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. It is a parliamentary democracy with a one-chamber parliament (National Council of the Slovak Republic, *Národná rada Slovenskej republiky*) of 150 members elected for four-year terms. Political parties are allotted seats according to the percentage of votes they receive in direct elections. Only parties winning at least 5 % of votes get seats in the parliament. The president, elected for a five-year term in a two-round popular vote, is the head of state with no substantial executive powers. Slovakia joined the OECD in 2000, and NATO and EU in 2004. The country is divided into 8 state administration regions identical with 8 self-governing regions. Transfer of executive competences from public administration bodies to self-governing regions and municipalities started in 1990s, with substantial changes in the education sector only in 2002, followed by fiscal decentralization effective since 2005. Income of self-governing regions and municipalities however substantially depends on centrally collected inhabitants' income tax composing substantial part of their budgets (see part 10.1).

Despite very high economic growth in the years before the crises (10.6 % in 2007 and 6.2 % in 2008, Eurostat [tsieb020]), Slovakia in long terms suffered from high unemployment (11.2 % in 2007 and 9.5 % in 2008, Eurostat LFS series) and low employment rates (60.7 % in 2007 and 62.3 % in 2008, Eurostat LFS series). Long-term unemployment rate remained even during these best times among highest in EU (8.3 % in 2007 and 6.6 % in 2008, Eurostat, LFS adjusted series), hitting predominantly the Roma minority. In particular, the Roma minority living in segregated settlements lives at high risk of social exclusion. Furthermore, south-central and eastern Slovakia regions lag behind the western Slovakia that profits from the developed infrastructure and huge foreign investment, and in particular behind the Bratislava region which was the 12th richest among EU NUTS II regions with 160.3 % of GDP per inhabitant in PPS in 2007 while Slovakia as a whole accounted only 67.7 %, (Eurostat regional GDP per in PPS in 2007, EU 27 = 100). This indicator concerning Bratislava region is significantly influenced by commuting population pushing up the production without being included into respective population. Thus it reflects to a large extent the specificity in accountancy and statistics typical for capital regions rather than the wealth of Bratislava region inhabitants themselves. Nevertheless, the wide disparity in distribution of wealth across the country is true and visible in declining figures from West to East: Western Slovakia accounted for 66.1 %, Central Slovakia for 53.3 %, and Eastern Slovakia accounted for 46.0 % in this indicator.

Although medium-term macroeconomic forecasts for 2009 were very positive with very high GDP growth (6.4 %, Eurostat) and further decrease in unemployment was expected, the global economic crisis hit hard Slovakia. Small open economy heavily dependent on export (mainly slow moving goods as cars and LCD panels) faced dramatic economic downturn with negative GDP growth rate in 2009 (- 4.7 %, Eurostat). The newest Eurostat data indicate an economic recovery with 2.7 % GDP growth in 2010 and the freshest forecasting of the National Bank of Slovakia from September 2010 anticipated an even higher, 4.3 % annual growth.

The economic downturn was accompanied by the increase in unemployment rate to 12.1 % in 2009, followed by a further increase to 15.2 % and a slight decrease to 14.4 % in the first two second quarters of 2010, and the decrease in employment rate to 60.2 % in 2009, followed by a further decrease to 58.0 % and a very slight increase to 58.6 % in the first two quarters of 2010 (all data Eurostat, LFS series). The long-term unemployment rate in

2009 was 6.5 % (Eurostat, LFS adjusted series). Although these labour market data also confirm recovery, employment opportunities of inexperienced workers (young and school graduates) are still weak.

The unemployment rate of youth aged 15-24 years increased to 27.3 % in 2009 compared to 19.0 % and 20.3 % in 2008 and 2007, respectively, and a further increase to 33.6 % in the first quarter of 2010 remaining very high also after the decrease to 31.9 % in the second quarter of 2010 (Eurostat, LFS data extracted in September 2010). Furthermore, the steep increase was seen in 2009 in absolute numbers of unemployed school graduates below 25 years registered with labour offices. There were 10,479 registered graduates as of May 2008 and with a peak of 19,404 as of September 2008, however, no traditional subsequent decrease occurred in the following period. There were 19,705 graduates registered in May 2009 followed by a dramatic increase up to 33,370 registered graduates in September 2009. As of May 2010 there were 23,220 graduates registered with labour offices. Despite improvement this data confirms the long-term unfavourable position of graduates.

Hard conditions for employment of graduates in 2009 and 2010 can also be indicated from the numbers of all registered unemployed. While there were in total 228,659 unemployed registered in September 2009, the number of registered unemployed increased to 368,021 in September 2009 peaking in February 2010 with 396,205 registered unemployed. Since then we can see the gradual improvement down to 370,671 registered unemployed in August 2010, however still exceeding dramatically the pre-crisis data.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that many people employed abroad returned home. 129.0 thousand people worked abroad in 2009 in contrast to 167.6 thousand in 2008, according to national LFS data.

1.2 POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The country has an area of 49,034 km² with 5,379,455 inhabitants and a population density of 110 inhabitants per km² (Census, 26th May 2001). A total of 55 % of the population lives in urban areas and 45 % in rural areas. There were 5,424,925 inhabitants in Slovakia as of 31st December 2009, according to the Statistical Office (ŠÚ, *Štatistický úrad*) estimation. Since the beginning of the 1990s, Slovakia has experienced a huge decrease in the birth rate and an ageing of the population. Live births declined from 80,116 in 1989 to 50,841 in 2002, followed by a gradual year-on-year increase. Live births amounted to 61,217 in 2009 with remarkable improvement compared to 57,360 in 2008.

Since 1989, old-age-dependency ratio has raised from 15.8 % to 16.7 % in 2009 (Eurostat). Nevertheless, Slovakia currently still enjoys favourable old-age-dependency ratio far below EU27 average (e.g. 16.95 % and 25.9 % in 2010 Eurostat projection), however gradually deteriorating by about 4 percentage points on a five year period basis (up to 39.98 % compared to EU27 45.36 % in 2040), followed by an accelerated worsening by about 8 percentage points on five-year period basis. Old-age dependency ratio is expected to be over the EU27 average since 2050.

Per capita financing introduced in 2004 was aimed at forcing the merging and closing of schools with low enrolments. A demographic trend broken down by age groups offered in Table 1 indicates the need for further restructuring of school networks, except kindergartens already facing a return of interest and surplus of demand over the available places.

TABLE 1: AGE-SPECIFIC DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS BY AGE GROUPS UNTIL 2025										
	TOTAL	0-24			25-59			60+		
		TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
1989	5287663	2145137	1094119	1051018	2362473	1168836	1193637	780053	323540	456513
1989 (%)	100	40.57	20.69	19.88	44.68	22.10	22.57	14.75	6.12	8.63
2010	5423703	1579076	807547	771529	2864766	1435228	1429538	979861	393065	586796
2010 (%)	100	29.11	14.89	14.23	52.82	26.46	26.36	18.07	7.25	10.82
2025	5521745	1381445	705247	676198	2744841	1397247	1347594	1395459	596860	798599
2025 (%)	100	25.02	12.77	12.25	49.71	25.30	24.41	25.27	10.81	14.46

Source: Statistical Office (1989 data) and INFOSTAT 2007 update of Demographic Prognosis 2002.

In VET schools a demographic decline, per capita financing and surplus of places at higher status ISCED 3A VET and ISCED 3A general education study branches, caused low enrolment in lower status studies, in particular ISCED 3C training branches. It is to a large extent a consequence of two failures:

- insufficient graduates' quality check by educational authorities and employers to maintain quality standards; and
- lacking instrument counterbalancing the per capita financing, which stimulated schools at risk of low enrolment to disregard labour market needs and the profile of graduates.

1.3 ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

ECONOMIC COMPOSITION OF THE COUNTRY

Since its independence Slovakia has been all the time characterised by a strong share of employed in industry, regardless changes in other sectors, e.g. a growth in the service sector and dramatic decrease of employed people in agriculture (from 256,489 as of 31st December 1992, according to the Statistical office of SR). The following table depicts changes after 1998, the period significant for restructuring the economy and shaping its current structure (and following the phase of privatisation and bankruptcies of state enterprises).

**TABLE 2: 2010-1998 COMPARISON IN EMPLOYMENT, AGE 15+, IN SELECTED SECTORS IN SLOVAKIA
(IN THOUSANDS AND %)**

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES	AGRICULTURE, HUNTING AND FORESTRY		MANUFACTURING		CONSTRUCTION		TOTAL	
	1000s	%	1000s	%	1000s	%	1000s	%
SK 1998 Q2	178.9	8.1	577.2	26.2	203.3	9.2	2201.4	100
SK 2008 Q2	99.3	4.1	648.6	27.0	251.6	10.5	2404.8	100
SK 2008 Q2 NACE REV.2	97.9	4.1	639.9	26.6	252.6	10.5	2404.8	100
SK 2009 Q2 NACE REV.2	86.4	3.6	575.3	24.2	254.2	10.7	2378.5	100
SK 2010 Q2 NACE REV.2	75.2	3.3	529.5	22.9	254.8	11.0	2312.5	100

Source: Eurostat (LFS, second quarter), * NACE Rev.1.1 (date of extraction: 26th May 2009);

Note: ** NACE Rev.2 (date of extraction: 30th September 2010).

In parallel to the increase of employment in manufacturing peaking in 2008 and in construction, a lack of graduates of an appropriate number and structure was indicated, in particular in the automotive industry, electrical engineering and construction sectors. Namely, the boom in the automotive industry resulted in plans for creation of 53,000 new jobs between 2006 and 2010, almost doubling the 2005 data of 57,376 people employed in this sector. There were 101,166 people employed in the automotive industry (production, supply, sale and services, as well as old car processing) in 2009, according to the Association of Automotive Industry (*Združenie automobilového priemyslu*).

Nevertheless, ISCED 3C graduates were dominantly required for these jobs. This created a serious problem due to a trendy shift in enrolment from ISCED 3C to ISCED 3A studies since the 1990s and a subsequent mismatch in the qualification structure in demand and supply. The economic crisis, however, reduced at least the preliminary demand for new staff in manufacturing, as can be seen from the dramatic decrease in employment in manufacturing in Table 2 above. Manufacturing was hit the most by the crisis, but the impact is only temporary with clear signals of recovery. In the construction sector the impact of crisis is delayed with deterioration in employment expected in 2010 as a consequence of a lack of new orders.

While the decrease in employment in agriculture is on firm downward path, development in the other two sectors will heavily depend on future economic policies. It is not possible to count on a long-term high share of employment in manufacturing and construction, provided governments will take their political declarations on moving towards the knowledge economy seriously.

A strong emphasis on manufacturing and construction in national economy can also be seen from the comparison with EU27 below.

TABLE 3: EMPLOYMENT BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, AGE 15+, IN 2009 IN EU27 AND SLOVAKIA (IN 1000S AND %)

	PRIMARY SECTOR AND UTILITIES		MANUFACTURING		CONSTRUCTION		DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSPORT		BUSINESS AND OTHER SERVICES		NON MARKETED SERVICES	
	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%
EU27	15192.8	7.0	35068.2	16.1	17290.9	7.9	57470.5	26.4	38557.9	17.7	53201.2	24.4
SK	159.8	6.8	565.4	23.9	257.0	10.9	620	26.2	272.7	11.5	490.3	20.7

Source: Eurostat, NACE rev.2, date of extraction: 30th April 2010.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The following table offers the distribution of employment by level of education in 2008 and 2009 in comparison with unemployment.

TABLE 4: EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION IN 2008 AND 2009 (IN THOUSANDS)

	EMPLOYED		UNEMPLOYED	
	2008	2009	2008	2009
TOTAL	2 433.8	2 365.8	257.5	324.2
WITHOUT SCHOOL EDUCATION	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.1
ISCED 2	109.9	92.8	71.6	66.1
ISCED 3C (CoA)	769.4	739.7	93.4	119.9
ISCED 3C (WITHOUT CoA)	60.5	57.3	4.8	7.2
ISCED 3A (MSLC) + CoA	126.0	105.3	11.5	18.5
ISCED 3A (MSLC) GEN	103.6	100.8	8.6	14.9
ISCED 3A (MSLC) VET	857.4	842.4	52.0	78.6
ISCED 5B	19.5	20.1	1.2	1.2
ISCED 5A - Bc	24.7	36.4	1.2	3.1
ISCED 5A - M	356.1	362.8	12.7	14.4
ISCED 6	6.6	8.2	0.2	0.2

Source: ŠÚ, LFS annual data.

Notes: CoA - Certificate of Apprenticeship (výučný list), MSLC - "Maturita" School Leaving Certificate (vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške), GEN - general education stream, VET - vocational stream, Bc - 1st cycle studies, M - 2 cycle studies.

Unemployment data from table 4 indicates three large groups of unemployed: ISCED 2, ISCED 3C with certificates of apprenticeships, and ISCED 3A VET educated. The comparison of 2009 and 2008 unemployed data reflects the vulnerability of the industry sector during the crisis as the highest increase in unemployment is in the VET related levels of education. While there were 124,600 unemployed men and 132,800 unemployed women in

2008, there were 170,800 men and 153,500 women unemployed in 2009 with the indication of the hardest impact of unemployment on men.

The following table indicates very low employment rates of low-skilled population (ISCED 0-2) and elderly population (aged 50-64) compared to EU27.

	YEAR	2003			2006			2009		
	AGE GROUP	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
EU27	TOTAL	36.0 (i)	77.4 (i)	51.5 (i)	36.6	79.1	54.4	35.2	78.8	56.5
	ISCED 0-2	25.1(i)	66.1(i)	41.9 (i)	24.8	66.9	43.5	22.8	64.1	43.3
	ISCED 3-4	47.2 (i)	79.1 (i)	54.9 (i)	48.1	80.5	57.9	46.3	80.5	59.5
	ISCED 5-6	62.0 (i)	88.0 (i)	72.4 (i)	60.5	88.5	74.2	58.4	88.2	74.5
	NO ANSWER	14.9 (i)	72.6 (i)	39.1 (i)	5.1	76.0	5.6	5.5	75.6	63.9
SLOVAKIA	TOTAL	27.3	77.0	44.4	25.9	77.7	50.5	22.8	78.1	53.8
	ISCED 0-2	1.9	38.3	20.8	2.1	34.1	24.3	1.9	33.4	28.0
	ISCED 3-4	46.0	78.9	48.7	44.9	79.8	52.8	39.5	79.7	55.5
	ISCED 5-6	66.5	92.0	75.5	65.8	89.6	73.9	42.7	85.9	75.8

Source: Eurostat, date of extraction: 30th April 2010.

Notes: Link to metadata: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/EN/lfsq_esms.htm

The extremely low employment rate 33.4 % of low educated people aged 25-49 in 2009 indicates the need for rethinking current retraining practice and labour market policies. A serious barrier to employment is that qualifications for manual works require comparably high level of general education. A certificate of apprenticeship can be obtained after at least 3 years of upper secondary education. There is no scheme allowing for certification of vocational skills for simple works only. Thus, many low achievers from primary and secondary schools, in particular Roma, failing to achieve ISCED 3C level of education are hampered to obtain at least some confirmation of related skills payable at labour market. ISCED 2C programmes are not offered in full possible variety of fields, currently in 9 areas. Consequently, low-educated people often pushed to achieve respective education level within labour market training activities of “second chance schools” type are pushed back to obtain higher level of general education with a low effect.

Employment rates of low and medium level educated people aged 50-64 are strongly influenced by an earlier retirement age in Slovakia compared to a dominant share of EU citizens, but this does not mean that the retraining of elderly people is efficient¹. Low employment rates of young people aged 15-24 can partly be explained by their continuing

¹ See also paragraphs and example of initiative on older workers in Part 5.1 Addressing equity in VET of the “Progress in VET in Priority Areas Agreed in the Copenhagen Process: VET Policy Report - Slovakia 2010”.

participation in education and training (usually till 18 years of age for ISCED 3C and 19 for ISCED 3A). Percentage of population aged 20 to 24 having completed at least upper secondary education was 93.3 % in 2009, the best in the EU (Eurostat, [tsiir110]) far over the respective 2010 benchmark of 85 %.

Nevertheless, despite gradual improvement the total employment rates are still below the EU 2010 targets (total employment rate is 70 %, female employment rate is 60 %) suffering from a decrease caused by the crisis. In 2009, the total employment rate of the population aged 15-64 was 60.2 % (62.3 %, 60.7 %, 59.4 %, 57.7 %, 56.9 % and 57.6 % in 2008-2003), while the employment rate of women was 52.8 % (54.6 %, 53.0 %, 51.9 %, 50.9 %, 50.9 % and 52.2 % in 2008-2003).

The following unemployment data also confirms the vulnerability of low-skilled people.

		2003			2006			2009		
		15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
EU27	TOTAL	18.0 (i)	8.3 (i)	6.6 (i)	17.2	7.3	6.3	19.7	8.2	6.3
	ISCED 0-2	20.2 (i)	11.6 (i)	7.2 (i)	21.2	11.2	7.5	25.9	14.8	9.1
	ISCED 3-4	17.7 (i)	8.4 (i)	7.7 (i)	15.4	7.3	6.9	16.9	7.5	6.2
	ISCED 5-6	12.0 (i)	4.8 (i)	3.7 (i)	13.4	4.3	3.6	15.4	4.8	3.4
	NO ANSWER	13.9 (i)	7.8 (i)	7.4 (i)	20.1	:	:	22.0	7.5	:
SK	TOTAL	32.9	14.8	13.7	26.6	11.9	11.2	27.3	10.9	9.3
	ISCED 0-2	69.6	50.5	30.0	74.0	51.4	31.0	64.6	48.3	25.4
	ISCED 3-4	30.6	13.3	12.6	21.4	10.6	10.1	24.3	10.4	8.6
	ISCED 5-6	23.6	3.2	:	16.2 (u)	2.7	2.8 (u)	22.4	3.7	2.5 (u)

Source: Eurostat, date of extraction: 30th April 2010.

Notes: Link to metadata: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/EN/lfsq_esms.htm

(u) - Unreliable or uncertain data, : - not available.

Strong growth in the economy as well as opening labour markets in EU countries gradually reduced numbers of unemployed. This trend has been reversed since 2008 due to the crisis. Nevertheless, three groups are permanently at risk.

High unemployment rates of ISCED 0-2 educated indicates a serious long-term problem as it contains many low educated Roma with low employability. 64.6 % ISCED 0-2 educated unemployed compared to 25.9 % in EU27 in 2009 indicate the need of urgent intervention. Provision of ISCED 2 level IVET should be rethought to be added to the current offer of training instead of relying on labour market training of low-educated adults with low effects.

Unemployment hits elderly and young people extraordinarily hard as their employability is perceived as lower compared to other age groups by employers. A lack of practice of young people should be addressed by the so-called "Graduate practice", an active labour market tool offering specific work place experience to graduates of schools (see part 6.3) and by better alignment of IVET to labour market needs through the involvement of employers, as expected by Act on VET No. 184/2009 Coll. (*Zákon č. 184/2009 Z. z. o odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave*). The increase in employment of older workers, in particular in

industry, seems to be hard to achieve. Retraining of elderly people did not contribute to a substantial improvement in employability so far as already mentioned above.

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION

Ministry of Finance (MF, *Ministerstvo financií*) data illustrates a severe decrease in expenditure on education in terms of percentage of the GDP from 4.75 % in 1995 down to 3.89 % in 2007, taking into account only the decrease of population in schools and disregarding from the need to invest substantially in improvement of education environment in the times of GDP increase. Improvement since 2008 and in particular a jump in 2009 is considered to be a result of increased drawing from ESF and a GDP decline caused by the crisis.

	1995	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
% OF GDP	4.75	4.17	4.17	4.03	4.15	4.15	3.89	4.33	4.94
% OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE	9.76	9.70	9.90	10.00	10.58	10.8	10.9	10.15	11.83

Source: MF.

Note: * all expenditures of the government, of municipalities and self-governing regions, including private sources of regional schooling; expenditures of private higher education institutions are not included (they are not available).

The total public expenditure on education in Slovakia is traditionally very low, deeply below the EU average. According to the latest, harmonised data it was 3.62 % compared to 4.96 % in EU27 (Eurostat, [tsdsc510]). Annual expenditure on public and private educational institutions per pupil/student compared to the GDP per capita was 18.5 in contrast to 24.9 for EU27 (Eurostat, [tps0009]), in the ISCED 1 segment it was 17.3 compared to 20.7 for EU27, in the ISCED 2-4 segment it was 15.9 compared to 25.2 for EU27, which was the second lowest, and in the ISCED 5-6 segment it was 28.3 compared to 36.8 for EU27 (Eurostat, [educ_thexp]); all data in 2007. Improvement in 2009 according to the national data from Table 7 needs confirmation in the future indicating a positive trend.

The following table offers a comparison of expenditures on general and vocational education and training.

GEO	ALL PROGRAMMES (ISCED 2-4)			GENERAL PROGRAMMES (ISCED 2-4)			VOCATIONAL AND PREVOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES (ISC 2-4)		
	ALL PROG.	% OF GDP	% OF TPE	GEN. PROG.	% OF GDP	% OF TPE	PV-VOC. PROG.	% OF GDP	% OF TPE
EU27	200368.4	2.2	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
SK	1533.5	1.7	4.9	883.3	1	2.8	650.1	0.7	2.1

Source: Eurostat (UOE Data collection), data as of 26th April 2009.

Notes: All data are provisional estimations. Special data extraction to Cedefop, TPE - total public expenditure.

Although the secondary VET stream is much larger in number of students than the general one, total expenditures on general and vocational education and training are the reverse. The secondary vocational data for Slovakia are biased due to unavailable and not included expenditures on VET covered by the own income of IVET schools. This refers in particular to former secondary vocational schools (SOU, *stredné odborné učilište*) that were financed from public funding in substantially lesser level, as they operate within the financial frame of the so-called contributory organisation, which means that these organisations are expected to cofinance their expenditures from their own productive work. The following table indicates the gradual decrease of expenditures on ISCED 2-4 education in Slovakia contrasted by the stability within EU 27.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
EU27	2.27 (s)	2.32 (s)	2.35 (s)	2.29 (s)	2.25 (s)	2.23 (s)	2.20 (s)
SLOVAKIA	2.05 (i)	2.29 (i)	2.17 (i)	2.11 (i)	1.88(i)	1.76(i)	1.69(i)

Source: Eurostat, date of extraction: 4th October 2010.

Notes: (s) - Eurostat estimate, (i) - see explanations at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/Annexes/educ_esms_an18.pdf

Again, worth stressing is that several comparisons against the EU average indicated the lagging behind in the investment in education in Slovakia. All this was in contrast with a priority declared by several governments to support investment in education and to build a knowledge based society. Although the Stability Programme of the Slovak Republic for 2008-2012, adopted by the government on 29th April 2009, also declared education and knowledge society among priorities, no obligatory improvements from public budgets are envisaged to compensate long-term underfinancing. Expenditures on education were again identified as sensitive to population ageing, and a subsequent decrease in expenditures induced by demographic changes in the percentage of the GDP was envisaged from 3.7 in 2004 to 3.0 in 2010. The Stability Programme of the Slovak Republic for 2009-2012, adopted by the government on 27th January 2010, again stressed a decrease of population suggesting even a further decrease of expenditures in 2010 from the aforementioned 3.0 % to 2.8 % of GDP. Regardless of future GDP development the Ministry of Finance does not think about improvement of investment in education.

Very likely, a population decrease will not be translated into an increase of per capita funding and subsequently into improvement of an educational environment damaged in the dry years of economy and not improved in the short period of solid growth. Furthermore, a continuation of the insufficient investment in human resources from public budgets has to be expected, due to the economic crisis and inevitable fiscal consolidation since 2011. Although in contrast to other sectors subjected to cuts caused by the coming period of fiscal prudence, less severe expenditure cuts are expected for the education sector (affecting predominantly capital expenditures) and a modest increase in salaries is also expected in contrast to almost all other workers' salaries in public sectors, the ageing of teachers and trainers and the low interest of young people to start teacher career due to uncompetitive salaries threatens education severely. From 2010 to 2013, a further decrease in investment in education must be expected due to the efforts of the government to achieve the general government deficit below 3 % in 2013, as can also be seen from the 2011 state budget proposal and indicative budgets till 2013.

1.4 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

Although Slovakia is among the EU leaders in the share of ISCED 3+ educated, the high share of ISCED 3C and the low share of ISCED 4+ levels identified by the 2001 census (see the diagram of population in Slovakia (age 25+) by level of education in the annex) indicated future risks for the implementation of a knowledge economy. In addition, only the Bratislava Region was significantly better off according to the latest census.

	ISCED 1+2	ISCED 3C	ISCED 3A-GENERAL	ISCED 3A-VOCATIONAL	ISCED 4, 5, 6	ISCED 0	No RESPONSE
SLOVAKIA	24.65	32.17	4.60	24.07	12.36	0.36	1.79
BRATISLAVA	14.97	25.08	6.59	25.45	25.74	0.11	2.06

Source: Statistical Office (ŠÚ, Štatistický úrad), Census 2001.

Meanwhile a strong increase in enrolment in higher education (about 50 % of ISCED 3A graduates) can be observed, and a substantial improvement concerning ISCED 4+ levels is expected within the 2011 census. A favourable low share of ISCED 0-2 educated population is confirmed by the low share of early school leavers aged 18-24 with 6.0 % in 2008 according to Eurostat LFS data, which is significantly below the EU27 data (14.9 %). Although the youth education attainment level is among the best in Europe, with 92.3 % of the population aged 20-24 having completed at least upper secondary education (in contrast to EU27 78.5 %) in 2008, a downward trend is visible e.g. in comparison with 94.5 % in 2002. Females' figures are better than those of males, within a two percentage point difference over a long time period.

The following table indicates the lagging behind of Slovakia in the share of tertiary educated people.

	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
EU 27 (%)*	27.9	46.9	25.2
EU27 (ABSOLUTE NUMBERS IN 1000S)	75 997.9	127 576.6	68 479.8
SK (%)	9.1	75.2	15.8
SK (ABSOLUTE NUMBERS IN 1000S)	281	2 331.6	488.7

Source: Eurostat, LFS, data of extraction 7th October 2010, * calculated by the authors as there were no refreshed data available.

With a decreasing population number, the share of enrolment in tertiary education however increased. The share of secondary school graduates continuing in higher education studies amounted to 49.8 % in the 2008/2009 academic year and to 49.6 % in 2009/2010) according to the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (ÚIPŠ, Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva).

TABLE 12: NUMBER OF NEWLY ENROLLED STUDENTS IN SELECTED ACADEMIC YEARS			
ACADEMIC YEAR	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	NEWLY ENROLLED TOTAL
2005/2006	36 196	21 295	57 491
2006/2007	37 753	24 510	62 263
2007/2008	37 503	21 306	58 809
2008/2009	34 673	20 662	55 335
2009/2010	36 038	15 176	51 214

Source: ÚIPŠ.

After years of increase of newly enrolled students also in absolute numbers, the 2007/2008 decrease down to 58,809 was caused by the regulation of numbers of part-time students introduced by the amendment of the Higher Education Act No. 131/2002 Coll. (*Zákon č. 131/2002 Z. z. o vysokých školách*). The Ministry of Education (MŠ, *Ministerstvo školstva*) argued that part-time studies are of lower quality, and the high numbers of students are accepted purely to raise the budget of higher education institutions.

Limiting the numbers of part-time students affected the numbers of full-time students, and in particular in private schools, as can be seen from the table below.

TABLE 13: NUMBER OF NEWLY ENROLLED STUDENTS IN SELECTED ACADEMIC YEARS			
		2008/2009	2009/2010
PUBLIC HEI	Full-time	32 437	31 268
	Part-time	10 969	8 991
PRIVATE HEI	Full-time	1 847	4 311
	Part-time	9 211	5 756
STATE HEI	Full-time	389	459
	Part-time	482	429
TOTAL		55 335	51 214

Source: ÚIPŠ.

Note: HEI - higher education institution.

Interestingly, the share of full-time students in higher education decreases with the share of vocational training within the secondary education of graduates entering tertiary education, e.g. when it comes to the HEI applicants graduating from respective secondary schools in 2008, 80.8 % of applicants graduating from grammar schools, 72.2 % from secondary specialised schools, 68.3 % from secondary vocational schools and 64.8 % from associated secondary schools were registered for the 2008/2009 academic year. The data for 2009 graduates registered for the 2009/2010 academic year is as follows: 80 % of applicants graduating from grammar schools, 69 % from secondary specialised schools and 54.9 % from conservatories. (The latter data reflects the new structure of secondary schools set by the Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll., see part 5.1.)

The following table refers to 11 years of development depicting important shifts in numbers of graduates.

TABLE 14: GRADUATES IN ISCED 3-6 BY ISCED LEVEL AND SEX IN SLOVAKIA												
	1998 BY ISCED LEVEL			2006 BY ISCED LEVEL			2007 BY ISCED LEVEL			2008 BY ISCED LEVEL		
	3VET	4VET	5+6									
ALL	78 604	1 591	17 442	60 329	2 792	40 190	59 198	2 438	46 379	54 202	2 747	65 026
M	41 673	467	7 555	32 535	1 710	16 278	31 471	1 421	17 744	28 618	1 806	23 251
F	36 931	1 124	9 887	27 794	1 082	23 912	27 727	1 017	28 635	25 584	941	41 775

Source: Eurostat, date of extraction: 16th August 2010.

Data indicates a huge decrease in ISCED 3 VET (with 2008/1998 Index 68.96 %) and an unimportant increase in tiny ISCED 4 VET accompanied by a boom in tertiary graduates growing from 17,442 in 1998 up to 65,026 in 2008 (with a remarkable 2008/1998 Growth Index of 372.81 %). Nevertheless tertiary levels data are biased, as a part of this huge increase in tertiary data is caused by post-Bologna development as there were 35,310 graduates from bachelor studies in 2008 in contrast to only 2,149 in 1998, according to the more detailed national (ÚIPŠ) data. As a rule, bachelors in Slovakia continue in master studies and therefore the number of people with higher education entering the labour market and applying for jobs is substantially lower than the number of ISCED 5+6 graduates (e.g. 65,026 in 2008) indicated by the Eurostat data. Interesting is a disproportional share of women among tertiary graduates indicating higher motivation of women to achieve higher education compared to men who are more ready to enter labour market without tertiary level education. Preference of women for humanities and social science is contributing to this development. A current trend of massification in higher education can also be seen in the increased share of part time students. In 2008, there were 14,534 part-time students out of all 35,310 bachelors (41 %) in contrast to 34 % in 2008.

The share of Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) ISCED 5+6 fields' graduates was 23.4 % of all graduates in 2007 slightly increasing from 21.1 % in 1998, however, with a decrease to 20.8 % in 2008. In 2008 the number of ISCED 5+6 MST graduates per 1,000 people aged 20-29 was 15.0 compared to 4.3 in 1998, indicating a positive trend (all data Eurostat, UOE).

Furthermore, no quality of graduates is guaranteed within the current mass production, due to insufficient quality assurance. The decrease of the quality of graduates is stated as a consequence of fighting schools for high enrolment numbers rather than high graduate placements. Moreover, a shift towards general studies instead of VET in secondary education and subsequent preference of humanities and social science is subject of criticism by employers. The Ministry of Education therefore indicated support for universities of technology by permanent efforts to increase per capita contributions ("normatives") for technology field students' more than per capita normatives for humanities and social science students.

Moreover, the Ministry of Education pushed by employers is also positive towards interventions in the numbers and profiles of graduates, in particular to increase the number of ISCED 3C graduates lacking in the manufacturing sector and diverse crafts. An appropriate instrument in support of matching labour market needs is seen in the recommendations of the newly created sectoral and regional VET councils introduced by Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on VET (Zákon č. 184/2009 Z. z. o odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave) in force since 1st September 2009.

In contrast to initial education with comparably positive statistical data meeting 2010 benchmarks, LLL benchmark is far from being achieved. The adult participation in education and training was among the lowest in the EU with a 2.8 % rate in 2009 far beyond the 2010 benchmark of 12.5 % and the EU27 provisional average of 9.3 % in 2009, according to Eurostat LFS data covering four week period prior to the survey. A 2007 Adult Education Survey (AES) data indicating 44 % rate covering the 12 months prior to the survey (field work from August 2007 to September 2007) offers alternative, less dramatic data. The AES data seems to better correspond to reality, as compared to LFS. It is also better covering short training activities typical for the Slovak population with a high share of ISCED 3-6 qualified. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education declared the intention to support adult participation in LLL to achieve the 2010 benchmark within its Strategy on Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance (*Stratégia celoživotného vzdelávania a celoživotného poradenstva*) and to achieve the 15 % rate in 2015.

Although, cooperation on the level of schools and other practitioners is considered to be both attractive for students and stimulating innovativeness in VET, VET to VET cooperation is verbally promoted rather than sufficiently supported on the national level. The evaluators of the implementation of the 2007-2009 Lifelong learning programme in Slovakia explicitly stated that “Slovakia has not yet appreciated the real value of accumulated and transferred European experiences in shaping its national policy²”. Nevertheless, mobilities within Leonardo da Vinci and Erasmus and partly also within other actions are in progress in terms of their volume and quality. For details and some statistical data see part 2.2.

1.5 DEFINITIONS

National definitions and short explanations for respective terms titled in English and Slovak are offered here.

GENERAL EDUCATION - VŠEOBECNÉ VZDELÁVANIE

There are many scholar definitions of general education, different in details, however typically stressing forming of personality, its relations to the world - nature, society and to him/herself; and focusing dominantly on preparation for further study. Knowledge, skills, habits and attitudes are traditional outcomes related categories, gradually complemented by “key competences” under the influence of European discourse.

In the Slovak language, it is necessary to distinguish between two very similar expressions. While “všeobecné vzdelávanie” refers to the process of education/learning, “všeobecné vzdelanie” refers to the results of the former. These results can be specified by respective formal levels. Levels of general education are specified by § 16 of the Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. (*Zákon č. 245/2008 Z. z. o výchove a vzdelávaní*). No legislation specifies (defines) two aforementioned terms corresponding to the term general education. It must

² Vantuch, J. et al.: *National Report on the Implementation of Lifelong Learning Programme in the Slovak Republic in 2007 - 2009*. Bratislava: SAAIC, 2010.

be stressed that general education is also offered within vocational studies, however in a lesser extent. Thus, it is not possible to see general and vocational education as disjunctive. Of course, there are ISCED 3A study branches that are classified as general education programmes and a grammar school is explicitly indicated by § 41 of the Education Act as a school offering general education.

VOCATIONAL AND PRE-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION - ODBORNÉ A PREDODBORNÉ VZDELÁVANIE

Slovak equivalents to terms vocational education/vocational education and training are “odborné vzdelávanie/odborné vzdelávanie a príprava”. Similarly to the case of general education, as explained in the previous paragraph, a difference between “vzdelávanie” a “vzdelanie” must be taken into account.

Scholar definitions are equivalent in content to Cedefop’s glossary formulation “to equip people with knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences required in particular occupations/labour market” with slight differences in particular with regard to using terms of outcomes related categories. Knowledge, skills, habits and attitudes are traditional outcomes related categories. (For further development see explanations concerning the term “competence” below.)

No legislation defines vocational education explicitly. Secondary vocational schools are explicitly indicated by § 42 of the Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. as schools offering education programmes lasting 2-5 years providing “knowledge, skills and abilities” necessary for carrying out respective occupations and vocational activities. Levels of vocational education are also specified by § 16 of the Education Act. More explanations are offered by state educational programmes (corresponding to ISCED 2A, 2C, 3A, 3C, 4A, 5B vocational education) to set requirements of state that are obligatory for schools while preparing their specific school educational programmes and by the “Manual for Creation of School Educational Programmes” (*Metodika tvorby školských vzdelávacích programov pre stredné odborné školy*).

Nevertheless, it must be stressed that secondary vocational studies are offered together with at least partly provided general education. There are no formal VET studies shorter than 3 years in Slovakia except some rarely attended ISCED 2C studies aimed at low achievers. They offer so-called lower secondary vocational education (*nižšie stredné odborné vzdelanie*) preparing for very simple activities performed usually under supervision of other professionals. These studies lasting at least two years are classified and related data submitted for international use within UOE statistics as pre-vocational. There is however no widely used equivalent of the term pre-vocational education and there is no pre-vocational education legislatively set.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION - TECHNICKÉ VZDELÁVANIE

Technical education is considered a specific case of vocational education related to diverse areas of technology (e.g. machinery, electrical engineering, etc. in contrast to others (e.g. services, business administration, etc.).

TERTIARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION - TERCIÁRNE A VYSOKOŠKOLSKÉ VZDELÁVANIE

There are no explicit definitions of these terms commonly accepted or wider used. Higher education is pragmatically understood as education offered by higher education institutions.

Higher education is usually translated as “vysokoškolské vzdelávanie” or “vysokoškolské vzdelanie” (see explanation to twin words “vzdelávanie/vzdelanie” above), as visible e.g. in the translation of the term European Higher Education Area as “Európsky priestor vysokoškolského vzdelávania” within Higher Education Act No. 131/2002 Coll. These terms are however not exact equivalents as “vysokoškolské” relates explicitly to the higher education institutions and the aforementioned act, if more precisely translated, should read as an Act on Higher Education Institutions. “Institutional” approach is strictly required by higher education institutions negatively perceiving the power of Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAV, *Slovenská akadémia vied*), for the long time privileged by state in funding research and which was originally independent in offering PhD studies. Now, PhD titles are exclusively awarded by universities, however “non higher education institutions”, e.g. the Slovak Academy of Sciences, if accredited for this and their experts approved by a respective university, can participate in preparation of PhD students in cooperation with a respective university. A “non-institutional” equivalent of the term “higher education” is not used due to the aforementioned “institutional clash” and additional explanations are used if misunderstanding occurs.

Furthermore, as a consequence of the reluctance of university lobby to accept emergence of expansion of secondary schools into tertiary education, there is an additional irregularity in terms necessary to be explained. Some secondary schools offer ISCED 5B studies classified as providing “higher professional education” according to § 16 of the Education Act which even speaks about “post-secondary or tertiary education” as a consequence of lobbying of secondary schools that developed experimental studies within the PHARE programme originally aimed at provision of higher than secondary education and which was perceived by students and also teachers as a sort of higher education, e.g. as a consequence of organisation of studies similar to universities. They were named higher professional schools (*vyššie odborné školy*) in common language, however legislatively not recognised as schools offering tertiary education. Currently this kind of institutions does not exist any more, however programmes of higher professional studies offering post-secondary education at secondary schools are recognised, while Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. even opens the door to offering tertiary education in the future.

Although originally terms higher education and tertiary education were used interchangeably and considered equivalent, aforementioned irregularities contributed to understanding of “tertiary education” as a wider term and “higher education” as a specific case of tertiary education. However, no legislation defines tertiary education and this term is even not used in the Act No. 131/2002 Coll. As already indicated, the term tertiary education is used in the Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. (focusing on primary and secondary education) setting a compromise for secondary schools offering ISCED 5B higher professional education that can award students with a newly introduced “Diploma Specialist” titles “DiS” and “DiS.art” that are however not higher education titles.

FURTHER EDUCATION - *ĎALŠIE VZDELÁVANIE*

Further education was traditionally seen as education after finishing formal education or even after a break usually caused by employment. According to the Act on Further Education No. 386/1997 Coll. it is seen as “education, which makes it possible for each individual to supplement, widen and deepen their education, to be retrained or to satisfy their interests”. Further education was seen as provided by institutions of further education offering also short-term programmes and programmes in various organisational forms and also as education offered by regular schools including universities preparing participants (usually part-time students) to obtain respective education level certificate (see also explanations concerning continuing education).

CONTINUING EDUCATION - ĎALŠIE VZDELÁVANIE, KONTINUÁLNE VZDELÁVANIE

Originally two terms - further education and continuing education were used interchangeably, usually referring to “German or English” approach dominantly influencing the speaker or translator. The first Slovak term “ďalšie” was dominant in common language and also in legislation, while the second term is occurring more frequently in coincidence with recognition of importance of permanent learning and lifelong learning. Gradually, continuing education is considered as general term and further education/training is more often used to describe just specific cases, predominantly meaning follow-up courses aimed at expanding/deepening professional skills. The term “kontinuálne vzdelávanie” is recently applied to indicate changes in in-service training introduced by the new act on pedagogical staff.

POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION - POSTSEKUNDÁRNE NETERCIÁRNE VZDELÁVANIE

Two forms of post-secondary non-tertiary education are recognised by the Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll.:

- follow-up studies aimed at offering ISCED 3C graduates programmes to achieve ISCED 3A level in the same or similar branch of study;
- “post-maturita” studies are aimed at enhancing or deepening qualification and specified in types by the legislation: developing or innovative (refreshing) studies; qualifying studies in order to obtain vocational qualification in addition to the previous one.

It must be stated that there are also two additional types of “post-maturita” studies (higher professional study and specialising study offering knowledge and skills for specific working positions) which are seen as tertiary and corresponding to ISCED 5B, according to Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll.

TRAINING - ODBORNÁ PRÍPRAVA, VÝCVIK

In Slovakia, training is seen as aimed at practical skills development. Significantly a Slovak equivalent “tréning” of that word is dominantly used with regard to preparation in sports. Gradually with opening to the world and practice from abroad it is together with a Slavic equivalent “výcvik” (and even substituting it) also used in wider sense, however still in cases dominantly focusing on improvement of already acquired skills (and not related to knowledge), i.a. in diverse in-company trainings. Furthermore, the word “training” is seen as stressing pragmatic English/American approach in contrast to theoretically based one. Therefore, in a Slovak context, “training” is often considered equivalent to “education” and translated as “vzdelávanie”. On the other hand, in a phrase “vocational education and training” it is translated as “príprava” and “odborné vzdelávanie a príprava” in full, in line with translation of “vocational training” in the sense of training aimed at preparation for working as “odborná príprava”.

INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING - POČIATOČNÉ ODBORNÉ VZDELÁVANIE A PRÍPRAVA

In Slovakia IVET is seen institutionally as initial education and training offered by secondary VET schools. As a consequence of width in coverage and volume of stream of secondary VET schools, the term is not widely used and it is also not defined by legislation.

CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING - KONTINUÁLNE ODBORNÉ VZDELÁVANIE A PRÍPRAVA

Continuing vocational education and training is seen as continuing education within VET. Gradually it is dominantly mentioned with regard to continuing professional development, e.g. in-service training of highly regulated professions such as teachers, or medical staff and with stress on training within retraining to meet job requirements. For some additional explanations see the paragraph above on “Continuing education”.

SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMMES, ALTERNANCE TRAINING, APPRENTICESHIP

Initial vocational education and training is school based in Slovakia. Therefore there are just school-based programmes and therefore there is also no equivalent widely used in Slovak. Similarly it is with the alternance training and therefore no Slovak equivalent was set. Furthermore, there is no traditional apprenticeship scheme in use anymore, and all participants are seen as pupils (students) according to legislation. The term apprentice is not recognised by legislation and the Slovak equivalent “učeň” is used in common language only or with regard the former status in history. There is a possibility for companies to pay for VET at secondary specialised (vocational) schools and also partly participate at training of students who they are interested in as future employees. To distinguish between them and students not in preparation for respective company the former are sometimes called “apprentices”, regardless the fact that legislation does not make such a difference.

CURRICULUM - KURIKULUM

This term was very rarely used in discourse till 1990s, and if, then with regard to description of situation in other countries. Instead of this, two crucial terms “učebné osnovy” (syllabi describing the content, which was set by the Ministry of Education to be obligatory taught in all subjects) and “učebný plán” (education plan setting a number of weekly hours for respective studies) were used with regard to the programming phase of education and a traditional term “vyučovanie” (classroom teaching - instruction) was used to refer to the delivery of education and learning provisions in class itself. Recently, after the curriculum decentralisation reform introduced by the Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. all aforementioned notions have remained in use, however syllabi are not centrally set, but by respective schools, and education plan is centrally set less detailed as a so-called framework education plan, leaving its finalisation up to school. The term “kurikulum” is not introduced by legislation and it is dominantly used in academic discourse usually referring to educational programming. In the same sense it is also used within the “Manual for Creation of School Educational Programmes” offered for schools to help them develop their own curriculum (school educational programme). Nevertheless, legislatively set terms “state educational programme” and “school educational programme” are used instead of “curriculum”, when meaning “curricular documents”.

QUALIFICATION - KVALIFIKÁCIA

There is no explicit definition of the term “qualification” in the Slovak legislation. It is usually used in a common sense as “ability to perform” relevant activities or it is formally described as “a sum of requirements according to relevant legislative norms”. Within respective legislative norms the following pattern is used: Qualification is presented as the conjunction of

- achieved education (level);

- specific qualifying conditions, sometimes described as specific vocational capabilities;
- experience already gained in respective field; and
- of which only the first one, or the first two, or in some cases all three are required and must be justified in a way stipulated by law.

In an academic world qualification is considered a set of abilities represented by knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits resulting in capability (sometimes specified as competence) to perform respective occupation. There is a difference between using the term “qualification” within science and legislation. Social science experts sometimes consider qualification as automatic consequence of completed education and training. In the “Manual for Creation of School Educational Programmes” for the first time a difference is recognised by stating that graduates from VET schools receive their “first qualification” leaving the space for further specification of requirements according to respective sectoral legislation or specific requirements targeted for working positions.

SKILLS AND COMPETENCES - ZRUČNOSTI A KOMPETENCIE

There is no appropriate Slovak word equivalent for “skills” encompassing both mental skills and manual skills. The most used Slovak term “zručnosti” correspond etymologically to manual skills as it is derived from the word “hand” (“ruka”). As a consequence, there is a risk of misunderstanding of the term “zručnosti”. There are three ways visible in the academic discourse to overcome this.

- Some use the term “zručnosti” as the general term and add explanatory adjective “mental” (“mentálne”) when it is important to indicate that not manual skills are meant. At the same time however, the term “mentálne zručnosti” is subjected to criticism due to inner inconsistency between “mentálne” and “zručnosti”, as the second word refers to the word “hand”.
- Some use the term “spôsobilosti” as the general equivalent to “skills” and “zručnosti” strictly in the sense of manual skills.
- Recently the term “spôsobilosti” (precisely identified, however ancient and forgotten in modern Slovak) was promoted as the general equivalent to “skills” by the terminological commission of the Ministry of Education (MŠ, *Ministerstvo školstva*).
- In traditional as well as recent official curricular documents and also in the mainstream discourse the term “zručnosti” was used as the equivalent of the term “skills”. In newly elaborated state curricular documents, “zručnosť” is seen as general term equivalent to “skill” and explained as “ability to apply knowledge or use know-how”. In statements describing graduates’ profiles and standards skills (“what pupil can do”) are contrasted to the knowledge (“what pupil knows”).

The term “kompetencia” has two interrelated connotations: the first one being “entitlement to act” (e.g. with “competent officer” one means the “officer who is appointed to deal with respective agenda”, while the quality of his/her skills to run agenda is not discussed); the second one is related to “ability to perform”, which was already demonstrated or in which it is believed in by the speaker. The first connotation is much more used, but this term is also gradually adopting new connotations due to international influence.

The following is the definition of “kompetencia” according to the “Manual for Creation of School Educational Programmes”: Competence is a proved ability to use knowledge, skills, attitudes, value orientation and other capabilities in demonstrating and performing functions following the respective standards at work, at study in personal and professional development of individual and in his/her active involvement in society, in his/her future assertion in work and non-work life and for his/her further education.

Schools were advised to identify knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits (values) graduate should possess and express them in terms of performance structured into three categories of competences. Thus a graduate’s profile within each of the state curricula and consequently each school educational programme is composed of key competences (6 overarching competences), general competences (reflecting results of general education) and vocational competences (reflecting occupational requirements).³

³ For further explanation see *Skills and Competences Development and Innovative Pedagogy: Slovakia, Detailed Thematic Analysis Theme 7, chapter 0701*.

2. POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

2.1 OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES OF THE NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT AREAS OF VET

2.1.1 NATIONAL LLL STRATEGY

Academia Istropolitana, an institution directly managed by the Ministry of Education (MŠ, *Ministerstvo školstva*), was appointed the task to elaborate the background documents for the policy paper aimed at the further development of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance measures till 2015 making use of the ESF project the Creation, Development and Implementation of an Open System of Life-long Learning in the SR for the Labour Market (*Tvorba, rozvoj a implementácia otvoreného systému celoživotného vzdelávania v SR pre potreby trhu práce*). Subsequently, the Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance (*Stratégia celoživotného vzdelávania a celoživotného poradenstva*) was adopted by the government on 25th April 2007, followed by the Action Plan for LLL Strategy Implementation (*Akčný plán na implementáciu Stratégie celoživotného vzdelávania a celoživotného poradenstva*), adopted by MŠ on 13th November 2007. The policy declared four explicit components:

- System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL;
- System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning;
- System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability;
- Supporting tools of financing of LLL.

In addition, the Modernisation Programme Slovakia 21 (*Modernizačný program Slovensko 21*) was adopted by the government on 4th June 2008, complemented by Action Plans added in October 2008. Creating a system of lifelong learning is listed among measures introduced in this paper within the priority area Education. Modernisation Programme Slovakia 21 is linked to the National Reform Programme of the SR for 2008-2010 (*Národný program reforiem SR na roky 2008-2010*), approved by the Government Resolution No. 707/2008 on 8th October 2008, within which the implementation of the LLL strategy is considered an instrument in the development of the knowledge society. Nevertheless, within action plans adopted together with the National Reform Programme and valid also for Modernisation Programme Slovakia 21, the most relevant support for LLL is visible within the Action Plan Employment with regard the development of the national system of flexicurity only. Regardless of all policy papers stressing the importance of LLL, submission of the new Act on Lifelong Learning to the government originally expected in 2007 was for a long time postponed.

Finally Act No. 568/2009 Coll. on Lifelong Learning (*Zákon č. 568/2009 Z. z. o celoživotnom vzdelávaní*) was adopted by the parliament in December 2009, however with reduced focus. In contrast to the “Strategy”, non-formal and informal learning settings were not explicitly addressed by this act and respective terms were not used in its final wording. The same applies for subsequent legislative provisions already elaborated. Furthermore, three of four aforementioned components of the “Strategy” were not substantially addressed. No incentives in support of CVET/LLL were set by this act due to

the disagreement of employers, the National Bank and the Ministry of Finance; the system of monitoring education needs as well as the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning are still pending.

This act made a crucial step by setting the National System of Qualifications (NSQ) composed of qualifications and for the first time in the legislation also partial qualifications. In contrast to earlier Act No. 386/1997 Coll. on Further Education that stipulated issuing certificates of attendance, Act No. 568/2009 Coll. on Lifelong Learning opens the door for issuing certificates on partial qualifications and even (full) qualifications as the composition of partial qualifications. Nevertheless, the development of the NSQ is a precondition for this. Validation of “outcomes”, while only outcomes related to education (and not learning) are explicitly mentioned, should stick to “qualification standards” and “assessment standards” to be set together with the newly established NSQ.

2.1.2 POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN THE MAIN VET POLICY AREAS

GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on VET (*Zákon č. 184/2009 Z. z. o odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave*), in force since 1st September 2009, specified in detail the possibilities of employers to adjust IVET to their needs. Regional/local employers are entitled to intervene into curriculum design and to require specified competences to be stressed within curriculum and achieved by graduates. Professional organisations of employers are furthermore expected to assess quality of graduates and elaborate a “plan of labour market needs” for the subsequent five year period. Self-governing regions are responsible for creation of regional VET strategies in cooperation with social partners: regional educational authorities, job centres, trade unions and employers, including regional chambers of commerce and professional organisations. This act, however, opens the door for initiative of stakeholders rather than it sets clearly defined mandatory duties. Furthermore, it iterates options to intervene, however without securing stable financial conditions and know-how for system monitoring and anticipation of future needs. The act envisaged the creation of diverse advisory bodies. It stipulated the establishment of four-partite “Regional VET Councils” - advisory bodies affiliated to self-governing regions and similarly a four-partite National VET Council affiliated to the government to cover trans-regional topics. Councils consist of representatives of state administration, self-governing administration, employers and representatives of trade unions and/or employees’ councils, therefore they are called “four-partite”. Sectoral VET Councils are set to serve as advisory bodies for sectoral professional organisations cooperating with respective ministries and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. Nevertheless, the intention to create advisory bodies is just a first step. It must be complemented by the development of quality know-how in support of evidence based policy making.

Financing VET shall be supported by tax incentives for employers contributing to the modernisation of equipment of schools, in particular in practical training, and co-financing the VET of learners drafted as their future employees. The act also sets a VET Development Fund headed by the Minister of Education collecting voluntary contributions from non-state subjects. With respect to financing the act is quite disappointing. Instead of “train or pay” principle and levy based obligatory funding, a voluntary funding was agreed, which makes the Fund vulnerable of illiquidity. Even worse, the current scheme of 2 % corporate tax to be allocated to schools and other organisations based on free decision of tax payers should be weakened and gradually abolished according to Ministry of Finance recommendations. Schools that established good contacts with enterprises and other donors consider new regulation as endangering their incomes in favour of the controversially perceived Fund. In contrast to this, opportunity to classify some costs of

training and motivation stipend (up to 65 % of minimum subsistence cost set by the relevant act of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family for learners identified as future employees) as tax deductible items for contributing future employer are seen positively. Nevertheless this currently involves marginal amounts of students amid the increasing amount of unemployed caused by the crisis; no dramatic increase in the number of students contracted by employers is expected.

VET policies are strongly interlinked with labour market development and therefore in a hard position to reflect accelerating changes in the labour market in shorter and shorter time for reaction. Traditional school based IVET is not able to provide for this task under current conditions, and the traditional ambition to prepare a full variety of tailor made workers for employers must be abandoned.

The problem of new policies backed by the Act on VET No. 184/2009 Coll. is that decision makers went from one extreme to another, and the fact that VET schools are between two markets: the input market of education services reflecting students' and their parents' desires and the output market of school graduates more or less interlinked with the labour market, is again underestimated. Recently, IVET schools, which were under the pressure of per capita funding and a population decline, fully concentrated on satisfaction of input market clients, disregarding the output market due to the VET policy systemic failure: non-existing benefits for schools for harmonising the schools' output market and the labour market. New policies tend to put too strong emphasis on recommendation of employers in the effort to make VET schools better responding to labour market needs regardless the fact that there has been no reliable know-how for anticipation of skills needs developed yet and that employers are insufficiently pushed to estimating their demands efficiently due to the IVET financing scheme based on public money.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Two new education sector legislative norms are hoped to strengthen interlinking among the relevant players. Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. explicitly speaks about the system of guidance and stresses importance of interlinking activities of respective institutions. Act on VET No. 184/2009 Coll. makes self-governing regions responsible for provision of information to centres of educational and psychological counselling and prevention in order to inform students, parents and other interested parties about labour market needs and VET provision at schools.

The Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance, adopted by the government on 25th April 2007, stressed that “the current subsystems of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in Slovakia are not mutually open and interconnected and they do not enable the people to flexibly access and achieve the required education and qualification”. Furthermore, within its chapter 4.2.2 this document declared some specific goals for “building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody”:

- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance;
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the Ministry of Education as well as employment services, i.a. for the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, specialised education of counsellors, tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance and the specialised training of counsellors the state administration, local self-governments and employers.

The National Forum on Lifelong Guidance (*Národné fórum pre celoživotné poradenstvo*) was established in 2008 similarly to other EU countries. It was expected that this forum consisting of 26 members representing a wide range of institutions, both from governmental as well as non-governmental sectors, would advise government concerning policy in this area. As this body is affiliated to the Ministry of Education and composed predominantly of high ranked officials, experts in the field were invited to form expert bodies affiliated to the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology (*Výskumný ústav detskej psychológie a patopsychológie*).

The first document initiated by the National Forum was the Concept of Lifelong Guidance in the Slovak Republic, elaborated in March 2009. This policy paper defines aims, priorities and specific goals of lifelong guidance on national level, also in relation to specific target groups. The Council Resolution on Better Integration of Lifelong Learning Guidance into Lifelong Learning Strategies, adopted in November 2008, was explicitly mentioned among European documents reflected by this policy paper. There were several measures suggested including:

- the analysis of the current situation in lifelong guidance provision in the Slovak Republic and the system of lifelong guidance in selected EU countries (direct comparison);
- the development of a new model of guidance and counselling services operating on the basis of approved competencies and effective cooperation of sectors/ministries, social partners and other providers;
- with the aim of increasing the quality of guidance staff, the development of professional and qualification standards for guidance and counselling practitioners;
- the development of a model of initial and further training of guidance and counselling practitioners;
- the development of educational and training programmes for further, lifelong learning of practitioners;
- the development of a quality assurance system;
- the development of a career information system for lifelong guidance accessible to the public;
- the improvement of access to lifelong guidance services on regional/local levels through establishing new guidance and counselling institutions and facilities.

Substantial support from the European Social Fund is envisaged to translate policies into practice. The Operational Programme Education (Priority Axis 1 “Reform of Education and Vocational Training System”; Measure 1.1 “Transformation of Traditional School into a Modern One”; Activity 1.1.2 “Supporting Educational and Career Guidance in Primary and

Secondary Schools”), starting in the second half of 2009, should improve the quality of service offered in regional schooling⁴.

TEACHER AND TRAINER TRAINING

There are two important impulses worth mentioning. As a consequence of the curricular reform introduced by the Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll., teachers and trainers in IVET became more involved in curriculum development. Subsequently massive training aimed at designing curricular documents was launched, supported by ESF. ESF projects were used for training pedagogical staff to adjust to new school leaving exams at both general and VET ISCED 3A studies⁵ implemented in 2005 to 2008. Within the 2007-2013 programming period, the following national projects have been launched:

- Primary school teacher training in the area of foreign languages with regard to the foreign language teaching concept in primary and secondary schools;
- Continuing primary and secondary teacher training in informatics;
- Modernisation of education process in basic (primary and lower secondary) schools;
- Modernisation of education process in secondary schools;
- Teacher training with regard to developing school education programmes;
- Developing new education programme in vocational training for the needs of automotive industry II;
- Kindergarten pedagogic staff training as part of the education reform.

Complementary to national projects that should have a strong systemic impact nation-wide there are many demand driven projects with impact on improvement of staff skills directly or indirectly within Priority Axis 1 Reform of the education and vocational training system and Priority Axis 4 Modern education for a knowledge-based society for the Bratislava Region. It is too soon to assess the results of these projects.

The Concept Paper for the Professional Development of Teachers in a Career System (*Koncepcia profesijného rozvoja učiteľov v kariérovom systéme*) was adopted by the government on 18th April 2007.

Act No. 317/2009 Coll. on Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff (*Zákon č. 317/2009 Z. z. o pedagogických zamestnancoch a odborných zamestnancoch a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov*) came into force since November 2009 introducing a credit system

⁴ The detail information about the contribution of ESF projects during the 2004-2006(2009) Operational Programme Human Resources and about plans within the 2007-2013 Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion is offered in the “Progress in VET in priority areas agreed in the Copenhagen process: VET Policy Report - Slovakia 2010”, chapter 5.2.

⁵ See Slovakia: Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2008, Part 0601 - Types of teachers and trainers in VET.

based continuing professional development scheme. It set six categories of pedagogical staff: teacher; trainer; tutor; pedagogical assistant; foreign lector; trainer of sport school or sport class. A new category - *répétiteur*, specific for conservatories, was added by the parliament. The act further indicates specialisation options within 4 levels career paths (see also part 7.1.3) for pedagogical and non-pedagogical staff.

Within Priority Axis 2 “Continuing education as an instrument of human resource development”, Measure 2.1 “Support of continuing education”, and corresponding Measure 4.2 “Raising competitiveness of the Bratislava Region through the development of higher and continuing education”, two national projects with the title “Professional and Career Development of Pedagogical Staff” were launched in October 2009, coordinated by the Methodological-Pedagogical Centre (*Metodicko-pedagogické centrum*). These national projects are aimed at creating an effective system of in-service training with a special focus on the development of key competences of educators. At least 20 000 people are to be trained within 48 months of project duration.

Three points are subjects of criticism concerning this reform. Credit gathering resulting in awards and better remuneration do not reflect earlier activities and all staff regardless of age and experience should start from scratch. Chasing after credits, regardless of value added from gathering it, might harm quality of class lessons, as regular quality teaching will not pay well compared to undertaking diverse out-of-class activities. Furthermore, there is no substantial increase in remuneration of teachers/trainers envisaged after collecting appropriate amounts of credits in contrast to the earlier promises from the pre-crisis times. Some signs of frustrations can also be seen from over 20,000-signature petition protesting against some details of the credit system.

New continuing professional development model is seen as being at risk of failure, making collection of credits more important than delivery of quality education and creating a market for training providers rather than for satisfaction of the learning needs of pedagogical staff.

CURRICULUM REFORM AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

The Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll., in force since 1st September 2008, introduced curricular decentralisation and first classes of secondary schools have been taught since the school year 2008/2009 according to curricula elaborated autonomously by schools. The decentralisation of curriculum development allows for increasing the impact of local policies and respective schools’ professionalism. Nevertheless, this reform cannot automatically improve innovativeness in teaching and/or assessment. It was hoped that together with the Act on Pedagogical Staff motivating teachers and trainers and also other staff to credit gathering in exchange of promotion, innovative activities would become more frequent as well as visible for dissemination. Of course, such a scheme alone cannot guarantee quality and prevent self justifying behaviour just to satisfy some formal criteria.

According to the criticism, the decentralisation reform does not create conditions for a real reform of curricula; it just shifts responsibility for curriculum development to schools without creating the material conditions for the change: There is a lack of textbooks, diverse teaching aids and predominantly digital learning materials. In contrast to this, the ministry stresses the importance of opening a window for those ready for change and the opportunity of funding changes from the ESF.

Within ESF Measure 1.1 Transformation of traditional school into modern one and complementary within Measure 4.1 - Transformation of traditional school into a modern one for the Bratislava Region, the door is opened for funding “innovation of methods and forms of teaching” as declared in programming documents and monitoring reports. First calls were launched just in 2008, but it is not yet possible to assess the results. Future

practice alone will show to what extent innovative activities will take place. Instruments in support are available.

SKILLS NEEDS STRATEGY

The new Act on VET No. 184/2009 Coll. for the first time explicitly sets responsibility towards identification of labour market needs. Self-governing regions have to prepare regional strategies in cooperation with Regional VET Councils composed of relevant stakeholders. Labour market needs should be materialised into a “plan of labour market learning needs” elaborated by professional organisations of employers and submitted to the Regional VET Council and the national VET Council for commenting, with a final decision by the self-governing region. Unfortunately, exact number of graduates of the respective study and training programmes are to be set as a consequence of § 5 (4). Although it is not clear how the respective data will be decided on, there is a serious risk of very strict regulations based on the lobbyism of employers, as there is a lack of experience with anticipation of skill needs. It is a pity that know-how for forecasting/anticipating skill needs was not developed within the 2004-2007 ESF programming period, despite original intentions⁶. There is a risk that the years of graduate supply produced with a disregard for labour market needs, which was caused by the defective practice in the way schools were financed, will be replaced by a turbulent period of conflicts between employers’ requirements to satisfy their business plans and students/parents expectations about the future. Methodological assistance for self-governing regions is very urgent, in order to support evidence-based policy making and prevent from replacing of the current one-sided policy by a new one.

VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

The first precondition for validation of non-formal and informal learning is to achieve agreement among stakeholders on the relevant know-how. There is, however just limited experience gathered, usually within European projects and as a consequence of amendment of the Trade Licensing Act, to enable skilled, however not formally qualified people to start their businesses⁷. Despite expectations and recommendations of the strategy on LLL (see part 2.1.1) validation of non-formal and informal learning was not introduced by the Act on LLL No. 568/2009 Coll. (*Zákon č. 568/2009 Z. z. o celoživotnom vzdelávaní*). In contrast to the draft version of the act, only the recognition of competences acquired within “further education” has been addressed within the final wording adopted by the parliament. The doubts of formal educational institutions and in fact also of decision makers can be seen from the absence of terms equivalent to “validation/recognition of non-formal and informal learning” in this act. However, at least one important step was made. In addition to (full) qualifications, also partial qualifications are to be recognised in the future.

⁶ See Slovakia: Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2008, Part 0701 - Mechanisms for the anticipation of skill needs.

⁷ Further details are available in Slovakia: Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2008, Theme 8 Accumulating, accrediting and validating learning. This procedure was however cancelled by the Act on LLL No.568/2009 Coll.

Thus, the way is open at least to the option to acquire partial qualifications based on the examination procedure aimed at the assessment of competences corresponding to the standards set for the respective (partial) qualifications. There is, however, a regulation in the act that might prove restrictive in the future. Within § 17 of this act a certificate from the CVET programme accredited by the Ministry of Education designed for obtaining respective (partial) qualification or the confirmation about 5-year practice from employer is required in addition to the certificate of the attained level of education. This indicates a very cautious approach of policy makers. In the Slovak qualification systems, the requirement to achieve a relatively high level of education (in fact at least ISCED 3C) is expected as a rule. Thus, low-educated people (ISCED 2 and less), with skills acquired in practice, will remain hampered in achieving a qualification certificate, regardless of the quality of their professional performance at work, as a consequence of not meeting the required level of formal education. Furthermore, the crucial point remained insufficiently targeted: How to provide inhabitants with quality information and how to secure their right for assessment of acquired competences regardless the ways/settings leading to their acquirement.

2.1.3 CURRENT DEBATES

Typically the hottest debates refer to already adopted policies. In contrast to the period between 2002 and 2006, when secondary VET was not among legislative priorities, in 2006 to 2009 hasty development took place and reforming laws were speedily adopted. The Ministry of Education itself highlighted in 2009 that it is time to slow down, to settle reforms and rethink corrections if needed. Here, some major topics of dispute and criticism are wrapped up:

- The decentralisation reform does not create conditions for a real reform of curricula; it just shifts responsibility for curriculum development to schools without creating the material conditions for the change.
- VET governing reform does not make it clear enough how to achieve the declared goals of linking VET and the labour market. Creation of advisory bodies (VET councils) and inviting employers to influence VET is positive, however without know how in anticipation of future skills needs and real expertise in policy making it might be useless or result in other forms of malpractice. Absence of relevant research does not allow for evidence based policy making.
- The new continuing professional development model creates a market for training providers rather than for satisfaction of the learning needs of pedagogical staff.
- The further erosion of a formal IVET system might be caused by introducing the recognition of prior learning in non-formal and informal settings without appropriate know-how for assessment.

Schools and their staff face a lot of challenges caused by reforms (including new administrative burden) and in contrast to recent years, debates on the philosophy of change are gradually being replaced by practical ones. Nevertheless, the missing period for preparing for changes (e.g. no piloting) will remain a subject of debates and criticism. Very likely, gradualists promoting the incremental approach in reforming will gain support from the pedagogical community over promoters of radical reforming.

Recently, IVET schools do not benefit from harmonising their output market with labour market needs. The major challenges are therefore as follows:

- rethink and elaborate the quality assurance system to prevent from the graduate quality decline due to the one-sided pressure of per capita financing for mass production satisfying input clients desires; and making schools less interested in the output market and in fact fully irresponsible for their future in the labour market after graduation;
- to improve labour market understanding and support labour market research in order to anticipate labour demand and skills needs as the fundamental precondition for evidence based policy making.
- to strengthen career guidance and counselling, making the difference between provision of these services in relation to school input, school output, and labour markets, as the coming period indicates the risk of subordination of learners' individual development to employers' short-term workers demand. Schools, demanded by recent IVET policy to put stress on the input market, are demanded by the new policy to put stress on the labour market, instead of putting stress on the permanent efforts to balance the school input and output markets, as well as school outputs and labour markets, based on the provision of quality data and quality guidance and counselling services.

Furthermore, interlinking IVET and CVET must be newly rethought with CVET and labour market training being substantially more relevant for aligning training to employers' needs. It is hardly possible to provide for publicly funded and school based IVET aligned to respective employers' needs. It is counterproductive, and finally harming the labour market, to expect that the supply of tailored young workers can be secured without substantial cofunding from respective employers. It is very likely that Slovakia will have to reshape its IVET and introduce apprenticeship in a larger extent and to allow coexistence of school based and dual VET systems. A first precondition of any progress is to rethink financing VET. Therefore

- the efficiency of labour market training must be examined, together with financial contributions to strategic investors to retrain newly recruited workers for which investors are never made accountable. In fact, such a contribution was an incentive to make country/region attractive for investment rather than a contribution to cover cost effective training needed to fill the gaps in skills and knowledge of recruited people. Without this, any trendy proposals visible in the current political discourse about flexicurity shall not be translated into practice, as flexibility in dismissal practice will not be complemented by tailored, targeted and efficient CVET/LMT;
- financing CVET and labour market must be interlinked with financing IVET, allowing IVET schools to benefit from CVET and labour market financial schemes provided they are able to reduce the extent of additional CVET and labour market training induced by employers' specific requirements or able to provide CVET/LMT efficiently.

In addition to the aforementioned proposals, there are some partial issues to be addressed by VET policy in the shortest future worth of highlighting with regard to human resource management

- prevent from the massive early school leaving of Roma, or compensate it by adjusting VET to their cultural specificity and dominant learning styles, stressing vocational skills over general education related knowledge and skills;
- strengthen in-service training of VET staff as an instrument to compensate at least partly the ageing of teachers and trainers and the low attractiveness of working positions at schools as the first choice career option;

- reduce IVET schools equipment modernisation debt, as one of the instruments to make VET more attractive for all students, teachers and trainers, and in order to prevent at least partly from the brain drain of IVET tertiary students abroad.

With regard to the last point a substantial breakout is expected as a consequence of the stipulation of the Act No. 184/2009 on VET Coll. (*Zákon č. 184/2009 Z. z. o odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave*), by which the sectoral professional organisations responsible for individual groups of study/training branches (according to the Decree of Ministry of Education No. 282/2009 Coll. on Secondary Schools (*Vyhláška Ministerstva školstva SR č. 282/2009 Z. z. o stredných školách*)) were appointed the competency to contribute to setting the so-called “premises, materials and equipment normatives”. These “normatives” set the minimum requirements on premises, materials and equipment all providers must conform to in delivery of education and training. Previously, these normatives were developed by sectoral ministries or their institutions. Some of them did not cover all three aspects or they focused just on vocational training or practical component of education, some of them have been already obsolete. Updated or fully new normatives should be developed for 569 study programmes, and for new experimental programmes. The State Institute of Vocational Education elaborated the draft common procedure to facilitate the development of normatives, as it is also responsible for finalisation of these “normatives” in cooperation with the aforementioned sectoral professional organisations.

2.2 THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF EUROPEAN TOOLS

IMPLEMENTATION OF A NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (NQF) CORRESPONDING TO EQF

A proposal to implement EQF in the Slovak Republic (*Návrh implementácie Európskeho kvalifikačného rámca pre celoživotné vzdelávanie v podmienkach Slovenskej republiky*) was approved by Government Resolution No. 105/2009 of 4th February 2009. According to this proposal a National System of Qualifications (NSQ) is defined as a publicly accessible registry of all full and partial qualifications validated and recognised in the territory of the Slovak Republic. This registry should be aligned to National Qualification Framework compatible with EQF. This decision has been confirmed by Act No. 568/2009 Coll. on Lifelong Learning (*Zákon č. 568/2009 Z. z. o celoživotnom vzdelávaní*), approved on 1st December 2009, stipulating the legislative background for elaboration of NSQ. NSQ will be aligned to the National System of Occupations (NSO) already in preparation under the surveillance of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (MPSVR, *Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) based on the stipulation of Act No. 139/2008 Coll. amending Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services. A Memorandum on Cooperation between the education and labour ministries, signed on 27th October 2009, should facilitate the coordination of the elaboration of NSO and NSQ.

Descriptions of IVET graduates’ profiles should comply with NQF descriptors by the end of 2011, and subsequently, also educational activities of CVET and adult education should be linked to respective levels of NQF by the end of 2011. Final versions of descriptors of respective NQF levels had to be agreed in 2009. Until now, however, it has only been agreed that levels 6-8 will correspond to three tertiary education cycles and reflect the Dublin descriptors, but there has been no agreement yet about other levels and even on a total number of levels. Nine levels are seen as better corresponding to existing qualification systems and education levels set by the Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. An inter-sectoral steering group chaired by the Director General of the Section of Lifelong Learning of the Ministry of Education has been established to prepare a draft proposal of NQF. A final version of NQF should be prepared in 2011 and the national referencing report by March 2013, according to the Ministry of Education.

To co-finance respective policies 2 ESF national projects were envisaged. An ESF Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion project the “National System of Occupations” should develop descriptions of occupations adjusted to labour market needs and labour market intelligence data know-how to facilitate the updating of NSO and facilitate the adjustment of VET to employers’ requirements. A revision of national statistical classification is envisaged, resulting in the alignment of NSO with ISCO 08. An ESF Operational Programme Education project, the “National System of Qualifications in the Context of Continuing Education Supported by Guidance and Counselling System” (*Národná sústava kvalifikácií v kontexte ďalšieho vzdelávania podporená systémom poradenstva*) has been announced by the Ministry of Education. The project is however still pending, and the final decision on the institution to be responsible for the development of the know-how to map, assess and forecast qualification requirements and to create NSQ encompassing competence based qualification standards and respective assessment standards has been postponed.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The introduction of the national quality assurance system is still pending, although the enhanced involvement of employers in monitoring quality, stipulated by the Act on VET, is a positive step. Nevertheless, there has been no national quality assurance scheme developed so far. European activities related to CQAF and EQARF are insufficiently reflected due to the lack of institutional support and also the lack of specialists. Slovakia did not even manage to fully participate in ENQA-VET and subsequent networking activities.

It is worth stressing that in contrast to the earlier ESF programming period, the quality management is addressed extensively in 2007-2013 ESF Operational Programme Education. The non-existence of national quality management system was expressed a weak point and the introduction of QMS in all segments of VET, regional schooling, higher education and CVET/LLL indicated an explicit goal to be achieved. Hopefully, the aforementioned national project indicates a turning point.

A new national project No. 1/2009 “External Evaluation of School Quality Facilitating Self-Evaluation Processes and School Development” (*Externé hodnotenie kvality školy podporujúce sebahodnotiace procesy a rozvoj školy*) has been launched under the Operational Programme Education to develop instruments of quality evaluation and self-evaluation of schools and school establishments including their implementation. There have been, however, no results from this project available so far.

MOBILITY WITHIN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Currently, the national qualification system in Slovakia is still structured predominantly in a traditional way, as corresponding

- to respective study/training branches within the education sector; and
- to specific requirements usually set by a respective sectoral ministry decree with regard to sectoral qualifications.

Qualification is rarely decomposed into a set of units or credits. Although transfer and accumulation of learning outcomes is not yet officially recognised, in practice the modularisation, and learning outcomes or competence based programming and assessment is in slight progress, pushed also by the curriculum decentralisation reform introduced by The Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. There has been however no specific instrument

developed and specific institution involved in monitoring accumulation of learning outcomes and facilitating the transfer within the education system. It is up to a school director to set transfer conditions, e.g. what kind of exam is requested to continue studies or to obtain a qualification.

In practice there was a difference between qualification according to education sector legislation and entitlement to run a small business requiring a qualification. In order not to hamper skilled although not (formally) qualified workers to conduct business, the Slovak Chamber of Craftsmen was authorised to organise qualifying exams in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior regional authority. These exams were abolished in agreement with the Ministry of Interior by the new Act No. 568/2009 Coll. on LLL due to dissatisfaction with the quality of examinations. A systemic change is expected from the Act No 568/2009 Coll. on LLL which allows for recognition of partial qualification, as a regular part of the National System of Qualifications.

IMPLEMENTING A UNIT-BASED CREDIT SYSTEM

Implementing a unit-based credit system in VET is typical for continuing professional development systems, rather than for obtaining an initial qualification. In addition to the health sector where credit systems are widely used, a credit system is in the process of introduction by the Act No. 317/2009 Coll. in in-service training of pedagogical staff.

In draft versions of the Act on LLL No. 568/2009 Coll. credit systems were proposed as an option for obtaining qualification as a consequence of recognition of competences acquired within non-formal and informal learning. Nevertheless, credit systems were not included in the final version of this act, apparently due to the doubts in successful implementation of respective policies under current conditions of insufficiently developed relevant know-how.

GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY IN VET

Lifelong Learning Programme actions are crucial instruments in support of mobility. In 2007-2009, there were 369 Leonardo da Vinci Mobility projects submitted for all target groups, out of which 284 were approved.

TARGET	2007			2008			2009			TOTAL 2007- 2009			TOTAL
	IVT	PLM	VETPRO	IVT	PLM	VETPRO	IVT	PLM	VETPRO	IVT	PLM	VETPRO	
SUBMITTED	71	10	28	83	12	31	85	13	36	239	35	95	369
APPROVED	64	6	22	61	8	21	67	8	27	192	22	70	284

Source: Lifelong Learning Programme National Agency.

Notes: IVT- young people in IVET, i.e. pupils of secondary specialised schools, PLM - people at labour market - who are involved in VET within which they take part in their placement abroad, i.e. employees, self-employed people and employable people at labour market (including graduates of secondary VET schools HEIs), VETPRO - VET professionals, i.e. VET teachers, trainers, instructors, counsellors responsible for VET in enterprises or accredited educational institutions.

The table indicates a dominant share of projects aimed at secondary IVET schools and it shows a very low number of projects focused on people at labour market (PLM). It is

surprising as there are many unemployed qualified young people, i.a. also school graduates. A large number of graduates is affected by specific treatment by Graduate practice within active labour market policy (see 6.3) in order to gain skills required by the labour market. No doubt, it would be possible to increase the participation of graduates in foreign placements even within the Leonardo da Vinci Mobility action, in the cooperation between labour offices and the Ministry of Education.

The total number of approved participants was 3,997 in 2007-2009. The table below shows the number of participants according to the target groups.

TABLE 16: NUMBER OF APPROVED PARTICIPANTS AND MOBILITY ACTIVITIES* ACCORDING TO TARGET GROUPS								
PARTICIPANTS/YEAR	2007		2008		2009		2007- 2009	
	PLAN	REAL	PLAN	REAL	PLAN	REAL	PLAN	REAL
IVT	1 176	1 175	918	934	1 124	446	3 218	2 555
PLM	82	64	70	51	56	19	208	134
VETPRO	149	125	183	147	219	62	551	334
TOTAL	1 407	1 364	1 171	1 132	1 399	527	3 977	3 023

Source: Lifelong Learning Programme National Agency.

Notes: * Leonardo da Vinci Mobility activities finalised by 31st December 2009; Plan - approved, Real - realised; Target group acronyms are explained in the table above.

The figures in the table correspond to the figures of submitted projects. Pupils of secondary specialised schools are dominant, and a comparably lower number is in case of professionals in VET. The less represented group is people on the labour market. When comparing numbers of planned and realised mobility activities it is necessary to take into account that many 2008 and 2009 mobilities are still open and their activities will be finalised in 2010 and 2011. When it comes to the fields of education, the leading fields in a long term are business and services, tourism and gastronomy (56 projects), almost the same number of projects were approved in the field of agriculture (55), followed by projects in the field of health, nursing and social work (42), and in the field of forestry (40).

Mobility in VET is still considered by schools as a sort of benefit for students and an opportunity to make training more attractive for them, rather than a regular effort to support plurality and specialisation in training. Assessment and validation in a mobility context is organised according to agreed practice among the participating institutions. There is no specific regulation on the assessment of skills and competences acquired during mobility experience and concerning certification. Europass is however well known by schools and used in a way agreed among partners.

There are about 1,000 Europass - Mobility documents issued annually, as visible from the data below. The following table offers the distribution according to the organisational framework.

TABLE 17: NUMBER OF EUROPASS - MOBILITY DOCUMENTS ISSUED BY PROGRAMMES AND ACTIONS IN 2008 AND 2009		
	2008	2009
LEONARDO DA VINCI	747	799
ERASMUS	198	154
COMENIUS	14	10
GRUNDTVIG	1	0
YOUTH	21	0
OTHER EC FUNDED ACTIONS	139	11
WITHIN NON-EC FUNDED ACTIONS	-	33
TOTAL	1 020	1 007

Source: National Europass Centre.

The following table offers the distribution of issued Europass - Mobility documents by countries, which also indicates priorities of destinations.

TABLE 18: NUMBER OF EUROPASS MOBILITY DOCUMENTS ISSUED BY DESTINATION COUNTRY IN 2009										
AT	BE	BG	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI
55	6	0	0	334	198	2	0	22	46	27
FR	HU	IE	IS	IT	LI	LT	LU	LV	MT	NL
54	29	4	0	15	0	0	0	0	3	3
NO	PL	PT	RO	SE	SI	SK	TR	UK	TOTAL	
34	54	6	0	22	7	0	25	61	1 007	

Source: National Europass Centre.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, participation in secondary VET mobility is hampered by a lack of co-financing from national/local sources and a limited knowledge of foreign languages. Thus, interested students from poor families and with poor language proficiency are disadvantaged.

Short-term mobility of Slovak HEI students is comparable with all participating countries' average (0.93 % Erasmus students in the total population of students in Slovakia compared to European average share 0.92 % in academic year 2008/2009). However it is lower in comparison with competitive foreign universities with a high share of Slovak students. A further improvement is needed, despite an increase in all Erasmus actions.

TABLE 19: MOBILITY ACTIVITIES WITHIN ERASMUS* IN 2007-2009						
ACADEMIC YEAR	STUDENT OUTGOING				STUDENTS INCOMING	
	STUDY		PLACEMENT**		EILC	NS
	NS	NM	NS	NM	NS	
2006/07	1 346	6 850.75	-	-	30	670
2007/08	1 454	7 254.50	245	818.75	33	748
2008/09	1 703	8 557.90	317	1 113.75	62	851
2009/10	1 885	9 614.76	344	1 084.88	n/a	n/a

Source: Lifelong Learning Programme National Agency.

Notes: * In 2006/2007 within the Socrates programme; NS - number of students; NM - Number of months; EILC - Intensive language courses; n/a - official data are not at disposal yet.

** traineeship/internship period between 3 months and 12 months in an enterprise or organisation in another participating country.

The lack of financial resources is not the only reason that there is an insufficient number of Slovak students in Erasmus mobility. It is also their insufficient language skills and barriers imposed by new rules in financing higher education in Slovakia. Students are also at the risk of having to pay for their study in case of exceeding of the standard time of studies at their sending university. Therefore, students are counterproductively pushed to taking such study subjects abroad, which are very similar to or identical with the subjects listed in the accredited programme of their respective sending schools⁸.

The numbers of incoming students from all countries involved in LLP are also comparably low reflecting low attractiveness of Slovak universities suffering from underfinancing and subsequently from both a lack of English speaking programmes and a quality infrastructure. Not surprisingly, most students traditionally come from neighbouring Slavic countries (Poland and the Czech Republic) and from France and Germany.

In contrast to low figures of short term mobility, Slovakia features extremely high share of students studying in full programme abroad. In 2007, 10.2 % of all ISCED 5-6 students were studying in another EU27 country compared to 2.7 % in EU27, ranking Slovakia at the third place in EU27 countries. When looking on absolute numbers there were 24,500 students abroad, which is a remarkable increase compared to 3,800 and 3 % in 1999 and compared to a less steep increase of the total number of students enrolled in tertiary education.

⁸ See the National Report on the Implementation of Lifelong Learning Programme in the Slovak Republic in 2007 - 2009.

TABLE 20: STUDENTS (ISCED 5-6) STUDYING IN ANOTHER EU27 - AS % OF ALL STUDENTS									
	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
EU27 (%)	2.7	2.6	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.2
EU27 (1000)	479.2	449.5	395.7	382.9	365.0	339.0	331.4	316.2	326.3
SLOVAKIA (%)	10.2	10.2	8.6	8.2	7.9	6.4	5.5	3.0	3.0
SLOVAKIA (1000)	24.5	22.3	16.8	14.5	13.4	10.3	8.3	4.2	3.8

Source: Eurostat, [educ_itertp], date of extraction 19th October 2010.

On the other hand, there were just 1,200 students studying in Slovakia from other EU27, EEA and candidate countries, representing just 0.5 % of all students in the country, compared to 3.1 % in EU27. This also seems to confirm a low attractiveness of Slovak higher education institutions.

3. VET IN TIMES OF CRISIS

3.1 OVERVIEW

The table below indicates a stormy downfall in the real GDP growth rate in 2009.

TABLE 21: GDP GROWTH IN 2007 TO 2010 (%)					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
EU27	3.0	0.5	- 4.2	1.0f	1.7f
SLOVAKIA	10.5	5.8	- 4.8	2.7f *	3.6f **

Source: Eurostat, [tsieb020], date of extraction: 30th October 2010.

Notes: f- Eurostat forecasting, * Revisions of 2010 GDP Growth Forecast: 3.7 % in February 2010, 4.3 % in September 2010, ** over 4 % according to the Ministry of Finance estimation from October 2010

The Slovak GDP decreased from extremely high numbers in 2007 extremely deep in 2009; deeper in comparison with the EU27 countries. 2010 data however shows a rush revival over the EU27 growth and the newest revised data stated below the Table 21 indicates a very steep growth.

Although no hard impact of financial crisis was expected in autumn 2008 by analysts, an economic slowdown was evident in both foreign and domestic demand in early 2009 as a consequence of the global economic crisis and the heavy dependence of Slovak industry on foreign demand. Compared to the corresponding period in 2008, the industrial production index (IPI) decreased by 22.9 % over the 2009 first quarter, of which by 25.7 % in manufacturing. Production decreased the most in the manufacture of:

- electrical equipment by 44.9 %;
- transport equipment by 40.9 %;
- basic metal and fabricated metal products except machinery and equipment by 29.8 %;
- chemicals and chemical products by 29.3 %;
- rubber and plastic products and other non-metallic mineral products by 27.2 %;
- machinery and equipment n.e.c. by 24.1 %;
- textiles, apparel, leather and related products by 23.7 %.

The employment data from the following table indicating the development in 10 years span in selected sectors can also contribute to better understanding of such a dramatic development.

TABLE 22: EMPLOYMENT AGED 15+ IN SELECTED SECTORS IN SLOVAKIA IN 1998 -2010								
ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES	AGRICULTURE, HUNTING AND FORESTRY		MANUFACTURING		CONSTRUCTION		TOTAL	
	1000s	%	1000s	%	1000s	%	1000s	%
1998 Q2	178.9	8.1	577.2	26.2	203.3	9.2	2201.4	100
2008 Q2*	99.3	4.1	648.6	27.0	251.6	10.5	2404.8	100
2008 Q2**	97.9	4.1	639.9	26.6	252.6	10.5	2404.8	100
2009 Q2**	86.4	3.6	575.3	24.2	254.2	10.7	2378.5	100
2010 Q2**	75.2	3.3	529.5	22.9	254.8	11.0	2312.5	100

Source: Eurostat (LFS, second quarter).

Notes: * NACE Rev.1.1 (date of extraction: 26th May 2009); ** NACE Rev.2 (date of extraction: 30th September 2010).

Agriculture continued to diminish, while manufacturing and construction sectors accounted for a dominant share of about 200,000 new jobs appearing between 1998 and 2008. Since then almost 100,000 have been lost as visible from the comparison of 2008 and 2010 data. A harsh decline is visible in particular in manufacturing, which is strongly dependant on demand for slow moving goods (in particular cars and their components, and LCD panels) abroad. Despite a solid GDP growth in the first half of 2010, the unemployment rates are stubbornly high as visible below.

TABLE 23: UNEMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN TIMES OF CRISIS									
08 2008**	08 2008**	12 2008	03 2009	06 2009	09 2009	12 2009	03 2010	06 2010	09 2010
NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED*	192098	218920	273779	313076	329860	335490	346067	331655	333841
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (%)	7.4	8.4	10.3	11.8	12.5	12.7	12.9	12.3	12.4

Source: Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (ÚPSVaR, Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny).

Notes: * number of disposable, **lowest unemployment in 2008.

Companies learnt to rationalise and they are reluctant to hire new workers. Improvement in the labour market is only expected in 2011. A positive exception is the automotive industry already facing a huge demand driven by the economy revival in Germany and some other important importing countries. A negative example is the construction sector doing well in 2009, however affected by the crisis with a delay and suffering from a lack of new orders, i.a. due to fiscal austerity measures taming large state investments plans. Public private partnerships became an appreciated instrument by the former left-centred government closing its period in June 2010 to secure funding and construction of highways, as their costs remain off the government balance sheets. The following table depicts a strong debt increase in 2009.

TABLE 24: GENERAL GOVERNMENT DEBT (% GDP) IN 2006 -2009				
	2006	2007	2008	2009
EU27	61.4	58.8	61.6	73.6
SLOVAKIA	30.5	29.3	27.7	35.7

Source: Eurostat, [tsieb090].

This development together with 43.8 % GDP indebtedness in 2010, according to the estimation by the Ministry of Finance, explains why the new centre-right government thinks about urgent fiscal savings and is reflective about long-term fiscal costs of planned PPPs. Moreover, the public finance deficit amounted to 7.9 % GDP in 2009 and is expected to attack 7.8 % GDP in 2010. The new government declared to tighten fiscal policy in order to cut the public finance deficit down to 4.9 % in 2011 and below 3 % in 2013. Restrictions and income revisions containing the increase of taxes and levies set for 2011 amount to EUR 1.75 billion (equal to 2.5 % GDP). In addition, the state budget is permanently under the pressure of costs of a pension reform. Generous 9 % opt out from the first pay-as-you-go pillar accounted for 1.3 % GDP in 2009. This shows what a large volume is needed from the state budget to cofund the first pillar pensions. Thus, the austerity plan is quite ambitious. The hesitation concerning PPPs already resulted in downturn in the construction sector and the incoming fiscal prudence period is expected to slowdown the GDP growth in 2011 compared to 2010. Moreover, a very open and export oriented Slovak economy heavily depends on the growth of the international economy.

Unemployment data from Table 4 in part 1.3 comparing 2009 and 2008 data indicated three large groups of unemployed hit by the crisis already at the beginning: ISCED 2, ISCED 3C with certificates of apprenticeships, and ISCED 3A VET educated. Employment and unemployment analysis in part 1.3 with Tables 4 to 6 as well as Tables 22 and 23 above indicate the vulnerability of low educated people. The extremely low employment rate 33.4 % of ISCED 0-2 educated people aged 25-49 in 2009 (as well as their 48.3 % unemployment rate) indicates the need for rethinking current retraining practice and labour market policies. The analysis also indicates the vulnerability of the industry sector and of people with secondary VET related levels of education, and therefore, also a harder impact of unemployment on men than on women. The following table documents that women were also more successful to stay employed than man.

TABLE 25: EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND SEX IN 2008 (IN 1000s)				
	EMPLOYED MEN		EMPLOYED WOMEN	
	2008	2009	2008	2009
TOTAL	1 363.7	1 326.4	1 070.0	1 039.4
ISCED 2	51.1	46.8	58.8	46.0
ISCED 3C (CoA)	508.5	493.1	261.0	246.6
ISCED 3C (WITHOUT CoA)	36.3	36.3	24.2	21.0
ISCED 3A (MSLC) + CoA	81.5	68.4	44.5	36.9
ISCED 3A (MSLC) GEN	43.1	40.3	60.5	60.5
ISCED 3A (MSLC) VET	433.2	427.8	424.2	414.6
ISCED 5B	5.7	7.8	13.7	12.3
ISCED 5A - Bc	9.1	13.1	15.7	23.2
ISCED 5A - M	190.5	187.8	165.6	174.9
ISCED 6	4.8	4.9	1.8	3.3

Source: ŠÚ, LFS annual data.

Notes: CoA - Certificate of Apprenticeship (výučný list), MSLC - "Maturita" School Leaving Certificate (vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške), GEN - general education stream, VET - vocational stream, Bc - 1st cycle studies, M - 2 cycle studies.

The crisis confirmed the well-known problems and made them more transparent:

- inbuilt instability in national economy due to its cyclical over-sensitivity;
- the need of further restructuring of economy in order to offer high value added jobs for tertiary graduates;
- vulnerability of secondary VET graduates and the need to rethink their training;
- low employability of low educated people (with a high share of Roma).

3.2 EFFECTS OF THE CRISIS ON VET AND CORRESPONDING MEASURES

3.2.1 TRENDS IN LEARNERS BEHAVIOUR

No strong impact of economic crisis on VET is visible so far. With regard to IVET, the Slovak school-based system is less vulnerable by the economic results of businesses compared to a genuine apprenticeship system. So far, the crisis has not affected either the VET schools or the interest of pupils in study in training branches. This can however change in the future, and even a stronger trend to a shift towards general education and a lack of interest in ISCED 3C training might be observed. Nevertheless, as a consequence of dissatisfaction of employers with gradually increasing numbers of students in grammar schools and higher education resulting in a lack of the quality ISCED 3C graduates, most needed for the automotive industry and electrical devices industry, led to new policies: Already announced restrictions of enrolment in grammar schools in particular into the long form of grammar schools with 8-year programme and in support of creation of regional centres of VET. It is expected that these centres established in cooperation with employers will not

only improve the quality of graduates and their alignment to labour market needs, but also the attractiveness of programmes offered there.

Currently, very likely boosted by the crises, enrolment in higher education is in exponential growth within recent years, as also discussed later. No doubt, staying longer in education is considered a prevention of unemployment by citizens as well as by the government that supports higher education institutions in massification of tertiary studies.

A dramatic increase in numbers of people in the labour market training organised by labour offices is visible from Table 54 in part 6.3., indicating almost 50 % increase in numbers of unemployed and over 100 % increase of employed participating in training.

An increasing request for counselling services among adults is a natural consequence of the increased numbers of people registered in labour offices and subjected to employer services thereof. Nevertheless, no substantial improvements or specific actions in counselling services, attributable to the crisis, are visible.

Recognition of prior learning is not an issue in Slovakia so far due to a traditional high share of people in formal education and also due to institutional unpreparedness for recognition in practice. There were only first steps taken as mentioned later in relation to the new Act No 568/2009 Coll. on LLL. On the other hand, the crisis resulted in the return of many workers from abroad. There were 7,438 unemployed people registered with labour offices in August 2010 and a part of them returned with working skills adopted abroad in working positions different from their initial training. This can contribute to improvement in pending recognition policies.

An interesting effect of the crisis has been observed in mobility activities, as reported in the National Report on the Implementation of Lifelong Learning Programme in the Slovak Republic in 2007 - 2009. In 2008-2010 we can observe an increasing interest of students of technical specialisations to take part in mobility actions. The crisis has decreased the interest of enterprises in students, either as working students or potential employees after completing their studies. There is also a decrease of possibilities for students to work in foreign production companies during holidays on the base of their own initiative. Thus, an opportunity to go abroad within the Erasmus sub-programme has become dominant. The impact of the crisis is also visible in the fact that getting new partner companies is more difficult, as well as their willingness to accept students for placements.

3.2.2. TRENDS IN ENTERPRISES' BEHAVIOUR

There is little evidence about the enterprises' behaviour as a consequence of crisis, as there is a long-term deficit of relevant data. In fact only the international CVTS data offers substantial primary data and the latest are from pre-crisis times. Some information only comes from databases of the electronic portal www.profesia.sk collecting information on vacancies and employment requests and from meetings of professionals in human resource development.

Businesses learnt during the booming period of economy closely before the crisis how difficult it was recently to find skilled workers, and therefore, they were not quick in dismissals of employees. They applied the so-called flexi-accounts, the scheme permitting employees to receive a full wages while not working and then to make up the hours later as an overtime work. They also preferred reducing working hours and wages over firing workers who might not be available anymore after a revival. They also preferred not to cut financial benefits (some in relation to a sort of training, e.g. English lessons or communication training for free) and financial bonuses over dismissals. Finally, however, waves of dismissals arrived as shown by the statistical data earlier. There is no research

about changes in training behaviour in enterprises but it is well known that there is a sector harshly hit by the crisis and dismissals where at the same time training intensified. It is the banking sector where training became inevitable due to the changes in staff and services to clients less interested in loans and mortgages or even unable to pay them. The government shocked by the wave of new unemployed decided to shift resources within ESF to support training of employees at risk of dismissal as visible from the increase in funding retraining of employees (see Table 72 in part 10.3) and from the planned ESF National Project “100” discussed later. Training of employed people funded and organised via labour offices is however hardly to assess in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. The impact of skills trained and hopefully adopted on employability has never been assessed. On the other hand, many enterprises were given the opportunity to train their employees without substantial expenditures from their own resources.

3.2.3. MEASURES TAKEN AT GOVERNANCE LEVELS (NATIONAL, REGIONAL, LOCAL)

Slovakia has no genuine apprenticeship system naturally sensitive on business cycles. Secondary IVET is school based and therefore places are not much endangered by the crisis directly. So far, state budget shortage has not influenced provision of places. In opposite places were expanded to prevent young people from entering the labour market featuring low job creation. Higher education institutions were asked to accept in addition up to 5,000 new tertiary students including PhD students in academic year 2009/2010. Additional funding above the already announced numbers of new entrants was offered. Higher education institutions accepting more students received additional funding (per capita contributions from the state budget) within their contract with the Ministry of Education. The government asked schools for support in order to prevent secondary school graduates from unemployment as they are highly at risk under current conditions (see paragraphs on Employment and unemployment in part 1.3).

No other measures have been taken as a direct response to the crisis towards the initial education and training system. Revision of existing programmes or curricula are driven by the curricular reform introduced before the crisis, however curricula of VET schools can be affected by the crisis as they are autonomously designed by schools. Rush changes in terms of knowledge, skills, competences are not expected. Numbers of students and future graduates from respective study and training branches can however be affected by the crisis as they are much more depending on employers than earlier as a consequence of the new Act on VET.

Any future measures will depend on fiscal policy in the future. Nevertheless, the government decided not to cut wages of teachers and trainers in regional schooling as well as of higher education teachers as its priority. Cost saving measures should affect in particular capital expenditures in higher education and expenditures on research. The latter measure is perceived very negatively by experts and it is seen as contradictory to recommendations aimed at building knowledge based economy.

In a period of shortage of workers businesses and schools learnt to cooperate, and practical training improved during the last few years in branches where companies offered new equipment and technologies for training. Centres of VET are to be established in all regions according to the new Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on VET based on regional policy papers of VET development. Apparently, for more active engagement of employers in this process, in particular during progressing crisis, interventions to motivate employers to get involved into IVET and formal CVET would be welcomed. Nevertheless, the creation of Centres of VET is in progress despite the crisis. Diverse VET councils (national, regional and sectoral) created following the Act on VET started their activities during the severest period of the crisis. The opportunity for partnerships among social partners and across sectors has been

used. The results however indicate unpreparedness of councils to offer data for evidence based policy making not only due to the crisis.

The crisis affected CVET in enterprises, that is however not a subject of direct governmental intervention. The only exception is the abolishment of the tax relief in support of continuing professional development of specific medical staff within the austerity package of the government. This is a negative message for hospitals in need of attested professionals. Teachers and trainers affected by the new continuing professional development model discussed in detail later were offered some modest increase in wages provided they are able to collect a required sum of credits from in-service training and other activities stipulated by the new Act No 317/2009 Coll. on pedagogical staff.

The crisis caused however adoption of a set of measures influencing labour market and labour market training. In 2009, the government declared fighting the rising unemployment the most important goal. Retraining of unemployed and employed at risk of dismissal, as well as placement of graduates on Graduates practice (see part 6.3) was made easier to access and was more generously funded. Types of training were however often supply driven rather than targeted at delivering needed skills increasing the employability. Training is traditionally targeted on delivery of job/sector specific skills (in case of cooperation with enterprises) and on key competences (in particular languages and digital competence). Training is not yet linked to NQF as the NQF is still pending. The specific measures to address labour market training were as follows:

- Within the new ESF programming period 2007-2013 the National Project “100” focused on support for citizens at risk of mass dismissal as a consequence of the global financial crisis. The project was intended for all regions except the Bratislava Region. It included two activities: Activity 1 “Guidance and support for employees at risk of job loss as a result of the global financial crisis”, and Activity 2 “Training of citizens at risk of mass dismissal as a consequence of the global financial crisis”. Within the second activity 1,980 people were planned to be trained between 30th January 2009 and 31st January 2011. Activities should have been focused on support for education and training of the target group tailored according to specific requirements and needs of potential employers, or current employers in case of changes in their production schedule or implementation of new technologies; support for targeted training focused on self-employment and support for training focused on development of key skills. The national project should have been managed by the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (ÚPSVaR, *Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) with a total budget of EUR 3,319,391.89 and training should have been delivered by external providers contracted by labour offices. Nevertheless, this measure did not prove attractive for employers.

- Another new instrument the Contribution to support employment of persons that have completed education and training for the labour market (§ 51a) was also introduced by the 2008 amendment of Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services (*Zákon č. 5/2004 Z. z. o službách zamestnanosti*). It was in particular intended to increase the interest of employers in employment of older workers. Finally it focused on “youngest and oldest”, on the employment of secondary school graduates registered with the registry of job seekers for at least six months, and citizens over 50 years of age registered with the registry of job seekers for at least three months. The contribution to employers employing a job seeker for 24 months depended on the unemployment rate in a respective region, the status of the employer and the status of the job seeker. This measure is however unsuccessful, as it was finally not applied in 2009. The reason is the inflow of experienced workers in the labour market as the consequence of massive dismissals caused by the crisis. These workers are better employable than retrained unemployed with a longer history of unemployment. But it could also indicate a mismatch between the focus of labour market

training programmes and specific employers' needs, as well as employers' attitudes towards older workers and the youngest ones.

- More intensive application of earlier active labour market policies was envisaged by the Act No. 49/2009 Coll. amending Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services, valid since March 2009. It was aimed at introducing new measures focused on reducing consequences of the crisis. The measures included contributions supporting: retaining employment; creation of new job; employee's wage; self-employment; and self-employment in agricultural products processing and trade. Improvement is also expected from better advising of unemployed and from a stronger support including financial one for starting their own businesses. Changes in the active labour market policies induced by the crisis are discussed in detail in part 6.3.

There are no new measures currently intended to stimulate VET for adults except the aforementioned measure addressing people at risk of mass dismissal. Additional means were however allocated for ESF National Projects IIIA and XI (see part 10.3) already developed in the earlier programming period with prolonged drawing till 31st May 2009 in order to improve skills of unemployed and those already employed.

State aid was given to important employers, e.g. Volkswagen, in support of retaining employment. A universal measure to remit levies for up to 60 days to companies retaining employment is at disposal as a consequence of amendment law No. 49/2009 Coll. indicated above. State aid to attract new investors is also offered accompanied with declarations of cofunding retraining of recruited new employees.

3.3 LONGER TERM CONSEQUENCES AND FUTURE RESPONSES

There are no consequences on VET in future directly linked to the crisis. Many politicians even believe that the crisis is over and Slovakia again entered the period of growth and therefore no specific measures are needed anymore. It is true that national economy returned to pre-crisis production in the automotive industry, the country leading industry, and that in electrical devices production, the country second important industrial field, the production already exceeded the pre-crisis level by 50 %. It is however necessary to warn against excessive optimism. Slovakia's economy remains very vulnerable because its current growth is caused by the current revival in foreign demand for its goods. Household final consumption expenditure is still low (with negative growth rates in 2009 and 2010; -0.7 % and -0.2 % respectively, according to the September 2010 estimation of the government) and may be even endangered by the aforementioned austerity package already introduced. General government final consumption expenditure is also weak with expected decrease in 2011 (- 6.3 % in 2011 followed by a modest increase + 0.9 % and + 0.6 % in next two years). High unemployment, in particular high youth unemployment, must be urgently addressed. The crisis made the problems of VET already known before the crisis even more transparent (see part 2 for details, and part 2.1.3 for current debates description). The main lesson from the crisis is however as follows: A further restructuring of the national economy is urgently needed. Heavy dependence on export of industrial goods makes the country vulnerable and low job creations for young professionals with higher education accelerates the brain drain for employment and self-employment opportunities abroad. Although the current mismatch between demand and supply must be addressed, and curricula in IVET in particular in ISCED 3C studies reformed, IVET graduates supply must not be adjusted just to current labour market needs as expected by employers. It is urgently necessary to anticipate the necessary skills in the domestic labour market need, but also take into account EU labour market able to absorb the highest quality people by offering adequate working positions or at least more attractive wages. Slovakia is at risk of massive over-qualification or the massive brain drain in the future.

4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Vocational education and training was traditionally linked to the activities of guilds as in other European countries. The first educational institutions appeared at the end of the 18th century. Worth mentioning is the establishment of the school in Liptovský Hrádok in 1796; it gradually developed into the Royal Chamber Forestry School. The Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II, a true Enlightenment ruler, was extremely supportive for massification of VET. In 1783 he ordered the obligatory training of all apprentices in Sunday schools. Nevertheless, schools that could be considered predecessors of today's technically oriented secondary specialised schools emerged only before the end of the 19th century with exception of the mining, metallurgy and forestry areas, where the tradition goes back to 18th century. The first secondary industrial school of machinery was established in 1872 by private initiative in Košice. It gradually developed into a model public school. On the verge of the century, industrial schools with continuity to present days were also established in other cities. A metal processing school established in Bratislava in 1903 developed into the most important industrial school of modern Slovakia.

Between World War I and World War II the unification of the inherited education system in the newly founded Czechoslovakia was begun. People's vocational schools affiliated to municipality schools were established by Act No. 75/1920 Coll. in order to support the broadening knowledge and skills of poorly educated youngsters from predominantly rural areas. In addition, the regular VET school types started to emerge (commercial, industrial, agricultural, schools of forestry and wood processing) offering also one-year courses, one-year study programmes, and two-year follow-up programmes. There were also vocational schools for women's professions offering two years of study, followed by one-year higher women schools, or other specialised schools, e.g. two-year nursery schools, or the institute for kindergarten teachers.

In the 1937/1938 school year, there were 131 apprentice schools considered by law as regular schools offering VET, however aimed at complementing work and on the job training in the workshops of their employees. While the structure of today's secondary specialised schools offering ISCED 3A VET is already visible in the development of the 1930s, schools offering ISCED 3C type school based VET still did not exist. Only after World War II, the aforementioned apprentice schools were gradually replaced by schools offering school based VET. This development was backed significantly by legislation from 1960; and further strengthened by the 1976 educational reform.

The 1976 "New Concept of Education Reform" made IVET a core of the education system. Institutions training future blue-collar workers became a status of secondary schools - the secondary vocational schools (SOU, *stredné odborné učilište*) emerged. Besides two- or three-year training programmes many SOU started to offer four-year programmes finished by a highly appreciated "maturita" school leaving exam (*maturitná skúška*) and "maturita" school leaving certificate (*vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške*). A three-tier model of secondary education - grammar school (G, *gymnázium*) providing general education, secondary specialised school (SOŠ, *stredná odborná škola*) providing predominantly theoretically based vocational education, and SOU providing predominantly practically oriented vocational education - created in the 1970s (and lasted till 2008) despite criticism of the unequal quality of the "maturita" programmes, especially those offered by SOU.

The enhanced status of SOU was supported by massive investment into SOU facilities. In contrast to G and SOŠ, SOU with a projected 60 % of the age cohort benefited from the

affiliation with and financial support of large enterprises or respective sector headquarters. These so-called “complex” SOU mushroomed and provided campus style service including practical training in school workshops. Finally, all basic occupations were covered by respective VET study or training branches. This is why there were so many VET programmes and diverse VET schools originally concentrating on the preparation of a young labour force for respective sectors of economy.

After the political change in 1989, the collapsing command economy caused the interruption of institutional links between schools and sectors/enterprises. Almost all SOU students traditionally contracted and co-financed by relevant enterprises became “state students” fully depending on the state budget and state managed schools, as at the same time enterprises became unable to maintain SOU. In 1990, respective ministries became responsible for establishing SOU to save them from the collapse. It was clear that the VET system as a whole faced a restructuring. In the mid 1990s, under the influence of the international evaluation of the VET system⁹, it was intended to reduce the number of programmes and quite surprisingly to develop occupational standards and related educational standards for all about 3,000 occupations registered on the labour market. This project backed by the 1996 government decision was however finally cancelled and the VET system further developed, dominantly influenced by the fight for survival of VET schools harmed by the economic downturn and affected by the fundamental restructuring of the economy. In the 2000s, as a consequence of a population decline, a decline in the interest in blue-collar professional training (due to its lower status and lower employability) and gradual loosening of the links with the world of work, and later also as a consequence of introducing per capita financing, SOŠ and SOU were encouraged to merge to form associated secondary schools (ZŠŠ, *združená stredná škola*) or joined schools (SŠ, *spojená škola*). In the 2000s, Slovakia also underwent the process of decentralisation, with regional parliaments and heads of 8 self-governing regions elected for the first time in December 2001. Responsibility for the establishment of schools was transferred to the self-governing bodies on 1st July 2002. A new system of self-governing offices and sectoral state administration offices was established on 1st January 2004, and fiscal decentralisation came subsequently into force on 1st January 2005, dominantly based on redistribution of personal income tax. Self-governing regions got the responsibility for the establishment and cancelling (in compliance with the network of schools and school establishments) of all originally state managed secondary VET schools and VET establishments aimed at provision of practical training for some VET schools. Some schools, which are of trans-regional importance, e.g. bilingual schools established under international agreements or schools for special educational needs pupils (of which some provide for VET), have remained under the responsibility of the state administration.

In parallel, within the decentralisation process the Ministry of Education developed into the national authority almost solely responsible for IVET till 2008. Other ministries were only given the opportunity to participate in advisory bodies and working groups subordinated to the Ministry of Education. A typical example were sectoral expert commissions affiliated to the State Institute of Vocational Education (ŠIOV, *Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania*), within which also other than education sector experts had the opportunity to express their opinions concerning curricula and other aspects of IVET provision, e.g. school leaving exams. While till September 2008 the Ministry of Education

⁹ *Strategic Review of Vocational Education and Training - Czech and Slovak Republics.*

approved curricula for all programmes (the so-called basic pedagogical documents (*základné pedagogické dokumenty*), the Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll., in force since 1st September 2008, introduced curricular decentralisation. In the 2008/2009 school year first grade classes of VET schools started to be taught according to curricula elaborated autonomously by schools (see paragraphs on Curriculum development and pedagogies in part 5.1) in cooperation with regional/local stakeholders who were explicitly invited to contribute to adjustment of curricula by this act. This act also changed the system of secondary education, abolishing secondary vocational schools. From September 2008, there are only two secondary streams. The general education stream is represented by grammar schools (G, *gymnázia*) and VET stream by secondary specialised schools (SOŠ, *stredné odborné školy*). In practice it means that all secondary vocational schools (SOU, *stredné odborné učilištia*) were renamed as secondary specialised schools. Secondary vocational schools were originally established to offer education for skilled workers and predominantly ISCED 3C programmes, finishing with a Certificate of Apprenticeship in contrast to secondary specialised schools offering ISCED 3A programmes finishing with the “maturita” school leaving certificate. The gradual development led to a dramatic increase of ISCED 3A programmes offered by secondary vocational schools and to a non-transparent system of VET schools with an increasing share of associated (*združené*) and joined (*spojené*) schools. Thus, the legislation reflected the reducing of the differences between the two kinds of schools. Furthermore, a variety of programmes has also remained preserved.

Currently, initial vocational education and training is still school based in Slovakia. There is no typical apprenticeship scheme in use, and all participants are seen as pupils (students) according to legislation. There is a possibility for companies to co-finance IVET at secondary VET schools and also partly participate at training of students who they are interested in as future employees. To distinguish between them and students not in preparation for respective company the former are sometimes called “apprentices”, regardless the fact that legislation does not make such a difference and all programmes are strictly school based and regulated by education sector legislation. Secondary IVET system in Slovakia has remain among EU strongest in terms of number of participants, despite long-term strengthening of general education. This shift, accompanied also by the students’ preference of ISCED 3A over ISCED 3C studies still contributes to the mismatch in supply and demand in the labour market, where ISCED 3C graduates are extremely missing in some professions although there are many ISCED 3C graduates registered with labour offices. Discrepancies in supply and demand visible also in the very high unemployment of VET graduates led to the newest reform of VET governance. Improvement is expected from regional Centres of VET¹⁰ in process of establishment under sectoral players’ supervision, and from the strategic leadership of employers in programming VET supply.

The status of the Centre of VET can be assigned to a secondary specialised school, centre of practical training, school farm or centre of vocational practice provided it cooperates with respective professional organisation, it is equipped with modern material and technical equipment, and it delivers VET for respective occupations. Professional organisation must take a decision on the establishment of centre of VET upon the approval

¹⁰ See part 6.2 in “Progress in VET in priority areas agreed in the Copenhagen process: VET policy Report - Slovakia 2010”.

of establisher. Thus, no centre can be created by regional authorities without the support of respective professional organisation. It is expected that these regional centres of VET will become leaders in the provision of quality training as they will be excellently equipped in cooperation with regional authorities and employers (sectoral players).

With coming into force of Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on VET (*Zákon č. 184/2009 Z. z. o odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave*), the period of a sort of isolation of VET from other sectors and employers terminated, and even more, the education sector role in VET diminished extremely. Till 2008, the VET system was dominantly supply driven (from the labour market point of view), and at the same time students demand driven (from the education services point of view). In contrast to the period till 2008, people outside the education sector are expected to take a lead in preparing strategy documents or supplying the background data for their development. The Act on VET stipulated the creation of multi-partisan VET councils on national, regional and sectoral levels. Although the Ministry of Education has remained responsible for the development of overall VET strategies, the supply of sub-national strategies to the National VET Council and subsequently to the Ministry of Education dominantly depends on the experience, specific data and points of view of stakeholders representing employers. Sectoral ministries (Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Construction and Regional Development, Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Environment) assisted by Sectoral VET Councils established by professional associations/chambers in cooperation with the respective sectoral ministry and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, are responsible for preparation of sectoral VET strategies aimed at the analysis of sectoral skills and future training of students for sectoral occupations. Education sector representatives play just an advisory role in it. Regional self-governments, advised by the Regional VET Council, again with the dominant influence of employers, are responsible for elaboration of regional VET strategies. Sectoral VET Councils under the supervision of specific employers representing the professional bodies identified by law prepare "Plans of labour market needs", indicating the number of graduates needed in respective study/training branches for the following five years. These plans are expected to be used as the basis for the decisions on networks of VET schools and their study programmes in the future next 5 years. The future will show to what extent regional VET councils affiliated to self-governing regions, and the self-governing regions themselves, will manage to balance lobbying and regulate an inflow into respective programmes appropriately. It must be stressed that not purely labour market demand and employers' co-funding (e.g. within the German-style dual system) but requests of employers for VET graduates financed from public money should serve as proxy data for anticipation of labour market needs. It is clear that the development of know-how for anticipation and forecasting skill needs is very urgent in support of evidence based policy making.

Within the last 20 years many new higher education institutions, including private ones, have been established. Former state universities were transformed into public ones according to Higher Education Act No. 131/2002 Coll. (*Zákon č. 131/2002 Z.z. o vysokých školách*). This act distinguished between higher education institutions (HEI) according to the founder and for the first time enabled the creation of private HEI. This is why private HEI were recently so marginal and why there is a pressure to create them now. HEI are established and may be dissolved by an act of the National Council except private HEI that are established by the decision of the government following the proposal of the Ministry of Education and report of the Accreditation Commission. In 2002, in response to the long-term expectations of church, the Catholic University in Ružomberok (*Katolícka univerzita v Ružomberku*) offering Catholic religion-based education, and in 2004, in response to the expectations of the Hungarian minority, the J. Selye University in Komárno (*Univerzita J. Selyeho v Komárne*) with Hungarian as the language of instruction, were established. In 2009, there were 20 public, 3 state (military academy, police academy, and medical

university focusing on in-service training), 10 private and 3 foreign (of which 2 private) higher education institutions. Thus, there are in total 36 HEIs now, in contrast to 13 in 1989. A dramatic increase in enrolment in tertiary education is caused not only by the interest of students, but also due to financial scheme. Similarly to secondary schools, tertiary schools are also stimulated by per capita financing to chase after students regardless the quality in the output. On the other hand, Slovakia is still among countries with the EU lowest shares of tertiary educated population due to restricted access to higher education under the communist regime.

In the 2000s, under pressure from the Ministry of Education and the Bologna agreement, all HEI transformed their educational programmes into three separate parts: bachelor studies, master studies and doctoral studies, with only marginal exceptions. Nevertheless, further transformation may be forthcoming due to disputable constructions of bachelor studies that are usually considered by both students and programme designers just a pre-level to continuation in master studies. Furthermore, all higher education institutions were established as universities according to the tradition confirmed also by the 1990 Higher Education Act elaborated after the political change. Although there is a possibility to distinguish between three types of higher education institutions (with higher professional schools focusing on labour market, strongly oriented education with limited research activities, and universities offering all cycles of tertiary education and interrelated research and development), this categorisation is not effective in practice. Thus, higher education faces further restructuring. The inevitable reconstruction of bachelor studies, partly in progress, opens the door for new IVET opportunities.

Even before 1989 Slovakia developed a relatively extensive network of training institutions providing continuing vocational training. Originally, continuing vocational training was provided in the form of external study (evening classes) and in the form of training of employees in enterprises. Furthermore, there were adult education institutions also offering vocational training in addition to non-formal adult education. Training centres belonged to the standard social infrastructure of every enterprise. Training centre facilities were usually located in attractive surroundings, and served both as training centres and recreation facilities for employees. Besides having an educational function they had also a socialisation function. In education and health care, the system of continuing education was strictly regulated by the state, and career paths were regulated by special legislation. Specialised sectoral institutions also operated in other sectors of the economy. After 1989, the system of continuing vocational education and training has undergone even more significant changes than has initial vocational education. With the economic transition and economic decreases, continuing vocational education lost its economic backing. There were no means for training at enterprises facing the restructuring process. Many training centres closed down or changed their field of operation, many facilities went through privatisation, and new enterprises started to utilise them commercially. The situation gradually changed. Interest in continuing education has been increasing with the economical revival and provision of CVET is now offered by thousands of private providers registered with the Ministry of Interior indicating education within their scope of operations. The Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (ÚIPŠ, *Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva*) addressed 5,632 providers when collecting statistical data on CVET/LLL in 2009.

4.2 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR IVET

According to § 42(2) of the Constitution of SR (*Ústava SR*), citizens have the right to free primary and secondary education, including secondary VET schools and if possible (“depending on the potential of the society”) also tertiary education. Non-state (non-public) schools are entitled by the Constitution to collect tuition fees.

The most fundamental laws regulating IVET:

- Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Upbringing and Education (Education Act) (*Zákon č. 245/2008 Z. z. o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon)*) in force since 1st September 2008, lastly amended by Act No. 184/2009 Coll. This act defined fundamentals of regional schooling. This means the segment of the education system composed in particular of primary and secondary schools and diverse establishments, considered “non schools” from the legislative point of view, offering services for the education sector or offering education and training. Centres of practical training and centres of vocational practice are the most relevant VET “establishments” (they are not “schools” according to legislation, despite that they offer VET). In contrast to earlier legislation two changes affecting the VET system are crucial:
- Two original streams of VET schools¹¹, secondary vocational schools (SOŠ, *stredná odborná škola*) and secondary specialised schools (SOU, *stredné odborné učilište*) were merged into one. Thus, all VET schools are now categorised as secondary specialised schools.
- Stipulation of levels of education is much more detailed and aligned explicitly to ISCED levels.

A set of decrees and other bylaws is affiliated to this act. The most important decrees are as follows:

- Decree of the Ministry of Education No. 318/2008 Coll. on Completion of Study at Secondary Schools (*Vyhláška Ministerstva školstva Slovenskej republiky č. 318/2008 Z. z. o ukončovaní štúdia na stredných školách*);
- Decree of the Ministry of Education No. 282/2009 Coll. on Secondary Schools (*Vyhláška Ministerstva školstva Slovenskej republiky č. 282/2009 Z. z. o stredných školách*); this decree also includes the list of types of secondary specialised schools, lists of study and training branches, and the list of sectoral professional organisations responsible for the respective fields of study;
- Decree of the Ministry of Education No. 326/2008 Coll. on Types and Appropriate Characteristics of Certificates and Other Documents including the Ways of their Registration and Storage (*Vyhláška Ministerstva školstva Slovenskej republiky č.326/2008 Z. z. o druhoch a náležitostiach vysvedčení a ostatných školských tlačív vrátane spôsobov ich evidencie a uloženia*);
- Decree of the Ministry of Education No. 325/2008 Coll. on School Facilities of Guidance and Prevention (*Vyhláška Ministerstva školstva Slovenskej republiky č.325/2008 Z. z. o školských zariadeniach výchovného poradenstva a prevencie*).
- Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on Vocational Education and Training (*Zákon č. 184/2009 Z. z. o odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave*). This act supplements the Education Act by the new

¹¹ See Slovakia: Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2008, Part 0401 Background to the IVET.

governance of VET allowing for direct intervention of non-educational stakeholders, in particular employers represented by professional associations and chambers, into IVET. A dominant part of the act is devoted to the stipulation of VET Fund related details perceived quite controversially (see part 10.4).

- Act No. 317/2009 Coll. on Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff (*Zákon č. 317/2009 Z. z. o pedagogických zamestnancoch a odborných zamestnancoch a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov*), in force since 1st November 2009 is a specialised act establishing rights and duties of teachers, trainers and other learning facilitators, qualification requirements for these professions as well as assessment of their performance. Originally aimed at setting of a new model of continuing education and professional development it became a more comprehensive legislative norm.

Act No. 596/2003 Coll. on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government (*Zákon č. 596/2003 Z. z. o štátnej správe v školstve a školskej samospráve*) lastly amended by Acts No. 245/2008, No. 179/2009 and No. 184/2009. This act regulates in detail the procedure of establishing schools and school establishments, the status of their managers, the management of schools by local/regional and national authorities (state, public, self-governing, including specific self-governing bodies at schools and regions), the supervision of schools and school establishments, etc. This act has been substantially amended and complemented by a new view on VET governance introduced by the Act on VET.

- Act No. 597/2003 Coll. on Financing Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and School Establishments (*Zákon č. 597/2003 Z. z. o financovaní základných škôl, stredných škôl a školských zariadení*), lastly amended by Acts No. 245/2008, No. 179/2009 and No. 184/2009; This law and respective bylaws specify financing schools and school establishments on a per capita principle (see part 10.1). Since January 2004 all primary and secondary schools receive an equal per capita funding from the state budget regardless of their status in order to encourage the establishment of non-state schools. Since 2009 non-state establishments specified by Act No. 179/2009 Coll. are guaranteed to receive at least 88 % of the per capita funding from the budget of the self-governing region (and in fact from income tax centrally collected and subsequently distributed).

- Higher Education Act No. 131/2002 Coll. (*Zákon č. 131/2002 Z. z. o vysokých školách*), lastly amended by Act No. 199/2010 Coll. This law with respective bylaws is fundamental for tertiary education. It also regulates the financing aspects. Tertiary education is free of charge in public universities; however it is possible to collect fees in private universities and since 2008 also for part-time studies at public universities. All public higher education institutions were universities *lege artis*. This should be changed according to the ongoing process of comprehensive accreditation leading to categorisation of HEI into research and education oriented ones (universities) and HEI focusing on education (higher education institutions and professional higher education institutions).

4.3 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR IVET AND ORGANIGRAM

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Ministry of Education (MŠ, *Ministerstvo školstva*) is the single national level authority essentially responsible for IVET. Other ministries play a limited role supporting specific secondary VET schools within their professional scope (health, police, fire-fighting). Ministry of Health has a specific role due to larger network of health schools (together 29) and due to autonomy in issuing state educational programmes (together 7 ISCED 5B, 8 ISCED 3A and one ISCED 3C) and autonomous accreditation procedures. Other ministries

can issue state educational programmes after agreement with the Ministry of Education. Following the latter procedure, the Ministry of Interior has issued 2 state educational programmes (ISCED 4A) for police schools (and one programme is being developed) and one programme (ISCED 5B) for a school of fire protection.

Nevertheless the position of Ministry of Education has changed since the entry into force of the Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on VET (*Zákon č. 184/2009 Z. z. o odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave*) in September 2009, sectoral ministries (of interior; health; economy and construction; culture and tourism; transport, posts and telecommunications; environment and regional development) have more to say to VET on a national level as they have representatives in the Council of the Government for VET (further National VET Council). It is believed that the National VET Council together with Regional VET Councils (for details see paragraphs on Regional/local government below) and Sectoral VET Councils (see also 8.2) will improve the alignment of VET to the labour market. Sectoral VET Councils are to be established by professional associations/chambers in cooperation with respective sectoral ministry and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (MPSVR, *Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*).

The most important institutions directly managed by the Ministry of Education are as follows:

- The National Institute for Education (ŠPÚ, *Štátny pedagogický ústav*) - support for general education curriculum development including general subjects of VET schools; responsibility for elaboration of national level framework curricular documents (so-called state educational programmes);
- The National Institute of Certified Measurement (NÚCEM, *Národný ústav certifikovaných meraní*) - responsibility for national student assessment programmes (in 9th and 13th year of study) and diverse international programmes (e.g. PISA, TALIS, SITES, etc.);
- The State Institute of Vocational Education (ŠIOV, *Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania*) - assistance in development of VET curriculum, responsibility for elaboration of national level framework curricular documents (so-called state educational programmes);
- The Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (ÚIPŠ, *Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva*) - collecting information including UOE harmonised statistics in education, analytical studies;
- The Research Institute for Child Psychology and Pathopsychology (VÚDPaP, *Výskumný ústav detskej psychológie a patopsychológie*) - psychological aspects of child and youth development, gradually focusing more on career guidance and counselling;
- Methodological-Pedagogical Centre (MPC, *metodicko-pedagogické centrum*) - responsible for the provision of in-service training for teachers and trainers with eight regional subsidiaries;
- The State School Inspection agency (ŠŠI, *Štátna školská inšpekcia*) - a state administration body headed by the Chief School Inspector appointed for a five-year period by the Minister of Education. By law the State School Inspection is independent in its performance of school inspection, which is based on the annual plan and results in the annual report on the status of education and upbringing.

REGIONAL/LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Slovakia is composed of eight self-governing regions identical with eight state administration regions. Thus, the educational authority is currently of two types:

- the self-governing administration, with offices of municipalities, responsible for maintaining basic schools (comprising primary and lower secondary education) and other establishments of local importance; and eight offices of self-governing regions maintaining secondary schools;
- the state administration, based on eight regional school offices located in the same cities as aforementioned offices of self-governing regions, acting as intermediary for financing school and school establishments.

The first level of the state administration agenda in education is covered by school directors who are appointed for five-year terms; a school director selection process is obligatory every five years.

Before establishing or cancelling an education institution, a municipality/self-governing region is obliged to ask the MŠ to register/de-register the institution. Without this registration/de-registration, the municipality and/or self-governing region cannot act. The law also requires a statement from the municipal school board or territorial school board concerning the intentions of the municipality or self-governing region.

Although unofficial freedom in finalising the curricula was given to schools (10 % of the weekly instruction hours and 30 % of its content might have been adjusted according to local/regional needs) curriculum development remained centralised until the entry into force of the new Education Act. Since September 2008 schools make use of their own, autonomously developed educational programmes based on by MŠ approved state educational programmes (developed by ŠIOV and ŠPÚ). The MŠ provides for textbooks for free according to a specific list. Other textbooks recommended by the MŠ can also be used.

Since 2009, with the entering into force of the Act on VET involvement of other players has been made possible within newly created Regional VET councils composed of representatives of state, self-government, employers and employees. In particular, the involvement of employers in VET should be strengthened. Employers can participate in elaborating IVET graduates' profiles and setting requirements for knowledge, skills, abilities and working habits. They can also facilitate practical training and provide for equipment and materials. In contrast to employers mentioned above acting in relation to respective schools and school curricula, employer associations or professional associations are also expected to act in a more general level, e.g. contribute to the elaboration of graduates' profiles in the state curricula, contribute to the development of textbooks and provide other teaching aids. They are in fact the most powerful body in preparing background documents, in particular VET regional strategies for decision making of regional self-governing authorities. They became more influential in quality check as they delegate their representatives to examination commissions for school leaving exams. It is of particular importance that they should elaborate plans for labour market needs in terms of estimated number of graduates in respective study and training branches for the following five years. This is an extraordinarily powerful tool for the assertion of employers' stances, which is expected to change networks of schools and programmes to adjust them to employers' needs. Nevertheless, regional human resource development is at risk of being subordinated to the employers' planning.

SHARING RESPONSIBILITY IN DECISION-MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION

In case of lower secondary education (marginal with regard to VET), upper secondary education and post-secondary non tertiary education, as well as a single alternative IVET pathway (ISCED 2C training), the decision-making level body, in both policy and legislation, is the Ministry of Education. Self-governing bodies play some limited role in policies (in particular with regard to networks of schools and programmes), however within strong governmental regulation, in particular due to centrally controlled fiscal policy. Responsible bodies for implementing policy at micro-level are school directors. There is a duality at the mezzo-level, as responsibility is shared by school establishers (predominantly self-governing regions) and regional state administration (regional school offices).

There is no genuine apprenticeship scheme in VET in Slovakia, only a very marginal number of students is trained for companies and their training co-financed by companies. A window for stronger participation of companies will be opened by the coming in force of the Act on VET, as this act makes some costs of the training and affiliated services of companies' tax deductible. Regional centres of VET leading well-equipped institutions providing for training of students, in-service training and regional information service are to be established under support of employers.

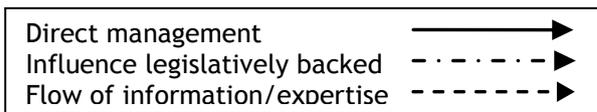
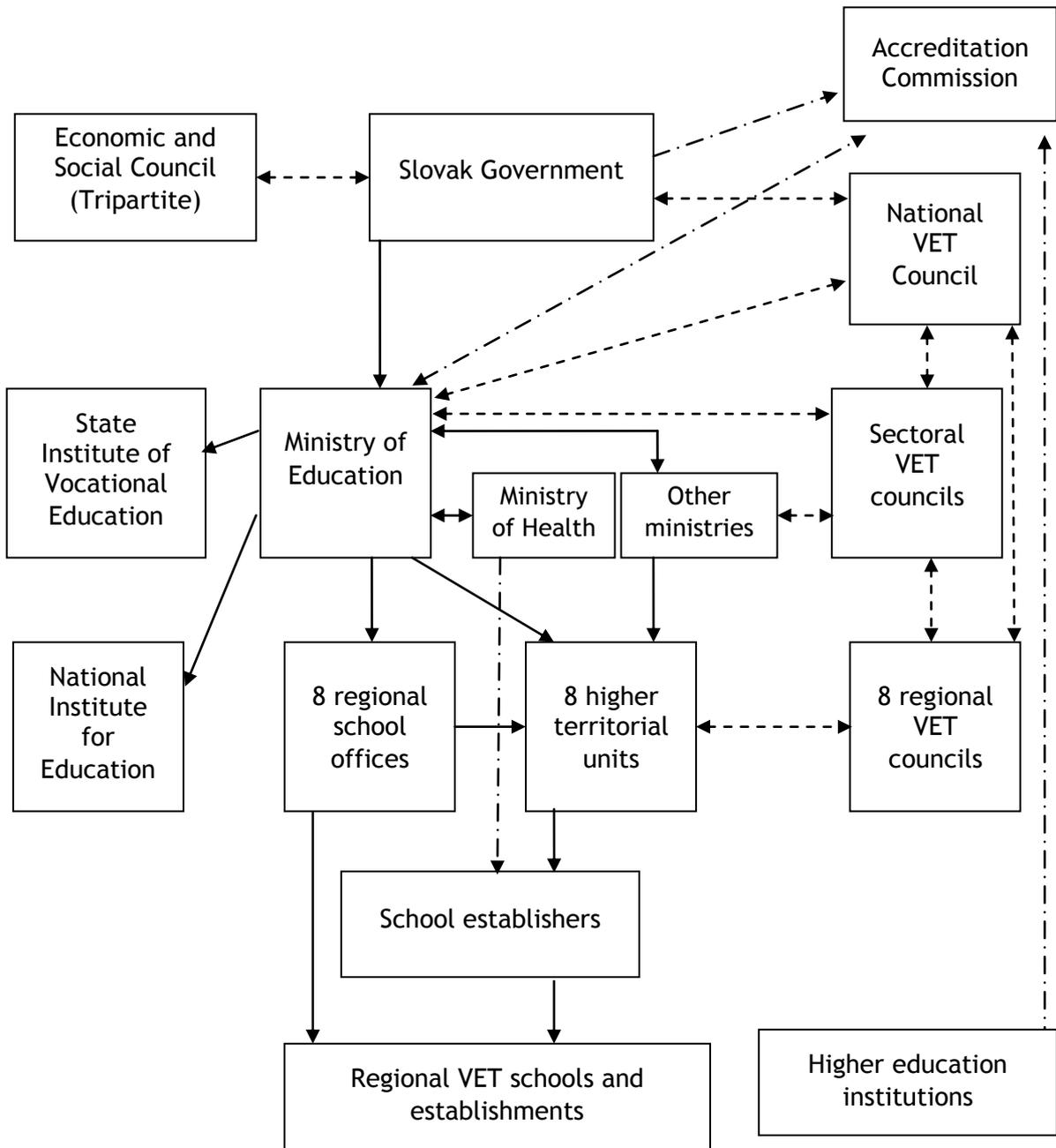
Although regional schools are also legal entities higher education institutions' autonomy is much stronger. The Ministry of Education is responsible for preparing legislation however there are hardly policies developed purely on the central level as there are two strong players representing higher education institutions recognised by law: the Slovak Rectors' Conference (SRK, *Slovenská rektorská konferencia*) and the Higher Education Council (RVŠ, *Rada vysokých škôl*). While the former is gradually increasing in importance as it is composed of executive representatives of universities, the latter is gradually decreasing in importance as it is a large body composed of elective representatives of all constituents of universities often unable to offer a clear stance and vision. The Ministry of Education and the government influence universities by a financing scheme and by regulating an inflow of funding for research activities.

There are also diverse activities within non-formal youth programmes contributing to the development of vocational skills of youth regulated by Act No. 282/2008 Coll. on Support of Working with Youth (*Zákon č. 282/2008 Z. z. o podpore práce s mládežou*), and implemented by institutions of the education sector and also by non-state organisations, however their activities do not focus on provision of training to obtain the qualification.

ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

The Economic and Social Council of the Slovak Republic (HSR, *Hospodárska a sociálna rada Slovenskej republiky*) a consulting and concerting body re-established by Tripartite Act No. 103/2007 Coll. (*Zákon č. 103/2007 Z. z. o trojstranných konzultáciách na celoštátnej úrovni (zákon o tripartite)*) discusses all policy papers and legislation before submitting it to the meeting of the government. Nevertheless, it has little influence on IVET delivery. Although social partners could have participated in decision-making processes in curriculum development, education standards establishment and in qualification exams, their role in IVET has been primarily that of advisors to the state administration. With the introduction of decentralisation in curriculum development by the Act No. 245/2008 Coll. and the new governance architecture by the Act No. 184/2009 Coll. the more space for influencing IVET by social partners is created. A representative of trade unions is one of vice-presidents of the newly established National VET Council (see e.g. paragraphs on Governance and funding in part 2.1.2).

ORGANIGRAM FOR IVET



4.4 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR CVET

LEGISLATION

The CVET relevant legislation is very fragmented and there is no single fundamental law on CVET. The most relevant legislation regulating CVET/adult learning/LLL:

- Act No. 568/2009 Coll. on Lifelong Learning (*Zákon č. 568/2009 Z. z. o celoživotnom vzdelávaní*) was expected to play a fundamental role by aligning CVET/LLL to the National System of Qualifications (NSQ) and by supporting CVET/LLL in all settings. Respective bylaw setting the NSQ should be issued by 1st January 2011. Similarly to Act No. 386/1997 Coll. on Further Education (see below) this act however concentrates on the education sector. The original overarching function umbrelling all sectors and learning settings has not been finally tackled;
- Act No. 386/1997 Coll. on Further Education (*Zákon č. 386/1997 Z. z. o ďalšom vzdelávaní*), lastly amended by Act No. 365/2004 Coll. and Act No. 653/2007 Coll., contained classification of institutions providing CVET, training activities, accreditation and certification rules. It also identified sources of financing CVET, however only in a declaratory form, without any measures to provide for mandatory public or private financing CVET. Since 1st January 2010 this act was replaced by the Act on LLL;
- Act No. 311/2001 Coll. of the Labour Code (*Zákon č. 311/2001 Z. z. Zákonník práce*), lastly amended by Act No. 574/2009 Coll., regulates employers' and employees' responsibilities for upgrading skills. However no obligatory measures are set in support of CVET¹²;
- Act No. 455/1991 Coll. on Trade Licensing (the "Trades Licensing Act"), lastly amended by Act No. 136/2010 Coll. (*Zákon č. 455/1991 Zb. o živnostenskom podnikaní (živnostenský zákon)*) regulates trades. It indirectly stipulates that the provision of continuing training is a free trade, i.e. no professional qualification is requested when registering (unless the trade is explicitly listed in the law and qualification of trader explicitly required).

Although the following act is aimed at regulation of regional initial education, it also affects LLL as it regulates state language schools accepting also adults and sets levels of language proficiency corresponding to the Common European Reference Framework for Languages. Furthermore, it regulates part-time studies at secondary schools.

- Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Upbringing and Education (Education Act) (*Zákon č. 245/2008. Z. z. o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon)*) adopted by the parliament on 22nd May 2008, in force since 1st September 2008 and abolishing Act No. 29/1984 Coll. (*Zákon č. 29/1984 Zb. o sústave základných a stredných škôl (školský zákon)*); lastly amended by Act No. 184/2009 Coll.

¹² See also Slovakia: Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2008, part 0504 CVET at the initiative of enterprises or social partners.

Similarly, the following act regulating tertiary education contains parts that regulate part-time studies.

- Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on Higher Education (*Zákon č. 131/2002 Z. z. o vysokých školách*), lastly amended by Act No. 199/2010 Coll.
- Act No. 317/2009 Coll. on Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff (*Zákon č. 317/2009 Z. z. o pedagogických zamestnancoch a odborných zamestnancoch a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov*), in force since 1st November 2010, already mentioned with regard to IVET is relevant for continuing professional development of teachers, trainers and other facilitators.

Establishment of private CVET providers can be based on the following acts:

- Act No. 513/1991 Coll. Trade Code (*Zákon č. 513/1991 Zb. Obchodný zákonník*), as amended;
- Act No. 34/2002 Coll. on Foundations (*Zákon č. 34/2002 Z. z. o nadáciách*);
- Act No. 83/1990 Coll. on Associations of Citizens (*Zákon č. 83/1990 Zb. o združovaní občanov*), as amended; and
- Act No. 455/1991 Coll. on Trade Licensing as amended (*Zákon č. 455/1991 Zb. o živnostenskom podnikaní v znení neskorších predpisov*);

Furthermore, there are four fundamental laws stipulating qualification requirements and/or the responsibility of employers to improve qualification of employees:

- Act No. 312/2001 Coll. with regard to state service (*Zákon č. 312/2001 Z. z. o štátnej službe*);
- Act No. 553/2003 Coll. with regard to public service (*Zákon č. 553/2003 Z. z. o odmeňovaní niektorých zamestnancov pri výkone práce vo verejnom záujme a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov*);
- Act No. 311/2001 Coll. of the Labour Code, already mentioned above;
- Act No. 455/1991 Coll. on Trade Licensing (the “Trades Licensing Act”), already mentioned above.

The full list of all legislative norms of the education sector, containing dozens of decrees and other regulations is available in Slovak at <http://www.minedu.sk/index.php?lang=sk&rootId=2791> and in English partly within the Slovak education system description in Eurybase at http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/SK_EN.pdf

In addition to the aforementioned norms there are many sectoral legislative norms stipulating in detail qualifications (vocational capabilities) for specific professions, e.g.

- Act No. 315/2001 Coll. on Fire Fighting and Rescue Corps (*Zákon č. 315/2001 Z. z. o Hasičskom a záchrannom zbore*) as amended by Act No. 82/2009 Coll. or the Decree of the Ministry of Interior SR No. 121/2002 Coll. on Fire Prevention (*Vyhláška Ministerstva vnútra SR č. 121/2002 Z. z. o požiarnej prevencii*) as amended by the Decree No. 259/2009 Coll.; or

- Regulation of the Government of the SR No. 296/2010 Coll. on professional qualifications of health professionals, on further training of healthcare personnel, on the system of specialised branches and the system of certified work activities (*Nariadenie vlády SR č. 296/2010 Z. z. o odbornej spôsobilosti na výkon zdravotníckeho povolania, spôsobe ďalšieho vzdelávania zdravotníckych pracovníkov, sústave špecializačných odborov a sústave certifikovaných pracovných činností*);
- Act No. 541/2004 on Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy (Atomic Act), lastly amended by Act No. 120/2010 Coll. (*Zákon o mierovom využívaní jadrovej energie (Atómový zákon)*) regulating conditions of use of nuclear energy and also professional competency of staff (§ 24) and further detailed by the Decree of the Nuclear Regulatory Authority of the SR No. 52/2006 Coll. on Professional Competency (*Vyhláška Úradu jadrového dozoru SR č. 52/2006 Z. z. o odbornej spôsobilosti*).

Labour market training is regulated by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (MPSVR, *Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) by

- Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services (*Zákon č. 5/2004 Z. z. o službách zamestnanosti*), later amended by Act No. 373/2010 Coll. It identifies respective tools of active labour market policy (§§ 49-61), provision of training of job seekers and employees in need of increasing their employability (§§ 44-48).

A specific case is

- Act No. 124/2006 Coll. on Occupational Safety and Health Protection, lastly amended by Act No. 136/2010 Coll. (*Zákon č. 124/2006 Z. z. o bezpečnosti a ochrane zdravia pri práci*), as this act regulates obligatory training of employees provided by each employer.

4.5 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR CVET AND ORGANIGRAM

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The Ministry of Education (MŠ, *Ministerstvo školstva*) is responsible for legislation for CVET, however, there are no clear borders between responsibilities of the MŠ focusing on “further” education and other governmental institutions engaged in lifelong learning, in particular the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (MPSVR, *Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) with responsibility to labour market training.

MŠ has one directly managed institution *Academia Istropolitana* (www.acadistr.sk) with a mission in this field. *Academia Istropolitana* is an education and training provider, and at the same time it develops draft policy papers, proposals of measures concerning CVET and lifelong learning. It was appointed to carry out the ESF project the “Creation, Development and Implementation of an Open System of Lifelong Learning in the Slovak Republic for the Labour Market”, one result of which was the Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance (*Stratégia celoživotného vzdelávania a celoživotného poradenstva*) adopted by the government on 25th April 2007. In 2010, shortly before the end of election period and unexpected by the education community, this institution was renamed to the National Institute for LLL with much more expanded focus in contrast to its predecessor.

The Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (ÚIPŠ, *Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva* www.uips.sk) also serves MŠ, e.g. by provision of statistics or specific research studies, if required by MŠ; This institute maintains a list of CVET providers stemming from

the registry of the Ministry of Interior (MV, *Ministerstvo vnútra*) and publishes offers for further education of pedagogical staff.

Other ministries have also specific institutions taking care of further training in the sector, among which the most important is the Institute for Public Administration (IVS, *Inštitút pre verejnú správu*, www.ivs.sk), offering professional training for officers at all levels of government including self-governing bodies. This institute similarly to other sector institutes also offers expert consultancy to respective ministries. Within the Ministry of Health (MZ, *Ministerstvo zdravotníctva*) sector, even the institution providing professional training and LLL for doctors and health care personnel was transformed into the state university, the Slovak Medical University, established in 2002.

MPSVR is responsible for the funding and organisation of labour market training. Labour market training together with other employment services are provided through the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (ÚPSVaR, *Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*, www.upsvar.sk), the network of offices of labour, social affairs and family, and detached branch offices, all headed by the Central Office.

The Institute for Labour and Family Research (IVPR, *Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny*, www.sspr.gov.sk) originated from the merging of diverse independent institutions under MPSVR. In contrast to the former labour market research institute from the 1980s and 1990s it has only limited research capacities. The Social Policy Institute (ISP, *Inštitút sociálnej politiky*) set up in 2004 by MPSVR in support of policy making in the social sector, was abolished in 2007 and its activities are to be covered by the Section of Social and Family Policies of MPSVR.

The Employment Institute (IZ, *Inštitút zamestnanosti*, www.iz.sk) is a non-governmental non-profit organisation created in 2004 focused on labour market analyses and provision of data for political discourse and policy making.

The Social Development Fund (FSR, *Fond sociálneho rozvoja*, www.fsr.gov.sk) has been created to assist and promote regional and local partnerships and financing bottom up driven projects supporting groups at risk of social exclusion. FSR serves as the national support structure for EQUAL, and since 2007 it has been launching calls as the ESF intermediary body under the managing authority to fight against poverty and social exclusion.

The Social Implementation Agency (SIA, *Sociálna implementačná agentúra*, <http://www.sia.gov.sk>) was set up by the MPSVR on 29th December 2006 to implement the 2007-2013 ESF Operational Programme “Employment and Social inclusion”.

An important lobbyist in CVET is the Slovak Association of Adult Education Institutions (AIVD, *Asociácia inštitúcií vzdelávania dospelých v SR*, www.aivd.sk), however, large enterprises and/or associations in branch industries are much stronger in lobbying for training benefits at the government.

REGIONAL/LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Regional partnerships were promoted by the Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance adopted by the government in April 2007. In contrast to IVET where the new governance architecture is described by the Act on VET coming into force in September 2009, changes affecting CVET/LLL were not laid down by the legislation. Nevertheless, it is expected that the role of self-governing regions in CVET will be gradually strengthened with the increasing involvement of employers in programming IVET. It can be hoped that with IVET related activities of regional VET councils and sectoral VET

councils the door for expansion into CVET will appear, as strong interrelation between IVET and CVET cannot be ignored. Currently there are no inter-sectoral bodies explicitly focusing on CVET, although there are some activities already indicating the importance of the overarching approach:

- The Memorandum of Cooperation between the MŠ and MPSVR, signed on 27th October 2009, should facilitate elaboration of the National System of Occupations (NSO) interlinked with the National System of Qualifications (NSQ).
- The National Forum of Lifelong Guidance established in 2008 within the European Union initiative is also an example of understanding the importance of overcoming sectoral fragmentations.

SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

In Slovakia, social partnership has been introduced in the early 1990s; however the social dialogue was interrupted in 1997 and legislation even nullified in 2004¹³. A new Tripartite Act No. 103/2007 Coll. established a new consulting and concerting body, the Economic and Social Council of the Slovak Republic (HSR, *Hospodárska a sociálna rada Slovenskej republiky*). The Council consists of 21 members equally representing three partners with seven seats each. Trade unions are represented by seven representatives of the Confederation of Trade Unions (KOZ, *Konfederácia odborových zväzov*) and employers' representatives are composed of four representatives of the National Union of Employers (RÚZ, *Republiková únia zamestnávateľov*), two of the Federation of the Employers' Association of Slovakia (AZZZ, *Asociácia zamestnávateľských zväzov a združení Slovenskej republiky*) and one of the Association on Towns and Municipalities of Slovakia (ZMOS, *Združenie miest a obcí Slovenska*). RÚZ is a member of UNICE.

The Council concerts standpoints and recommendations and makes agreements (e.g. general agreements and diverse social agreement on employment, productivity, wages, etc.) in the field of economic and employment development, it concerts standpoints and recommendations in the field of the state budget, and concerts standpoints to relevant legislation set by § 4 of the Tripartite Act.

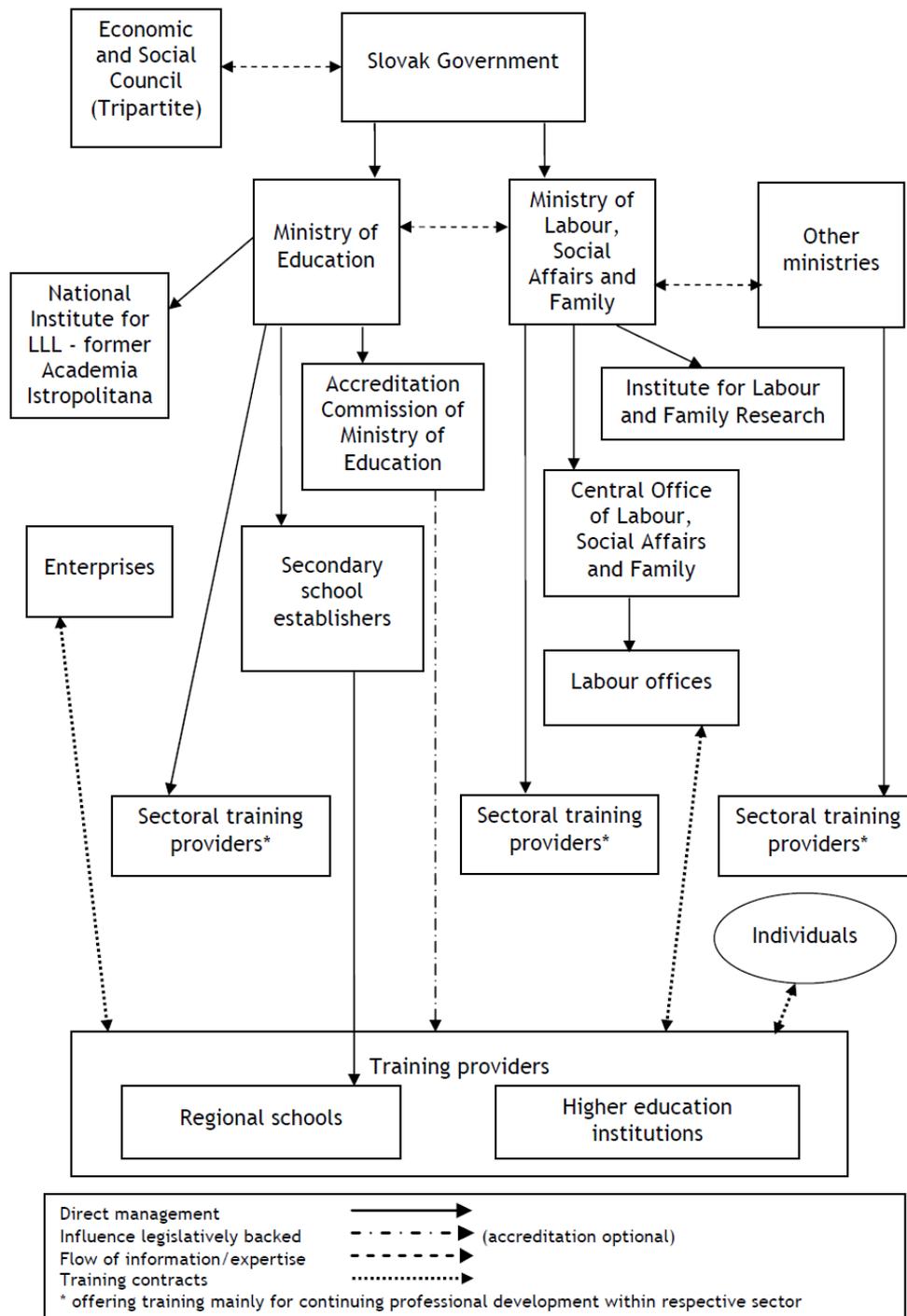
Social dialogue at the highest level could result in the General Agreement (*Generálna dohoda*) between social partners (which however happened last time in 2000). On the branch level, social dialogue is carried out through collective bargaining. Partners for collective bargaining on this level are respective employers' organisations and respective union bodies and it results in a collective agreement at the master agreement level (*kolektívna zmluva vyššieho stupňa*). According to Act No. 2/1991 Coll. on Collective Bargaining (*Zákon č. 2/1991 Zb. o kolektívnom vyjednávaní*), lastly amended by Act No. 564/2009 Coll., results of collective bargaining are binding, which is a permanent source of criticism of employers. The government returned to the earlier practice cancelled by the previous government in order to satisfy trade unions. Some businesses see it very unfair that the results of bargaining are also valid for subjects not participating in the negotiation as the extension of results is based purely on belonging to a respective sector of the

¹³ See Slovakia: Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2008.

economy disregarding from real needs of employers and employees of particular businesses.

Nevertheless, the collective bargaining just very rarely addresses VET and as a rule, provision of CVET is not a subject of master agreement level and agreements do not go beyond the stipulations of the aforementioned Act No. 311/2001 Coll. of the Labour Code.

ORGANIGRAM FOR CVET



5. INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

5.1 BACKGROUND TO THE INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

COMPULSORY SCHOOLING AND LEVELS OF EDUCATION

Pupils enter primary education at so called basic school usually at the age of 6 years. Compulsory education lasts 10 years and this usually means nine years of basic school and at least one year of grammar school or secondary specialised school (VET school). Such a construction is intended as in-built driver to prevent leaving education early. Although there is neither education level nor classification recognised in reference to the completion of compulsory education according to legislation, it is implicitly expected that mainstream students achieve at least the ISCED 3C education level. Since 2008 a system of education levels (see the table below) has been refined in order to better diversify among the education achieved and also to better classify early school leavers. As the basic school is composed of two stages, the first lasting for four years and the second one for five years; respective levels of education have been introduced (corresponding to ISCED 1 and ISCED 2). Furthermore, the lower secondary vocational level (ISCED 2C) is newly introduced for low achievers from basic schools including those who failed to complete it and therefore cannot apply for ISCED 3C level study to receive a Certificate of Apprenticeship. Those VET students who finish at least a 3-year ISCED 3C level education obtain a certificate of completion of secondary vocational education (*stredné odborné vzdelanie*) and students who finish 4 or 5-year ISCED 3A courses with an upper secondary “maturita” school leaving certificate (*maturitné vysvedčenie*) are considered to have achieved “complete secondary vocational education” (*úplné stredné odborné vzdelanie*). These terms often lead to confusion in international comparisons as students who do not achieve complete secondary vocational education (ISCED 3A) might have completed secondary vocational education (ISCED 3C). Therefore ISCED 3A level is preferably named “full secondary education” in this report (as visible also in the table below). No specific level is recognised within the national classification that corresponds to ISCED 4. All ISCED 3A and 4 programmes’ graduates are labelled as full secondary education graduates, making a difference only between VET and general education.

TABLE 26: CATEGORISATION OF EDUCATION LEVELS SINCE THE 2008/2009 SCHOOL YEAR			
EDUCATION LEVELS* ACCORDING TO ACT NO. 245/2008 COLL.			TYPE OF STUDY AT SCHOOL - ISCED**
OVERARCHING	GENERAL STREAM	VET STREAM	
PRE-PRIMARY	PRE-PRIMARY		Kindergarten - ISCED 0
BASIC	PRIMARY		1 st stage of basic school - ISCED 1
	LOWER SECONDARY		2 nd stage of basic school - ISCED 2
SECONDARY		Lower secondary vocational education (lower secondary)	Secondary specialised (vocational) school, 2-year programme with a final exam- ISCED 2C (extraordinarily with a Certificate of Apprenticeship)
		Secondary vocational education (secondary)	Secondary specialised (vocational) school, 3 to 4-year programme with a final exam (usually also with a Certificate of Apprenticeship) - ISCED 3C
	FULL SECONDARY GENERAL EDUCATION (UPPER SECONDARY)		Grammar school 4 to 8-year programme with a “maturita” school leaving certificate - ISCED 3A
		Full secondary vocational education (upper secondary)	Secondary specialised (vocational) school 4 to 5-year programme with a “maturita” school leaving certificate (in some cases also with a Certificate of Apprenticeship) - ISCED 3A Conservatory after 4 th year - ISCED 3A
			Secondary specialised (vocational) school follow-up study (usually 2 years) for ISCED 3C secondary vocational education graduates; completed by a “maturita” school leaving exam - ISCED 3A
			Secondary specialised (vocational) school post-maturita developing and refresher study (at least 6 months) completed by a final exam - ISCED 3A
			Secondary specialised (vocational) school “post-maturita” qualifying study (at least 2 years) completed by 2 nd “maturita” school leaving exam - ISCED 4A
HIGHER PROFESSIONAL		Higher professional education (post-secondary or tertiary)	Secondary specialised (vocational) school “post-maturita” specialising study completed by absolutorium - ISCED 5B
			Secondary specialised (vocational) school higher professional study (2 to 3 years) with absolutorium Conservatory after 6 th year - ISCED 5B

Notes: * In the first column overarching terms traditionally used are presented. In the second column levels offered within general education and in the third column levels offered in VET are presented.

** In the fourth column ISCED classification and study programmes with indication of respective schools depicted in the diagram of the education system are presented. ISCED levels correspond to classification used to feed UOE statistics.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

After completion of basic school, students, typically at the age of 15, make their choice of secondary school. They can decide for VET at secondary specialised schools, for conservatory or for grammar school.

Secondary specialised schools (SOŠ, *stredná odborná škola*) traditionally provide for ISCED 3A and in special cases, post-secondary education, which is content-related rated ISCED 4, and 5B. Originally they very rarely offered ISCED 3C training. However after the 2008 reform all VET schools are named SOŠ and therefore all ISCED 3C programmes are offered by SOŠ. Thus, SOŠ represent a variety of schools preparing students for both higher education and/or the labour market in professions requiring a quality general and professional education with a firm grounding in theory and also for blue collar professions. There are 60 names of SOŠ (corresponding to types of schools and their programmes) listed in the Decree of Ministry of Education No. 282/2009 Coll.

Conservatories (*konzervatórium*) were originally subsumed under secondary specialised schools. In new legislation, they are explicitly named separately in parallel to the category of secondary specialised schools (see also the diagram below). For the purpose of this report, however, we will not stress this kind of autonomy of conservatories as they are still seen as a VET system component. There are two types, dance conservatory, and music and drama conservatory.

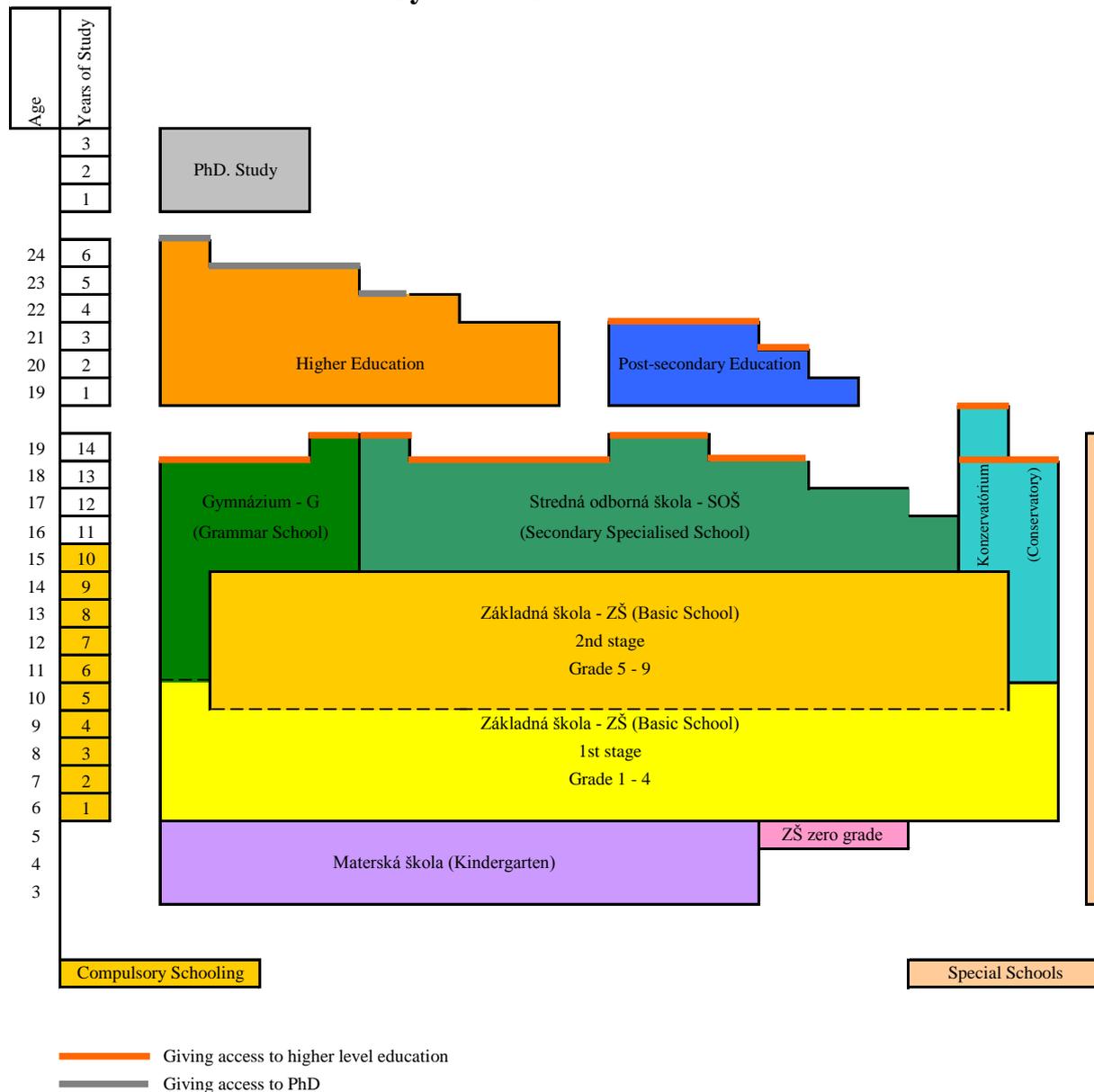
Grammar school (*gymnázium*) is the alternative to VET schools. It was originally created as a very demanding general educational institution aimed at deepening the students' theoretical knowledge and academic skills, and considered the best preparatory programme for university studies. Standard courses of study last for 4 years. The bilingual version (with English, German, French, Spanish or Italian as a complementary language of instruction) lasts 5 years. The so-called long form of study (for pupils completing Grade 5 of basic school) lasts 8 years. It was originally aimed at pupils considered as exceptionally academically gifted. Currently it predominantly attracts parents who expect a better academic environment and/or prefer bypassing the secondary school admission procedure after the completion of basic school. 24.8 % and 24.1 % of all full-time graduates from secondary general programmes at Grammar schools graduated from the long form of Grammar school in 2008/2009 and 2009/2010, respectively, in contrast to the originally projected 5 %.

Special schools provide education and training to mentally and physically challenged students. Since the early 1990s, the trend to integrate SEN students is increasing and inclusion efforts are supported by legislation and fiscal reward. Despite this, a system of special schools continues to play an important role in assisting SEN students to cope with the demands of the society and the labour market. There are both general stream special schools (basic schools and grammar schools) and vocational stream schools.

The formal education system is completed with a set of specialised facilities providing assistance to schools, parents and students (e.g. school service centres, school catering facilities, school clubs, centres of leisure, youth centres, in-country schools, pedagogical and psychological counselling centres) and offering additional specialised education (e.g. language schools, etc.). Basic schools of arts are state subsidised institutions offering paid education (with symbolic fees) in music, dance, fine arts, and drama for gifted and/or motivated children and adults.

Centres of practical training (*strediská praktického vyučovania*) provide for the practical training of students who receive theoretical education at VET schools without the full option of school based practical training.

Education System in Slovakia since 2008/2009



EDUCATION PATHWAYS AND RESPECTIVE CERTIFICATES

The mainstream students are after 10 years of compulsory education in the middle of their study either at grammar school or at secondary specialised school (or conservatory). Respective pathways of VET are presented in the table below.

TABLE 27: SECONDARY VET PROGRAMMES	
EDUCATION PATHWAY/PROGRAMME	CERTIFICATE
2-year (extraordinarily 3-year) ISCED 2C training branch with a final exam*	A certificate on final exam, extraordinarily also a Certificate of Apprenticeship
3 to 4-year ISCED 3C training branch with a final exam	A certificate on final exam + a Certificate of Apprenticeship
4 to 5-year ISCED 3A study branch with vocational training (<i>odbor s odborným výcvikom</i>) with a “maturita” school leaving exam	A “maturita” school leaving exam certificate (in some cases also with a Certificate of Apprenticeship)
4 to 5-year ISCED 3A study branch with practice (<i>odbor s praxou</i>) with a “maturita” school leaving exam	A “maturita” school leaving exam certificate (in some cases also with a Certificate of Apprenticeship)
6-year ISCED 5B study branch at conservatory	A “maturita” school leaving exam certificate after 4 th year with the option to leave conservatory or stay for two additional years to receive absolutorium diploma.
8-year study branch at dance conservatory (containing both lower and upper secondary levels)**	A “maturita” school leaving exam certificate together with a certificate on absolutorium exam and absolutorium diploma after 8 th year

Notes: * for basic school low achiever or those who even did not complete basic school (due to repeating classes).

** a specific case; the programme focused for pupils completing Grade 5 of basic school; it is an upper secondary level from graduates age point of view, however graduates are trained in a high level, as documented by absolutorium, and classified ISCED 5B.

Nevertheless, there are students who complete compulsory education earlier due to repeating classes at the basic school. If not interested in 2-year ISCED 2C training (indicated in the first row), they leave schooling without qualification. Early school leavers are a quite rare case, with exception of Roma minority.

Graduates from secondary ISCED 3 VET programmes can decide between post-secondary non-tertiary education not leading to higher level of education, higher professional education leading to higher level of education, which is currently not recognised as tertiary education (despite ISCED 5B classification) and tertiary education. Graduates from ISCED 3A VET programmes can apply for any tertiary programme of their interest. The table below presents a variety of pathways offered for graduates from any secondary programme.

TABLE 28: POST-SECONDARY NON TERTIARY VET PROGRAMMES	
EDUCATION PATHWAY/PROGRAMME	CERTIFICATE
At least 6 month developing and refresher study with a final “post-maturita” exam	A certificate on final “post-maturita” exam
2-year follow-up study branch with a “maturita” school leaving exam	A “maturita” school leaving exam certificate
At least 2-year qualifying study with a vocational component of “maturita” school leaving exam (2 nd “maturita”)	A “maturita” school leaving exam certificate (for vocational component)
At least 2-year specialising study with an absolutorium exam	A certificate on absolutorium exam and an absolutorium diploma
3 year higher professional study with an absolutorium exam	A certificate on absolutorium exam and an absolutorium diploma
Conservatory in final classes (5 th -6 th year of continuing training and after acquiring “maturita”)	A certificate on absolutorium exam and an absolutorium diploma; programme can be entered only continuing after receiving maturita from the same conservatory programme*

Note: * see also explanation within the table on secondary VET programmes above.

Programmes available for tertiary students are depicted in the following table.

TABLE 29: TERTIARY PROGRAMMES	
EDUCATION PATHWAY/PROGRAMME	CERTIFICATE
1 st level (Bachelor)	A certificate on a state exam and a Bachelor diploma
2 nd level (Master)	A certificate on a state exam and a Magister, Engineer, Doctor diploma
3 rd level (PhD)	A certificate on a state exam and a PhD diploma

In addition to VET for mainstream students diverse VET programmes are offered for students with special educational needs. Special schools offer programmes equivalent to mainstream programmes but also specific programmes for mentally challenged.

TABLE 30: SPECIFIC VET PROGRAMMES FOR MENTALLY CHALLENGED STUDENTS	
EDUCATION PATHWAY/PROGRAMME	CERTIFICATE
Practical school	A final certificate (stating the area of activity the pupil is able to perform)
Vocational school	3 types of certificates based on the level on meeting respective standards (trained, fully trained, and trained with qualification); the highest level resulting in receiving a certificate on final exam and a Certificate of Apprenticeship

PROMOTING PARTICIPATION IN IVET

As a consequence of population decrease, VET schools fight hard to attract students. ISCED 3C programmes suffer from a decrease of interest caused by a dramatic decrease in demand for working professions accompanying a restructuring of economy in the 1990s after the fall of communism. There were only 11,315 ISCED 3C graduates in 2008/2009 compared to 24,828 in 1998/1999 and 34,562 in 1988/1989 in full-time studies (without special schools). Interestingly there were in total 73,339 and 71,015 full-time graduates from all programmes offered by secondary schools in respective years. Only a slight decrease in total numbers in comparison to the harsh decrease of ISCED 3C graduates indicates the increase of opportunities to receive other than ISCED 3C education. Closing old-profile factories and slow emerging of new working opportunities caused the increase in preference for ISCED 3A programmes that were traditionally highly valued by inhabitants as an “entrance ticket” to white-collar occupations. A shift to ISCED 3A general education is visible from the increasing number of grammar school full-time graduates (without special schools) from 10,463 in 1988/1989 to 19,082 in 2008/2009.

VET schools organise diverse campaigns, including open door days, and visits of surrounding basic schools to present their programmes and opportunities for students. In the mid 2000s demand for graduates from studies preparing for working professions increased substantially as a consequence of economy growth, in particular in the automotive industry and electric devices. In contrast to other sectors, in these two booming sectors enterprises facing a lack of workers used to contribute to campaigning. Recession however negatively influenced the reviving school-business relations, as there are again experienced unemployed workers available on the labour market. On the other hand, in contrast to the 1990s, it is clear that interventions in promotion of VET and in particular reversion in ISCED 3C downturn are inevitable and schools and businesses have to cooperate in this.

Improved cooperation in promotion of VET is also expected as a consequence of Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on VET (*Zákon č. 184/2009 Z. z. o odbornom vzdelávaní*). The newly created bodies, the National VET Council, Regional VET Councils and Sectoral VET Councils are expected to contribute substantially to promotion of VET in all sectors. Financial incentives are also expected from enterprises due to introduction of recognition of some related costs as tax deductibles (see 5.4).

TYPES OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS IN VET

There is no difference in types between public and private institutions. Non-state subjects are free to establish any type of school, provided they meet requirements set by law. All schools are public entities with a large autonomy in curriculum development since 2008. The position of school director can be restricted by financial instruments of school establisher and by education quality checking by the State School Inspection. School boards, the self-governing bodies composed of representatives of schools, parents and local/regional players, play the most important role in an open competition for the position of school director. Establishers of private and church-affiliated schools can be more influential with regard to curriculum development and pedagogies used in schools than establishers of public/state schools. All schools regardless the type and ownership (i.e. also private and church affiliated schools) are subsidised from the state budget equally based on per capita contributions (so-called normatives). These normatives are composed of wage normatives and operational normatives. There is a difference in capital funding. Private schools are not eligible for contributions from the state budget for capitals (even not in case of emergency - in contrast to public and church affiliated schools). Nevertheless, capital investment from state budget is not claimable. The following table offers numbers of schools delivering education by ownership in time series.

TABLE 31: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS* DELIVERING SECONDARY EDUCATION IN SELECTED YEARS						
TYPE OF SCHOOL		2003/2004	007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	Δ***
GRAMMAR SCHOOLS	STATE/PUBLIC	158	156	156	156	-2
	PRIVATE	19	40	40	38 + (1)	+20
	CHURCH AFFILIATED	46	55	55	55	+9
VET SCHOOLS	STATE/PUBLIC	519+(3)	416+(2)	399+3**+(1)	389+3**+(2)	-128
	PRIVATE	48+ (5)	84+(4)	92+(3)	92+(5)	+44
	CHURCH AFFILIATED	16	21	21	20+(1)	+5
CENTRES OF PRACTICAL TRAINING	STATE/PUBLIC	27	9	11	7	-20
	PRIVATE	6	22	21	17	+11
	CHURCH AFFILIATED	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (ÚIPŠ, Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva).

Notes: * without schools for special education needs (SEN) students; schools offering only part-time studies are in brackets; ** schools of other ministries; *** difference in number of schools in 2009/2010 and 2003/2004 school years.

Favourable conditions for establishment of non-state schools can be assumed from the decreasing number of public/state schools and increasing numbers in private and church affiliated schools.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND PEDAGOGIES

In 2008, a decentralisation reform was introduced making obligatory only state (framework) educational programmes and leaving elaboration of details on the schools. The original general recommendation introduced in 1990 referred to as 10/30 formula (meaning that 10 % week hours and 30 % of content of original uniform curricula could have been replaced to meet local/regional needs after agreement of relevant stakeholders) is substituted by a framework regulation set by the state education programme valid for respective groups of branches (sectors) and embedded in the newly adopted Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. (*Zákon č. 245/2008 Z. z. o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon)*). Since 2008, state educational programmes for groups of branches - in fact corresponding to sectors of economy have been developed by the State Institute of Vocational Education (ŠIOV, *Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania*) replacing “basic pedagogical documents” (*základné pedagogické dokumenty*) for over 1,000 individual study and training programmes¹⁴.

¹⁴ See Tables 1 and 2 in part 0403 in Slovakia: Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2008, part 0401.

TABLE 32: STATE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES (SEP) BY ISCED LEVELS IN 2008/2009						
	ISCED 2C	ISCED 3C	ISCED 3A	ISCED 4A	ISCED 5B	TOTAL
SEP	9	16	20	23	14	82

Source: ŠIOV.

A further minor change affects conservatories. Their curricula activities are not backed by ŠIOV anymore. Now they are backed but by the National Institute for Education (ŠPÚ, *Štátny pedagogický ústav*). Individual VET schools are entitled to develop their own curriculum expressed by school educational programmes compatible with respective state educational programme and reflecting relevant labour market needs. According to § 7(2) of Education Act, a school educational programme must be discussed with employers or employers' organisations with the responsibility to the respective field. The right of schools to reshape weekly calendars with the provision of subjects and hours was confirmed by law and the former universal 10%/30% formula was replaced by eligible adjustment limits stipulated by respective state educational programmes. The aforementioned state educational programmes were subsequently slightly updated, and 83 SEPs in total, of which 17 ISCED 3C SEPs, are valid for the 2010/2011 school year.

The curricular reform in VET is based on the "Concept of Two-Level Model of Educational Programmes in VET in the Slovak Republic" (*Návrh koncepcie dvojúrovňového modelu vzdelávacích programov v oblasti odborného vzdelávania a prípravy v Slovenskej republike*), approved by the government on 6th June 2007. It follows the same pattern of competence-based curricula, that was introduced in the early 2000s and that sticks to six key competences (Communicative and social-interactive; Intra- and interpersonal (including learning to learn); Creative problem solving; Entrepreneurial; Digital (ICT); Civic ("to be a democratic citizen")), making differences between content standards and performance standards. Furthermore, graduate profile description had to consist of key competences, general competences and vocational competences in all VET programmes.

Traditionally, the description of "educational goals" was essential for curricular documents. These goals were based on the identification of respective knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits. Nevertheless, despite this, content based programming dominated within curriculum design. A "competence-based" paradigm become dominant in the early 2000s mixing up with a traditional approach, gradually complicated with a European "learning outcomes discourse". Currently, EQF is not yet translated into SEPs, as the legislator preferred to work with the ISCED levels only. Further clarification of "fundamentals" and an agreement on ways of refinement of descriptions, significant for a shift towards stressing outcomes over education process, are inevitable.

It is expected that working on school curricula will strengthen the need for a deeper debate on identification of learning outcomes and refinement of outcomes/competence based school curriculum. It is still not yet clear to what extent the shift to learning output based curricula will be translated into practice. First signals not surprisingly indicate that more time is needed for crucial changes.

This curricular reform is also supported by the ESF project "Teacher Training with Regard to Developing School Educational Programmes" (*Vzdelávanie učiteľov v súvislosti s tvorbou školských vzdelávacích programov*). This project has been designed to improve skills of curricula designers at schools to reflect the new competence based approach within their own school educational programmes. According to its Strategic Goal No. 2, innovative pedagogies aimed at increasing motivation, critical thinking and creativity are envisaged.

Schools with active managers have also opportunities to respond to the calls within Priority Axis 1 “Reform of the Education and Vocational Training System”, Measure 1.1 “Transformation of Traditional School into a Modern One” and a similar measure within Priority Axis 4 “Modern Education for a Knowledge-Based Society for the Bratislava Region”.

Changes in pedagogy and innovativeness in the class and workshops depend dominantly on the individuality of respective teachers and trainers. School directors have little opportunities to stimulate this as the remuneration of teachers and trainers is comparably poor and tariff based with a low share of bonuses. In contrast to the tragedy of the 1990s and early 2000s leading to deterioration of quality of education, caused inter alia also by huge modernisation debt, dedicated individuals and schools have got more options to improve learning environment in schools. Funding of new educational initiatives from businesses as well as from ESF projects is aimed at both improving conditions (equipment) and pedagogies. Unlike an earlier period, individual examples of improvement are easily visible. Nevertheless, there is no clear picture about the nation-wide situation concerning the quality of teaching methods and innovativeness, due to insufficient evidence from monitoring and research. Dissemination of good practice is insufficiently used and even results of communitarian projects and ESF projects are not exploited for systemic changes. In ESF projects, auditing financing dominates over content monitoring and impact assessment. A revival of empirical research is an inevitable precondition of future progress.

Higher education institutions are fully autonomous in the development of their curricula only being limited by the framework description of study programme requirements, within which core topics addressing core knowledge of graduates are obligatorily set (referred as a “study branch core”). These descriptions were elaborated by an expert commission under the supervision of the Slovak Rectors’ Conference (SRK, *Slovenská rektorská konferencia*) for all study branches. Only a study programme listed in the registry of study branches issued by the decision of the Ministry of Education and complying with the aforementioned study branch cores are eligible for accreditation and subsequently for certification.

QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS

The IVET system is still based on traditional quality assurance mechanisms:

- input based accreditation of schools; based on formal assessment of compliance of application of school (including non-state schools and school establishments) with conditions (relevant documents) required by law;
- supervision of State School Inspection (ŠŠI, *Štátna školská inšpekcia*); its performance is based on the annual plan and results in the annual report on the status of education and upbringing;
- responsibility for quality assigned declaratively by law to respective players (e.g. director of school, establisher, Ministry of Education (MŠ, *Ministerstvo školstva*).

Thus, all working quality system mechanisms in IVET are inherent to the education system. Furthermore, quality checking activities are dominantly aimed at the assessment of students’ performance in educational terms. The first impulse to address quality management from the institutional point of view came from the Decree of the Ministry of Education No. 9/2006 Coll. on the Structure and Content of Reporting on Educational Activities, Outcomes and Conditions of School and School Facilities. It introduced

obligatory annual reporting to the public and softly pushed schools to declaration of mission statements and self-evaluation. Nevertheless, no strong accountability inducing mechanism has been implemented and no national policy on quality management adopted. Reviewing these annual reports indicates a need to train school managements in performance of self-evaluation processes. A new ESF project “External Evaluation of School Quality Facilitating Self-Evaluation Processes and School Development”, launched in 2009 and conducted under the surveillance of the State School Inspection, should therefore elaborate know-how to support schools in self-evaluation, as well as to improve current know-how in quality monitoring of the state inspection.

It is worth stressing that in contrast to the earlier ESF programming period, the quality management is addressed extensively in the 2007-2013 ESF Operational Programme Education. Promotion of school quality management systems, including supporting the development of models for evaluation and self-evaluation, is for the first time explicitly stressed and operationalised in the 2007-2013 ESF Operational Programme Education within Priority Axis 1, Measure 1.1 “Transformation of Traditional School into a Modern One”. Similarly, promotion of quality culture in higher education institutions is stressed in Measure 1.2 “Higher Education Institutions and Research & Development as the Driving Forces in the Development of a Knowledge-Based Society”.

Surprisingly, however, even within the 2004-2006 ESF programming period, within which quality assurance was not seen a priority, some schools decided to adopt the quality management system and they received the ISO norm 9001:2000 certificate. The ESF project “Quality of School - Guarantee of the Regional Schooling Reform”, conducted since 5th September 2006 to 30th September 2008, accumulated the experience that could be transferred to other schools provided the backing for dissemination is offered¹⁵. It must be stated that quality assurance is for a long-time a weak point of the VET system in Slovakia and that European initiatives based on CQAF, EQA-VET and EQARF have so far not been sufficiently reflected.

In higher education, curriculum development must finally materialise into an accreditation proposal within which a profile of graduates must be described containing descriptions of theoretical knowledge, practical abilities (skills), complementary knowledge and skills. Although curriculum development is in essence competence based, the quality of elaboration differs. Similarly, although all programmes are credit based, options of individualised routes vary among respective programmes. Accreditation is dominantly input based and any innovation in curriculum must not go beyond agreed courses in terms of their title and their description in the so-called information sheet of the course. Students enrolled in a programme not accredited by the Accreditation Commission (AK, *Akreditačná komisia*) due to lacking quality, insufficient amount of quality teaching staff or weak research and development activities, is at risk of not receiving a diploma, or of a transfer to another higher education institution in order to be subjected to state examination. State examination followed by awarding a diploma must not be done in the institution without the accreditation of the respective programme.

¹⁵ See the example of initiative on the project in part 6.1 of the “Progress in VET in priority areas agreed in the Copenhagen process: VET policy Report - Slovakia 2010”.

5.2 IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

There is only general education within the lower secondary level (pupils aged 10-15) with a marginal exemption - students of dance conservatory. These students can be indicated as belonging to vocational study within UOE statistics. Other students of respective age are in a general education stream (basic schools or first four years of 8-year grammar schools).

	ISCED 2 TOTAL	ISCED 2 GENERAL	%	ISCED 2 PRE- VOCATIONAL	%	ISCED 2 VOCATIONAL	%
SK -2006	345 462	341 910	99	3 439	1	113	0
SK -2007	327147	323 523	98.9	3 518	1.1	106	0.0
SK -2008	310 315	306 535	98.8	3 673	1.2	107	0.0
EU27-2007	22 283 865	21 716 207	97.5	291 250	1.3	276 408	1.2

Source: Eurostat, last update: 4th June 2010, date of extraction: 18th August 2010.

In addition, there are also students indicated as pre-vocational according to UOE; 3,673 in 2008 as visible in the table. There are several groups of students incalculated here. The first group consists of students enrolled in two or three year programmes designed for low achievers from basic school. Students who left basic school without completing lower secondary (general) education (even after repeating classes) are eligible to enter these programmes organised within secondary schools. Thus, these students are about 16-17 years old, while regular lower secondary education graduates are 15 years old. The second group of students includes students from similar programmes used for handicapped students educated within the special education system. The third group of students also includes special education needs students, however in contrast to others, they are mentally disabled and trained within a different programme, as visible from the table below.

TABLE 34: TYPES OF IVET PROGRAMMES AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL						
PROGRAMME	SECTOR	ISCED	BALANCE BETWEEN		DURATION OF STUDIES	TRANSFER TO OTHER PATHWAYS
			GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	SCHOOL- AND WORK-BASED TRAINING		
CONSERVATORY*	Arts	2A	n/a*	n/a	4 years	Conservatory**
TRAINING FOR SIMPLE AND AUXILIARY WORKING	***	2C	General subjects below 10 % ****	n/a	2 or 3 years	Labour market; complementary studies*****
TRAINING FOR MENTALLY DISABLED	***	2C	13 % *****	n/a	3 years	None
PRACTICAL SCHOOL (FOR MENTALLY STRONGLY DISABLED)		2C	Diverse*****	n/a	3 years	None

Notes: n/a - not applicable as programmes are school based and training in workplace can be organised only after agreement between school and organisation offering workplace for training.

* Dancing branch only, however designed as 8 year programme.

** Or any secondary school, if not able/interested to continue.

*** Engineering and other metal-processing; Technical chemistry of silicate chemistry; Food-processing; Textile and clothing; Processing of hides, plastics, rubber, shoes production Wood-processing and musical instruments production; Building, geodesy and cartography; Agriculture and forestry and rural development; Economics and organisation, retail and services.

**** 126 out of 1 890 total hours within 2 year programme and 192 out of 2 880 hours within 3 year programmes.

***** Programme specially designed to complete lower secondary (general) education as it is not possible for them to continue in secondary education to achieve ISCED3 level; they are however expected to enter labour market and they also prefer to do so.

***** e.g. 384 out of 2 976 (13 %) in 3 years lasting Metallurgy programme.

***** Depends on allocation of free and disposable working hours; basic distribution is as follows: 24 - general, 24 - vocational, 15 - free/optional, 15 - disposable of total 78 week hours in three years programme.

As confirmed by the tables above, IVET programmes at lower secondary level are far marginal by both their volume and target. Even despite the large share of vocational subjects, training for simple and auxiliary works is aimed at preventing from social exclusion and dropping out of school rather than at training for specific profession. In contrast to previous regulation recognising only ISCED 3C vocational qualification as a minimum, since 2008 lower secondary vocational education has been recognised by law and therefore offering a qualification certificate expected to enable placement of low skilled people as well as disabled on the market, in both cases however working under supervision only (see table in part 11.1.2 depicting levels of education valid since 2008).

These programmes will also remain marginal after the development of NQF. It has not been yet decided whether they will be assigned a specific level within NQF. It could happen they will be subsumed into one level together with all ISCED 2 level programmes (regardless whether general or vocational).

5.3 IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

The upper secondary IVET stream is among the strongest in EU countries (with 72.3 % students in 2008) although the general education stream (with 27.7 % students in 2008) has been in a gradual increase since 1989.

	ISCED 3 TOTAL	ISCED 3 GENERAL	%	ISCED 3 PRE- VOCATIONAL	%	ISCED 3 VOCATIONAL	%
SK - 2006	304 976	80 298	26	-	-	224 678	74
SK - 2007	299 620	80 294	26.8	: (-)	:	219 326	73.2
SK - 2008	290 863	80 477	27.7	: (-)	-	210 386	72.3
EU27 - 2007	22 085 482	10 719 847	48.5	1 130 868	5.1	10 234 767	46.3

Source: Eurostat, last update: 4th June 2010, date of extraction: 18th August 2010.

Notes: - not applicable or real zero or zero by default.

: not available.

The demographic decline and a preference of ISCED 3A over 3C studies changed the originally strongest secondary stream composed of secondary vocational schools' ISCED 3C programmes¹⁶ (see also Table 37). In response to the now almost unclear and non-characteristic names of VET schools, all VET schools are categorised as secondary specialised schools (SOŠ, *stredná odborná škola*) since the 2008/2009 school year. Thus, there are only two secondary education streams, since former secondary vocational schools (SOU, *stredné odborné učilište*) are now also named secondary specialised schools.

Nevertheless, former VET programmes types remained preserved, although all studies were redesigned according to the principles of curricular reform starting in September 2008. Study branches offered with a strong focus on theory by former secondary specialised schools were renamed as “*study branches with practice*” (*odbor s praxou*) and those offered with a stronger focus on practice by former secondary vocational schools were renamed as “*study branches with vocational training*” (*odbor s odborným výcvikom*). In *study branches with practice* students participate in the working process or assist there in the form of continuing activity for a period set by curricula; this usually happens in the summertime. In *study branches with vocational training*, vocational training is organised in

¹⁶ See Slovakia: Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2008, part 0401.

alternance with theoretical education in school workshops or in places suitable for training which are contracted by schools during the whole school year.

Thus, the duality within ISCED 3A study branches remained preserved, although a common state educational programme was issued for a respective group of branches. ISCED 3C training branches typically offered by former secondary vocational schools have also remained preserved.

PROGRAMME	SECTOR	ISCED	BALANCE BETWEEN		DURATION OF STUDIES	TRANSFER TO OTHER PATHWAYS
			GENERAL/VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	SCHOOL- AND WORK-BASED TRAINING		
STUDY BRANCH WITH PRACTICE	(1)	3A	43-48 % / 57-52 %*	n/a	4 or 5	4A, 5B, 5A
STUDY BRANCH WITH VOCATIONAL TRAINING	(2)	3A	43-48 % / 57-52 %*	n/a	4 or 5	4A, 5B, 5A
TRAINING BRANCH	(3)	3C	about 25 % / 75 %**	n/a	3	3A (follow-up)

Notes: n/a - not applicable as programmes are school based and training in workplace can be organised only after agreement between school and organisation offering workplace for training.

* 57%/43 % in study branches with practice at a bilingual school due to more hours of the foreign language; similarly in cases of both types of study branch at schools with minority language of instruction (Hungarian).

** a share of general subjects is slightly higher at schools with minority language of instruction (Hungarian).

(1) Mining, geology and geological technology, Metallurgy, Engineering and other metal-processing, Electrotechnics, Technical chemistry of silicate chemistry, Applied chemistry, Food-processing, Textile and clothing, Processing of hides, plastics, rubber, shoes production, Wood-processing and musical instruments production, Printing industry and media, Building, geodesy and cartography, Transport, post and telecommunication, Special technical specialisations, Agriculture and forestry and rural development, Veterinary sciences, Economics and organisation, retail and services, Library and information sciences, Pedagogy, Arts and artistic crafts, Healthcare (supervised by the Ministry of Health).

(2) As (1) except Mining, geology and geological technology, Technical chemistry of silicate chemistry, Veterinary sciences, Library and information sciences, Pedagogy, Healthcare.

(3) As (1) plus Information technology and except Metallurgy, Special technical specialisations, Veterinary sciences, Pedagogy.

Admission requirements for all types of programmes are set by respective state educational programmes and have remained unchanged by the 2008 reform. Only graduates from basic schools with completed lower secondary (general) education and from the legislative point of view (but rarely in practice) also students of the fourth class of 8-year grammar schools and 8-year dance conservatory are entitled to enter secondary specialised schools after successful passing of the admission procedure. The admission procedure may or may not comprise admission tests as it is up to individual school policies to decide upon this. In attractive branches with a surplus of demand, admission tests are

usually applied. In other cases results in basic schools might be applied or even all candidates accepted. In specific cases set by Annex 9 to the Decree of the Ministry of Education No. 282/2009 Coll. on secondary schools (*Vyhláška Ministerstva školstva Slovenskej republiky č. 282/2009 Z. z. o stredných školách*), special admission regulation is set by law to test special abilities (“talent”) of applicants (e.g. art schools).

The typical age of newly enrolled students is 15 years. An upper age limit for admission is not explicitly set as in practice it is not a point of concern. As compulsory education lasts 10 years, attending at least a first class of secondary school is obligatory for regular students graduating from 9-year basic school without repeating classes. Registration and tuition fees are not applied in public and church affiliated schools.

Students entering bilingual schools established by international bilateral agreements are marginal exceptions; they are entitled to enter this kind of school one year earlier. Bilingual schools (typically but not exclusively grammar schools) offer five year programmes with a first year focusing on the language of instruction acquisition, as the language of instruction in some subjects is identical with this foreign language. Curriculum is also taken over from the partner country.

All state educational programmes and subsequent school educational programmes based on Decree of the MŠ No. 282/2009 Coll. on Secondary Schools indicate explicitly the certification (see subchapter on education pathways and respective certificates in part 5.1). Progression possibilities are indicated in the last column of Table 36 above. The aforementioned decree also regulates conditions of admission to post-secondary studies. Conditions for admission to higher education studies are set autonomously by respective universities and/or their faculties. The National Qualification Framework is in the process of preparation and should make this more transparent, and respective information easier to find on the dedicated electronic portal. No substantial systemic changes are however expected.

Traditionally all basic occupations were covered by respective study or training branches of VET. Correspondence with occupations updated according to recent developments should be secured by correspondence between the National System of Qualifications and the National System of Occupations to be renewed under the support of specialised ESF projects (see parts 6.1.2 and 9.1).

Increasing enrolment in ISCED 3A programmes and in particular in grammar schools (*G, gymnázium*) and a lack of graduates of ISCED 3C programmes is subject of criticism by businesses. The decrease in ISCED 3C graduation visible since 1989 (see the subchapter on promoting participation in IVET in part 5.1) even accelerated in the 2000s, and the number of ISCED 3C graduates halved within this period, as can be seen from the table below. The growth index indicates a shift towards higher status studies.

	2008		1999		2008/1999 INDEX
	ABS	%	ABS	%	
3 TOTAL	72 998	100	90 738	100	0.8
3A GEN	18 796	25.7	15 648	17.2	1.2
3A VOC	39 645	54.3	48 220	53.1	0.8
3C VOC	14 557	19.9	26 870	29.6	0.5

Source: Eurostat, UOE harmonised data, date of extraction 27th August 2010.

Dissatisfaction of businesses with this trend and a dramatic decrease of available labour force after Slovakia's entry into the EU, and the entry of many Slovak workers onto labour markets in the EU led to calls for regulation of access of students to grammar schools and ISCED 3A VET study branches. The new Act on VET is opening the door for translation of employers' needs into IVET and even regulation of admissions into respective secondary schools. Nevertheless, without counterbalancing their power by taking into account also other factors, i.a. the wishes and behaviour of students and their parents this could result in malpractice similar to introducing financing per capita without quality check of graduates, which caused a decline of "production" of ISCED 3C graduates and an increase of ISCED 3A graduates indicated above.

5.4 APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

There is no typical apprenticeship training in Slovakia and there are no apprentices, although ISCED 3C students from former secondary vocational schools (SOU, *stredné odborné učilište*) were often considered and called apprentices. They were however regular secondary school students, according to the law, and as a rule, with no contract with employers. Since 2008 all students, including ISCED 3C students of former SOU, are students of secondary specialised schools (SOŠ, *stredná odborná škola*), as former SOU were renamed to SOŠ according to Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll.

Practical training of ISCED 3C students was and is usually school based. Even if organised outside the school, in centres of practical training or workplaces, it is ensured by a contract between the school and the provider (affecting about the fifth of VET students, in 2009).

Nevertheless, schools can accept an initiative of other entity willing to offer and cover practical training for a student this entity is interested in, e.g. as a future employee. In such a case, the student, if older than 15, sign a contract according to which he/she is in training for this entity and this entity is obliged to offer him/her an employment contract after successful completion of study. This kind of relation can be considered a form of apprenticeship. Nevertheless, even these students who receive theoretical education in school and practical training at the workplace of respective entity (craftsman or enterprise) will remain considered by the legislation students of the school-based VET system. Furthermore, it is a marginal case, currently about 1.5 % of respective students, as businesses are rarely interested in provision of "this kind of apprenticeship".

The Act on VET No. 184/2009 Coll. (*Zákon č. 184/2009 Z. z. o odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave*), in force since September 2009, stimulates employers to contract individual students explicitly recognising related eligible costs of employers (costs of meals, accommodation, travelling, medical and psychological testing required by specific professions, as well as provision of work and protective equipment) as tax deductible. Furthermore, costs of additional specific training agreed by the contract between school and enterprise (and not covered by state) are also classified as tax deductibles. These incentives are however insufficient to boost provision of "places", in particular in times of recession. With a revival of economy and the reduced availability of skilled unemployed ready to work businesses might rethink investment in targeted practical training of VET students. Nevertheless, it is very likely that savings from tax relief will not exceed the costs of inception training of newly recruited VET graduates.

5.5 OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

Slovakia is among the EU countries with the lowest number of drop-outs and early school leavers and therefore alternative programmes are quite marginal. Nevertheless, statistics

would be different for the Roma ethnic minority; in particular the Roma population living in segregated settlements. Ethnic statistics are however not available as collecting data on the ethnic principle is forbidden. According to the 2001 census only 19.9 % of those 20-24 aged who declared themselves as belonging to a Roma nationality (and representing only a fragment of all ethnic Roma) received ISCED 3C or higher level education, in contrast to 89.4 % of the total population of the same age group.

There are specific programmes to assist low skilled or inexperienced people's integration into the labour market. They are, however, organised within active labour market policies and cannot be classified as pure IVET programmes. Two ones can be perceived as interlinked with IVET:

The first initiative is targeted at adults without completed lower secondary education. The objective of the programme is to bring them back to school and assist them in completing basic school, and obtain lower secondary education level certificate. Although "second chance schools" are well known programmes from other countries, they have not proved successful in Slovakia so far. Moreover, ISCED 2 level education is very low for successful placement on the labour market in Slovakia. The employment rate of 25 to 64 aged Slovak inhabitants with ISCED 0-2 level of education was the lowest among the EU countries in 2009 with 30.3 % compared to 54.7 % in EU27.

The second ALMP instrument "Graduate Practice" can be perceived as even more strongly linked to IVET as it was applied for graduates from secondary and tertiary schools who had graduated at a maximum 2 years previously and had failed to enter employment. Eligible graduates were given a contribution (since 2008 significantly increased and equal to the subsistence minimum) for a period of six months in the case they were accepted by an organisation offering them an opportunity to improve professional skills and gain practical experience from employment (for further details and newest development see part 6.3)¹⁷.

The new Education Act No. 248/2008 Coll., in force since 2008, introduced a positive change with respect to refining the qualification (education level) range. Students who left a 9-year basic school without completing lower secondary (general) education, even after repeating classes, are now given a chance to complete lower secondary vocational education (*nižšie stredné odborné vzdelanie*) by completing 2 or 3 year long ISCED 2C "training for simple and auxiliary working". These programmes were originally aimed at retaining young people within education and training in order to enable them to obtain at least some competences. In contrast to former graduates from the former programme with unclear status, they are now clearly embedded in the system. This might open the window for many low skilled adults, for receiving a qualification in particular the unemployed who failed to complete basic school. Graduates from these programmes are classified as graduates from "ISCED 2 pre-vocational" studies within UOE statistics, and therefore are also mentioned in part 5.2.

¹⁷ See also paragraphs on Graduates in part 5.1 of "Progress in VET in priority areas agreed in the Copenhagen process: VET policy Report - Slovakia 2010".

5.6 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL

Traditionally, there were two kinds of post-secondary non tertiary programmes in Slovakia:

- follow-up programmes offered to ISCED 3C graduates; and
- three types of “post-maturita” programmes for ISCED 3A graduates (refresher programmes, specialising programmes, qualifying programmes).

In addition, higher professional programmes are newly stipulated, reflecting experience from a long period of experimental provision initiated by the PHARE programme in the 1990s.

PROGRAMME	SECTOR	ISCED	BALANCE BETWEEN		DURATION OF STUDIES	TRANSFER TO OTHER PATHWAYS
			GENERAL/VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	SCHOOL- AND WORK-BASED TRAINING		
FOLLOW-UP STUDY BRANCH	(1)	3A	44-47 % / 56-53 %*	n/a	2	4A, 5B, 5A
QUALIFYING	(2)	4A	100 %	n/a	2 year	5B, 5A
SPECIALISING	(3)	5B	100 %	n/a	2 years	5A
HIGHER PROFESSIONAL	(3)	5B	100 %	n/a	3 years	5A
REFRESHER	(2)	4A	100 %	n/a	6 month+	4A, 5B, 5A

Notes: n/a - not applicable as programmes are school based and training in workplace can be organised only based on agreement between school and organisation offering workplace for training.

* share of general subjects is slightly higher at schools with minority language of instruction (Hungarian).

(1) The same as in case of study branch with practice listed under (1) below Table 36 in part 5.3 except the following: Special technical specialisations, Veterinary sciences, Library and information sciences, Pedagogy, Healthcare (supervised by the Ministry of Health (MZ, Ministerstvo zdravotníctva)).

(2) The same as in case of study branch with practice listed under (1) below Table 36 in part 5.3 plus Physics and mathematics, Economic sciences, Legal sciences; Special technical specialisations and Security services (both supervised by the Ministry of Interior (MV, Ministerstvo vnútra)).

(3) Mining, geology and geological technology, Engineering and other metal-processing, Electrotechnics, Food-processing, Textile and clothing, Transport, post and telecommunication, Special technical specialisations, Agriculture and forestry and rural development, Veterinary sciences, Economics and organisation, retail and services, Legal sciences, Pedagogical science, Arts and artistic crafts, Healthcare (supervised by Ministry of Health).

Follow-up programmes are offered to ISCED 3C graduates willing to receive a higher status ISCED 3A “maturita” school leaving certificate. As a rule, it lasts two years and finishes with a “maturita” examination certifying an ISCED 3A level of education. This kind of

programme is offered to adults of all ages. Quite often, 18-year old graduates of ISCED 3C programmes enter this programme in full-time study immediately after finishing the ISCED 3C programme. Older people prefer it in the form of part-time study.

Qualifying programmes are of at least 2 years in length completed by a “maturita” school leaving examination. These studies are rated as an ISCED 4A level of education. These programmes are aimed at gaining an additional or new qualification as they obtain a second “maturita” school leaving certificate (in a branch other than the one studied earlier).

Specialising programmes are of at least 2 years in length completed by an absolutorium exam. These studies are rated as an ISCED 5B level of education. These programmes are aimed at acquiring new specific knowledge and skills related to the previously received education and training within the same or similar branch of study. In contrast with qualifying programmes, graduates are also awarded a higher level of education according to the legislation, i.e. higher professional education level (*vyššie odborné vzdelanie*).

Higher professional programmes are of 3 years in length, completed by an absolutorium exam. In contrast to specialising programmes, no strong interlinking in content with previous study is required. Graduates are awarded a higher level of education also according to the legislation, i.e. higher professional education level.

Refresher programmes (upgrading skills and innovative) are of at least 6 months in length and are completed by a final exam. These studies are rated as an ISCED 4A level of education. The programmes are aimed at updating of previously acquired knowledge and skills.

ISCED codes to all types of IVET programmes tabled above were originally assigned by the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (ÚIPŠ, *Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva*) in order to enable delivering the UOE statistics. Coding referred to the content and exit procedure of programmes. There was, however, a problem with legislative contradicting to this coding, instead of backing it. The new Education Act in force since September 2008 solved the problem at least partly, as an ISCED code is indicated directly within the respective state educational programme. Nevertheless, higher professional studies delivered by secondary schools are described there as “post-secondary or tertiary”, opening the door for the further recognition of some of these programmes as tertiary. Despite ISCED coding 5B, they are still not accepted as tertiary programmes by the act on higher education institutions.

All programmes tabled and described above are regulated in a same way as upper secondary programmes described earlier, as they are all offered by secondary specialised schools (SOŠ, *stredná odborná škola*). Thus, the aforementioned state educational programmes stipulate details for post-secondary studies (with the exception of refresher programmes) together with details for secondary studies for respective sectors. Refresher programmes are to be elaborated autonomously by schools in cooperation with other players to secure quality and compete on the market, only broadly sticking to respective state educational programmes.

As visible from the table below, there are only vocational programmes offered within post-secondary non tertiary education. Furthermore, a decrease in graduates (see Table 14 in 1.4) is also confirmed by a decrease in participation from the peak in 2003.

YEAR	ISCED 4 TOTAL	ISCED 4 GENERAL	%	ISCED 4 PRE-VOCATIONAL	%	ISCED 4 VOCATIONAL	%
2008	3 957	0	0	0	0	3 957	100
2007	4 159	0	0	0	0	4 159	100
2006	4 802	0	0	0	0	4 802	100
2003	6 377	0	0	0	0	6 377	100

Source: Eurostat, UOE data.

The introduction of bachelor studies after implementation of the Bologna declaration seems to be the reason of the decrease in “post-maturita” studies. In particular higher professional studies are endangered by bachelor studies at technical universities.

YEAR	2008	2007	2006	2003
HIGHER PROFESSIONAL STUDIES	2 220	2 241	2 824	6 118

Source: Eurostat, UOE data.

Note: * recognised as higher secondary level of education according to current legislation.

5.7 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF IVET AT TERTIARY LEVEL

All Slovak public higher education institutions were expected to provide university type education in accordance with Act No. 172/1990 Coll. on Higher Education. Within the Higher Education Act No. 131/2002 Coll. (*Zákon č. 131/2002 Z. z. o vysokých školách*), last amended by Act No. 199/2010 Coll., it is proposed to allow for the existence of non-university education and non-research based tertiary education. The evaluation of universities is already in progress and in summer 2011 all higher education institutions including private ones should be newly categorised into

- universities (offering studies in all three levels);
- higher education institutions (offering bachelor and master studies and no PhD studies); and
- professional higher education institutions (offering predominantly bachelor studies and doing only applied research).

All higher education institutions have reshaped their studies to a three-cycle model: with bachelor, master and doctoral studies (with exceptions of specific studies, e.g. medical studies and theological studies) in order to be compatible with the Bologna Declaration. There are, however, no higher education 5B studies offered in Slovakia.

ISCED 5B participants visible in UOE statistics for Slovakia, as within the table below, are in fact students of higher professional studies, already mentioned in part 5.6 who, contrary

to their expectations and the expectations of schools originally running these studies in a form of experimental programmes, are not considered tertiary students. In contrast to ISCED 5B, the table below indicates a gradual increase in ISCED 5A participation and a comparably high share of participants in PhD studies.

TABLE 41: STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN SLOVAKIA BY PROGRAMME ORIENTATION						
YEAR	ISCED 5 TOTAL	ISCED 5A	%	ISCED 5B	%	ISCED 6
2006	187 204	184 380	98.5	2 824	1.5	10 739
2007	206 886	204 645	98.9	2 241	1.1	11 066
2008	218 803	216 583	99.0	2 220	1.0	10 674

Source: Eurostat, last update: 4th June 2010, date of extraction: 18th August 2010.

Conditions for admission to higher education studies are set autonomously by respective universities and/or their faculties. No entrance tests are obligatory. In practice they are applied only in those universities/study branches where there is a surplus of demand over their capacities. In contrast to this, students may be accepted without entrance examination for studies with low demand, with the only precondition required the attainment of upper secondary level education (“maturita”). As students are allowed to apply for more universities (programmes), some universities organise a second round admission procedure during summer to replace students successfully accepted for more programmes who decided to choose another programme, and to attract any other free students.

Regular students entering higher education are 19-year old, as this is the regular age of graduation from secondary school. Graduates of a long-form grammar school who originally entered the 8-year grammar school after completion of the fourth class of basic school usually received a school leaving certificate one year earlier and therefore could have entered higher education studies one year earlier. The newly enrolled students of the 2008/2009 school year are the last ones who were given this advantage, as the new Education Act postponed the entry to long-form grammar schools after completing the fifth class of basic school. Some students enter higher education older due to a longer form of secondary programme or because of any other reason. Beyond the age of 26 they are indirectly penalised by obligatory cofinancing studies, paying for health insurance, and their parents are not eligible for child allowances and tax bonuses (if a parent is employed). There is no legal regulation upon an upper limit for admission to higher education; however older people as a rule prefer part-time studies.

Marginal registration fees are required to cover the costs of the admission procedure; however, no tuition fees are required for full-time studies at state/public universities. Students studying more than one study programme or studying longer than the officially programmed length of study are, however, payers. Since the 2008/2009 academic year higher education institutions offer part-time studies officially in two modes: for better ranked students according to admission procedure for free, and for worse ranked students for fees. However, the number of part-time students is regulated, as the total number of part-timers at a university cannot exceed the total number of full-time students. In addition to this regulation (which will not be applied for future higher professional educational institutions according to the Higher Education Act), the number of students is regulated by the amount of means from the state budget available for respective schools in the form of contract with the Ministry of Education (MŠ, *Ministerstvo školstva*) and based on a calculation formula (see paragraphs on “Funding tertiary education” in part 10.1).

Currently, continual master study lasts five years and sometimes four or six years. Bachelor studies last three years (exceptionally four years) and have limited popularity, partly due

to the fact that tertiary education is free, except for part-time students over the officially set quota. Consecutive master studies last usually two years (exceptionally 3 years). PhD studies last 3 years; in part-time programmes 5 years.

FORMS OF EDUCATION DELIVERY

The PHARE programme “Multi Country Co-operation in Distance Education”, which was conducted between 1995 and 1999 initiated the creation of the National Centre for Distance Education (*Národné centrum dištančného vzdelávania*) and the creation of the Slovak Distance Education Network. Although the National Centre for Distance Education was closed in 2000 and transformed into the Institute of Lifelong Learning (ICV, *Inštitút celoživotného vzdelávania*) at the Slovak University of Technology (STU, *Slovenská technická univerzita*), and similarly other network members were transformed, activities at universities have remained. Despite the dissolution of this network and the re-profiling of regional centres, the promotion of distance learning contributed to a more variable higher education provision.

	FORM AND LEVEL	PUBLIC HEI	PRIVATE HEI	STATE HEI	TOTAL
BACHELOR	FACE TO FACE	80 577	7 022	1 246	88 845
	DISTANCE LEARNING	1 109	0	0	1 109
	COMBINED	2 067	527	0	2 594
	TOTAL	83 753	7 549	1 246	92 548
MASTER	FACE TO FACE	36 369	1 075	183	37 627
	DISTANCE LEARNING	398	0	0	398
	COMBINED	1 603	219	0	1 822
	TOTAL	38 370	1 294	183	39 847
CONTINUAL**	FACE TO FACE	8 149	0	135	8 284
	DISTANCE LEARNING	1	0	0	1
	COMBINED	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL	8 150	0	135	8 285
ALL	FACE TO FACE	125 095	8 097	1 564	134 756
	DISTANCE LEARNING	1 508	0	0	1 508
	COMBINED	3 670	746	0	4 416
	TOTAL	130 273	8 843	1 564	140 680

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (ÚIPŠ, Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva), calculated by authors.

Notes: *Just students with the Slovak nationality in full-time programmes at HEI, except PhD studies, as of 31st October 2009.

** Master study containing first two levels consecutively and not allowing entering it as follow up after completed appropriate Bachelor studies.

It must be however concluded that the provision of distance learning is underdeveloped in Slovakia, partly hampered by a long period of lagging behind in the technological development of the educational infrastructure at higher education institutions. With recent improvement of ICT opportunities and better connectivity of inhabitants, improvement of provision of e-learning is expected, unless hampered by the reluctance of an ageing teaching staff to change traditional methods of delivery. Only a very slight increase in distance and combined learning is however visible when comparing past two years.

TABLE 43: NUMBER OF STUDENTS* BY A FORM OF STUDY IN 2009 AND 2008			
FORM	2009 TOTAL	2008 TOTAL	GROWTH INDEX
FACE TO FACE	134 756	132 500	1,02
DISTANCE LEARNING	1 508	1 200	1,26
COMBINED	4 416	3 647	1,21
TOTAL	140 680	137 347	1,02

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (ÚIPŠ, Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva), calculated by authors.

Notes: *Just students with the Slovak nationality in full-time programmes at HEI, except PhD studies, as of 31st October.

CURRICULA ELEMENTS

Higher education institutions are fully autonomous in the development of their curricula, only being limited by

- the accreditation procedure, since costs of non-accredited programmes are not cofinanced from the state budget (contract with the Ministry of Education); and
- the descriptive framework of study programme requirements, within which core topics, addressing core knowledge of graduates are obligatorily set out, (referred as “study branch core”).

These descriptions were elaborated by an expert commission under the supervision of the Slovak Rectors’ Conference (SRK, *Slovenská rektorská konferencia*) for all study branches. These study branch cores are the subject of further development and change. Only the study programme listed in the registry of study branches, issued by the decision of the Ministry of Education, and complying with the aforementioned study branch cores, are eligible for accreditation and subsequently for certification.

Curriculum development must finally materialise into an accreditation proposal within which a profile of graduates must be described, containing descriptions of their theoretical knowledge, practical abilities (skills), complementary knowledge and skills. Although curriculum development is in essence competence based, the quality of elaboration differs. Similarly, although all programmes are credit based, options of individualised

routes vary among respective programmes. Accreditation is dominantly input based and any innovation in curriculum must not go beyond the agreed courses in terms of their title and their description on the so-called information sheet of the course.

Successful completion of accredited study programmes result in certification (Bachelor, Master and PhD diploma) issued and signed by the university rector, as faculties are not legal bodies anymore. Students enrolled in a programme not accredited by the Accreditation Commission (AK, *Akreditačná komisia*) are at risk of not receiving a diploma, or of a transfer to another higher education institution in order to be subjected to state examination. State examination, followed by the awarding of a diploma must not be done in the institution without the accreditation of the respective programme.

State exams are composed of the defending of the master/bachelor thesis and an oral/written examination in subjects explicitly listed within the accreditation documentation. Portfolio assessment is gradually gaining importance in contrast to traditional examinations.

MAIN PROGRESS, TRENDS AND POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICIES

The table below indicates a dramatic increase in participation in higher education - over 3.5 times more since 1990.

TABLE 44: STUDENTS IN ISCED 5A HIGHER EDUCATION IN SLOVAKIA							
YEAR	2008	2007	2006	2000	1998	1990	2008/1990 INDEX
5A TERTIARY STUDIES	216 583	204 645	184 380	123 136	101 982	60 567	3.58

Source: Eurostat, UOE data (1998 - 2008), ÚIPŠ national statistics (1990 - the 1989/1990 academic year).

The increase in graduates is also steep. There were 34,019 and 10,191 graduates in 2007 and 50,040 and 12,575 graduates in 2008 (all first degrees and a second degrees, respectively) from ISCED 5A programmes, in contrast to total 18,516 graduates in 1999, according to the Eurostat UOE data. In particular, the increase in 2008 compared to 2007 raises questions about quality standards. Similarly to secondary schools higher education institutions follow the pressure of per capita funding, disregarding the quality in favour of their budgets.

Short track tertiary education should be more promoted in order to change the attitude of the population of secondary school graduates who usually consider it as an uncompleted master study. Furthermore, bachelor studies should be redesigned in order to provide a solid base also for assertion into the labour market.

Universities are now much more open towards LLL, as they depend on earnings from the provision of diverse paid activities. There are LLL institutes as a rule established at universities for the provision of LLL, and, in addition, all faculties provide LLL in line with their fields of interest. Universities are also stimulated to earn from LLL by current financial regulations, as the contribution from the state covers only part of their expenditures.

6. CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

6.1 FORMAL EDUCATION

6.1.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND (ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND FINANCING)

MAIN OBJECTIVES OF CVET AND ADULT EDUCATION

The main objectives of CVET were traditionally considered within an economic frame, as personal development

- to acquire higher qualification necessary for promotion;
- to increase employability; and
- in general to raise productivity, competitiveness, and economic efficiency, in particular via upgrading relevant skills for a relevant purpose, regardless of age.

The main objectives of adult education were traditionally less focused on employment related aspects, and more on the quality of life of adults. It was considered as a complementary activity in particular to satisfy personal and social needs and interests not necessarily related to the workplace.

Now, CVET and adult education are seen as an integral part of lifelong education/learning. Nevertheless, regardless of terms used, personal demand driven learning of adults should be distinguished from training driven by employers' requirements, in order to better understand the population's behaviour with regard to LLL, and to develop targeted interventions within policy making. The priority of future LLL development was stated in the Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance (*Stratégia celoživotného vzdelávania a celoživotného poradenstva*), adopted by the government on the 25th April 2007, as follows:

“The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15 %, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.”

Following the strategy, Act No. 568/2009 Coll. on Lifelong Learning (*Zákon č. 568/2009 Z. z. o celoživotnom vzdelávaní*) was adopted in December 2009. The traditional reluctance of the Ministry of Finance and other important players to cofinance

LLL from tax money resulted in rejection of all proposals for inclusion of fiscal incentives in support of LLL into this act¹⁸.

For a detailed description of legislation and financing CVET see parts 4.2 and 10.2 respectively.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS AND THE LABOUR MARKET

Until now, there has been no National System of Qualifications explicitly set covering all sectors, segments and learning settings in Slovakia. There are different segments of formal qualifications and their regulation differs depending on respective sectors (see part 6.1.2). There is a very strictly set system of initial VET programmes linked to relevant study programmes leading to qualifications, which can also be obtained through formal CVET, designed for part-time studies. These studies and qualifications are supply driven rather than demand driven with regard to labour market needs. It is partly due to tradition and persistence to change of schools and legislation, but also due to broader profiles of graduates. Although this system is becoming more flexible as well, it might be seen as rigid compared to CVET, which is aimed at training for specific tasks or jobs. In contrast to IVET and the segment of formal CVET for part-timers, other segments of CVET are dominantly market driven. Such CVET, however, encompasses both formal and non-formal settings: enterprise training, labour market training and training to increase employability of individuals may or may not be labelled as formal CVET. As a rule, legislatively set specific qualifying conditions (sometimes also called specific vocational capabilities) make a difference. It is however not possible to say whether there is correspondence between formal qualifications and the labour market, as there are many players setting qualifying conditions with diverse experience and philosophy, and there is no universal methodology sensitive to the identification of labour market needs for setting commonly agreed qualification requirements. A shift from content based to outcome based programming clearly visible within IVET, induced also by respective regulation, is visible within formal CVET too, however, in different extent. It varies among sectors and providers (see part 6.1.2). Act on LLL No. 568/2009 Coll. (*Zákon č. 568/2009 Z. z. o celoživotnom vzdelávaní*) has introduced quite strict regulation inducing outcome based approach to programming CVET, however, this act is not applicable to CVET regulated by other sector legislation as well as part-time studies within secondary and tertiary education.

ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

The role of social partners differs depending on respective CVET segments. Part-time studies offered by secondary VET schools and by higher education institutions have to comply with IVET. The influence of social partners on respective IVET programmes is also manifested in respective CVET programmes. Graduates profiles are identical as this education leads to respective level of education recognised by law. Continuing professional development may or may not be regulated by law and the involvement of social partners in continuing professional development of pedagogical staff or health workers is very strictly regulated and the influence of social partners is inherent. Similarly, CVET required for work specialisations is naturally derived from employers' requirements. A room for social partners' involvement has expanded also by the contribution to the development of

¹⁸ See Slovakia: Tax Incentives for Lifelong Learning Face Obstacles in Cedefop Newsletter, Issue 1/2010.

registry of type positions and subsequently the National System of Occupations carried by Trexima, Ltd. (see e.g. parts 6.1.2, 8.2, 9.1).

It is not possible to say that there is a direct systemic influence of social partners in defining competences in adult education and CVET. Social partners, in particular employers, naturally focus on expression of requirements, leaving the definition of relevant competences up to specialists with respective experience from IVET or practitioners (in particular with regard to CVET programme with no direct links to some IVET programmes). However, there are also examples of traditional programming authoritatively set by authorities, insufficiently referring to the outcome based approach and insufficiently reflecting social partners experience (see part 6.1.2). There is little evidence about social partners' involvement in promoting participation in formal CVET. There is no research on examination of the role of social partners with regard to this but it is assumed that CVET is promoted by employers whenever needed for the sake of increased productivity, expansion of production scope and/or relevant human resource development. Some of social partners, e.g. the Slovak Craft Industry Federation (SZZ, *Slovenský živnostenský zväz*), are for long time supportive for both CVET and IVET aimed at training of craftsmen. Regardless of this, however, there is a lack of craftsmen in the country.

BRINGING LEARNING CLOSER TO LEARNERS

There is a wide network of secondary and tertiary VET institutions spread over the country offering formal IVET, as well as formal CVET for part-time students. As their capacities are much larger than the demand, they are very flexible in bringing learning closer to learners. Tertiary institutions are ready to create local affiliations wherever there is a demand. Similarly, it can be assumed that CVET organised to obtain sectoral qualification is also market driven and flexible in provision unless there are corporativistic restrictions enabled by law. There is anecdotal evidence about the restricted flexibility caused by protectionism of professional chambers. It is expected that e-learning based courses will be offered more, with the increase of ICT skills of the population. There is no data about numbers and fields of study of e-learning courses already successfully implemented. There are many experimental courses, but they are often vulnerable as they depend on project funding.

NGOs are not involved in formal CVET unless they participate in the provision of CVET in affiliation with schools. Similarly, workplace learning is typical for non-formal rather than formal CVET. Of course, workplace training is inevitably a part of formal training in the case of specific professions in which practice can be obtained only at a workplace. A new Act on VET, in force since 1st September 2009, introduces the establishment of regional centres of VET offering quality IVET and CVET based on earlier regional experience and sectoral experience (automotive industry).

6.1.2 MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF FORMAL CVET

QUALIFICATIONS CHARACTERISTICS

There are no levels of qualifications explicitly set by law. There are only levels of education explicitly set by law, and the level of qualification can be partly derived from this. In case of part-time studies provided by secondary schools and higher education institutions qualifications (comprising however a level of education only) can be described in terms of ISCED levels. Specific sectoral qualifications are as a rule defined as a composition of educational level (which can be directly classified by an ISCED level), specific qualifying conditions, sometimes described as specific vocational capabilities, and experience already gained in the respective field. Furthermore, any employer can specify in detail the additional requirements for a specific job. The individual who does not meet

these additional requirements is considered not qualified for this job although he/she can be fully qualified for the occupation related to this job.

Trexima Bratislava, Ltd. (*Trexima Bratislava, s.r.o.*) has been assigned by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (MPSVR, *Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) to update the National System of Occupations (*Národná sústava povolani*) based on its experience within the Czech Republic implemented “Integrated System of Type Positions” (ISTP, *Integrovaný systém typových pozícií*). Thus, Trexima Bratislava will also become an important player in the development of the National System of Qualifications (NSQ) compatible with the European Qualification Framework. Respective ESF funded project planned by the Ministry of Education to adjust the Slovak NSQ to EQF is however still pending.

MAIN FORMAL CVET PROVIDERS

The Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (ÚIPŠ, *Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva*) maintains a list of CVET providers stemming from the registry of the Ministry of Interior (MV, *Ministerstvo vnútra*). In 2009, the institute addressed 5,632 providers when collecting statistical data. The number of private and non-state CVET providers has increased significantly in the 1990s, some of them however do not offer CVET on a regular basis, and some of them are just interested to have the chance to offer CVET, if appropriate, and currently are not interested in doing so. The largest of the non-state training institutions, and the only one with a regional network, is the Academy of Education (*Akadémia vzdelávania*) with centres in 38 cities spread over the whole country. This institution originated from the dominant state adult education provider of the former regime before 1989. Of course, there are also many other strong private providers often linked to internationally recognised training institutions competing on the market.

A list of educational institutions and their educational activities prepared by the ÚIPŠ on an annual basis is available at <http://www.uips.sk/dalsie-vzdelavanie/>. An important source of websites and addresses of the strong players is the website of the Association of Adult Education Institutions (AIVD, *Asociácia inštitúcií vzdelávania dospelých*) at www.aivd.sk.

Lists of providers of CVET are also available from many commercial websites, e.g. <http://www.zlatestranky.sk/zs/hf/vzdelavacie-zariadenia-a-agentury>. Lists of courses (and respective providers) are at www.education.sk. A list of accredited programmes with the contact addresses of providers is offered by the Ministry of Education at <http://www.minedu.sk/index.php?lang=sk&rootId=642>.

It is however not always clearly indicated within the aforementioned lists whether the respective course/programme corresponds to formal or non-formal setting. Furthermore, part-time studies are, as a rule, not promoted within these lists.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF CURRICULA

Curricula within formal CVET part-time studies provided by secondary schools and higher education institutions correspond to full-time programmes, as part-time and full-time studies are equivalent according to law. There is a difference in the number of face-to-face lessons, as more room is left for individual study. Since September 2009, with the coming in force of Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Upbringing and Education (Education Act) (*Zákon č. 245/2008 Z. z. o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon)*) curricula are to be key competence, and learning outcome, based. Thus, curricula based on key competences and learning outcomes for both full-time and part-time programmes are gradually being developed.

The Accreditation Commission for Continuing Education affiliated to the Ministry of Education (AK MŠ, *Akreditačná komisia Ministerstva školstva SR pre ďalšie vzdelávanie*) responsible for accreditation of educational programmes also supports modularisation and outcome based approaches within the evaluation procedure of the proposal and through a template prescribed for submission.

Curricula within sectoral formal CVET are regulated by sectoral legislation differently. In some sectors learning outcome based approach is adopted (e.g. in nuclear power sector qualifications), in others a traditional approach based on obligatory numbers of training hours, still dominates (e.g. concerning driving schools). In the health sector, where formal CVET is the most strictly regulated, programmes are accredited by the Accreditation Commission affiliated to the Ministry of Health (MZ, *Ministerstvo zdravotníctva*), which displays at its websites lists of accredited public and private institutions.

QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS

CVET provided by secondary schools and higher education institutions within formal education follows the same quality assurance mechanisms as applied in IVET. School educational programmes have to stick to state educational programmes, university programmes have to make submissions for accreditation to the Accreditation Commission, an advisory body to the government.

The Accreditation Commission affiliated to the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for accreditation of educational programmes, as well as the Accreditation Commission affiliated to the Ministry of Health, both concentrate on assessment of input conditions and as a rule output quality is left up to the market power and clients. No national quality assurance programmes were elaborated and no quality assurance mechanisms based on specific European tools (CQAF, EQARF) were made obligatory. Improvement in this area is expected as a result of the new legislation on LLL.

There are, however, positive examples from practice: VUJE a.s. is an engineering company that performs design, supply, implementation, research and training activities, particularly in the field of nuclear and conventional power generation. Training to obtain qualification for nuclear plant technician positions is based on job analysis and learning outcomes, and is certified according to ISO norm 9001. This training is internationally recognised and foreign specialists are trained there, too.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES

There is no data about main characteristics of CVET programmes. Although all programmes of formal CVET indicate objectives; target group; admission criteria; duration, assessment and progression as it is required in the process of accreditation, there were no surveys conducted to analyse respective features of CVET. The ratio between general competences and vocational competences depends on the type of training and it is impossible to offer detailed data.

An initial picture about programmes by field of training can be obtained from the Ministry of Education data on accredited programmes (“educational activities” according to the vocabulary of the relevant legislation) in the following table.

TABLE 45: CVET PROGRAMMES (“ACTIVITIES”) BY FIELDS ACCREDITED BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION		
FIELDS	PROGRAMMES	
	N	%
PEDAGOGY	98	2.1
HUMANITIES AND ART	120	2.57
GENERAL PROGRAMMES	237	5.07
AGRICULTURE, VETERINARY	238	5.09
TECHNOLOGY, PROCESSING, CONSTRUCTING	437	9.34
HEALTH CARE, SOCIAL SECURITY	465	9.94
SERVICES	476	10.18
LANGUAGES	650	13.9
NATURAL SCIENCES, MATHEMATICS, INFORMATICS	699	14.95
SOCIAL SCIENCES, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, LAW	1 240	26.51
OTHER	17	0.36
TOTAL	4 677	100

Source: MŠ.

Note: * listed are programmes accredited between 9th October 2003 to 23rd June 2008 (no newest data are available).

As already indicated earlier the accreditation procedure (in education and health sectors) induces learning outcome based approach. In other cases the main characteristics of formal CVET depend on philosophies of providers and approving authorities. It was expected that the Act on LLL will support outcome based approach across sectors, but this is not the case. On the other hand, all CVET programmes accredited according to this act in the future will have to comply with respective IVET (outcome based) programmes and qualifications included in the National System of Qualifications. Creation of an overarching NSQ is thus a precondition for induction of outcome based approach in all formal CVET programmes.

VET POSSIBILITIES FOR ADULTS WITHOUT ANY PREVIOUS BACKGROUND IN VET

All citizens have access to formal education in a form of part-time study at secondary and tertiary level (after meeting admission criteria that usually include education level attainment and in specific cases also health conditions) at any point of their lives.

Furthermore, adults have access to certified training provided by various institutions within CVET programmes accredited by the Accreditation Commission of the Ministry of Education for Continuing Education. In this case however it is up to the employers whether they recognise this certificate as a substitute for formal qualification or not. In some cases these certificates are sufficient for carrying out a trade (e.g. massage services), as stipulated in detail in the annex of the aforementioned Trade Licensing Act No. 455/1991 Coll. In some cases these certificates and practice are sufficient for carrying out a trade.

Job seekers are entitled to training for the labour market according to Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services. In some cases a job seeker participates in tailor-made retraining course meeting requirements of the potential/future employer (based on an agreement

between the labour office and potential/future employer) who recognises a certificate obtained as sufficient for performing the agreed job.

DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMMES

Distance learning programmes were originally typical for part-time studies. Its share was higher compared to full-time studies in higher education institutions. Absolute data are visible from the table below.

TABLE 46: NUMBER OF STUDENTS* IN PART-TIME PROGRAMMES BY A FORM AND LEVEL OF STUDY IN 2009					
	FORM AND LEVEL	PUBLIC HEI	PRIVATE HEI	STATE HEI	TOTAL
BACHELOR	FACE TO FACE	23 066	17 505	1473	42 044
	DISTANCE LEARNING	1 084	842	0	1 926
	COMBINED	2 442	2 107	0	4 549
	TOTAL	26 592	20 454	1 473	48 519
MASTER	FACE TO FACE	13 372	4 171	990	18 533
	DISTANCE LEARNING	533	203	0	736
	COMBINED	1 960	616	0	2 576
	TOTAL	15 865	4 990	990	21 845
CONTINUAL**	FACE TO FACE	415	0	0	415
	DISTANCE LEARNING	26	0	0	26
	COMBINED	68	0	0	68
	TOTAL	509	0	0	509
ALL	FACE TO FACE	36 853	21 676	2 463	60 992
	DISTANCE LEARNING	1 643	1 045	0	2 688
	COMBINED	4 470	2 723	0	7 193
	TOTAL	42 966	25 444	2 463	70 873

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (ÚIPŠ, Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva), calculated by authors.

Notes: *Just students with the Slovak nationality in part-time programmes at HEI, except PhD studies, as of 31st October 2009.

** Master study containing first two levels consecutively and not allowing entering it as follow up after completed appropriate Bachelor studies.

Although distance learning and combined learning are much more presented in their share in part-time studies compared to full-time studies, the provision of distance learning in

general is underdeveloped in Slovakia, as also visible in a severe decrease in distance learning and only a slight increase in combined learning, when comparing two past years.

TABLE 47: NUMBER OF STUDENTS* BY A FORM OF STUDY IN 2009 AND 2008			
FORM	2009 TOTAL	2008 TOTAL	GROWTH INDEX
FACE TO FACE	60 992	64 966	0.94
DISTANCE LEARNING	2 688	5 642	0.48
COMBINED	7 193	6 354	1.13
TOTAL	70 873	76 962	0.92

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (ÚIPŠ, Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva), calculated by authors.

Notes: *Just students with the Slovak nationality in part-time programmes at HEI, except PhD studies, as of 31st October.

Distance learning can also be offered by secondary VET schools as it is explicitly mentioned in § 54(10) of the Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. Data is, however, not available as it is not contained within the regular collection of data of ÚIPŠ.

Distance learning is gradually gaining importance within the professional staff development. Even in-service teacher training which was traditionally provided in a face-to-face form by regional in-service training institutions is changing due to the lack of funding of travel costs and the reluctance of directors of schools to free teachers from schools during their teaching time. A good example is the e-learning course of personal management provided by the Methodological-Pedagogical Centre Bratislava in cooperation with the Faculty of Electrical Engineering of Slovak University of Technology making use of human and technical resources of the former Local Centre of Distance Education, and funded by the ESF.

With the increase in citizens' familiarity with ICT, distance learning programmes are also on the increase in the very competitive CVET/LLL market offered by private CVET providers in an even more dynamic way than public providers.

Current provision of distance learning or its further development is primarily connected with the ESF as a source of funding. Universities are interested in gradual the development of virtual campuses, however, they are usually hampered by a lack of resources and the reluctance of staff to reduce the number of face-to-face lessons. Nevertheless, several universities work at the creation of centres of distance learning. Furthermore, diverse institutes of LLL offer distance learning in order to compete on the market.

MEASURES FOSTERING ACCESS TO CVET

There are no explicit measures set in support of fostering access to CVET and fostering CVT in enterprises, except for funding via the ESF. It was envisaged that the act on LLL would set a specific measure, as was noted in § 27 of the draft act from early 2009 speaking i.a. about tax incentives and learning vouchers. However, all incentives of this kind were cancelled even before submitting of the act to the parliament. It is unlikely that there will be an agreement among key players soon about an appropriate measure. Instead of this a very controversial instrument was introduced by the new Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on VET (*Zákon č. 184/2009 Z. z. o odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave*). The VET Development Fund is dominantly aimed at supporting secondary IVET, with the option to support also part-time studies and CVET offered by VET secondary schools. It is a non-state legal entity collecting funds from donations from national and international entities (except state administration

authorities) and the voluntary contributions of employers. Thus, it is not a typical “train or pay” instrument and it will very likely suffer from a lack of resources. This also signals a lack of support for tax incentives or levy based instruments for future discussions about fiscal stimulation of CVET and adult education.

The main instruments in support of professionalization courses, assessment of competences and e-learning so far are the ESF and LLP (in particular the Leonardo da Vinci programme). Slovakia also needs a new systemic instrument fostering access to CVET (see also statistics within the next paragraph “Comments on the statistical data”).

In response to the crisis the national authorities decided to support CVET of employed people in order to prevent them from dismissal. Large amount of resources were reallocated within ESF to cofund retraining of employed and also similarly a number of placement in Graduate Practice increased substantially in 2009 compared to 2008 (see exact data in § 47 and § 51 within Table 54 in part 6.3).

COMMENTS ON THE STATISTICAL DATA

Participation of adults in formal CVET is below the EU average, as visible from the table below.

TABLE 48: PARTICIPATION RATE OF PEOPLE (AGED 25-64) IN FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%), 2007				
ISCED97/ GEO	0-2	3-4	5-6	TOTAL
EU 27	2.5	5.7	12.2	6.3
SK	: (-)	4.9	11.3	6.1

Source of data: Eurostat (AES); Extracted on: 03-05-2010; Last update: 13-01-2010

Notes: not available; - not applicable or real zero or zero by default.

Slovakia also suffers from the Matthew effect - a higher share of trainees with higher education level, as visible from the table above. These data confirm similar results from the Eurostat LLL ad hoc module LFS 2005 with the reference year 2003¹⁹. This is also a reason for rethinking measures to boost the interest of low-income individuals in training. The following table also confirms the need for rethinking training policies. While the participation rate in training of employed people is slightly above the EU average, rates of two other groups are below the EU average (for more details see active labour market policies in part 6.3).

¹⁹ For further details see Table 37 in Slovakia: VET in Europe: Country Report 2009.

TABLE 49: PARTICIPATION RATE OF PEOPLE (AGED 25-64) IN FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY LABOUR STATUS (%), 2007

STATUS	EMPLOYMENT	INACTIVE POPULATION	UNEMPLOYMENT	TOTAL
EU 27	6.2	6.4	6.3	6.3
SK	6.4	5.1	4.6	6.1

Source of data: Eurostat (AES); Extracted on: 03-05-2010; Last update: 13-01-2010

There are also other data confirming the low participation in CVET. Slovakia scored below the EU27 average (38 % and 49 %, respectively) in the share of enterprises providing CVET courses, according to data gathered within 2005 CVTS3. All these CVET data might be partly explained by a comparably high level of education/qualification attained within IVET. Slovakia has one of the highest shares of VET trained population within initial formal training in the EU (72.3 % of students in ISCED 3 vocational programmes in upper secondary education in 2008, according to Eurostat). Furthermore, in 2008 Slovakia ranked third in education attainment level in the EU with 89.9 % of population aged 25-64 having completed at least upper secondary education compared to 71.5 % in EU27. Thus, it can be assumed that there is no need to train more such a population within formal education.

Nevertheless, with 2.8 % of the adult population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training in 2009 (according to Eurostat, LFS) permanently decreasing since the top result of 4.3 % in 2004, Slovakia is far below the 2010 LLL benchmark of 12.5 %. Very likely, as also supported by disparities mentioned above regarding vulnerable people, a traditionally strong stream of IVET causes insufficient awareness of the need for intervention in support of formal CVET.

6.2 NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

6.2.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND (ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND FINANCING)

Non-formal education is a comparably new term in Slovakia. No currently valid legislation speaks about non-formal education. Just like the twin term “non-formal learning”, it has been more frequently used under the influence of European Union activities in particular since the consultation process to the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning. Non-formal education was for the first time defined in the governmental policy document the Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance (*Stratégia celoživotného vzdelávania a celoživotného poradenstva*) as follows: “It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification. It can be organised at schools apart from their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programmes of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.”

The newest definitions of non-formal education and non-formal learning in a governmental document stem quite typically from the proposal to implement EQF in the Slovak Republic responding to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council. In contrast to an earlier definition, the main objective of non-formal education has changed and the following is added: “to supplement, widen or deepen knowledge, skills and competences of individual”.

Within the Act No. 386/1997 Coll. on Further Education (*Zákon č. 386/1997 Z. z. o ďalšom vzdelávaní a o zmene zákona Národnej rady Slovenskej republiky č. 387/1996 Z. z.*

o zamestnanosti), the term “further education” subsumed diverse forms of education that is not formal (and even some segments of formal) without stressing classification and the difference among them in detail. In the Act on LLL No. 568/2009 Coll. (*Zákon č. 568/2009 Z. z. o celoživotnom vzdelávaní*), in force since 2010 abolishing the aforementioned Act No. 386/1997 Coll., only terms further and continuing education are used, in contrast to the draft version of this act, where also the term “non-formal education” was used.

Non-formal education *sensu stricto* (i.e. personal demand driven and not leading to certification of education level or qualification) is in essence neither regulated nor supported by any financial scheme. Of course, as a consequence of hard market competition, providers promote their products by means which might be seen as a result of regulation. Providers for instance indicate their courses as accredited by the Ministry of Education, or individual trainers/lecturers announce that they are certified lecturers of the Slovak Association of Adult Education Institutions (AIVD, *Asociácia inštitúcií vzdelávania dospelých v SR*).

As non-formal education *sensu stricto* is regulated by market forces alone, there are diverse providers to be found; NGOs and small traders alongside strong, often international organisations. Despite lagging behind in using ICT in education in the 1990s and early 2000s, e-learning is on the increase as a consequence of improving connectivity and broad band availability.

Only two points hampering efforts to bring learning closer to learners are worth stressing - the lack of resources for learning among poor families and the lack of access to information about the quality of respective courses which would allow them for distinguishing among provision of education in terms of quality.

6.2.2 MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-FORMAL CVET

MAIN INSTITUTIONS AND PROVIDERS

As already indicated, CVET and adult education are now seen as an integral part of lifelong education/learning, regardless of whether they refer to formal or non-formal setting. A major feature of non-formal CVET is that it is usually an ad hoc, short training aimed at the improvement of specific skills related to better performance at work. From this point of view the main providers are companies and/or training providers hired by companies. The main providers are registered at the Slovak Adult Education Institutions’ Association (AIVD, *Asociácia inštitúcií vzdelávania dospelých v SR*) promoted by diverse portals already mentioned in part 6.1.2, as it is not always possible to draw the line between pure formal and pure non-formal education providers.

The Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (ÚIPŠ, *Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva*) which maintains a list of CVET providers stemming from the registry of the Ministry of Interior (MV, *Ministerstvo vnútra*) addresses thousands of providers when collecting statistical data on an annual basis. Although the number of private and non-state CVET providers has increased significantly in the 1990s, some of them do not offer CVET on a regular basis. The provision of training is not regulated, small traders and companies indicate training among their activities just to have a window of opportunity opened for the future.

The largest of the non-state training institutions, and the only one with a regional network, is the Academy of Education (AV, *Akadémia vzdelávania*) with centres in 38 cities. It originated from the privatisation of the largest adult education network of the former regime. Gradually there are more and more internationally recognised strong

training providers on the market. An overview of courses and their providers can be gained from the portal www.education.sk.

There are no specific data on non-formal education, as the only official data collection is conducted by ÚIPŠ, focused on “further education“, within which in fact formal “further education” activities are also included.

STATUTE AND MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TRAINING PROVISION IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

The statute of non-formal education is neither legislatively specified nor explicitly perceived by inhabitants. It is usually subsumed under the traditional terms *further education* or *adult education*.

Little is known about the explicit training provision of non-formal education. The statistical data available from the official “further education” data collecting instrument overlaps with formal education and at the same time it subsumes diverse (and essentially very different) kinds of non-formal education.

TYPE OF TRAINING ACTIVITY	TP	%	TRAINEES	%	GRADUATES	%
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL TRAINING	2 296	50.48	172 274	53.76	83 693	45.82
TRAINING FOR RECEIVING A PARTIAL QUALIFICATION	634	13.94	33 841	10.56	25 202	13.80
INTEREST AND CULTURAL EDUCATION	801	17.61	32 567	10.16	15 016	8.22
CIVIC EDUCATION	71	1.56	2 572	0.80	1 832	1.00
EDUCATION FOR OLDER PEOPLE	41	0.90	4 254	1.33	1 283	0.70
OTHER	652	14.34	69 065	21.55	50 641	27.72
NOT AVAILABLE (DATA MISSING)	53	1.17	5 856	1.83	4 989	2.73
TOTAL	4 548	100.00	320 429	100.00	182 656	100.00

Source: ÚIPŠ.

Note: TP - training programmes.

Non-formal education *sensu stricto*, as mentioned above, is strongly demand driven and therefore flexible and does not adhere to formal programming regulations. It is usually perceived as “personal interest driven adult education”. No marketing studies are officially known, although providers definitely do some simple ad hoc research about this. Provision, registration procedures and prices are entirely down to the market or to the learning community (associations, NGOs, etc.). In the latter case education might be provided for free, indirectly covered by membership fees or from other gained sources. All programming is subordinated to the ultimate goal to attract individuals paying for education or contributing to the community mission.

Similar criteria apply to individually driven education aimed at the improvement of working skills for employment, or to the business where an individual perceives value added he/she has received as counting for more than the formal attributes of education or even a certificate.

There is also a segment of formal education moving towards voluntarily accepting diverse formal education regulations. This segment usually intends to offer diverse pre-qualification education and training that can improve knowledge, skills and competences required for respective qualifications.

The decrease in numbers of trainees and graduates visible from the table below can also indicate the influence of the crisis, as these numbers are lower despite a higher number of programmes offered on the market.

TABLE 51: TRAINING PROGRAMMES, TRAINEES AND GRADUATES IN 2009 COMPARED TO 2008			
TYPE OF TRAINING ACTIVITY	TRAINING PROGRAMMES	TRAINEES	GRADUATES
TOTAL 2009	4 548	320 429	182 656
TOTAL 2008	3 526	388 049	291 278
GROWTH INDEX	1.29	0.83	0.63

Source: ÚIPŠ.

The Act on LLL No. 568/2009 Coll. (*Zákon č. 568/2009 Z. z. o celoživotnom vzdelávaní*) recognises the existence of partial qualification. It might also stimulate non-formal education aimed at improvement of working skills, as a consequence of the possibility of getting recognised/validated non-formal/informal learning. No project aimed at paving the way to accreditation of non-formal and informal learning has been officially launched so far. The only experience already gathered is linked to international projects with Slovak participation, of which the Leonardo da Vinci project EPANIL (European Common Principles for the Accreditation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning in Lifelong Learning CZ/04/B/F/PP-168010, <http://www.epanil.net/> and the ESF project ATENA (Centre for the Development of Non-Formal Learning and Personal Development, SOP HR 2004/1-189) are worth mentioning.

A very important part of non-formal education, which is however neither studied, nor explicitly statistically covered, is non-formal education/learning in companies usually driven by employer requirements. It might be very strictly regulated by internal measures, however, without offering formal qualification. Diverse in-company training or even on-the-job training is often even not perceived by participants as “education”, in particular due to the comparably short duration of activity. Frequent short education/learning activities or many activities not perceived as education seem to be one of alternative explanations for the low adult LLL data (in a long term below 5 %).

STATISTICAL DATA, TRENDS AND POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICIES

In contrast to formal CVET, participation of adults in non formal education and training is above the EU average in all education attainment levels, as visible from the table below.

TABLE 52: PARTICIPATION RATE OF PEOPLE AGED 25-64 IN NON FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING* BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED IN 2007 (%)				
ISCED97	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6	TOTAL
EU 27	16.3	33.3	52.8	32.7
SK	14.2	38.4	56.8	41.2

Source of data: Eurostat (AES); Extracted on: 03-05-2010; Last update: 13-01-2010.

Note: * in the 12 months prior to the survey.

The Matthew effect is again visible: the share of trainees is increasing with the education attainment level. This data confirms similar results from the Eurostat LLL ad hoc module LFS 2005 with the reference year 2003²⁰.

Also 2003 data, stemming from 2005 LLL (LFS) ad hoc module presents Slovakia as performing above the EU25 average in non-formal education. Furthermore, 2005 CVTS3 data indicates that the share of all employees trained in all enterprises is above the EU27 average (38 % and 33 %, respectively). All this might be seen by authorities as evidence of a reduced urgency for intervention. When it comes to working status the participation of employed people is above the EU average, while the other two groups' participation is dramatically lower, as visible from the table below.

TABLE 53: PARTICIPATION RATE OF PEOPLE AGED 25-64 IN NON FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING* BY LABOUR STATUS IN 2007(%)				
STATUS	EMPLOYMENT	INACTIVE POPULATION	UNEMPLOYMENT	TOTAL
EU 27	40.5	13.2	20.4	32.7
SK	51.5	7.2	12.1	41.2

Source of data: Eurostat (AES); Extracted on: 03-05-2010; Last update: 13-01-2010.

Note: * in the 12 months prior to the survey.

It can be concluded that specific interventions in support of low skilled (and usually low-income people), as well as for the unemployed, is urgent.

Furthermore, the Eurostat LFS statistics depicts Slovakia among the poorest performing EU countries in the adult population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training (with 2.8 % in 2009, far below 2010 benchmark 12.5 %). The Ministry of Education (MŠ, *Ministerstvo školstva*) declared within its Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance, adopted by the government on 25th April 2007, to achieve improvement up to 15 % in 2015. Nevertheless, no fiscal incentives were agreed to boost LLL, and in particular for low income individuals and SMEs, a lack of disposable resources can create a serious barrier. Thus, no substantial improvement can be expected. Neither financial support of new coming investors and a pro-training attitude of large/rich companies, nor the ESF has contributed to the increase in the number of trainees since 2004, according to the LLL Eurostat data. It can be assumed that country inhabitants are much more positive towards learning than visible from the Eurostat LLL benchmark data. A detailed analysis of respective data is needed to identify the basis for further intervention. In particular the decrease in the 2004-2009 period (4.3 %, 4.6 %, 4.1 %, 3.9 %, 3.3 %, 2.8 %, respectively, according to the LFS Eurostat data) calls for rethinking both the 2015 national benchmark 15 % and policies in support of non formal education.

²⁰ For further details see Table 39 in *Slovakia: VET in Europe: Country Report 2009*.

6.3 MEASURES TO HELP JOB SEEKERS AND PEOPLE VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

Unemployed people and other people vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market are served by employment services provided by the headquarters of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (ÚPSVaR, *Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) and its network of offices spread throughout the country. Employment services are regulated by Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services (*Zákon č. 5/2004 Z. z. o službách zamestnanosti*), as amended. This act also identifies some “vulnerable groups” specifying so called “disadvantaged job seekers”, who are in detail described by § 8(1) as follows:

- A citizen below 25 years of age, who has completed his/her systematic vocational preparation in full-time study courses less than two years ago and failed to acquire his/her first regularly paid employment (hereinafter referred to as “graduate”);
- A citizen older than 50 years;
- A citizen maintained on the register of job seekers for at least 12 months in the last 16 months (hereinafter referred to as “long-term unemployed citizen”);
- A citizen who did not perform gainful activity not even prepared for a profession in the framework of systematic vocational preparation or further education for at least 24 months, due to an inability to harmonise duties at work with his/her parental obligations;
- A citizen, who is a parent, or a person, pursuant to a special regulation, who cares for three or more children, or a lone citizen caring of a child;
- A citizen who has lost the ability to carry out his/her current employment for health reasons and who is not a disabled citizen;
- A citizen moving or having moved within the territories of Member States of the European Union, or a citizen staying in the territory of a Member State of the European Union in order to carry out an employment;
- A disabled citizen;
- A citizen with reduced ability (minimum 20 %, maximum 40 %) to perform economic activity;
- An immigrant who has been granted asylum;
- A citizen unemployed due to diverse non-subjective reasons (e.g. organisational change, at risk of occupational disease, etc.);
- A citizen who has dropped out from secondary school;
- A citizen with specific status in relation with penitentiary or other institutional care.

Focusing on active labour market policy (ALMP) as a vehicle for labour market assertion of disadvantaged groups is explicitly stressed in §11(1)d of this act.

In addition, employed people can also be seen as belonging to a vulnerable group. The Contribution to support maintaining employment of employees with low wages (§ 50a) and the Contribution to support maintaining employment of employees at risk of living below subsistence minimum before employment and (§ 50f) differ in way of financial benefits. The first measure has been introduced since 1st May 2008 and the second one since 1st March 2009. However, there are no measures in place to support education and training of these people, in contrast to the people at risk of mass dismissal. According to § 47(3) labour office can financially support education and training of employees at risk of mass dismissal, provided their employment remains secured by the employer over the next 12 month.

In general, ALMP tools consist of three groups aimed at improving employability, creation of new jobs and retaining jobs, respectively. The respective tools, together with indication of their volume in terms of numbers of affected people, are depicted in the table below,

in which the new tools that were introduced in 2008 can also be seen. The employment services directly related to CVET can be seen from the table below (see explanation of ALMP tools below the table): policies are presented in time series since 2004.

ALMP TOOLS	PEOPLE AFFECTED			
	2004	2007	2008	2009
§ 46	27 208	8 890	12 143	17 924
§ 47	- *	12 537	13 863	29 921
§ 51	14 462	8 937	7 451	11 764
TOTAL**	273 354	304 249	264 801	208 016

Source: Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

Notes: EUR 1 = SKK 38.796 as of 31st December 2004; EUR 1 = SKK 33.603 as of 31st December 2007; 2008 and 2009 data offered in EUR by the Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

§ 46 Education and training for the labour market of the unemployed job seekers and employed job seekers, § 47 Education and training for the labour market of employee, § 51 Contribution for the graduate practice.

* not implemented. ** including also additional tools listed in the act.

Education of job seekers and other persons interested in employment (§ 46) is an obligatory instrument; it means that all eligible applicants must be served. Disadvantaged groups are however preferred. Trainees are entitled to

- reimbursement of 100 % costs related to training for the labour market (meals, accommodation, travel costs);
- contribution for services for families with children during the training period, since May 2008 SKK 1,300 per month for one child and SKK 1,000 for every additional child (since January 2009 it is EUR 43.16 and EUR 33.20, respectively);
- benefit during the training period provided that the training for the labour market lasts over one month (benefit equals to subsistence minimum for one adult person, since January 2009 to June 2009 it was EUR 178.92 and since July 2009 to June 2010 it is EUR 185.19).

In contrast to the previous measure, Education and training for the labour market of employee (§ 47) is not an obligatory instrument. Contribution may be provided to the employer for the reimbursement of training costs for training according to legislatively specified intensity in the percentage of eligible expenditures (e.g. lecturer costs, travel and accommodation costs for participants, counselling, training consumables, project equipment depreciations)

- 25 % in case of specific training;
- 60 % in case of general training increased by 10 % in case of medium sized and by 20 % in case of small enterprises.

Thus, the maximum reimbursement intensity is 80 %. The maximum contribution for one employer and one project has been EUR 33 193.91 since January 2009.

A new instrument (§ 55a) has been introduced since May 2008 to offer specific assistance to disabled people unable to enter regular education and training for the labour market. It was intended by legislators to facilitate the disabled to gradually adjust to working position requirements. Training focused on gradual development of relevant skills can last up to 6 months and is finished by a final exam. Nevertheless, this instrument was not applied in 2009.

Another new instrument the Contribution to support employment of persons that have completed education and training for the labour market (§ 51a) was also introduced by the 2008 amendment of Act No. 5/2004 Coll. It was in particular intended to increase the interest of employers in employment of older workers. Finally it focused on “youngest and oldest”, on the employment of secondary school graduates registered with the registry of job seekers for at least six months, and citizens over 50 years of age registered with the registry of job seekers for at least three months. The contribution to employers employing a job seeker for 24 months depended on the unemployment rate in a respective region, the status of the employer and the status of the job seeker. This measure is however unsuccessful, as it was finally not applied in 2009. The reason is the global economic crisis causing massive dismissals of experienced workers. But it also could indicate a mismatch between the focus of labour market training programmes and specific employers’ needs, as well as employers’ attitudes towards older workers and the youngest ones.

In 2008 labour offices received 19,233 applications from job seekers and those interested in job change for entering education and training for the labour market activities. There were 12,004 job seekers and 97 interested in change placed, which represents 62.9 % of submitted applications. 12,037 people completed education and training for the labour market activities (11,941 job seekers and 96 interested in change). Courses with the highest number of trainees were focused on ICT - 2,218, business and services - 2,094, diverse blue-collar occupations - 1,708. A specific category was the training for self-employment, assisting i.a. in preparation of a business plan for those unemployed wishing to qualify for § 49 instrument and receive contribution for self-employment allowing the covering of their initial costs to run a new business. In 2008, there were 2,000 people trained for self-employment.

Retraining activities were completed with certificates of attendance, however, without the obligatory indication of the respective education branch according to the national classification, or the specific indication of newly acquired or improved skills. E.g. people retrained in accountancy improved their skills in the area as certified by their participation; however, this does not mean that they became qualified for such a profession. Improvement is expected from the Act on LLL No. 568/2009 Coll. (*Zákon č. 568/2009 Z. z. o celoživotnom vzdelávaní*) allowing for recognition of partial qualifications.

Other educational activities were also planned, aimed at completing education in order to attain the education level (basic education, lower secondary education). This kind of training was however just marginal (within second chance school experimental projects) and not mainstreamed, although low educated people are disproportionately presented among unemployed. In 2009, the unemployment rate of people with ISCED 0-2 education level was the highest in the EU, with 41.7 % compared to 14.8 % in EU27 (Eurostat, LFS)

The graduate practice (§ 51) is targeting graduates from secondary and tertiary schools who are maximum 2 years after graduation and have failed to enter employment. It is aimed at acquiring vocational skills and practical experience at employer’s workplace in order to expand graduates’ employability by improving his/her professional skills and by gaining practical experience from employment. Although not certified by any special procedure, it is considered a successful instrument with a clear advantage for participants, as it is reported that it really improves their skills. There are however, no data about

interlinking study field and skills to be developed during the graduate practice as well as about the direct impact of graduate practice on later employment. There is just data about their subsequent placement, however, without estimation of the deadweight. Within the graduate practice a graduate works up to 20 hours weekly for the period up to six months. Based on the contract between a labour office and a school graduate, he/she receives a contribution equal to the level of subsistence minimum provided to one adult person according to Act No. 601/2003 Coll. on Subsistence Minimum (*Zákon č. 601/2003 Z. z. o životnom minime*); from 1st January 2009 it was EUR 178.92 per month and from July 2009 it was EUR 185.19. The contribution for the graduate practice is an obligatory instrument, thus all eligible applicants must be served. Originally, school graduates registered as unemployed for at least 3 months were eligible for this measure. As a consequence of crisis this period of registration is not required anymore, and since 1st November 2009 all registered graduates can apply for the graduate practice immediately after registration.

TABLE 55: GRADUATE PRACTICE ACCORDING TO NP IX LASTING SINCE 1ST JULY 2004 TO 30TH JUNE 2009

	BUDGET EUR	ALL PARTICIPANTS	GRADUATES	YOUNG PEOPLE UP TO 25	TOTAL EMPLOYED WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER FINISHING
SOP	17 528 891.42	61 519	43 861	17 658	29 %
SPD	681 819.00	238	193	45	N/A
TOTAL	18 210 710.42	61 757	44 054	17 703	N/A

Source: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, ESF and SPD Managing authorities.

Note: n/a - not available.

The graduate practice has been also financed from the state budget. In 2008, 5 970 graduate practice participants were financed from NP IX and 1 481 from the state budget, while 167 and 11 597, respectively, were placed into graduate practice in 2009. The graduate practice is not to be financed from the European money anymore, and therefore, the follow up to NP IX has not been prepared. Since 2010 the graduate practice will be financed from the state budget only (for exact data see § 51 within the Table 54 above).

Furthermore, the important contribution to reintegration into the labour market comes from the coincidence of labour market training and contribution to self-employment (§ 49) conditioned by specific labour market training. These people may or may not belong to the vulnerable group. A table below indicates an increase in people entering the labour market via supported self-employment since the onset of the crisis in 2008.

TABLE 56: PEOPLE RECEIVING CONTRIBUTION FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT IN 2004-2009

MEASURE	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
§ 49	5 618	9 908	10 477	10 038	12 096	12 870

Source: Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

Note: § 49 Contribution for self-employment of Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services.

In 2009, 4 560 (35.43 %) out of all 12,870 benefited were people at risk prioritised by employment services. Among them, the largest share was represented by long-term unemployed (18.2 % of all benefited). The contribution covered trainees' start-up costs

and their obligatory retraining for self-employment. There is no data available yet on long-term sustainability of their businesses.

There is also § 54 (Other projects and programmes) encompassing the verification of newly implemented active labour market policy measures and any other specific instruments. There were 1 203 people in training in 2009, which is 5 953 people less compared to 2008. In addition, there were 1 071 beneficiaries based on contracts from previous years.

Furthermore, § 54 measures include i.a. individual state aid to investors approved by the government or the European Commission and provided by the ÚPSVaR to contribute to the creation of new jobs. The state aid explicitly specifies a contribution for training of newly recruited staff for these jobs. There is however no data about using these means.

The numbers of trained people varied in respective years depending on the availability of means from the state budget and from the ESF. Table 54 above indicates a dramatic increase in numbers of trained employed people since 2007 (§ 47) and a further increase in trainees among unemployed and employed at risk of dismissal in 2009 caused by the reallocation of unused resources from other ESF measures. Similarly, there was also an increase of participants in Graduate practice (§ 51) in 2009.

7. TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

7.1 TYPES OF TEACHER AND TRAINER OCCUPATIONS IN VET

7.1.1 TEACHING AND TRAINING OCCUPATIONS IN VET

The Measure of the Statistical Office No. 16/2001 Coll. on the Classification of Occupations (*Opatrenie Štatistického úradu č. 16/2001 Z. z., ktorým sa vyhlasuje Klasifikácia zamestnaní*) set an ISCO based national classification KZAM. The newest version of KZAM 2008 classification substantially revised the former categories²¹ reflecting the Commission Recommendation of 29th October 2009 on the use of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08). Within the revised classification the following is of the highest relevance:

Sub-major group No. 23 Teaching professionals is divided into 5 minor groups and 12 unit groups. Respective occupations belong to respective unit groups, however, with no code numbers. VET (subject) teachers belong to unit group No. 2320 Vocational education teachers. On the other hand, general subjects teachers in VET schools belong to unit group No. 2330 Secondary education teachers. Within the secondary IVET system, VET teachers and VET trainers are recognised equally as pedagogical staff by educational legislation and their qualification requirements are strictly regulated. The obligatory required level of education (teachers must be higher education graduates, while trainers must possess a relevant certificate of apprenticeship and be at least ISCED 3A level educated) is the only substantial difference (see part 7.2.2 for further details).

Teachers from VET oriented higher education institutions are subsumed within the unit group No. 2310 University and higher education teachers (fully sticking to ISCO-08).

School and student counsellors belong to minor group No. 235 Other teaching professionals, while educational and school psychologists belong to sub-major group No. 26 Legal, social and cultural professionals, unit group 2634 Psychologists.

School directors belong to sub-major group No. 13 Production and specialised services managers, unit group No. 1345 Education managers.

Pedagogical assistants and tutors belong to sub-major group No. 53 Personal care workers, unit group 5312 Teachers' aides.

CVET teachers are classified as belonging to unit group No. 2320. In KZAM 2008 it is a little bit confusingly titled as "Teachers of further VET" (*Učitelia ďalšieho odborného vzdelávania*) in contrast to ISCO-08 title "Vocational education teachers". Nevertheless, as already indicated above IVET teachers are, despite the title of the unit group, correctly classified as belonging to unit group No. 2320 as well. CVET professionals in Slovakia are usually called lecturers, regardless of the content of their education or training and their status; and sometimes, in particular when training affects practical skills; instructors (see

²¹ See part 6.1.1 in Slovakia: VET in Europe: Country Report 2009.

part 7.3.1 for further details). Gradually, also new names emerge, e.g. “coach”, corresponding to the international trends.

Positions in VET are usually seen as of lower attractiveness compared to general education. It is partly due to the traditionally higher status of secondary grammar school teachers compared to teachers and trainers in secondary VET schools and in particular in school offering dominantly ISCED 3C training branches. It is however not that simple. It is often up to individual teachers/trainers and individual schools and their reputations. CVET teachers and trainers are often freelancers or they work in private institutions. Their income is higher than within IVET.

If measuring attractiveness by remuneration the work of all IVET pedagogical staff as well as general education staff is unattractive. A starting wage tariff for novice teachers without practice is EUR 499 in 2010, regardless of the kind of school their work in. The following data however suggest strong regional disparities which can make position of IVET teachers/trainers comparably more attractive in the underdeveloped regions with low wages.

TABLE 57: COMPARISON OF WAGES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS TO AVERAGE WAGE IN RESPECTIVE REGIONS			
REGION	SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER MONTHLY AVERAGE WAGE* (EUR)	REGIONAL MONTHLY AVERAGE WAGE (EUR)	DIFFERENCE (IN %)
BANSKÁ BYSTRICA	665	646	+3
PREŠOV	640	626	+2
ŽILINA	637	679	-6
KOŠICE	661	711	-7
NITRA	643	694	-7
TRENČÍN	643	707	-9
TRNAVA	645	737	-12
BRATISLAVA	668	969	-31
SLOVAKIA	650	772	-16

Source: Merces.sk continuing surveying as of 25/6/2010 (the source is announced to be renamed to platy.sk in the future).

Note: * Wage tariffs do not make a difference between grammar school and VET school teachers, individual bonuses and years of practice make a difference among individuals regardless of the kind of school their work in.

7.1.2 RESPONSIBLE BODIES AND ORGANIGRAM

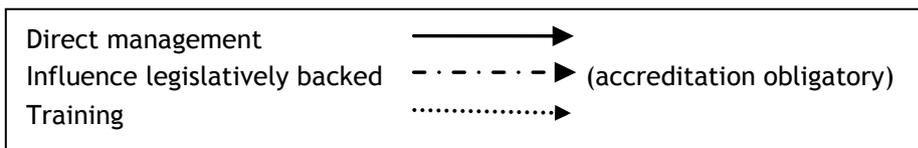
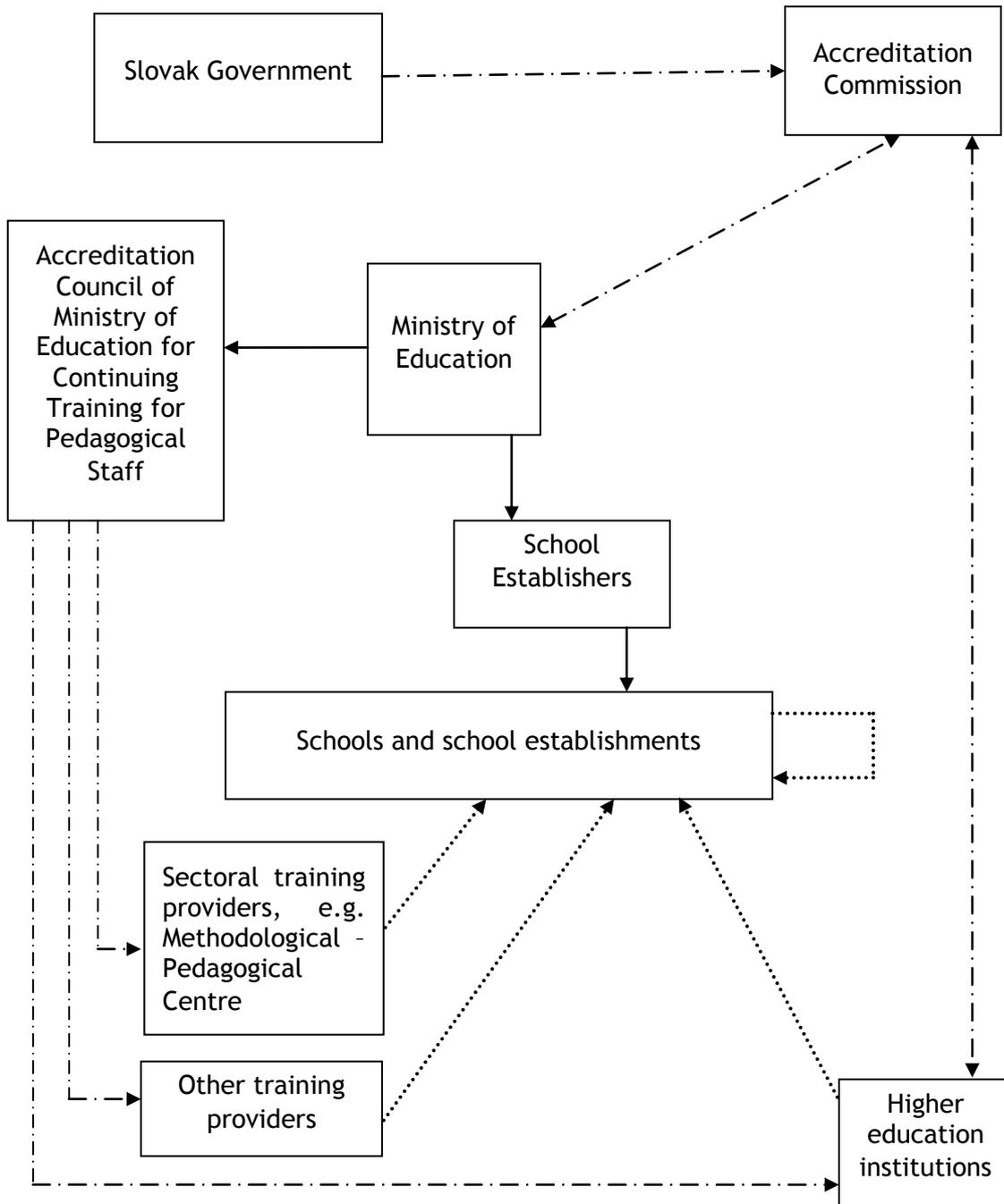
The responsibility for curricula in initial training of VET teachers and trainers is with the training providers. Higher education institutions are the only institutions awarding qualifications to IVET teachers. Their teacher training is accredited by the Accreditation Commission (AK, *Akreditačná komisia*) established by the government as its advisory body. The same applies with newly emerging bachelor studies for IVET trainers. Specialised training in pedagogy for practitioners or graduates from tertiary non-teacher-training studies is offered by higher education institutions with the relevant aforementioned accredited studies for those alternatively interested in becoming IVET teachers and trainers (see details on the so-called complementary pedagogical study in part 7.2). Of

course, it is not obligatory to be trained at higher education institution to become an IVET trainer. An alternative way is completion of the qualification studies organised by in-service training institutions and accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Training of Pedagogical and Professional Staff (*Akreditačná rada Ministerstva školstva Slovenskej republiky pre kontinuálne vzdelávanie pedagogických zamestnancov a odborných zamestnancov*).

There has been no system for monitoring training relevance introduced in Slovakia. So far, the accreditation processes of all kinds have been exclusively input based. No national quality assurance model has been introduced yet, either.

There were no official regulations applied concerning CVET trainers (lecturers) on the free market unless self-imposed by the respective professional association. Certification of adult education trainers based on training offered by the Slovak Association of Adult Education Providers (AIVD, *Asociácia inštitúcií vzdelávania dospelých v SR*) is not obligatory; however, gaining gradually more importance. Being listed at the AIVD website as a certified lecturer is considered a signal of quality by clients. Act No. 568/2009 Coll. on LLL (*Zákon č. 568/2009 Z. z. o celoživotnom vzdelávaní*), in force since 2010, however stipulates to add a proof of lecturers' "capability" within the process of accreditation of the programme.

ORGANIGRAM FOR TEACHER AND TRAINER TRAINING



7.1.3 RECENT REFORMS TO VET TEACHER/TRAINER TRAINING

The following top down changes affecting teachers and trainers in secondary IVET were introduced within last five years.

The Bologna process and a subsequent reform of tertiary education influenced also study programmes for teachers and trainers. All higher education institutions have redesigned their programmes introducing three independent cycles, and submitted the reconstructed study programmes for accreditation to the Accreditation Commission. The reform also contributed to the emergence of new programmes - bachelor studies for VET trainers. A detailed, so-called comprehensive accreditation of higher education institutions is in progress with first results assessing quality of higher education institutions announced in August 2009 (see part 4.2).

A school leaving examination reform was launched in 2005. This reform was substantially accompanied by retraining of pedagogical staff supported by the ESF. The National Institute for Education (ŠPÚ, *Štátny pedagogický ústav*) and the State Institute of Vocational Education (ŠIOV, *Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania*) retrained teachers to enable them to adapt to organisational changes and to new examination related requirements, like the identification of appropriate exam topics and their translation into relevant tasks. In case of vocational subject teachers special attention was paid to the development of comprehensive, interlinked topics for both the theoretical and the practical part of the exam.

Since September 2008, as a consequence of decentralisation of curricular development, schools must prepare school educational programmes. Therefore, two national projects with the same title “Teacher Training for the Creation of School Education Programmes” and similar goals were set within the ESF Operational Programme Education Priority Axis “Reform of education and training” and Priority Axis “Modern education for knowledge society for Bratislava region”.

Furthermore, within the same ESF priority axes, two specialised national projects of the “Development of New Educational Programme in VET for Automotive Industry II” were launched as a follow up to the project on “Development of New Educational Programmes in Vocational Education for the Needs of the Automotive Industry” carried out in the 2004-2006 ESF programming period. They are focusing on the training of staff to improve curriculum development (school educational programmes elaboration) by schools preparing workers for automotive industry.

The most important reform concerns profession definition, and consequently in-service training. A working group established by the Ministry of Education (consisting of representatives of the ministry and pre-service and in-service teacher training institutions) developed the Methodology Proposal for Developing Professional Standards for Individual Categories of Pedagogical Staff (*Návrh metodiky tvorby profesijných štandardov jednotlivých kategórií pedagogických zamestnancov*). The proposal reflected “Education and Training 2010” goals as well as the work of the European Commission Working Group B. Furthermore, a Draft Concept Paper for the Professional Development of Teachers in a Career System (*Koncepcia profesijného rozvoja učiteľov v kariérovom systéme*) was elaborated and was approved by the government on 18th April 2007. A new act No. 317/2009 Coll. on Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff, in force since November 2009, sets the following categories of pedagogical staff: teacher, trainer, tutor, and pedagogical assistant, foreign lecturer, trainer of sport school or sport class, and répétiteur. Additionally, it sets five categories of other professional staff dealing with psychological, social and health aspects of education. The act specifies personal and qualification prerequisites concerning all categories of pedagogical and professional staff and it aims to

improve teacher qualifications by using a model of continuous professional development with four career levels in all categories representing a career path marked by sets of respective standards for

- beginning pedagogue/professional worker;
- independent pedagogue/professional worker;
- pedagogue/professional worker with the first attestation;
- pedagogue/professional worker with the second attestation;

and two specific career positions: specialist and leader (manager).

The act introduces the credit system for standards driven continuing training. Accreditation of continuing training programmes should be carried out by Accreditation Council for Continuing Training of Pedagogical and Professional Staff (*Akreditačná rada Ministerstva školstva Slovenskej republiky pre kontinuálne vzdelávanie pedagogických zamestnancov a odborných zamestnancov*), established in November 2009 as an advisory body to the Ministry of Education. The intention of legislators was to increase the social status and remuneration of pedagogical employees as a consequence of their additional training, to improve the quality of their in-service training. This act also includes measures concerning the protection for the pedagogical employees from excessive psychological stress, protection of teachers from aggressive behaviour from students and/or their parents, differentiating of performances of pedagogical profession, and includes a proposal for fair evaluation and remuneration.

Within Priority Axis 2 “Continuing education as an instrument of human resource development”, Measure 2.1 “Support of continuing education”, and corresponding Measure 4.2 “Raising competitiveness of the Bratislava Region through the development of higher and continuing education”, two national projects with the title “Professional and Career Development of Pedagogical Staff” were launched in October 2009, coordinated by the Methodological-Pedagogical Centre (*Metodicko-pedagogické centrum*). These national projects are aimed at creating an effective system of in-service training with a special focus on the development of key competences of educators. At least 20 000 people are to be trained within 48 months of project duration.

There is a special stream of schools serving SEN students including IVET schools and specific schools assisting mentally disabled to acquire some vocation skills. Teachers and trainers of these schools must graduate from special education training to be fully qualified. Therefore, all pieces of educational legislation address education of SEN students by specific paragraphs. Integration and inclusion processes that have emerged since 1989, are increasingly supported by authorities and public, however, in practice still hampered by a lack of resources (despite the obligatory additional funding from the state budget) to create an appropriate environment for SEN students within mainstream schools. The remarkable progress can be seen in inclusion of SEN students and in improvement of conditions for their study in tertiary education. Special facilitators (specialised according to the type of disability) are identified in all faculties to coordinate support for SEN students and assist students and/or teachers in overcoming problems.

Special attention is paid to SEN students and/or training of staff dealing with them by ESF, where the special Priority Axis 3 “Support to Education of Persons with Special Education Needs” is identified. Similarly, ESF and EQUAL served and ESF still addresses VET of socially disadvantaged population (with a large share of Roma from segregated

settlements) as the most visible vulnerable group. The results are controversial, despite some partial success.

7.2 TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

7.2.1 TYPES OF TEACHERS, TRAINERS AND TRAINING FACILITATORS IN IVET

Secondary IVET is dominantly school based and there is no genuine apprenticeship system in Slovakia. Even when practical training is offered outside school facilities, the education sector regulation must be respected and the dominant partner finally responsible for practical training is the school and not the contracting partner offering workshops or workplace for the training of students. Thus, IVET staff is dominantly bound to the education institutions.

TABLE 58: TYPE OF VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN THE IVET SYSTEM			
TYPE	PLACE OF TEACHING/ TRAINING	CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT	ASSESSMENT
TEACHER OF GENERAL SUBJECTS	school	partial autonomy*	Ministry of Education (MŠ, <i>Ministerstvo školstva</i>)
TEACHER OF VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	secondary specialised schools SOŠ	partial autonomy*	MŠ
TEACHER OF PRACTICAL TRAINING	school, workplace	partial autonomy*	MŠ
TUTOR	school, dormitory, specialised out-of-school facility	partial autonomy*	MŠ
TRAINER AT EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS OF EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITIES	school, centre (SOP, SPV), workplace	partial autonomy*	MŠ
TRAINER AT EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS OF COMPANIES	centre (SPV at companies), workplace	partial autonomy*	MŠ, Company
INSTRUCTOR**	workplace	partial autonomy*	MŠ
HIGHER EDUCATION (UNIVERSITY) TEACHER	higher education institution	full autonomy	Accreditation Commission (AK, <i>Akreditačná komisia</i>)
RÉPÉTITEUR	conservatory	partial autonomy*	MŠ

Notes: * expanding since September 2008 in case of first classes of secondary schools; curriculum development decentralisation results in designing individual school educational programme, within

which cooperation of pedagogical staff is envisaged. ** newly recognised by education sector legislation within Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on VET.

SOŠ - secondary specialised school (stredná odborná škola), SOP - centre of vocational practice (stredisko odbornej praxe), SPV - centre of practical training (stredisko praktického vyučovania) providing for the practical training of students who receive theoretical education at VET schools without the full option of school based practical training.

There are traditionally three categories of VET school teachers officially recognised by the education sector legislation: teachers of general subjects, teachers of vocational subjects and teachers of practical training. The latter category of teachers is involved in practical lessons at school, e.g. in laboratories and practical lessons connected to workplaces specified within the curricula and aimed at applying theoretical knowledge gained during theoretical subjects.

Trainers are responsible for assisting in gaining respective skills (predominantly manual) during practical training. Although VET in Slovakia is dominantly school-based, in some cases practical training is offered outside the school. The first option comprises centres of practical training (SPV, *stredisko praktického vyučovania*), originally aiming at the practical training of students of former secondary vocational schools (SOU, *stredné odborné učilište*), and since 2008 September training branches of secondary specialised schools (SOŠ, *stredná odborná škola*), and centres of vocational practice (SOP, *stredisko odbornej praxe*) originally aimed at the practical training of students of secondary specialised schools.

Based on an agreement between a school and a company, practical training can be provided directly by the company in its own premises and by its own staff, but under the supervision of the school. These professionals are often called instructors to differentiate between them and trainers from schools.

Tutors serve students residing at affiliated dormitories and take care of diverse aspects of the students' personal interest.

Sport instructors are in fact specialists at schools dedicated to the education of students who are at the same time (pre)professional sportsmen and sportswomen.

7.2.2 PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF IVET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

Qualifications of IVET teachers and trainers are strictly regulated by the Ministry of Education. Till October 2009 by the Decree of the Ministry of Education No. 41/1996 Coll. on Professional and Educational Competence of the Educational Staff (*Vyhláška Ministerstva školstva č. 41/1996 Z. z. o odbornej a pedagogickej spôsobilosti pedagogických zamestnancov*) and since 1st November 2009 by Act No. 317/2009 Coll. on Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff (*Zákon č. 317/2009 Z. z. o pedagogických zamestnancoch a odborných zamestnancoch a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov*), and by the Decree of the Ministry of Education No. 437/2009 Coll. on Qualification Prerequisites and Specific Qualification Requirements for Respective Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff Categories (*Vyhláška MŠ SR č. 437/2009 Z. z., ktorou sa ustanovujú kvalifikačné predpoklady a osobitné kvalifikačné požiadavky a osobitné kvalifikačné požiadavky pre jednotlivé kategórie pedagogických zamestnancov a odborných zamestnancov*).

All secondary IVET teachers must be graduates from higher education institutions. Teachers of general subjects are prepared at universities within teacher training programmes designed for all types of schools, usually in two fields corresponding to

respective subjects (e.g. Mathematics and Physics). There is no specific initial training for teachers of general subjects at VET schools. They adjust to VET schools demands within the first years of service, assisted by appointed experienced colleagues.

Teachers of vocational subjects at VET schools are usually graduates from technical universities (with an Engineer's degree - Ing.) and from specific complementary pedagogical study (DPŠ, *doplňujúce pedagogické štúdium*) with the minimum duration of 200 hours offered at universities for those interested in teaching career. This study is aimed at the full provision of training in "pedagogy" and can be studied simultaneously or consecutively, after graduation from non-teaching programme. It is regulated by the Decree of the Ministry of Education No. 581/2007 Coll. on Complementary Pedagogical Study (*Vyhláška MŠ SR č. 581/2007 Z. z. o doplňujúcom pedagogickom štúdiu*). Currently, complementary pedagogical studies can only be organised by higher education with relevant accredited studies.

Teacher training programmes for VET teachers exist, but they are not attractive. Thus, teachers of vocational subjects can be graduates from teacher training programmes at universities with other priorities than teacher training (e.g. University of Economics), but it is traditionally very rare and gradually vanishing. Students interested in acquiring teaching qualification at these universities prefer to study in non-teaching programmes and in the aforementioned complementary pedagogical studies to secure the acquisition of two qualifications simultaneously (as a specialist in the respective field and a teacher of relevant vocational subjects).

There is no specific initial training for teachers of vocational subjects differentiating between the needs of ISCED 3A and ISCED 3C programmes.

IVET trainers must also fulfil the minimum requirements set by the legislation mentioned in the first paragraph. Since 1st November 2009 Act No. 317/2009 Coll. and subsequent decree also apply for IVET trainers and other learning facilitators at VET schools and school establishments. IVET trainers are usually graduates from relevant secondary VET school who additionally completed studies to acquire relevant skills in pedagogy. They can enter the qualification studies organised by in-service training institutions (according the § 8 (2) of the Act No. 317/2009 Coll. after accreditation by the Accreditation Council of the Ministry of Education for Continuing Training of Pedagogical and Professional Staff (*Akreditačná rada Ministerstva školstva Slovenskej republiky pre kontinuálne vzdelávanie pedagogických zamestnancov a odborných zamestnancov*). Training in "pedagogy" is also offered by universities in a form of the aforementioned complementary pedagogical study. Gradually however bachelor studies for trainers are replacing it as it is more attractive for future trainers to acquire a bachelor degree. There were traditionally no entry requirements for training in "pedagogy" (qualification studies as well as complementary pedagogical studies). Admission exams may or may not be applied for bachelor studies for trainers. Higher education institutions act ad hoc concerning this, usually depending on the demand for these studies.

The following data on qualifications of staff presented in the table below indicates a low share of unqualified staff in IVET, 5.1 % among VET schools teachers and 6.6 % among trainers. A decrease from over 11 % among teachers and 20 % among trainers of former secondary vocational schools in 2001 indicates a significant improvement.

TABLE 59: TEACHERS AND TRAINERS BY QUALIFICATION AS OF 30TH NOVEMBER 2009									
SCHOOLS		TEACHERS				TRAINERS			
		WITH QUALIFICATION		WITHOUT QUALIFICATION		WITH QUALIFICATION		WITHOUT QUALIFICATION	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
KINDERGARTEN		13 622	98.7	177	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
BASIC SCHOOL		34 059	95.1	1 752	4.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
OF WHICH	1ST STAGE	13 628	95.6	624	4.4	0	0.0	0	0,0
	2ND STAGE	20 431	94.8	1 128	5.2	0	0.0	0	0,0
BASIC SCHOOLS OF ARTS		4 677	81.3	1 073	18.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
GRAMMAR SCHOOLS		7 856	98.2	143	1.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
SECONDARY SPECIALISED SCHOOLS		15 448	94.9	835	5.1	3 473	93.4	247	6.6
CONSERVATORIES		718	89.8	82	10.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
LANGUAGE SCHOOLS		397	95.4	19	4.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
SPECIAL SCHOOLS		3 382	80.4	825	19.6	549	87.7	77	12.3
TOTAL		80 159	94.2	4 906	5.8	4 022	92.5	324	7.5

Source: ÚIPŠ.

In-service training for IVET teachers was regulated by the Decree of Ministry of Education No. 42/1996 Coll. on the In-service Training of the Pedagogical Staff (*Vyhláška Ministerstva školstva Slovenskej republiky č. 42/1996 Z. z. o ďalšom vzdelávaní pedagogických pracovníkov*). The officially recognised forms of in-service training valid till September 2009 were as follows²²:

- introduction of new teachers to practice;
- refresher work (*priebežné vzdelávanie*);
- specialised innovative study (*ŠIŠ, špecializačné inovačné štúdium*);
- specialised qualification study (*špecializačné kvalifikačné štúdium*);
- training in leadership (*príprava vedúcich pedagogických pracovníkov*);
- extended study (*rozširujúce štúdium*).

The new Act No. 317/2009 Coll. on Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff introduced a credit based and standards driven continuing development model. The following table

²² For detailed description see Slovakia: Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2008, part 0602 - Types of teachers and trainers in IVET.

depicts the new scheme influencing in-service training expected since November 2009. Respective categories of pedagogical staff: teacher; trainer; tutor; pedagogical assistant; foreign lector; trainer of sport school or sport class, and répétiteur, in 4 career levels in diverse career paths are to be trained.

TABLE 60: CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL (2007 CONCEPT PAPER, 2009 ACT)			
CAREER LEVELS	BASIC PATH (NO SPECIALISATION)	SPECIALISATION PATHS	
4 TH LEVEL		↑	2 nd Attest holder ↑
3 RD LEVEL	↑	1 st Attest holder ↑	⇒
2 ND LEVEL	Independent ↑	⇒	
1 ST LEVEL - BEGINNER	⇒		

Notes: ↑ ⇒ credit gathering ↑ upgrading after exam and credits assessments against a set of standards.

Specialisation paths: Subject matter expert; Pedagogue-specialist; Leader/ Manager.

There are two levels of attestation determined as can be seen from the table above. Both require a specific length of pedagogical practice, a minimum amount of credits gathered and an exam taken in front of a committee. It is up to teachers and other staff to decide for respective career path and to find an agreement with a school director who is responsible for planning continuing development of his/her employees, concerning harmonisation of teaching duties and continuing education. Teachers/trainers are indirectly pushed to gather credits in order to proceed in career levels and to be better remunerated.

The following types of continuing education are recognised by Act No. 317/2009 Coll., and by the Decree of the Ministry No. 445/2009 Coll. on Continuing education, Credits and Attestation of Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff (*Vyhláška MŠ SR č. 445/2009 Z. z. o kontinuálnom vzdelávaní, kreditoch a atestáciách pedagogických zamestnancov a odborných zamestnancov*), which came into force since 15th November 2009:

- adaptive education (*adaptačné vzdelávanie*), which is obligatory for starting teachers and lasts two years. The teacher does not earn any credits for its completion;
- up-to-date education (*aktualizačné vzdelávanie*), which is designated for upholding the professional competence needed for standard performance or attestation;
- innovative education (*inovačné vzdelávanie*), which is meant to improve professional competence of a teacher;
- specialised education (*špecializačné vzdelávanie*), which is designated for acquiring professional competences to pursue specialised activities;
- function education (*funkčné vzdelávanie*), which is obligatory for teachers in administrative positions. The teacher does not earn any credits for its completion;
- qualification education (*kvalifikačné vzdelávanie*), which provides the teacher with higher qualification.

No official quality assurance system has been introduced yet; as a rule, it is up to the director of the school and the school establishment to monitor the quality of service as well as to arrange for guidance on improving staff skills.

7.3 TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

7.3.1 TYPES OF TEACHERS, TRAINERS AND TRAINING FACILITATORS IN CVET

It is not appropriate to differentiate between teachers and trainers in CVET in Slovakia. CVET professionals are usually called lecturers, regardless of the content of their education or training and their status; and sometimes, in particular when training affects practical skills, instructors. The terms *teacher* and *trainer* are related rather to the initial formal education system. It would be possible to offer classification with many sub-categories, however, any detailed classification is vulnerable as there are no strict legal regulations, except for the aforementioned national classification of occupations (KZAM 2008, *klasifikácia zamestnaní*) used for statistical purposes rather than in daily life. Many professionals prefer their own classifications (e.g. coaches usually prefer not to be seen as trainers and even not counsellors). Similarly, many professionals prefer to be named lecturers and alternatively the category of professional trainers could have been labelled as a category of lecturers.

TYPE	PLACE OF TEACHING/ TRAINING	CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT	ASSESSMENT
obligatory CPD* trainer/ facilitator	educational establishment	limited autonomy	respective authority**
adult education trainer	educational establishment, facilities leased by provider	full autonomy	provider (could be based on feedback from client)
professional trainer	based on agreement with respective company/institution/individual	full autonomy	provider/client
trainer at companies/institutions	company, training facilities of company	full autonomy	company
professional instructor	based on agreement with respective company/institution, usually at workplace	full autonomy	provider/client

Notes: * continuing professional development; e.g. in-service training of teachers.

** Ministry of Education (MŠ, Ministerstvo školstva), in case of pedagogical staff; Ministry of Health (MZ, Ministerstvo zdravotníctva) and respective professional associations in case of medical staff, etc.

Lecturers are predominantly professionals of diverse occupations who are contracted for CVET by training providers or directly by institutions interested in training for their employees. Thus, lecturing is often a job rather than an occupation. The level of education of lecturers from 596 in 2009 positively responding organizations within regular annual data collection done by Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (ÚIPŠ, *Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva*) can be seen from the following table.

TABLE 62: LECTURERS IN CONTINUING TRAINING IN 2009			
LECTURERS	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL	TOTAL
ISCED 2	7	14	21
ISCED 3C (CoA)	7	8	15
ISCED 3C (WITHOUT CoA)	4	12	16
ISCED 3A (MSLC) + CoA	24	32	56
OF WHICH WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION	17	6	23
WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION (IN %)	70.83	18.75	41.07
ISCED 3A (MSLC) GEN	59	175	234
OF WHICH WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION	11	21	32
WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION (IN %)	18.64	12.00	13.68
ISCED 3A (MSLC) VET	215	497	712
OF WHICH WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION	62	144	206
WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION (IN %)	28.84	28.97	28.93
ISCED 5B	29	46	75
OF WHICH WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION	22	13	35
WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION (IN %)	75.86	28.26	46.67
ISCED 5A - Bc	81	392	473
OF WHICH WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION	33	131	164
WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION (IN %)	40.74	33.42	34.67
ISCED 5A - M	2152	8679	10831
OF WHICH WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION	774	3071	3845
WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION (IN %)	35.97	35.38	35.50
ISCED 6	1 768	2 544	4312
OF WHICH WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION	645	1213	1858
WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION (IN %)	36.48	47.68	43.09
TOTAL	4 346	12 399	16 745
OF WHICH WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION	1 564	4 599	6 163
WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUALIFICATION (IN %)	35.99	37.09	36.81

Source: ÚIPŠ.

Notes: CoA - Certificate of Apprenticeship (výučný list), MSLC - "Maturita" School Leaving Certificate (vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške).

GEN - general education stream, VET - vocational stream.

7.3.2 PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF CVET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

PRE-SERVICE (INITIAL) TRAINING

Continuing training education is not a regulated trade and thus no certificate of lecturing (pedagogical or andragogical) competence is required by law and no evidence of professional qualification is needed for setting up an educational institution. Thus, systematic initial training for lecturers does not exist and it is not as a rule officially required from lecturers, either. Submitting a proof of professional competence is required consistently only in some specific cases, such as training in the field of occupational safety, fire protection, arts, healthcare, where such proof must be submitted in accordance with regulations stated by the Trade Licensing Act No. 455/1991 Coll. (*Živnostenský zákon č. 455/1991 Zb.*) or sectoral legislation (e.g. Act No. 124/2006 Coll. on Occupational Safety (*Zákon č. 124/2006 Z. z. o bezpečnosti a ochrane zdravia pri práci*), Act No. 125/2006 Coll. on Labour Inspection (*Zákon č. 125/2006 Z. z. o inšpekcii práce*), the Act No. 93/2005 Coll. on Driving Schools (*Zákon č. 93/2005 Z. z. o autoškolách*)). In such cases a certificate of lecturing competence (the so-called lecturing minimum) is also usually required. Thus, lecturers in the field of blue-collar professions, who generally have only secondary education, often complete training in pedagogy pursuant to such a sectoral legislation or based on their own initiative. They often enter training originally designed for trainers in formal IVET (see part 7.2.2).

A great number of lecturers in continuing education are higher education teachers, who in contrast to teachers of basic schools and secondary schools are usually not trained in pedagogy. Thus courses have been developed to improve lecturer skills (e.g. by the Slovak Association of Adult Education Institutions (AIVD, *Asociácia inštitúcií vzdelávania dospelých v SR*) to assist those with difficulties to adjust their natural styles of instruction to adults needs (see the next paragraphs).

IN-SERVICE (CONTINUING) TRAINING

Systematic in-service training for CVET trainers and other learning facilitators does not exist and continuing training is not officially required from a lecturer. In-service training of internal lecturers may be set by individual training providers or companies in accordance with their training culture; however, there is no official evidence nor impact surveys about these activities.

Nevertheless, a paid certified course for lecturers was developed and is offered by the Association of Adult Education Institutions (AIVD) to all those interested in improving their lecturing skills. Output requirements of the certification course for lecturers provided by the AIVD include mastery of adult education theory; a video taped lecture for the analysis of their performance; and a final paper in the form of the lecturer's course design and/or manual. The list of certified lecturers is maintained by the association and displayed at the association's website with an expected comparable advantage in the market for graduates.

It is often hardly possible to label existing fragments of training as pre-service or in-service training. In fact, courses on lecturing could be considered the latter or the former depending on the status of participants, i.e., novice or lecturer already in service.

As already explained pre-service and in-service training of CVET teachers and trainers is substantially less regulated than training of IVET teachers and trainers. There is no quality assurance system developed and any quality improvement is based on initiatives of market players only.

The assessment of lecturers is performed based on inquiries after completing an educational/training activity and usually does not have any impact on the lecturer's formal career. The lecturers' career path is fully his/her business, influencing and influenced by the demand for their services and the honorarium. The career path of an internal lecturer fully depends on the training provider, or company, where he/she is internally employed to provide training of employees.

With rising competitiveness in the market, efforts to establish quality control and quality self-regulation became a subject of discussion. It was intended to set certification of lecturers as obligatory by law. The certification of lecturers however remained not obligatory as visible from § 11(4) of the Act No. 568/2009 Coll. on LLL (*Zákon č. 568/2009 Z. z. o celoživotnom vzdelávaní*). Certificate confirming skills in lecturing/pedagogy can be replaced by the declaration of training provider confirming experience of individual lecturer.

8. MATCHING VET PROVISION (SKILLS) WITH LABOUR MARKET NEEDS (JOBS)

8.1 SYSTEMS AND MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS (IN SECTORS, OCCUPATIONS, EDUCATION LEVEL)

There is no genuine system and there were no reliable mechanisms developed for anticipation of skills needs till 2009. There is only sectoral data or regional data, collected ad-hoc. All these surveys were limited by specific focus corresponding to respective sectoral fields of interest and without efforts to develop instruments to be used periodically to monitor labour market supply and demand. The earlier Refernet reports²³ offer details on these surveys and studies performed till 2008. In recognition of this systemic weakness, its negative influence on designing VET programmes, and in the light of the lack of research in this field the sub-measure 3.3.B “Systems for linking vocational education and training with the labour market” was set within the ESF SOP Human Resources. There were 10 surveys of labour market needs, 20 studies on key occupations and establishment of a functional electronic system of mapping labour market needs envisaged. Nevertheless, the appropriate measures were not finally carried out and the reserved means were reallocated for other activities. At the same time the failure to achieve the planned results in this field also happened in the education sector: Although Academia Istropolitana successfully contributed to the development of the LLL strategy within the ESF project “Creation, Development and Implementation of an Open System of Lifelong Learning in the SR for the Labour Market” (*Tvorba, rozvoj a implementácia otvoreného systému celoživotného vzdelávania v SR pre potreby trhu práce*), it failed in “creating and implementing a system for monitoring, research and design of educational needs, derived from technologies applied in individual sectors of the economy“, envisaged by the project. In contrast to original expectations the project contributed to the identification of future policies and recommendations concerning further research in the field rather than to the development of relevant know-how. In both cases the severe divergence from initial plans happened partly due to the lack of research capacity and expertise. While it is understandable that there was no experience in this field during the command economy period it is incomprehensible why the relevant research capacities were not created after 1989.

In October 2009, the government discussed the information on forecasting labour market needs and skill needs submitted by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family on its own initiative as a reaction to the EU “New Skills for New Jobs” initiative and under the strong influence of Cedefop’s Skillsnet project. For the first time labour demand was forecasted according to three categories of education (low, medium, high). The level of education up to ISCED 3C was labelled as low, ISCED 3A+4+5B (containing post-secondary non tertiary VET) as medium, and higher education as high. It must be stressed here that ISCED 3A level includes a strong VET component and post-secondary non tertiary VET is quite tiny in Slovakia.

²³ See e.g. *Slovakia: VET in Europe - Country Report 2009*, part 7.1, and “*Progress in VET in priority areas agreed in the Copenhagen process: VET policy Report - Slovakia 2010*”, part 4.1.

This forecasting was based on the econometric model of the Institute of Economic Research of Slovak Academy of Sciences and its forecasting of the macroeconomic development of the Slovak Republic till 2020. In relation to labour market employment (absolute numbers, year to year change) and unemployment (absolute numbers, unemployment rates, year to year change) were forecasted, disaggregated into 8 regions. Forecasting of employment by NACE groups was offered as well.

	NACE	2008		2015		2020	
		IN 1000s	%	IN 1000s	%	IN 1000s	%
AGRICULTURE, FISHING	A-B	79.9	3.6	90.1	4.0	75.6	3.3
MINING AND QUARRYING	C	8.7	0.4	6.3	0.3	5.1	0.2
MANUFACTURING	D	544.2	24.3	533.7	23.5	554.9	24.3
ELECTRICITY, GAS AND WATER SUPPLY	E	33.3	1.5	31.7	1.4	31.4	1.4
CONSTRUCTION	F	182.9	8.2	182.0	8.0	182.2	8.0
MARKET SERVICES	G-I	656.5	29.3	693.7	30.5	712.5	31.2
FINANCIAL SERVICES	J-K	229.5	10.3	241.5	10.6	249.9	10.9
PUBLIC SERVICES	L-Q	502.1	22.4	492.9	21.7	474.2	20.7
TOTAL	A-Q	2 237.1	100	2 271.9	100	2 285.8	100

Source: Institute of Economic Research of Slovak Academy of Sciences (*Ekonomický ústav Slovenskej akadémie vied*), tabled by authors.

Out of three scenarios (low, medium, high) the second one was used for forecasting labour demand according to three categories of education. A year on year increase about 4-5 % in higher education demand is expected for the whole period till 2020, as a consequence of a heavily unsaturated market with demand strongly exceeding supply. After a few years of stagnation caused by the crisis a year on year increase of about 1-2 % is forecasted for secondary education demand for the next period. Low level education is expected to decrease, with an accelerated decrease close to the end of the period, dropping from 39.3 % share in demand in 2008 down to 22.9 % in 2020. In contrast, labour demand for higher educated is expected to increase from current 15.8 % up to 26.0 % in 2020.

The importance of prevention from the mismatch between labour demand and supply and conducting periodical forecasting of demand and supply, the anticipation of skill needs on the regional and sectoral basis based on surveying skill needs in enterprises has been promoted by this governmental paper. Subsequently, the Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, started to develop a system of forecasting labour market needs within the Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion National Project XIV-2 “Created and Eliminated Jobs Detection System and Forecasting Labour Market Needs” (*Systém zisťovania vzniknutých a zaniknutých pracovných miest a prognózovanie potrieb trhu práce*). In December 2009, the Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family launched a tender to identify a provider of methodology, data and interpretation of collected data for annual forecasting of labour needs in order to develop a system aimed at monitoring labour market needs (and *expressis verbis* at “emerging and lost working places”). Medium and short-term forecasting of labour market needs by regions, broken by NACE and ISCO classifications, should be carried out. Deloitte Slovensko won this tender. Currently, Data Collection Questionnaire consisting of 44 items has been developed divided in four sections (general identification data, data regarding the number of employees and jobs, data on

job vacancies, supplementary explanatory data). An English version of this questionnaire is available at http://www.deloitte.com/assets/Dcom-SlovakRepublic/Local%20Assets/Documents/sk_en_Data_Collection_Questionnaire.pdf

This emerging initiative conducted under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family has to be complemented by the activity under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. Within ESF Operational Programme Education, the Ministry of Education launched a national ESF project “National System of Qualifications in the Context of Continuing Education Supported by Guidance and Counselling System” (*Národná sústava kvalifikácií v kontexte ďalšieho vzdelávania podporená systémom poradenstva*). Academia Istropolitana was surprisingly again selected by the Ministry of Education, apparently in the hope that in its second attempt it will be more successful in running this project. Activity 1.4 “Monitoring and forecasting educational/learning needs” of this project should contribute to the progress. The project is however still pending, and the final decision on the institution to be responsible for the development of the know-how to map, assess and forecast qualification requirements and to create NSQ has been postponed.

A cooperation of the two ministries is urgently needed to make effective and efficient use of ESF resources. This might prove to be hard to achieve, as the aforementioned projects are conducted within different ESF operational programmes that are run independently by respective ministries and supervised by different monitoring committees.

8.2 PRACTICES TO MATCH VET PROVISION (SKILLS) WITH SKILL NEEDS (JOBS)

As explained in the previous chapter, there are no genuine instruments available to identify labour market needs with direct impact on matching VET provision with skill needs. Nevertheless, increasing interest in the identification of labour market needs has recently emerged fuelled by employers’ dissatisfaction with graduate supply. This changed attitude of employers, manifested by diverse (often non-standard and/or particular) activities, will hopefully translate into systemic surveying based on valid and reliable measuring. The two aforementioned ESF projects should secure this. Thus, it can be concluded that there are only partial and no national systemic and systematic activities aimed at matching VET skills with labour market needs and jobs; and that the first relevant data and subsequent evidence based policies can be expected in the future from results of surveys based on the aforementioned ESF project run by Deloitte Slovensko.

As already mentioned in part 2.1.2, the Act on VET No. 184/2009 Coll. (*Zákon č. 184/2009 Z. z. o odbornom vzdelávaní*) stipulates responsibility for the identification of labour market needs. This Act resulted from the pressure of the automotive industry, the leading industry of the Slovak national economy. Changes in VET for automotive industry could be seen as an example of the translation of sectoral studies’ findings into the sectoral VET reform in all segments, i.e. programming VET, assessing VET and teacher and trainer training. This sector’s experience and two self-governing regions’ (the Žilina and Bratislava Regions) experience in regional development planning influenced substantially the governance reform represented by the Act on VET. It is however open how the extension to other sectors and regions will succeed. Insufficiently developed methodologies for the identification of labour market needs and their translation into relevant policies might hamper the reform in less developed regions and sectors still fighting with restructuring and with the transition from the heritage of the former command economy.

Self-governing regions had to work out regional strategies in cooperation with Regional VET Councils composed of representatives of state administration, self-governing administration, employers and representatives of trade unions and/or employees’ councils. A plan of labour market needs (an obligatory document required by law) must be adopted

by self-governing regions. It should be elaborated by respective professional organisations of employers and submitted to the Regional VET Council and National VET Council for commenting, with a final say of the self-governing region. Thus, strong regulations should result from the monitoring of the labour market and the discussion of these findings by the aforementioned bodies.

A Decree of Ministry of Education No. 282/2009 Coll. on Secondary Schools (*Vyhláška Ministerstva školstva SR č. 282/2009 Z. z. o stredných školách*) already stipulated, what professional organisations are responsible for the respective fields of study. An Annex 8 to this decree listed a two digit classification of education branches according to the classification of education branches (*KOV, klasifikácia odborov vzdelania*) and respective organisations of employers. Subsequently, Sectoral VET Councils were established (14 out of planned 17 as of July 2010) by professional associations/chambers in cooperation with the respective sectoral ministry and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*MPSVR, Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*). Sectoral VET Councils are expected to play a crucial role in particular in identification and anticipation of sectoral skill needs and translate them into plans of labour market needs in terms of numbers of graduates in respective study/training branches for the following five years. Furthermore, they are expected to provide for inputs for education sector experts to align graduates profiles to professional competences required on sectoral working positions. Thus, in contrast to earlier conditions, employers are expected to participate more deeply at the elaboration of profiles of VET graduates and at setting requirements on knowledge, skills, abilities and working habits, as well as on elaboration of school educational programmes.

Self-governing regions assisted by Regional VET Councils and supported by Sectoral VET Councils expertise have to develop regional VET strategies. These regional strategies are expected to be worked out in close cooperation with social partners, in particular employers. They should be fed by the aforementioned plans of labour market needs and by explications of labour market needs on secondary VET qualifications.

Before the Act on VET came into force in September 2009 stakeholders were invited to participate in respective VET related activities, however, their engagement was not explicitly agreed and set by legislation and their participation was dominantly based on personal cooperation/partnership rather than the institutional one²⁴. A curricular reform starting in September 2008 and changes in governance in force since September 2009 are two milestones of the recent reforming of VET. It is too soon to predict a real impact of involvement of stakeholders in the respective VET related activities, as the quality of labour market intelligence envisaged by the Act on VET suffers from a lack of reliable know-how as can be seen from the first documents (regional strategies, sectoral strategies, and in particular plans of labour market needs) submitted for discussion at the National VET Council meetings and available at its website www.radavladyp.sk.

There is a risk that the work of councils, in particular of sectoral councils containing employers' representatives, will suffer from a lack of their members' experience in education related issues and with regard to gathering relevant data. Rethinking of methodologies for preparation of plans of labour market needs is urgently needed.

²⁴ For detailed description of pre-reform situation see *Slovakia: Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2008, chapter 07 Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy*.

Therefore, a specific meeting to find an agreement about the methodology was held on 15th April 2010 and the Draft Common Procedure for the Development of Plan of Labour Market Needs in VET Area should be elaborated by the Slovak Chamber of Trades in cooperation with other professional associations and Education and Labour Ministries, and submitted for discussion in October 2010.

As already stressed, stakeholders' rights and responsibilities are in the process of change and the real impact of their involvement will be much clearer after the reform plans embedded in the newly adopted legislation are settled. The currently available findings indicate that a much longer period of time is needed than expected by legislators. Educational standards are at the same time under the pressure of changes induced by the ongoing curricular reform. There is however no research and no relevant and reliable data, which would reflect labour market needs, to influence educational standards. The development of the National System of Occupation, which has just started under the leadership of Trexima Ltd. (the freshest development is available at www.sustavapovolani.sk) and the supervision of the labour ministry, has not yet resulted in setting occupational standards, and the influence of the type position description on educational standards is not yet systemic, although positive. More time is needed to interlink activities conducted under education and labour sectors players to agree on an undisputed model of matching skills needed by jobs on the market with the skills provision offered by VET (but also with skills interesting for adoption by the population).

9. GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

9.1 STRATEGY AND PROVISION

The provision of career guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment is traditionally a shared responsibility of two sectors/ministries - the Ministry of Education (MŠ, *Ministerstvo školstva*) and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (MPSVR, *Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*). A detailed look shows that especially during the last two years more progress and positive development was achieved in the educational sector than in the employment services. The description of the main approaches to guidance and counselling is therefore focusing on these two sectors separately.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PROVISION IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

A series of policy papers relating more or less substantially to career guidance, submitted by the Ministry of Education, were adopted by the Slovak government during spring 2007:

- The Concept of Pedagogical and Psychological Guidance System and its Implementation into Practice (*Koncepcia pedagogicko-psychologického poradenského systému a jeho implementácie do praxe*), March 2007, focusing on the further development of wide scope guidance and counselling services provided for children and youth since late 1950's;
- The Concept of Special Education Counselling (*Koncepcia špeciálnopedagogického poradenstva*), March 2007, concentrating on children and youth with special needs; and
- The Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance (*Stratégia celoživotného vzdelávania a celoživotného poradenstva*), April 2007, a key document in this specific area, for the first time putting together and stressing interrelations between lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

The first two documents were used as a basis for new legislation defining the role of guidance and counselling service providers in the education sector - the new Act on Education came into force since September 2008 and career guidance service provision has a quite important position in it (see below).

In addition to this, the new Act on Vocational Education and Training was approved in May 2009 and came into force in September 2009. Stress is put here also on the co-operation of all stakeholders and social partners on national and regional levels to harmonize VET with labour market needs. According to this regulation, the regional self-government is responsible, besides other tasks, for informing young people and their parents on labour market needs and possibilities of VET studies in secondary schools in the respective region, and also for passing all relevant information of that kind to guidance and counselling centres.

In December 2009 the new Act on Lifelong Learning was approved and with few exceptions, relating to some specific paragraphs, came into force on 1st February 2010. The National System of Qualifications, based on the National System of Occupations, is being established by this Act and as a public register describing existing national qualifications should be open to public since January 2011. Besides this, information system of further education will be developed - it will consist of educational and training

institutions register, register of accredited E&T study programmes, register of further E&T participants, and also prognosis of E&T needs. The Act explicitly declares that the prognosis is a tool for guidance in lifelong learning, which is used both by career guidance services providers and by the Ministry of Education, the latter for coordination of lifelong learning opportunities. On the basis of the Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance, an Action Plan was approved by the Ministry of Education in November 2007. In accordance with this, further steps were and are currently taken.

In October 2008 the National Forum on Lifelong Guidance as a consulting body of the Minister of Education was established. The National Forum consists of 26 members representing a wide range of institutions, both from governmental as well as from non-governmental sectors (ministries of education, labour, health, justice, interior; public employment services; Association of Municipalities and Villages of Slovakia; Confederation of Trade Unions; Association of Educational Counsellors; Association of School Counsellors; Research Institution of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology; information and counselling centres of higher education institutions; Association of Youth Information Centres; Youth Council of Slovakia). In spite of the fact that guidance and counselling is a new topic for many of the National Forum members, the Forum wants, similarly to what is recommended by the Cedefop guidelines (2008), to improve the communication, develop cooperation, identify citizens' needs, improve the quality of the provided services, and to influence lifelong guidance policies, and develop international cooperation.

The first document that the National Forum initiated was the Concept of Lifelong Guidance in the Slovak Republic (*Koncepcia celoživotného poradenstva v SR*), March 2009, submitted to the Ministry of Education in spring 2009. This policy paper (unfortunately, not open for public discussion) defines aims, priorities and specific goals of lifelong guidance on a national level, also in relation to specific target groups. There were several measures suggested for implementation within the ESF Operational Programme Education (Priority 1 - Reform of educational and vocational training system; Measure 1.1 - Transformation of traditional school to a modern one; Activity 1.1.2 - Supporting educational and career guidance in primary and secondary schools), starting in the second half of 2009.

These measures include:

- the analysis of the current situation in lifelong guidance provision in the Slovak Republic and the system of lifelong guidance in selected EU countries (direct comparison);
- the development of a new model of guidance and counselling services operating on the basis of approved competencies and effective cooperation of sectors/ministries, social partners and other providers;
- with the aim to increase the quality of guidance staff, the development of professional and qualification standards for guidance and counselling practitioners;
- the development of a model of initial and further training of guidance and counselling practitioners;
- the development of educational and training programmes for further, lifelong learning of practitioners;
- the development of a quality assurance system;
- the development of a career information system for lifelong guidance accessible to the public;

- the improvement of access to lifelong guidance services on regional/local levels through establishing new guidance and counselling institutions and facilities.

As a result of the global economic and financial crisis, with the most severe impacts on national economy mainly in 2009 and 2010, quite a lot of initiatives, programmes and project within the responsibility of the Ministry of Education had to be re-evaluated and new priorities in this context were defined. Due to this development the National Forum initiated a revision of previously approved measures and suggested some innovations in this respect. In September 2010 these were specified as follows:

- analysis of the current system of lifelong guidance;
- development of skills and competencies of guidance practitioners;
- supporting the co-ordination of various stakeholders on national, regional and local levels;
- focusing strongly on an individual and his/her needs;
- linking with new EU initiatives and programmes (e.g., New Skills for New Jobs, or European Skills, Competencies and Occupations database).

Furthermore, two National Projects VIII-2 “National System of Occupations in SR” (*Národná sústava povolani*) and “National System of Occupations in the Bratislava Self-governing region” (*Národná sústava povolani BSK*) with duration between 2009 and 2012 and budgets EUR 11 352 320 and EUR 819 890, respectively, are being carried out having some relation to career guidance within Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion, Priority Axis 1 - Supporting the employment growth and Priority Axis 3 - Supporting employment, social inclusion, and capacity building in the Bratislava self-governing Region. Educational counsellors are listed among target groups in these projects. The main goal of these national projects is the development and implementation a system that would allow access to detailed information on labour market (current and future needs of employers, descriptions of occupations including information on required knowledge, skills and qualification) and would contribute to better interconnection between employers' needs and vocational education and training. It is expected that National System of Occupations will be interlinked with the National System of Qualifications and the National Qualification Framework to be developed by the respective ESF project to be conducted under ESF Operational Programme Education (see part 8.1). In contrast to the latter, some progress is visible within the former. A dedicated National System of Occupations website is available at www.sustavapovolani.sk, within which a Registry of Occupations and a respective Registry of Competences will be maintained under support of multi-partisan sectoral councils containing representatives of social partners and experts in order to support LLL adjusted to labour market needs. These sectoral councils are institutionally different from Sectoral VET Councils created according to the Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on VET (*Zákon č. 184/2009 Z. z. o odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave*).

Additional projects with relevance to career guidance and with career counsellors and secondary and higher education students included into target groups (and of course, with employees, employers, initial and lifelong learning and VET and higher education providers, jobseekers, social partners, etc.), are two National Projects XIV-2 “Created and Eliminated Jobs Detection System and Forecasting Labour Market Needs” (*Systém zisťovania vzniknutých a zaniknutých pracovných miest a prognózovanie potrieb trhu práce*) with duration between 2009 and 2012 and budgets EUR 3 005 745.88 and EUR 230 509.16, respectively, carried out within Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion, Priority Axes 1 and 3 (see also 8.1).

There are three partial activities in this project:

- Activity No. 1: Statistical Surveys of Entrepreneurs;
- Activity No. 2: Survey of Important Enterprises;
- Activity No. 3: Labour Market Needs Prospects.

The project is under the responsibility of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (ÚPSVaR, *Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*). Labour market prospects on local, regional and national levels, quantification of the current and future structure of vacancies, job opportunities, specification and identification of jobs increasingly/decreasingly demanded on the labour market, employment prospects for some specific target groups (e.g. graduates, people with disabilities), adequate utilisation of active labour market policy measures - all this will be possible to be used also in improving the range and quality of career guidance and counselling services for all target groups, both in educational and employment sectors. The first partial results of activities No. 2 and No. 3, together with detailed description of the project aims, methodology, target groups, potential users and other relevant information are already available at http://www.deloitte.com/sk/narodny_projekt_XIV_2.

As the National Forum on Lifelong Guidance seems to be, paradoxically, a relatively closed community and there are no signals yet that it will be open to all those who are interested and even directly involved in career guidance and counselling services provision and further development, an initiative was taken by the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology to create wider *expert groups* focusing on various aspects of career guidance and counselling services. In spring 2009 three such groups started to work (An expert group on general aspects of career guidance in educational sector; An expert group of career guidance practitioners in primary and secondary education; An expert group for guidance and counselling in higher education institutions). All these expert groups are supposed to provide expertise and submit the results of their efforts to the National Forum.

There is one minor initiative worth mentioning here when talking about guidance and counselling for education, career and employment: the statement titled "*Light and Dark Times - The Value of Career Guidance in an Economic Crisis*", released by the Executive Committee of the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance in Jyväskylä, Finland, in June 2009 was translated into Slovak and subsequently published in "Zamestnanost a socialna politika" (Employment and Social Policy), a monthly journal published jointly by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. The article (in Slovak - "*Dobré a zlé časy - hodnota kariérového poradenstva v ekonomickej kríze*") was published in August 2009 issue - 35 000 paper copies were disseminated to 46 local Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, to other ministries, governmental institutions, members of the parliament, and social partners. The journal is published also on the ÚPSVaR website (http://www.upsvar.sk/buxus/docs/magazine/2009/Zamestnanost_200908.pdf).

This statement could help to get career guidance further into the centre of attention of policy and decision makers on national level.

As far as career guidance and counselling services provision in educational sector itself is concerned, according to the new Act on Education this is the responsibility of the different facilities of education guidance and counselling and prevention, namely:

- centres of educational and psychological counselling and prevention;
- centres of special education guidance and counselling;
- educational counsellors in primary and secondary schools;
- school psychologists;
- school special pedagogues;
- therapeutic pedagogues;
- social pedagogues; and
- prevention coordinators.

Nearly all of these providers existed in the educational sector also according to the previous legislation, but were not such explicitly mentioned as part of the guidance and counselling system. (N. B.: career guidance and counselling is here only one part of the more widely arranged services provided by all actors mentioned above.)

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PROVISION IN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

There are no major changes in guidance and counselling services provision in employment services comparing the current situation with that of two or three years ago, at least from the current legislation point of view. Due to the financial and economic crisis the situation on the labour market is dramatically changing - the registered unemployment rate increased from 7.4 % in August 2008 (the lowest rate since early nineties) to 13.0 % in February 2010 (see also Table 23 in part 3.1 presenting unemployment data in times of crisis).

Guidance and counselling in this situation is viewed as a supporting measure both for all new registered unemployed and also for long-term unemployed, the reduction of unemployment rate through various active labour market measures is hampered by very limited number of vacancies.

An important policy paper, “The Employment Strategy (Prognosing labour market needs and skills)” (*Stratégia zamestnanosti (Prognózo vanie potrieb trhu práce a zručností)*) was submitted by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family to government in August 2008. Improving career guidance and counselling provision, more transparent information on labour market trends and required skills in globalised European labour market, together with many other measures are presented here as specific goals of this policy. What seems to be very important in this context is the fact that the ministry clearly declares its responsibility to participate actively in activities defined by the Strategy on Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance.

The responsibility for career guidance and counselling provision for unemployed (registered) and employed job seekers, including disadvantaged groups lies mainly on public employment services (Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family), as well as on

agencies of supported employment (focusing on long-term unemployed and people with disabilities), and partly on agencies of temporary employment.

As far as the question on evidence base is concerned, it should be mentioned here that career guidance and counselling policy and strategy design is very rarely based on deep and serious analyses, evaluation and research of existing data, as an argument is here either lack of financial sources, and/or shortage of time.

Cooperation between education and employment sectors is still something that is just declared on various levels than really existing. In spite of the fact that the Strategy on Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance was adopted by the government, the key role is played by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family is here not active enough, at least not in the sense of trying to be the most important stakeholder in relation to all adult population, not only regarding the registered (mostly) and unregistered job seekers.

9.2 TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

The target groups in the education sector are primary and secondary school children and youth, mainly in upper grades who can use career information, guidance and counselling services provided by specialised staff and school facilities mentioned in the previous section. Students in higher education are offered these services in career information and guidance centres, which were established with the support of ESF financial sources during the last few years in many faculties and/or universities throughout the country.

In employment services target groups are strictly defined by the Act on Employment Services - two categories are distinguished here: unemployed (and registered) job seekers, and employed job seekers (registration is not obligatory). Career information and guidance services are usually offered to all clients, career counselling is focusing mainly on disadvantages, registered/unemployed job seekers (especially long-term unemployed, those under 25 or above 50 years of age, people with disabilities, etc.).

When talking about career guidance and counselling for groups with special needs in the education sector, we have in mind mainly children and young people with disabilities - they could be offered few measures focusing on their specific career development. There is a set of written information (both in printed and electronic versions) with the detailed description of medical, psychological and labour market aspects of career guidance of pupils and students with 13 various types of health problems influencing their career choices. Information and help is offered also to their parents, teachers, educational counsellors and all those who are or could be interested.

Another possibility is a module for people with disabilities in a web based program *Guide to the World of Occupations* with the title "Have you got a health problem?" (The Slovak title of the program is "*Sprievodca svetom povolani*" and is available at www.povolania.eu; English and other eight languages version are available at www.gwo.cz).

Also the web based Integrated System of Type Positions (ISTP, *Integrovaný systém typových pozícií*; www.istp.sk) allows clients in one module (so-called Analysis of individual potential) to identify their health problem and then they can be offered a specific information relating to their prospects on the labour market.

In employment services all the above mentioned measures are available also for adult clients, mainly registered, unemployed job seekers. Besides these, clients with health problems can visit one of the five Information and Guidance Centres for people with

disabilities (they are part of Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family), where an attempt to measure their individual employability potential is made and corresponding job offers are provided by qualified staff.

In relation to pupils and students a quite a wide range of career information is provided, focusing mainly on further education and training paths in secondary and/or postsecondary educational institutions. This is combined also with information on possible career prospects, employment possibilities and job offers on local, regional, and national levels, in some cases also on EU level (web portals www.eures.sk, as well as PLOTEUS are used here). Those who have some problems with their career decisions (e.g. who are not able for various reasons to make the decision, those with ambitions not corresponding to their potential, etc.) could use psychological counselling provided by school psychologists or by the Centre of Educational and Psychological Counselling and Prevention.

Mainly for primary school pupils in their last, 9th grade, an interesting career information product titled "World of Work" was developed by the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. An interactive DVD is presenting several types of useful information supporting career guidance and the first career choice.

The DVD is structured as follows:

- a detailed information on 35 areas of work and corresponding occupations;
- how to apply for a job;
- information on (and link to) the Integral System of Type Positions (internet portal developed earlier also for guidance and counselling purposes, www.istp.sk);
- useful contacts (offices of labour, social affairs and family, EURES services, Association of educational counsellors).

The development, production and dissemination of the DVD was a part of the national project "Employment services modernisation through supporting the development of tools and forms of information and mediation services" supported by the ESF. There were 80 thousand copies of the DVD produced and provided for offices of labour and schools at the end of 2008.

Methods for the main target groups of clients in employment services are similar to those mentioned above - provision of wide range of career information including vacancies; individual action plans are obligatory, offered for some groups of disadvantaged job seekers (those under 25, over 50 years of age, long-term unemployed); a set of psychological methods and instruments used as "*bilan de competences*" mainly in guidance and counselling for long-term unemployed and some other disadvantaged job seekers.

Since the adoption of the Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance (*Stratégia celoživotného vzdelávania a celoživotného poradenstva*), the importance of career guidance and counselling both in education and employment sectors is rising. It is evident at least from policy papers, but less evident in the reality, especially in the professionalisation of career guidance and services provision, initial and lifelong learning possibilities for guidance practitioners, financial sources, adequate support of research and evidence base, quality assurance, etc. Most of these shortages are addressed by the Strategy and the Concept of Lifelong Guidance and there are some ideas, plans how to deal with these challenges in the next three - four years.

9.3 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

There is no accreditation scheme for gaining professional credentials for career guidance counsellors in Slovakia, neither in education, nor in employment sectors. The main reason is that “career guidance practitioner/counsellor” does not exist as an official, certified occupation, there are only people who are dealing with career guidance and counselling issues, who provide career information, guidance and counselling services. Career guidance and counselling as a comprehensive study programme or course is not available in universities or other third level educational institutions.

Act No. 317/2009 Coll. on Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff (*Zákon č. 317/2009 Z. z. o pedagogických zamestnancoch a odborných zamestnancoch a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov*), in force since November 2009, does not include educational counsellors and career counsellors into pedagogical or professional staff categories (see part 7.1.3). Individuals (usually the category of teachers) can decide for performance of these specialised activities requiring acquisition of respective professional competences within their professional development. Education counsellor and career counsellor are listed among career position specialists. Their continuing professional development is also regulated by this act. Furthermore, psychologists/school psychologists and special pedagogues/school special pedagogues belong to professional staff categories (the act makes a difference between professional staff and pedagogical staff.)

Qualification background of professionals providing career information, guidance and counselling services in both educational and employment sectors is as follows:

- Educational counsellors in elementary and secondary schools are regular teachers with university degree (Master level) qualified for two or three school subjects. Most of them have in-company, on-the-job training for career guidance and counselling, duration of which varies from 40 to 200 hours. According to the current legislation in the educational sector no formal qualification for career guidance and counselling is required and therefore no university or any third level educational institution offers such a course. On the other hand there were many different courses for “career counsellors” or in career guidance and counselling running throughout the country provided mostly by accredited non-governmental organisations and funded from the ESF. The problem is that these courses are not following one common qualification/occupational standard and therefore they vary in content, structure, duration, quality and also in other details;
- School psychologists must have a 5-year university qualification in psychology (a Master degree), most often in counselling or educational psychology (where “counselling” means all areas of counselling, not specifically career counselling - this is only a very small part of their pre-graduate course), or a Master degree in teacher training programme in psychology plus four-term specialised education in educational psychology provided by higher education institution;
- School special pedagogues must be also graduates from master studies. With respect to their main task (providing help and assistance for children with special educational needs, or with disabilities), career guidance and counselling is only a marginal topic in their duties and usually they have no formal or informal/non-formal training in career guidance and counselling.

There is no formal qualification required for career information and guidance officers in employment services working at the Career Information and Guidance Departments of Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*úrady práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) and here it is possible to have very different and variable qualification background - it is even not necessary to have a university degree.

In the case of career counsellors working at the Counselling Services units of Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family a master level of university degree is required by the current legislation (Act on Employment Services No. 5/2004 Col.), but it does not include any further specification, which means that also here it is possible to find counsellors with very different and variable university qualifications.

Although there are hardly any possibilities to gain qualification in career guidance and counselling in formal education, quite a lot has been done in this field for guidance practitioners, especially in educational sector, through various training projects realised during pre previous ESF programme period (2004 - 2006/2008). A very good example of such an initiative is a set of studying materials for guidance practitioners in the educational sector published by the Methodical-Pedagogical Centre in Bratislava at the end of 2007 and disseminated in 2008 under the title “Effective prevention of unemployment starts with career education and career guidance and counselling in schools and school facilities” (*Efektívna prevencia pred nezamestnanosťou začína kariérovou výchovou a kariérovým poradenstvom v školách a školských zariadeniach*). In June 2009 the electronic version of the whole set was disseminated through intranet also to staff providing career information, guidance and counselling services in Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. Development of draft professional and educational standards for educational and psychological counsellors and analysis of educational needs of counsellors in the education sector within the project is worth mentioning, too.

10. FINANCING: INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

10.1 FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

There is no substantial difference in funding the respective levels of education, except the difference caused institutionally. VET offered by secondary specialised schools (SOŠ, *stredná odborná škola*) and VET establishments (covering upper secondary and post-secondary non tertiary education) is regulated by Act No. 597/2003 Coll. on Financing Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and School Establishments (*Zákon č. 597/2003 Z. z. o financovaní základných škôl, stredných škôl a školských zariadení*), as amended, while funding higher education institutions (covering tertiary education) by the Higher Education Act No. 131/2002 Coll. (*Zákon č. 131/2002 Z. z. o vysokých školách*), as amended.

As explained earlier, lower secondary education and apprenticeships are not crucial for consideration with regard to the Slovak VET system.

FUNDING UPPER SECONDARY AND POST-SECONDARY NON TERTIARY VET

FUNDING FLOWS

The first legislative norm introducing the financing of regional schools based on allocation formulae was Act No. 506/2001 Coll. Originally aimed at introducing a “per capita” funding, it has been changed in the parliament to “per class” funding as a consequence of lobbying of representatives of little rural schools, predominantly schools with the Hungarian language of instruction. A new Act No. 597/2003 Coll. finally introduced a per capita funding and increased the importance of self-governing bodies in financing and distributing funds for regional schools, as they were also made responsible for establishing and maintaining schools.

Since January 2004 all primary and secondary schools (of respective category established for the purpose of budgeting; see Table 6 in the Annex) were funded equally through per capita funding from the state budget, regardless their ownership status, in order to encourage the establishment of non-state schools. Furthermore, funding flows and sources gradually started to change in line with the progress of decentralisation.

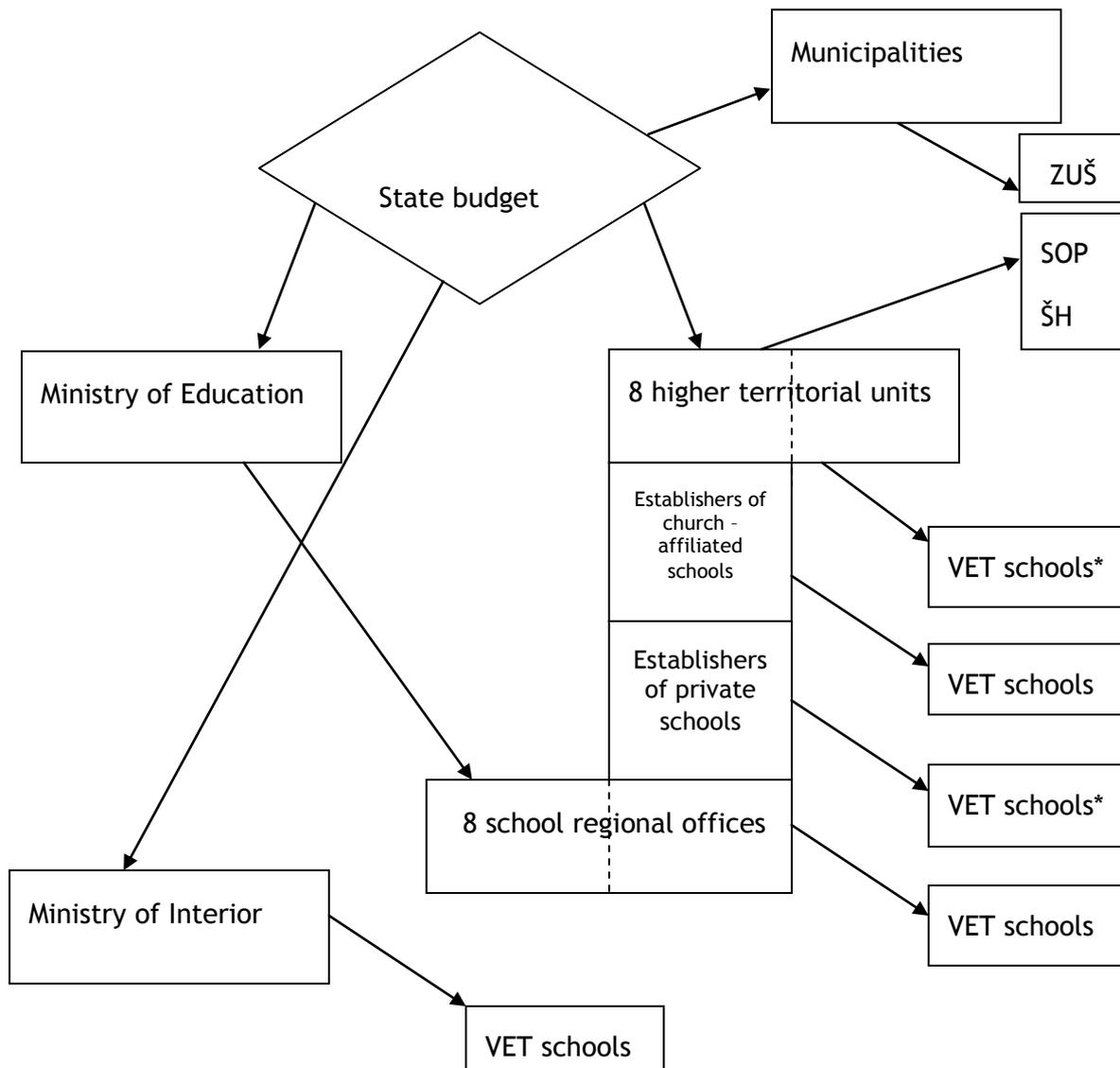
From 2005, fiscal decentralisation came into force through the redefinition of the income tax revenue. Although centrally collected, the essential part of income tax goes from the Ministry of Finance (MF, *Ministerstvo financií*) directly to self-governing bodies to cover their expenditures: 70.3 % was earmarked for municipalities, 23.5 % for self-governing regions and 6.2 % out of the total income tax remained with the state as a reserve. Municipalities and regions also became responsible for setting tax rates for some other taxes (of which the property tax was the most important for municipalities and the tax from automotive vehicles for self-governing regions). As a rule, the directly collected income is just about the 20 %, while the transferred part of the personal income tax is about the 80 % of all tax income of both types of self-governing bodies. The financial crisis and subsequent economic downturn caused a harsh decrease in collecting personal income tax. As a consequence vulnerability of this model of decentralisation has been again visible: Self-governing bodies insisted on compensation from the state budget for a decreased income from personal taxes.

The decentralisation reform differentiates between the so-called original and transferred competences in state administration. Original competences are to be borne by the budget of self-governing bodies, while transferred competences entitle them to require additional

funding from the state budget. Financing secondary VET institutions belongs to transferred competences, and therefore self-governing regions and municipalities are entitled to receive additional contribution from the state budget (from the budget chapter of the Ministry of Education (MŠ, *Ministerstvo školstva*)).

The following chart (Chart 1) is depicting funding flows in regional schooling, within which funding VET is highlighted.

CHART 1. FINANCIAL FLOWS IN INITIAL SECONDARY AND POST-SECONDARY NON TERTIARY VET



Notes: * - VET schools and centres of practical training, ZUŠ - basic schools of arts (*základné umelecké školy*), SOP - centres of vocational practice (*strediská odbornej praxe*), ŠH - school farms (*školské hospodárstva*), JŠ - language schools (*jazykové školy*)

Sources of funding with respective shares are presented in the table below.

TABLE 64: SOURCES OF FINANCING REGIONAL EDUCATION IN 2009 (IN EUR AND %)		
INDICATOR	EUR	%
STATE BUDGET	1 259 983 693	94.56
MUNICIPALITIES AND HIGHER TERRITORIAL UNITS	18 094 236	1.36
RENTING SCHOOL FACILITIES	7 481 349	0.56
PROFIT FROM OWN ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES	860 614	0.06
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARENTS TO COVER PARTIALLY COSTS RELATED TO MATERIAL CARE*	923 504	0.07
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARENTS TO COVER PARTIALLY EDUCATIONAL COSTS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS (INCLUDING TUITION FEES IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS)	12 326 836	0.93
CONTRIBUTIONS AND GIFTS	4 436 083	0.33
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ENTREPRENEURS AND ENTREPRENEURS' ASSOCIATIONS**	189 087	0.01
OTHERS (INCLUDING MEANS FROM STUDENTS' PRODUCTIVE WORK)	28 251 925	2.12
TOTAL	1 332 547 327	100

Source: MŠ.

Notes: * contributions to meals and accommodation at facilities established by regional school offices (krajské školské úrady). ** new category in comparison to 2008 data²⁵.

Contributions from entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs' associations are identified based on the Act No. 179/2009 Coll. amending the Act No. 597/2003 Coll. on Financing Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and School Establishments. This funding is intended to cover the costs of practical training required in addition to regular activities and therefore not covered by state budget via per capita normatives.

As visible from the table above, regional schools are dominantly state budget funded (94.56 %).

The following table details state budget funds earmarked for current expenditure and capital expenditure. It clearly indicates that the dominant share of funding from the state budget is allocated by normatives (per capita).

²⁵ See Table 47 in Slovakia: VET in Europe: Country Report 2009, where this means were subsumed under the category Contributions and gifts from entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs' associations.

TABLE 65: BUDGET BREAKDOWN OF STATE BUDGET SOURCES IN 2009 (IN EUR AND %)			
BUDGET LINE		EUR	%
CURRENT EXPENDITURES TOTAL		1 246 055 461	98.89
OF WHICH	WAGES, INSURANCE, (ALLOCATED BY NORMATIVES)	957 955 639	76.03
	OPERATIONS(ALLOCATED BY NORMATIVES)	241 345 753	19.15
	OTHER (NOT BY NORMATIVES)	46 754 069	3.71
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES		13 928 232	1.11
TOTAL FUNDING FROM THE STATE BUDGET		1 259 983 693	100

Source: MŠ.

CURRENT EXPENDITURES FLOW DESCRIPTION

Funding of original competences is covered from means incoming to self-governing regions (higher territorial units, VÚC, *vyššie územné celky*) and municipalities directly from the state budget. Funding of transferred competences comes in via the Ministry of Education and its budget chapter.

Further, funds are distributed via eight regional school offices to establishers (inclusive private and church affiliated) for financing wages and operational expenditures of schools.

Regional school offices cannot redistribute funds received but must earmark the funds and pass them to establishers. Major establishers are self-governing regions (higher territorial units). Other establishers are regional school offices themselves (they are establishers of a few institutions that are not suitable for being maintained by the self-governing region due to their trans-regional impact), church and religious denominations; and finally diverse private subjects (e.g. company limited).

Establishers receive means for VET schools and establishments (centres of practical training) calculated exactly according to per capita normatives, but they could partly redistribute them in case they maintain more of them. However, they obligatorily had to transfer to each school and establishment at least a part of per capita normatives set by the regulation of the government. It was 80 % of the wage normative and 75 % of the operational normative for mainstream schools and 50 % of both normatives for schools for students with special needs in the first year of the reform guaranteed by legislation. In 2009, it was at least 90 % of the wage normative and 80 % of the operational normative for mainstream schools and 85 % and 80 % respectively for schools for students with special needs.

In order to prevent from the hard impact of per capita funding to respective schools (predominantly small rural schools) a minimum guaranteed funding was originally envisaged for the first three years of the reform; i.e. 95 % of the previous year funding for current expenditures was guaranteed by the Ministry of Education. This measure was valid also in 2009.

A specific internal measure of the Ministry of Education regulates the process of negotiation between the ministry and establishers of schools and establishments to correct errors in the input data. Furthermore, to support transparency, regional school offices have to publish on their web-sites the costs allocated for wages, insurance and levies, and purchase of goods and services for all institutions of the region.

As visible from the chart above, there are also other institutions (that can be categorised as VET related) funded directly from self-governing regions (basic schools of arts (ZUŠ, *základné umelecké školy*), (language schools (JŠ, *jazykové školy*), centres of vocational practice (SOP, *strediská odbornej praxe*) and school farms (ŠH, *školské hospodárstva*)); and funded directly by municipalities (basic schools of arts (ZUŠ)). Since 2008 also non-state basic schools of art have been funded by municipalities from means aimed at original competences (and inflowing from income tax).

As municipalities are similarly to higher territorial units given means to cover original and transferred competences from the state budget they also have to fund some educational institutions. The most important transferred competences concern establishing basic schools (containing also lower secondary education). Flows to cover this and other non-VET activities are not depicted in the chart in order to make it easier to read.

At least 94 % of the total contribution from the Ministry of Education must be offered via normatives and only 6 % according to alternative procedures (see also Chart 2 below).

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES FLOW

The capital investment is sensitive to the state budget capacity and the limits set by the fiscal policy of the Ministry of Finance. Although normatives had to be originally set in cooperation between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education also for capital investments, after fiscal decentralisation capital expenditures are to be covered as a rule by establishers. Only extraordinarily (e.g. in case of emergency), capital expenditures can be covered from the state budget from the budget chapter of the Ministry of Education. Thus only public/state schools can be funded from the tax money (however not from earmarked stream coming to higher territorial units via the Ministry of Education and regional school offices, but from income tax means inflowing directly from the state budget (Ministry of Finance). Schools' requirements have exceeded available means for a long period. Thus, a modernisation debt was even officially proclaimed. Representatives of self-government criticise the fact that they were given responsibility for regional educational institutions that had been in very bad conditions with regard to equipment and facilities.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT TYPES AND SOURCES OF FUNDING FROM A VET SCHOOL POINT OF VIEW

Traditionally, there were two main types of upper secondary schools providing VET: secondary specialised schools (SOŠ, *stredné odborné školy*) and secondary vocational schools (SOU, *stredné odborné učilištia*). In recent years, main VET providers (SOŠ and SOU) have been merging to form associated secondary schools (ZSŠ, *združené stredné školy*) and/or joined schools (SŠ, *spojené školy*). Since September 2008 all VET schools are categorised as secondary specialised schools (see also the whole part 5).

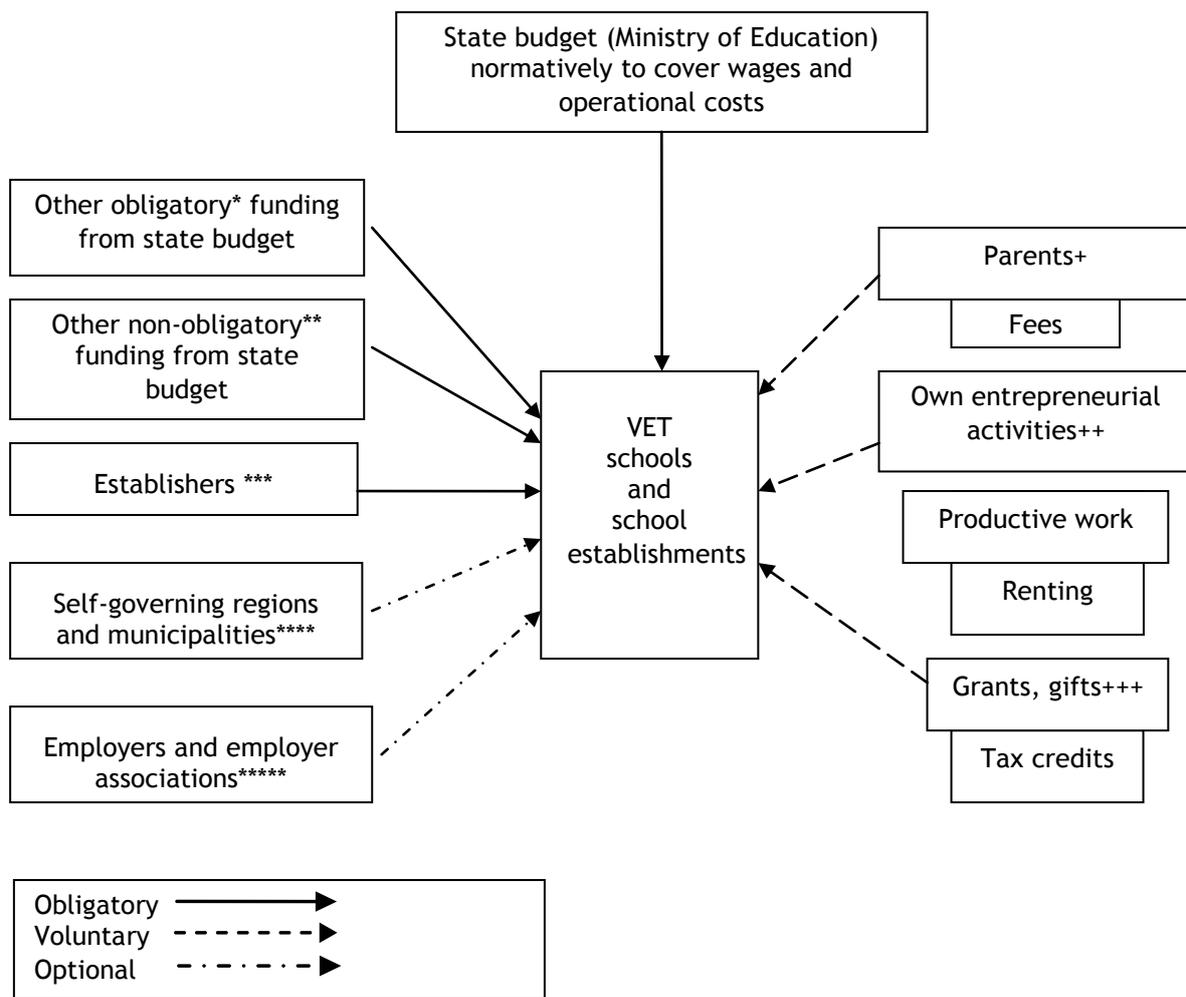
Funding and overall regulation of VET schools has traditionally depended on the financial management type of the school. SOU have been classified as contributory organisations whereby they were only co-funded by the state (due to their historical links with enterprises and the funding they used to receive from them and also due to ability to earn from own productive work). SOŠ have been classified as budgetary organisations whereby they were almost purely tax money funded. Now it is up to the regional educational authorities to decide on the financial management type in the current phase of changing categorisation (and names) of schools.

The most important difference in management was originally as follows: budgetary organisations were strongly linked to the state budget or self-governing region budget and were due to return their income to the state budget, while contributory organisations were not. Up to 50 % of their income is to be covered by own income and the rest from

contribution from tax money. The most important difference affecting the accountancy of contributory organisations concerns depreciation, which is not applied within the accountancy of budgetary organisations.

In addition to the later detailed obligatory contribution from the budget chapter of Ministry of Education based on normatives, schools also receive, directly or indirectly, other funding (which is a maximum of 6 % of total contribution from the Ministry of Education). Sources of funding VET schools are depicted within Chart 2 below.

CHART 2. SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR REGIONAL VET SCHOOLS



*Notes: * E.g. schools are supported on request to cover their need for officially recognised textbooks and costs of officially organised student competitions.*

*** Schools might receive means after successful application for funding a development project elaborated in response to a call launched by the Ministry of Education to improve education (e.g. to improve ICT in education). Public schools might receive means for capital investment, however only extraordinarily; they can also require additional funding to meet specific issues as e.g. financing transport of students and wages of assistants to students with special needs.*

**** Establishers might cofinance their schools from their budgets as regard current expenditures and are also responsible for capital investment. Private and church affiliated institutions were not entitled to claim capital investment from tax money. Public schools might receive means for*

capital investment from budgets of self-governing regions as establishers, and therefore from tax money, however this is not claimable.

**** Self-governments are not obliged to cofinance VET, but they could decide to do it even for schools that are not established/maintained by them.

***** There are no direct mandatory contributions to IVET from businesses to VET schools. Employers could contract students in VET school for the purpose of future employment and as a consequence to cofinance their VET accordingly. This is however quite rare and should be boost by new Act on VET No. 184/2009 Coll. (Zákon č. 184/2009 Z. z. o odbornom vzdelávaní).

+ Parents pay for school supplies and special textbooks (e.g. foreign language books printed abroad and considered by the school to be more appropriate than those available for free from the Ministry of Education). They are also usually required to contribute to the budget maintained by the Association of Parents (Rodičovské združenie) by a small lump sum about EUR 10 yearly. There are no detailed analyses of these marginal sources. Private schools are however entitled to charge parents with admission and tuition fees.

++ Schools can also earn from their own entrepreneurial activities. In case of public/state schools it is however regulated by the Ministry of Education, currently by the Methodological Guideline No. 12/2009-R valid since 27th August 2009 (Metodický pokyn č. 12/2009-R z 27. augusta 2009, ktorým sa určuje postup škôl a školských zariadení pri vykonávaní podnikateľskej činnosti). Entrepreneurial activities cannot in any case harm education. VET schools offering ISCED 3C VET (typically former SOU) are entitled to earn from productive work of students. Schools very often rent facilities. Making use of earnings from renting premises and equipment are subjects of decision of establishers, and therefore public/state schools as a rule loose part of these earnings for the sake of the budget of establisher.

+++ All schools can apply for diverse grants from public or private grantgiving programmes, and submit projects to earn from European structural funds and various sub-programmes of Lifelong Learning Programme, in particular the Leonardo da Vinci programme. Schools can also accept gifts from sponsors based on a deed of gift.

2 % of the income tax and corporate tax could have been allocated based on a free decision of tax payers for activities of NGOs, therefore schools set up school-affiliated NGOs earning from this source successfully for improvement of learning environment (for more details on unfavourable development concerning this measure see part 10.4).

FUNDING PER CAPITA (CURRENT EXPENDITURES)

State contributions to budgets of respective educational institutions (see the table below) are substantially based on normatives (per student contributions from the state budget). All schools regardless of type and ownership (i.e. also private schools) are subsidised from the state budget equally based on current normatives figures. These normatives are composed of wage normatives and operational normatives. Tables 6 and 7 in the Annex offer an overview of current expenditure normatives²⁶.

²⁶ For data in 2005 and 2006 see Slovakia: Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2008.

Details about construction of normatives and parametric changes within allocation formulae are set by the Regulation of the Government allowing every year to adjust to reflected needs. This regulation (the original one No. 630/2008 Coll. to regulate financing in 2009 set 24 categories of SOŠ; later it was amended by regulation No. 29/2009 Coll. of February 2009 setting 25 categories of SOŠ) allows calculation of future contribution to the budget for all schools and establishments. According to Regulation No. 598/2009 Coll. of 16th December 2009, which came into force since 2010, 27 categories of SOŠ are envisaged for financing in 2010. Derivatives from these normatives are used to stimulate specific policies, higher normative is applied for schools for minorities or for students with special needs integrated into mainstream school.

Two interesting components of operational normatives are depicted in Tables 8 and 9 in the Annex, indicating means, quite modest indeed, available for improvement of quality of pedagogical work. For materials and equipment EUR 35.41 to 62.32 per capita are set for SOŠ (to indicate the contribution for “cheapest” and the most “expensive” studies) for 2009. Since 2008 the equivalent of 1.5 % of wages is available to cover continuing professional development of staff.

FUNDING TERTIARY EDUCATION

Public higher education institutions are legal entities that in contrast to regional schools are also owners of their facilities. It means that they can also earn from selling buildings they do not consider useful anymore. Contributions from state budget are based on a contract between the respective institution and the Ministry of Education. Contracts specify amounts offered for respective activities according to programmes (e.g. education, research, etc.) based on allocation formulae and budgeting procedures agreed between the Ministry of Education, the Slovak Rectors' Conference (*Slovenská rektorská konferencia*) and the Higher Education Council (*Rada vysokých škôl*). The most important inputs are quality of staff (corresponding to career levels), quality of research measured by numbers of publications in specific categories and by research projects conducted and of course by number of students. The per capita contributions are based on coefficients of pedagogical and economic demandness of which the first is represented by the ratio of students per staff considered appropriate for the respective study branch and the second estimates the operational costs of delivery of the respective studies in comparison with the study of law (considered least costly and having Index 1).

To prevent from chasing after numbers of students and concentrating on education extensively disregarding research and development a correction to recognise research activities of schools were applied. Means from state budget for respective schools are composed of two components. The first component refers to the number of students. The second component refers to the volume and quality of research. The research component is sensitive to the volume of funding the respective school was able to win in the competition for research and development grants, and to the number and value of publications that are priced according to agreed categories. These two components influence the allocation of the resources from the state budget earmarked for wages. In 2009, the respective share was 65 % of the total income from contracts referring to the number of students (gradually decreasing the impact of the number of students from 70 % in 2008 and 80 % in 2007), and 35 % according to the success in competition in research and development and publications (increasing respectively in comparison with previous years).

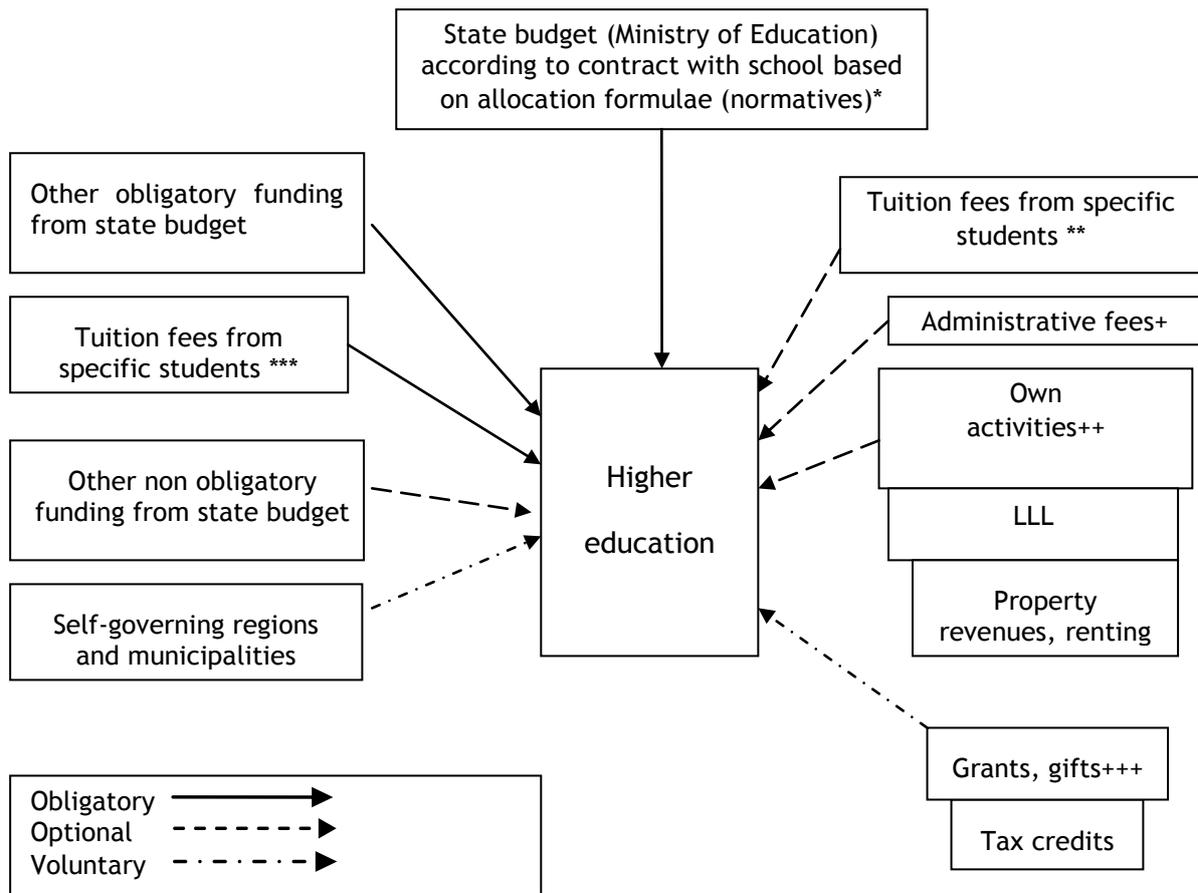
In public (state) schools tuition fees are not required for full-time students and for a part of part-time students, whose study costs are subject of contract with the Ministry of Education. From additional part-time students (see part 5.7) tuition fees are required to cover their study costs. Furthermore, students over 26 years of age and those studying longer than officially set by the programme are made payable.

In addition to funding from the Ministry of Education representing a dominant part of their budgets schools have to earn also from other sources, e.g. grants (in particular research grants) and additional entrepreneurial activities, among which paid lifelong learning activities must be stressed here. Under the umbrella of lifelong learning, many educational activities are conducted making use of know-how or even the facilities of the universities. These activities are offered in order to differentiate between regular education and training offered to students within a contract with the Ministry of Education and these additional activities, which do not receive state funding and therefore can be made payable by participants.

In the higher education segment, holding a PhD is the minimum requirement for considering teacher to be qualified. Schools are financially punished having teachers without PhDs as they do not receive full remuneration for teachers without a PhD within the contract with the Ministry of Education. Furthermore, the Accreditation Commission started to carry out a “comprehensive accreditation of activities of higher education institutions” (according to § 84 of Higher Education Act). Within this process numbers of professors and associate professors will be taken into account together with other already agreed criteria for reclassification of higher education into universities and two categories of non-university higher education institutions. Out of 20 assessed public universities twelve universities fail to meet university status accreditation requirements. They were given a one-year period to eliminate their shortcomings. There were 13 higher education institutions recognised as universities as of 22nd September 2010. Financial bonuses for universities envisaged originally for funding from the state budget already in 2010 have not yet been applied.

Higher education institution also used to earn from the aforementioned 2 % income tax allocation mechanism (for more details see part 10.4).

CHART 3. FINANCIAL FLOWS AND SOURCES OF FUNDING OF HIGHER EDUCATION



*Notes: * or from other ministries budget (Ministry of Health (Ministerstvo zdravotníctva), Ministry of Interior (Ministerstvo vnútra), Ministry of Defence (Ministerstvo obrany) for state school specific for respective sectors: healthcare, police, military); Ministry of Education can also offer contribution to private schools, after informing and receiving comments from the Higher Education Council, Student Higher Education Council (Študentská rada vysokých škôl), Slovak Rectors Conference and approval of the government.*

*** overquota part-time students, non EU countries citizens.*

**** full-time students studying in more programmes, or exceeding standard length of study.*

***** There are diverse semi-independent grantgiving schemes financed from state budget, income from these grants is important not just to cover research and remuneration costs but also as important entry for allocation formulae influencing volume of their next year contracts with the Ministry of Education.*

+ costs of entrance procedures, fees for issuing diverse documents, etc.

++ In addition to already indicated LLL activities and property revenues also revenues from intellectual property, from own financial funds and other activities complying with main mission of schools.

+++All schools can apply for diverse grants from public or private grantgiving programmes (i.a. of large companies), and submit projects to earn from European structural funds and various sub-programmes of the Lifelong Learning Programme. Schools can also accept gifts from sponsors based on a deed of gift.

Higher education institution also used to earn from the aforementioned 2 % income tax allocation mechanism (for more details see part 10.4).

FUNDING POLICY, ITS IMPACT AND EXPECTED CHANGES

The introduction of normative funding resulted in a more transparent allocation of funds; however, normatives have been set and adjusted to possibilities of the state budget. Thus, internal debts of educational institutions in modernisation, as well as eroding the quality standards of graduates, which are visible, but not taken into account in economic terms, make the introduction of counterbalancing measures inevitable. A failure to link funding with quality checking of graduates is a long-term weakness of the educational policy.

There are no exact data about volumes of means inflowing from alternative sources of funding IVET in respective levels. Only public money spending is regularly under control. Monitoring bodies focus on sticking to financial rules and the most important signal of successful financial management is a balanced budget at the end of the fiscal year. Since reforms introduced by the Higher Education Act No. 131/2002 Coll., higher education institutions have not been bailed out anymore by the Ministry of Education and their expenditures successfully capped. Similarly, secondary VET schools and establishments' expenditures were capped by the financing reform introduced by Act No. 597/2003 Coll. Thus, hard budget constraints applied towards all educational institutions is a political success of the Ministry of Finance rather than the Ministry of Education. Normatives are gradually refined as visible also from Tables 6 to 9 in the Annex, however the main signal to schools' policies - to attract as much students as possible, has remained unchanged. Fighting for students is continually coupled with the softening of educational standards, as there is no efficient quality assurance introduced in schools. Gradually, regional authorities intensify their policies with regard to reducing school networks and study programmes, trying to optimise expenditures.

In the light of a decreasing number of public/state schools and mushrooming private and church affiliated schools political controversies seem to loom on the horizon. Public/state schools claimed that they were discriminated against as compared to private and church affiliated schools, as the incoming normatives from the Ministry of Education for private and church affiliated schools are not affected by reductions of normatives by establishers. Authorities establishing public schools are entitled to do this in order to create a temporary reserve fund at the regional level and to differentiate among schools, while establishers of single private or church affiliated school transfer the full normative to their school. On the other hand, private schools feel discriminated as they are not eligible for contributions from the state budget for capitals (even not in case of emergency - in contrast to public and church affiliated schools), according to the newest measure valid since 2009. Although private schools officially require tuition fees from parents in contrast to church affiliated schools and public schools and therefore have an additional source of funding, they feel discriminated in contrast to church affiliated schools, as visible from some new 2009 policies presented below.

Linking funding and quality in regional schooling is in a very slow progress. The obligation of regional schools to prepare annual reporting to the public about school outcomes introduced by the Decree of the Ministry of Education No. 9/2006 Coll. resulted in an overall narration rather than a detailed accountability feedback so far and did not translate in any fiscal corrections. Nevertheless, as a result of shameless advertising of some private secondary schools about ISCED 3A programmes and subsequent criticism for not keeping quality standards of some private schools, a possibility to punish private schools was introduced in 2008 by § 6a of the Act No. 597/2003 Coll. A 15 % reduction of normative for all months a failure (e.g. not sticking to curricula, too many teachers without qualification, exceeding numbers of students in class) identified by the State School Inspection (*Štátna školská inšpekcia*) lasts, can be applied. This measure applies only for private schools and no similar measures are applied for public and church

affiliated schools. Surprisingly, such an extension has not been proposed by legislators. On the other hand, there are also some positive incentives: bonuses for schools are possible for successful performance of students in national and international events (e.g. student competitions or projects), according to § 4b of the same act.

There is in fact little known about efficiency of allocation of means as there is no overall data about total income of educational institutions available. It affects institutions depending substantially on alternative sources to the state budget (in particular former SOU which were expected by the state to earn independently as they were not budgetary but contributory organisations and all higher education institutions). Monitoring data is also complicated due to the involvement of school-affiliated non-profit organisations that earn part of the income used by schools. The real income from own activities and other private sources is therefore not known in detail, often even to regular staff of institution. As overall expenditures are not monitored by the educational authorities, and there is no research conducted on the real structure of expenditures and benefits of VET, changes in policies are not evidence based and are dominantly driven by lobbyism of important players (i.a. political parties).

For a temporary period (2010 and 2011), church affiliated establishments (e.g. language schools and basic schools of art, which were classified by us as IVET schools) are guaranteed to receive from the budget of the self-governing authorities at least 88 % of per capita funding offered to respective public establishments, according to Act No. 179/2009 Coll. amending Act No. 597/2003 Coll. on financing. This is in contrast with private subjects that are also entitled to ask for cofunding from the budget of the municipality or self-governing region (as funding this is their so-called original competence), however, without a guaranteed level of cofunding. For years 2007-2009, at least 90 % of the per capita funding was guaranteed for both the private and church affiliated establishments.

There is no collective fund for VET in place. Long-lasting efforts to persuade the Ministry of Finance to reduce levies or offer some tax incentives for those willing to cofund VET have come at least for the moment to the end: In contrast to expectations Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on VET (*Zákon č. 184/2009 Z. z. o odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave*), coming into force since September 2009, stipulates in detail the establishment of a non-state VET Fund in 2010. However, this fund will face problems with sources as contributions from the state authorities are forbidden and businesses are asked to contribute only on a voluntary basis receiving no stimulation from the state.

An important possibility is open for establishers of schools to reduce the modernisation debt through applying for funding from the Regional Operational Programme managed by the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development. Priority Axis 1 Infrastructure of Education is aimed at reconstruction, expanding and modernisation of school facilities and procurement of equipment, including ICT equipment for schools in connection to their reconstruction, expanding and modernisation. The Operational Programme Bratislava Region (Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective) offers similar options for schools from the Bratislava Region, however just to some extent, as this region with GDP per capita far over 75 % of the EU average does not qualify for the Convergence Objective. In addition and in contrast to the earlier ESF programming period, a specified ESF Operational Programme managed by the Ministry of Education is aimed at the reform of education in regional schooling, the support of improvements of higher education and the development of human resources for knowledge-based society within Priority Axis 1 Reform of Education and Vocational Training. The main objective is being achieved under two measures:

- Transformation of traditional school into a modern one;
- Higher education institutions and research & development as the driving forces in the development of a knowledge-based society.

Higher education institutions can also apply for both the development of infrastructure and the support of research and development from the European Regional Development Fund and Operational Programme Research and Development managed by the Ministry of Education.

Although the potential to earn from European structural funds is enormous, there is a risk that a lot of quality project managers disappointed by administrative load and extensive bureaucracy caused by failures of managing authorities within the previous programming period will resign replaced by the inexperienced or lowest quality project staff.

10.2 FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

10.2.1 FUNDING FOR PUBLICLY PROVIDED CVET

Act No. 386/1997 Coll. on Further Education (*Zákon č. 386/1997 Z. z. o ďalšom vzdelávaní*) lists the sources for financing “further” - continuing education, however without setting rules for securing the funding. The payments of participants, means of employers, state budget subsidies, etc. are not specified, either. See more details about types of sources in Table 66 below. The data presented represents the distribution of sources of financing CVET in 2009 resulting from a CVET providers’ survey conducted on an annual basis by the Institute of Information and Prognoses (ÚIPŠ, *Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva*).

TABLE 66: DISTRIBUTION OF SOURCES OF FINANCING OF CVET* IN 2009 ²⁷ (IN EUR AND %)		
TYPE OF SOURCES	EUR	%
TRAINEES	12 609 756.69	23.68
PRIVATE COMPANIES	12 003 068.85	22.54
PUBLIC SECTOR	5 930 312.75	11.14
<i>OF WHICH: LABOUR OFFICES</i>	<i>3 065 739.96</i>	<i>5.76</i>
<i>MUNICIPALITIES</i>	<i>658 386.94</i>	<i>1.24</i>
<i>SELF-GOVERNING REGIONS</i>	<i>1 887 472.81</i>	<i>3.54</i>
STATE BUDGET	6 662 730.15	12.51
FOUNDATIONS	597 624.92	1.12
EU FUNDS	14 944 646.84	28.06
OTHERS	503 206.31	0.94
TOTAL	53 251 346.51	100

Source: ÚIPŠ.

Note: * Data from well-disciplined institutions and at the same time the most important providers (in total 5 632 institutions were addressed, 1 154 responded of which 597 declared provision of

²⁷ The data indicating the distribution of sources of financing CVET in 1997-2009 see in Slovakia: VET in Europe: Country Report 2009.

education in 2009 and 525 submitted data on financing); data does not cover part-time studies in formal education, respective data is collected by annual reporting of IVET institutions.

No particular bodies are identifiable as particularly responsible for public funding CVET. As a rule, institutions publicly offering CVET fully cover costs from their institutional budget, or, more often, they require cofinancing by participants. These data only allow for identification of major contributors. It should be noted that the highest share in financing CVET came from EU funds, followed by trainees and private companies. The highest share of EU funding was caused by the increased drawing from the ESF in the final years of previous programming period (e.g. as a consequence of a shift of resources for National Project XI aimed at training of employees).

Financing formal CVET usually comes from individuals interested in obtaining qualification rather than individuals interested in increasing their employability or willing to increase their competitiveness at the market. It is estimated that the per-trainee expenditures are similar to the per-student costs in initial VET and to other, similar formal education programmes. Non-formal education, of which language and ICT training are the most popular, is subject to free competition on the market. Therefore, prices vary, i.a. they territorially reflect the purchasing power of inhabitants as costs are to be fully covered by trainees.

The regulation of tertiary part-time studies is very specific (and criticised in practice). At public higher education institutions, part-time studies are provided both for free and for fees. Following the Higher Education Act No. 131/2002 Coll. (*Zákon č. 131/2002 Z. z. o vysokých školách*) the number of students accepted for part-time studies cannot exceed the number of full-time students accepted by a higher education institution for the respective academic year. Government regulations determine the total amount of funds from the state budget for the respective academic year and for individual institutions of higher education. Based upon the set limits, each higher education institution decides upon the number of students in respective study programmes who will be accepted for free. Additional part-time students can be accepted for fee. There is also an option that legal bodies interested in the employment of a respective student can make agreements with the student for future employment and for covering their costs of study.

In the light of a low proportion of adults in LLL (permanently below 5 % since 2003 according to Eurostat LLL data on participation of 25-64 olds in education and training, 2.8 % in 2009), there have been increased discussions as how to promote CVET/LLL and re-think fiscal incentives.

The Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance (*Stratégia celoživotného vzdelávania a celoživotného poradenstva*) adopted in 2007 again reiterated the introduction of financial tools for development of LLL (in its measure 8.15), however without any concrete proposal of financial scheme. There were some efforts to introduce fiscal incentives into the draft act on LLL, but they were finally rejected and they were not included in the final wording of the Act on LLL No. 568/2009 Coll. (for more details see paragraphs on Measures fostering access to CVET in part 6.1.2).

10.2.2 FUNDING FOR CVT IN ENTERPRISES

There are no specific measures and even no reliable statistical data on supply-led and demand-led funding of CVT. The only official research data are from the 1990s from a research team that does not exist anymore. As Slovakia did not participate in the international survey 2, the first reliable EU comparable data about enterprise-based CVET is from CVTS3 available at the Eurostat portal. The national analysis of CVTS3 results announced for 2009 is pending.

Aggregate data indicates that the share of training enterprises is close to EU27 data and confirms the earlier assumption that the share of training enterprises increases with the size class of enterprises, similarly to other EU countries.

TABLE 67: TRAINING ENTERPRISES AS % OF ALL ENTERPRISES, BY SIZE CLASS IN 2005				
	TOTAL	10 TO 49	50 TO 249	250 OR MORE
EU27	60	55	78	91
SLOVAKIA	60	56	74	92

Source: Eurostat; Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS3, 2005).

Large enterprises offer more training opportunities than SMEs, usually due to the introduction of already developed investor's training culture into privatised enterprises. This also very likely explains the comparably higher costs of CVT in comparison with the total labour costs in the segment of large companies, as visible from Table 68 below.

TABLE 68: TOTAL COSTS OF CVT SOURCES AS % OF TOTAL LABOUR COST (ALL ENTERPRISES), BY SIZE CLASS IN 2005				
	TOTAL	10 TO 49	50 TO 249	250 OR MORE
EU27	1.6	1.1	1.4	1.9
SLOVAKIA	1.8	1	1.3	2.4

Source: Eurostat; Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS3, 2005).

The following table confirms the need to support CVT by specific measures as the share of enterprises indicating the impact of public measures is very low. In particular financial incentives are very rare. In fact, only strategic investors received it within state aid incentives aimed to attract them to settle in Slovakia.

TABLE 69: ENTERPRISES WITH IMPACT OF PUBLIC MEASURES ON THEIR CVT PLANS AS % FOR ALL TRAINING ENTERPRISES IN 2005						
	ANPMS	PBFAD	FINSIB	TXRELI	PRSTD	PRCER
EU27	36	9	17	10	11	20
SLOVAKIA	21	4	2	1	6	18

Source: Eurostat; Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS3, 2005), date of extraction: 21st August 2008.

Notes: *anpms* - Any public measure, *pbfad* - Publicity-funded advisory service aimed at identifying training needs and/or developing training plans, *finsib* - Financial subsidies towards the costs of training persons employed, *txreli* - Tax relief on expenditure on training persons employed, *prstd* - Procedures to ensure the standards of trainers (e.g. by national registers, assessment), *prcer* - Provision of recognised standards and frameworks for qualification and certification.

Interestingly, in the light of the importance of CVT within the flexibility approach towards labour market policy, a huge difference can be seen in the share of enterprises with a training centre (Table 70).

TABLE 70: ENTERPRISES WITH A TRAINING CENTRE USED EXCLUSIVELY OR PARTLY FOR CVT AS % OF ALL ENTERPRISES BY SIZE CLASS IN 2005 (ANY TYPE OF TRAINING, IN %)				
	TOTAL	10 TO 49	50 TO 249	250 OR MORE
EU27	12	10	17	33
SLOVAKIA	4	4	4	20
DENMARK	47	41	68	89

Source: Eurostat; Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS3, 2005), date of extraction: 21st August 2008.

10.3 FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

The Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) tools (see part 6.3 for specification) were funded by the state budget and by the European Social Fund within the so-called national projects addressing disadvantaged groups. Respective policies were designed and managed by the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (ÚPSVaR, *Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) with an execution decentralised to respective labour offices. As a rule, there is no discrimination according to ownership of subjects providing employment services agreed with labour offices and covered from the ALMP central budget. Similarly, there is no discrimination according to ownership concerning access to contributions and other benefits in support of employment. Nevertheless, there is a lot of space for respective labour offices to bypass official rules, if they wish to do so. Decisive influence of political parties and local players cannot be excluded as the decision process can be hardly strictly regulated. On the other hand, improving transparency rules make any case of positive or negative discrimination subject of public debating as media enjoy commenting any examples of disorder.

The Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources addressed all regions except the Bratislava Region that was covered by the Single Programming Document NUTS II Bratislava Objective 3. Thus, twin national projects were implemented to address two eligible territories in parallel. The following table depicts national projects in relation to VET designed for the 2004-2006 programming period and implemented till 2009.

TABLE 71: NATIONAL PROJECTS AIMED AT TRAINING OF UNEMPLOYED AND OTHERS VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION FROM THE LABOUR MARKET	
TITLE OF THE NATIONAL PROJECT (NP) 2004-2006 (2009)	Relevance to Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services (<i>Zákon č. 5/2004 Z. z. o službách zamestnanosti</i>)
NP III - EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF THE UNEMPLOYED FOR THE LABOUR MARKET FOLLOWED BY THE MODIFIED NP III A - EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR THE LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYEE PRACTICE SINCE 2007	§ 46 education and training for the labour market for the job seeker and the job changer
NP IX - SCHOOL LEAVER'S JOB EXPERIENCE (GRADUATE PRACTICE)	§ 51 allowance for carrying out school leaver's job experience
NP XI - THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL TRAINING OF EMPLOYEES FOR ACQUIRING NEW KNOWLEDGE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS	§ 47 education and training for the labour market of employee

Source: ÚPSVaR.

Since 2004, a state-managed network of 46 Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family headed by the ÚPSVaR and labour market polices became regulated by Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services. Active labour market policies were covered from the state budget via the ÚPSVaR as well as from the European Social Fund.

The list of active labour market policies related to the respective paragraphs (see the explanation below the table) of the Act on Employment Services and their results in 2004 to 2009 is offered in Table 10 in the Annex. In the following table, only the most relevant policies are presented in time series since 2004.

TABLE 72: ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES IN 2004, 2007, 2008 AND 2009								
ALMP TOOLS	PEOPLE AFFECTED				BUDGET ASSIGNED (IN EUR)			
	2004	2007	2008	2009	2004	2007	2008	2009
§ 46	27208	8890	12143	17924	5455898.5	1923460.1	3725446.92	5841204.64
§ 47	- *	12537	13863	29921	- *	7097743.8	8501069.87	30642710.81
§ 48B	- *	- *	1693	1066	- *	- *	401026.46	251399.11
§ 51	14462	8937	7451	11764	5152065.6	2526441.7	4815714.30	10989976.03
TOTAL**	273354	304249	264801	208016	50789976.9	77601404.9	123688504.51	162181943.50

Source: ÚPSVaR.

Notes: EUR 1 = SKK 38.796 as of 31st December 2004; EUR 1 = SKK 33.603 as of 31st December 2007; 2008 and 2009 data offered in EUR by the Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

§ 46 Education and training for the labour market of the unemployed job seekers and employed job seekers, § 47 Education and training for the labour market of employee, § 48b Provision of benefits during training for the labour market and preparation for assertion at the labour market of disabled citizen, § 51 Contribution for the graduate practice.

* not implemented.

** including also additional tools listed in the act.

A gradual decrease in training for the labour market in the share of total ALMP investment till 2006 is transparently visible from the table below (see § 46), followed by a slight improvement. At the same time, an increase in funding of education and training of employees (§ 47) aimed at improving the employability and prevention from unemployment of the already working people can be seen below with a huge increase in its share in crisis year 2009. Similarly, an increase can be seen in a share of Graduate practice. Both these figures correspond to the figures indicating the volumes of resources in the previous table above.

TABLE 73: DISTRIBUTION OF VET RELEVANT ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES MEANS IN 2004 TO 2009 (%)						
ALMP TOOLS	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
§ 46	10.7	10.6	2.1	2.5	3.01	3.60
§ 47	0.0*	0.0*	0.8	9.1	6.87	18.89
§ 48B	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.32	0.16
§ 51	10.1	13.5	5.4	3.3	3.89	6.78
TOTAL **	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ÚPSVaR.

Notes: § 46 Education and training for the labour market of the unemployed job seekers and employed job seekers, § 47 Education and training for the labour market of employee, § 48b Provision of benefits during training for the labour market and preparation for assertion at the labour market of disabled citizen, § 51 Contribution for the graduate practice.

* not implemented.

** including also additional tools listed in the act and visible in the Table 11 in the Annex.

The ESF Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources and the Single Programming Document NUTS II Bratislava Objective 3 in years 2004-2006 (finally lasting till May 2009) are followed by the Operational Programme Education and Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion for the 2007-2013 programming period.

The national projects aimed at education and training continue with the exception of Graduate practice. This policy is not financed from European money anymore. On the other hand, graduate practice is considered an important tool for fighting graduate unemployment that is expected to increase. Therefore, additional funding from the state budget and even more friendly conditions for enrolment are expected.

A new bunch of national projects was designed for the new ESF programming period. There were 36 national projects elaborated with regard to objective Convergence (valid for all regions except the Bratislava Region) and 22 national projects with regard to objective Regional Competitiveness and Employment (valid for the Bratislava Region). In the following table, some of them were selected with a direct impact on VET.

TABLE 74: TOTAL BUDGETS (ESF AND STATE BUDGET MEANS) ALLOCATED TO VET RELEVANT NATIONAL PROJECTS OF OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

NATIONAL PROJECT/ MANAGING INSTITUTION	DURATION	VALID EXCEPT BRATISLAVA REGION (EUR)	VALID FOR BRATISLAVA REGION (EUR)
NP VIII-2 NATIONAL SYSTEM OF OCCUPATIONS IN SLOVAK REPUBLIC/ EDUCATION CENTRE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND FAMILY	2009 - 2012	11 352 320.00	819 890.00
NP XIV-2 SYSTEM FOR SURVEYING EMERGING AND VANISHING WORKING POSITIONS AND FORECASTING LABOUR MARKET NEEDS/ CENTRE OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND FAMILY	2009 - 2012	3 005 745.88	230 509.16
NP III-2/A EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR THE LABOUR MARKET/ CENTRE OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND FAMILY	2009 - 2012	16 942 960.00	-
NP XII-2 HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND SYSTEMIC DEEPENING OF WORKERS' QUALIFICATION/ CENTRE OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND FAMILY	2009 - 2012	8 208 962.06	415 907.63
NP XXI-2 INDICATORS AND SYSTEM FOR ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFICIENCY OF ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICY MEASURES/ EDUCATION CENTRE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND FAMILY	2009 - 2010	346 034.16	59 956.71
EDUCATION AS THE TOOL OF MODERN AND PRO-CLIENT ORIENTED STATE STATISTICS/ STATISTICAL OFFICE	2010 - 2013	786 301.00	94 293.96

Source: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Managing Authority for OP Employment and Social Inclusion

Very urgently needed are two projects with the expected systemic impact. National Project VIII-2 aimed at the development of the National System of Occupations, and the national project aimed at forecasting labour market needs. National Project XXI-2 is expected to improve assessment of active labour market policies and its results are crucial for monitoring the impact of policies and suggestions for corrections as well as respective amendments of the Act on Employment Services. This is also very relevant for CVET and labour market training organised by labour offices, as the efficiency of this training, cofinanced from the ESF within the earlier programming period, has been disputed.

National Project III-2/A, which focuses on labour market training, can also benefit from preliminary results of this project. It is important to reduce the deadweight in provision of this training and to improve focusing on appropriately identified skills and targeting on relevant groups.

10.4 GENERAL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS AND MECHANISMS

VET funding arrangements are very simple. IVET is dominantly funded from the state budget and CVET from the pocket of the interested players (employers or individual participants). Labour market retraining is financed from the state budget and from the ESF. A debate about additional funding mechanisms with clear incentives to private subjects positive towards funding VET goes back to the early 1990s. Initially, train-or-pay

VET fund was considered appropriate and later tax relieves were proposed, however without success. Here are two examples of policy papers addressing this issue.

The National Action Plan of Employment for 2004-2006 explicitly mentioned recommendations of the Council of the EU on “more effective investment in human capital and lifelong learning” and “greater incentives to invest in training and to facilitate access to education” and proposed i.a. a tax relief scheme for employers aimed at increasing their investment in training of their employees.

The Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance (*Stratégia celoživotného vzdelávania a celoživotného poradenstva*) adopted in 2007 suggested the introduction of financial tools for the development of LLL in its measure 8.15.

The debate continues, dominated by two basic fundamentals of all Slovak governments. Efficient tax policy is considered incompatible with any kind of tax related incentives for VET/LLL, and governments are unable to reduce government costs and/or redirect more resources to investment in education, LLL and R&D at the expense of other public expenditures.

The Ministry of Finance (MF, *Ministerstvo financií*) opposes all proposals for tax incentives in support of IVET and/or continuing VET for individuals considering flat tax reform introducing 19 % tax rate for VAT, income tax and corporate tax a sufficient stimulus for encouraging investment in human resources and/or own education.

There are no sectoral training funds implemented. In 2010 a VET fund will be established according to Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on VET (*Zákon č. 184/2009 Z. z. o odbornom vzdelávaní*). In contrast to a levy-type fund known from other EU countries and promoted by a professional audience, the VET fund presided by the minister of education cannot receive funding from state authorities and funding from businesses is strictly on a voluntary basis. As the Ministry of Finance strictly opposed creating a fund as lowering state budget income, employers accepted only non-obligatory contributions. This fund is seen controversially as a lack of means is expected under the current terms. In addition, VET schools are afraid of worsening their possibilities to earn from businesses. Currently, schools fight for contributions from businesses based on a specific tax credit measure introduced originally to support NGOs. Schools created affiliated NGOs in order to apply for additional funding, e.g. 2 % of the personal income tax (since 2001) and corporate tax (since 2004). Many schools are very successful in attracting subjects with a special interest (parents, businesses from similar sector, etc.). Schools are afraid that political manipulation might result in funnelling funding from businesses to the VET fund instead directly to them. Unfortunately, this scheme will be gradually weakened under the pressure of the Ministry of Finance. In 2011, only 1.5 % of corporate tax can be assigned to NGOs with gradual decrease in following years. In the effort to increase the inflow of tax money to the state budget, the Ministry of Finance suggests corporations and self-employers to match a decrease in funding NGOs via tax credits by after-tax financial contributions. The Ministry of Finance argued that many corporations used to self-service their own NGOs. On the other hand, there is no evidence about effects of activities of respective NGOs and some NGOs of strong corporates evidently support education.

There is only one example when government adopted a measure based on tax relief disregarding the criticism of the National Bank of Slovakia and the Ministry of Finance. In the light of the brain drain of medical staff to better paying EU countries the government decided to adopt a measure prepared by the Ministry of Health (MZ, *Ministerstvo zdravotníctva*) aimed at the stimulation of continuing professional development of medical staff in order to fill the gap of specialists. The measure is valid since 1st January 2008, thus tax deduction applies for the 2008 fiscal year (with tax reporting deadline 31st March 2009) for the first time. Act No. 578/2004 Coll. on Provision of Health Care, Medical Staff and

Medical Professional Organisations (*Zákon č. 578/2004 Z. z. o zdravotnej starostlivosti, službách súvisiacich s poskytovaním zdravotnej starostlivosti*) and Act No. 595/2003 Coll. on Income Tax (*Zákon č. 595/2003 Z. z. o dani z príjmov*) were amended by Act No. 653/2007 Coll. This act enables medical doctors, dentists, nurses, and obstetric nurses/midwives to include the costs of the continuing training into tax deductibles. A decree of the Ministry of Health No. 31/2006 Coll. sets upper limits of training fees relevant to the respective types of training of respective medical staff categories. As a consequence of the 19 % income tax rate, the spending of trainees of study programmes set and accredited by the Ministry of Health is reduced by about one fifth. The parliament broke a taboo by this measure concerning tax incentives for continuing training/lifelong learning²⁸. Nevertheless, this measure is cancelled by the new austerity package to be introduced in 2011.

There are sectoral regulations detailing qualification requirements for diverse professions, however without similar fiscal incentives. Of course it is up to the employers to apply some, if appropriate. According to § 155 of the Labour Code the employer is entitled to sign a training agreement with the employee in which the employee commits himself/herself to remain in employment for a certain period (maximum 5 years), otherwise the relevant costs of the employer (up to 75 % of the total costs) have to be reimbursed. Thus, tax incentives for CVET for individuals from other professions were not applied. Nevertheless, the aforementioned measure benefiting health sector personnel will be abolished as a consequence of cost saving measures to reduce the state budget deficit in 2011. Learning accounts and vouchers were discussed only academically with no serious debate among decision makers.

Saving schemes and loans aimed at VET are also not in place. There are scholarships to assist low income families to cofinance costs of living of students, but they are not VET specific, and in addition, they are not widely used. A Student Loan Fund has started to provide loans since the 1995/1996 academic year. In 2008/2009, 1,547 contracts were signed (of which 66 with part-time students) in a total sum paid EUR 1,375,725. Students can apply for loans in 4 levels: EUR 331.94 (SKK 10,000), EUR 663.88 (SKK 20,000), EUR 995.82 (SKK 30,000) and EUR 1,327.76 (SKK 40,000) in contrast to only two levels in 2008. The interest rate is 3 %, which is significantly below market interest rates. There is however a comparably low interest in these loans as students are more interested in earning from work (i.a. abroad during summer holidays) and in the so-called “social stipends” (up to EUR 239 monthly), as well as in “motivation stipends” for high-performing students (up to EUR 663.88 per academic year). In the 2010/2011 academic year loans for students with tuition fees are envisaged with a maximum amount EUR 2,655.52 (SKK 80,000).

In addition to these stipends for higher education students, the so-called “motivation stipends” are available for secondary students whose parents are in material need or below subsistence minimum aimed at improving the access of these students to education and make them more involved in their education²⁹.

²⁸ See *Parliament Breaks a Taboo: Tax Incentives for Lifelong Learning*. In: *Cedefop Info 1/2008*.

²⁹ See *example of initiative on scholarships for students in Part 5.1 Addressing equity in VET of the “Progress in VET in Priority Areas Agreed in the Copenhagen Process: VET Policy Report - Slovakia 2010”*.

11. NATIONAL VET STATISTICS - ALLOCATION OF PROGRAMMES

11.1 CLASSIFICATION OF NATIONAL VET PROGRAMMES

11.1.1 MAIN CRITERIA USED TO ALLOCATE VET PROGRAMMES

Currently a statistical classification of study and training branches used in programming VET is set by the Decree of the Statistical Office SR No. 161/2010 Coll. on Classification of Education Branches (*Vyhláška Štatistického úradu č. 161/2010 Z. z., Slovenskej republiky, ktorou sa vydáva Štatistická klasifikácia odborov vzdelania*), also containing a respective ISCED code. The Classification of Occupations corresponding to the ISCO-88(COM) is introduced by the Measure of the Statistical Office No. 16/2001 Coll. which is however not directly interrelated within curricular documentation. In essence however IVET schools offer the obtaining of a first qualification across all occupations in the national economy. All VET programmes are coded in line with statistical classification of study and training branches.

There is the ESF National project VIII -2 National System of Occupations in Slovak Republic within which revision of current classification of occupation and its alignment with ISCO 08 and National System of Occupations is envisaged. Subsequently, alignment to the National System of Qualifications should be achieved.

Until 2008, when the new Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. (*Zákon č. 245/2008 Z. z. o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon)*) came into force, ISCED codes were dominantly used in the statistical practice of the education sector only. A respective conversion table between ISCED and national classification was elaborated by the Institute of Information and Prognoses (ÚIPŠ, *Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva*) in particular with regard to UOE harmonised data delivery.

For specific explanations concerning post-secondary non tertiary education and ISCED 5B categories see the definition of tertiary and higher education in part 1.5.

Nevertheless, since 2000 all national statistics of ÚIPŠ about primary, secondary, tertiary education and CVET is also offered according to ISCED 97, while educational statistics published by the Statistical Office (ŠÚ, *Štatistický úrad*) within annual yearbooks is based on the national Classification of Education Branches (KOV, *klasifikácia odborov vzdelania*), which is widely used also in labour market statistics (e.g. in graduates unemployment statistics). The convergence table between the two classifications is below.

TABLE 75: CONVERSION TABLE BETWEEN ISCED AND NATIONAL CLASSIFICATION (5 TH DIGIT OF 7 DIGIT KOV FULL CODE)		
NC	DESCRIPTION	ISCED
0	Lower secondary vocational education at schools with adjusted curricula, and at practical schools* (trained, fully trained) ⁺	2C
1	Lower secondary vocational education in experimental programmes ⁺⁺	2A
2	Secondary vocational education finishing with a certificate of apprenticeship acquired at SOŠ** and at vocational schools***	3C* 2C**
3	Secondary education (study in less than four-year programmes, without “maturita”)	3C
4	Full secondary vocational education (study at SOŠ**** finishing with “maturita”)	3A
5	Full secondary general education (study at grammar school finishing with “maturita”)	3A
6	Full secondary vocational education (study at SOŠ***** or conservatory finishing with “maturita”, and diverse “post-maturita” studies not finishing with absolutorium)	3A,4A
7	First level of tertiary education - bachelor, and higher professional education (post-secondary not tertiary finishing with absolutorium)	5
8	Second level of tertiary education - master (magister, engineer, doctor)	5
9	Third level of tertiary education	6

Source: Classification of Education Branches (KOV) according to the Statistical Office, descriptions and respective ISCED codes allocated by authors.

Notes: ZŠ basic school (základná škola).

SOŠ secondary specialised school (stredná odborná škola).

⁺ till 2008 Completed compulsory education in a grade lower than final grade of ZŠ.

⁺⁺ till 2008 Completed basic or secondary education (except secondary education stated in points 2 and 3).

* schools for students with special educational needs within the stream of special schools.

** till 2008 labelled as training branches at secondary vocational schools (SOU, stredné odborné učilište), since 2008 training branches at SOŠ.

*** schools for students with special educational needs within the stream of special schools able to achieve it despite the handicap.

**** till 2008 programmes labelled as study branches at SOU and since 2008 labelled as study branches with vocational training at SOŠ.

***** since 2008 programmes labelled as study branches with practice at SOŠ.

As visible above the national Classification of Education Branches is education programme based and increasing numbers in coding does not fully correspond with levels of education according to educational legislation. Gradual transition to ISCED is expected nation and all sector wide. Within the aforementioned Decree of the Statistical Office No. 161/2010 Coll. ISCED codes in the full (7 digit) list of branches is announced. Thus, a new decree will have to be issued as a consequence of incoming renewal of ISCED.

11.1.2 VET LEVELS IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

With the coming in force of the Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. levels of education have been substantially changed.

Since September 2008 the general education comprise three levels: primary education - after completing 4th year of basic school; lower secondary (general) - after completing 9th year of basic school or respective class of longer form of grammar school and full secondary general - after completing a grammar school. Levels of VET including tertiary programme levels adjusted to the Bologna declaration are presented in the table below.

TABLE 76: VET LEVELS IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM					
LEVEL	ISCED	MINIMUM DURATION	MAXIMUM DURATION	TYPICAL DURATION*	TYPICAL STARTING AGE OF PUPILS
LOWER SECONDARY VOCATIONAL	2C	2 years	3 years	2	15-16
SECONDARY VOCATIONAL	3C	3 years	4 years	3	15
FULL SECONDARY VOCATIONAL**	3A	4 years	5 years	4***	15
HIGHER PROFESSIONAL	5B	2 years	3 years	2,3	19
HIGHER EDUCATION 1 ST LEVEL (BACHELOR)	5A	3 years	4 years	3	19
HIGHER EDUCATION 2 ND LEVEL (MASTER)	5A	2 years	3 years****	2****	22
HIGHER EDUCATION (PHD)	6	3 years	4 years*****	-	24-25*****

Notes: * average duration is not an appropriate indicator as there are only two options of duration.

** there are diverse post-secondary programmes not leading to higher level of education, e.g. post-secondary studies lasting at least 6 months (refresher) labelled ISCED 4A or post-secondary studies lasting 2 years (qualifying) labelled ISCED 4A; starting age of pupils differs, often it is 19 in full-timers and usually more in case of part-timers.

*** this level can also be obtained after 2 years follow-up study after completing education leading to secondary vocational level (ISCED 3C), but there are also genuine more demanding programmes requiring 5 years of study.

**** there are some master studies not following bachelor studies (e.g. medical studies lasting 6 years in total.)

***** in part-time form lasting 5 years students are usually older, in contrast to full-time students entering 3 years lasting study usually immediately after achieving the master level; however this is not obligatory.

11.2 FIELDS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The respective fields of education and training are classified according to the aforementioned national Classification of Education Branches (KOV, *Klasifikácia odborov vzdelania*) in the table below offering an overview of study fields from lower secondary to tertiary level.

TABLE 77: VET PROGRAMMES BY FIELDS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

CODE	FIELD ACCORDING TO NATIONAL CLASSIFICATION (KOV)	ISCED 97						
		2C	3C	3A, 4	5B	5A-1 ST	5A-2 ND	6
1	NATURAL SCIENCES							
11	PHYSICAL-MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES	0	0	1*	0	1	1	1
12	GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
13	GEOGRAPHICAL SCIENCES	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
14	CHEMICAL SCIENCES	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
15	BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
16	ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
2	TECHNICAL SCIENCES I							
21	MINING, MINING GEOLOGY AND GEOLOGICAL TECHNOLOGY	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
22	METALLURGY	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
23	ENGINEERING AND OTHER METAL-PROCESSING I	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
24	ENGINEERING AND OTHER METAL-PROCESSING II	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
25	INFORMATICS AND COMPUTING TECHNOLOGY	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
26	ELECTROTECHNICS	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
27	TECHNICAL CHEMISTRY OF SILICATE CHEMISTRY	1	1	1	0	0	1	0
28	TECHNICAL AND APPLIED CHEMISTRY	0	1	1	0	1	1	1
29	FOOD-PROCESSING	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3	TECHNICAL SCIENCES II							
31	TEXTILE AND CLOTHING	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
32	PROCESSING OF HIDES, PLASTICS, RUBBER, SHOES PRODUCTION	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
33	WOOD-PROCESSING AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS PRODUCTION	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
34	PULP, PRINTING AND MEDIA	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
35	ARCHITECTURE	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
36	BUILDING, GEODESY AND CARTOGRAPHY	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
37	TRANSPORT, POST AND TELECOMMUNICATION	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
38	AUTOMATION AND REGULATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

CODE	FIELD ACCORDING TO NATIONAL CLASSIFICATION (KOV)	ISCED 97						
		2C	3C	3A, 4	5B	5A-1 ST	5A-2 ND	6
39	SPECIAL TECHNICAL SPECIALISATIONS	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
4	AGRICULTURAL-FORESTRY AND VETERINARY SCIENCES							
41	AGRICULTURAL-FORESTRY SCIENCE	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
42	AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT I	0	0	1	1	1	1	0
43	VETERINARY SCIENCES	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
45	AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT II	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
5	HEALTHCARE							
51	MEDICAL SCIENCES	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
52	PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
53	HEALTHCARE BRANCHES AT SECONDARY HEALTH SCHOOLS	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
56	NON-MEDICAL HEALTHCARE SCIENCES	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
6	SOCIAL SCIENCES AND SERVICES I							
61	PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCES	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
62	ECONOMIC SCIENCES	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
63	ECONOMICS AND ORGANISATION, RETAIL AND SERVICES I	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
64	ECONOMICS AND ORGANISATION, RETAIL AND SERVICES II	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
67	POLITICAL SCIENCES	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
68	LEGAL SCIENCES	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
7	SOCIAL SCIENCES AND SERVICES II							
71	HISTORICAL SCIENCES	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
72	LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCES	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
73	PHILOLOGICAL SCIENCES	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
74	PHYSICAL CULTURE SCIENCES	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
75	PEDAGOGICAL SCIENCES	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
76	TEACHER TRAINING	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
77	PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
78	TEACHER TRAINING - SUBJECT COMBINATION	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
79	FULL SECONDARY EDUCATION AT GRAMMAR SCHOOLS	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

CODE	FIELD ACCORDING TO NATIONAL CLASSIFICATION (KOV)	ISCED 97						
		2C	3C	3A, 4	5B	5A-1 ST	5A-2 ND	6
8	SCIENCES ON CULTURE AND ARTS							
81	ARTS SCIENCES	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
82	ARTS AND ARTISTIC CRAFTS I	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
85	ARTS AND ARTISTIC CRAFTS II	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
9	MILITARY AND SECURITY SCIENCES							
91	MILITARY ENGINEERING AND ELECTROTECHNICS BRANCHES	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
92	SECURITY SERVICES	0	0	1*	0	1	1	1
94	NON-STATE SECURITY SERVICES	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
96	MILITARY BRANCHES	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
97	MILITARY BUILDING AND TRANSPORT BRANCHES	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
98	MILITARY ECONOMIC BRANCHES	0	0	0	0	1	1	1

Source: Decree of the Statistical Office No. 161/2010 Coll. on classification of education branches and a Decree of the Ministry of Education No. 282/2009 Coll. on Secondary Schools (Vyhláška Ministerstva školstva Slovenskej republiky č. 282/2009 Z. z. o stredných školách)

Notes: 0 - non-existing programme, 1 - existing programme.

* just ISCED 4A.

5A-1st - bachelor programmes.

5A-2nd - master (magister, engineer, doctor) programmes.

5B - post-secondary programmes offered by secondary specialised schools only.

The following table offers fields of tertiary education according to ISCED together with the newest data on participants. Similar statistics for secondary and post-secondary education is not available.

TABLE 78: STUDENTS ENROLLED IN TERTIARY PROGRAMMES IN THE 2007/2008 ACADEMIC YEAR

FIELDS OF EDUCATION	ALL TERTIARY (ISCED 5+6)	5A	5B	6
TOTAL: ALL FIELDS OF EDUCATION	229477	216583	2220	10674
EDUCATION (ISCED 14)	34496	33618	119	759
TEACHER TRAINING (ISCED 141)	28629	28431	119	79
EDUCATION SCIENCE (ISCED 142)	5867	5187	n	680
HUMANITIES AND ARTS	14917	13095	568	1254
ARTS (ISCED 21)	3899	2969	568	362
HUMANITIES (ISCED 22)	11018	10126	n	892
SOCIAL SCIENCES, BUSINESS AND LAW	67268	64964	167	2137
SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE (ISCED 31)	10896	10296	n	600
JOURNALISM AND INFORMATION (ISCED 32)	5170	5053	n	117
BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION (ISCED 34)	40663	39417	167	1079
LAW (ISCED 38)	10539	10198	n	341
SCIENCE	19383	17788	40	1555
LIFE SCIENCES (ISCED 42)	5705	5099	n	606
PHYSICAL SCIENCES (ISCED 44)	3740	3226	n	514
MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS (ISCED 46)	1990	1799	n	191
COMPUTING (ISCED 48)	7948	7664	40	244
ENGINEERING, MANUFACTURING AND CONSTRUCTION	34375	31902	113	2360
ENGINEERING AND ENGINEERING TRADES (ISCED 52)	21336	19638	69	1629
MANUFACTURING AND PROCESSING (ISCED 54)	4791	4406	44	341
ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDING (ISCED 58)	8248	7858	n	390
AGRICULTURE	5867	5486	n	381
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERY (ISCED 62)	4895	4615	n	280
VETERINARY (ISCED 64)	972	871	n	101
HEALTH AND WELFARE	40332	38200	508	1624
HEALTH (ISCED 72)	22425	20671	419	1335
SOCIAL SERVICES (ISCED 76)	17907	17529	89	289
SERVICES	12839	11530	705	604
PERSONAL SERVICES (ISCED 81)	2817	2071	597	149
TRANSPORT SERVICES (ISCED 84)	3605	3431	70	104
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (ISCED 85)	1212	1092	n	120
SECURITY SERVICES (ISCED 86)	5205	4936	38	231

Source: ÚIPŠ, UOE data.

As already mentioned ISCED 5B data in the table above refer to graduates from higher professional studies offered by secondary specialised schools completed by an absolutorium. There are no tertiary ISCED 5B programmes currently offered as also indicated within the next chapter.

11.3 LINKS BETWEEN NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OR CLASSIFICATIONS

The National Qualification Framework (NQF) does not exist yet, however, its implementation process has already started based on Government Resolution No. 105/2009 of 4th February 2009 (for details see part 2.2.).

A Memorandum on Cooperation between the ministries of education and labour was signed on 27th October 2009 in order to facilitate the alignment of the to-be-renewed national system qualification to the new national system of occupations both materialising into the National Registers. The elaboration of the National Register of Occupation is already in progress under the supervision of Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (MPSVR, *Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) cofinanced by the ESF. The elaboration of the National Register of Qualification is however pending as the start of the ESF project aimed at the renewal of the national qualification system has been delayed.

Nevertheless, the system of secondary VET programmes is in the process of renewal since 2008 and the commitment of the government to create NQF till the end of 2011 remain valid. All relevant documents should include reference to the respective EQF (NQF) level by the end of 2012 in order to comply with the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council.

A working group for the implementation of EQF has been created and the first contribution to the elaboration of NQF mapping (conversion table between NSQ and EQF) was done with completion of the referencing process by December 2011, according to the Ministry of Education. Below is the draft proposal of the Slovak National Observatory of VET submitted to the national EQF working group. Based on the request it only covers the education sector in terms of levels of education as stipulated by the Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. and Higher Education Act No. 131/2002 Coll. Subsequent full mapping of qualifications will require broader cooperation of experts from other sectors. When all learning settings (and not just formal learning) will be covered by the NQF will also depend on the progress in the ESF project on NSQ (see parts 2.2 and 8.1).

TABLE 79: BASIC* PROPOSAL OF TABLE FOR THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK (NQF)			
NQF LEVEL (PROPOSAL)**	ISCED LEVEL	LEGISLATION ***	TITLES, NAMES OF STUDY PROGRAMMES OR SCHOOLS
8	6	3 rd VŠ	PhD, ArtD, ThDr**** ; doctoral
7	5A	2 nd VŠ	Mgr, Mgr.art / Ing; Ing. arch/ MUDr, MVDr, MDDr; Master
6	5A	1 st VŠ	Bc, Bachelor
6	5B	-	Currently not offered tertiary education
6	5B	VOV	DiS, higher professional study (2-3 years) finishing with absolutorium
6	5B	VOV	DiS Art conservatory after 6 th year, dance conservatory after 8 th year finishing with absolutorium
6	5B	VOV	DiS; “post-maturita” specialising study (at least 2 years) finishing with absolutorium
5 (5+)	4A	ÚSOV	“Post-maturita” qualifying study (at least 2 years) finishing with the second “maturita” school leaving exam
5 (5+)	4A	ÚSOV	“Post-maturita” developing and refresher study (at least 6 months) at SOŠ finishing with a final exam
5	3A	ÚSOV	4-5 year programme at SOŠ with “maturita” (or also with a Certificate of Apprenticeship)
5	3A	ÚSOV	Conservatory after 4 th year (“maturita”)
5	3A	ÚSOV	Follow-up study (as a rule 2 years) following completed secondary vocational education (training branch) finishing with “maturita”
5	3A	ÚSVV	“Maturita” from grammar school
4	3C	SOV	3-4 year programme with a final exam (usually also with a Certificate of Apprenticeship)
3	2C	NSOV	2-year programme at SOŠ with a final exam (or also with a “quasi” Certificate of Apprenticeship)
2	2	ZV-NS	Completing the second stage of basic school, 4 th year of 8-year grammar school, 1 st year of bilingual secondary school, 4 th year of dance conservatory
1	1	ZV-P	Completing the first stage of education at basic school

Notes: VŠ - higher (vysokoškolské), VOV - higher professional education (vyššie odborné vzdelanie); ÚSOV - full secondary vocational education (úplné stredné odborné vzdelanie (vyššie sekundárne)), SOV - secondary vocational education (stredné odborné vzdelanie (sekundárne)); ÚSVV - full secondary general education (úplné stredné všeobecné vzdelanie (vyššie sekundárne)), NSOV - lower secondary vocational education (nižšie stredné odborné vzdelanie (nižšie sekundárne)); ZV-NS

- basic education - lower secondary (základné vzdelanie - nižšie stredné), ZV-P - basic education - primary (základné vzdelanie - primárne).

* So far reflecting just legislatively set levels of education and not qualifications as would be desirable; and other indicators of higher level of competence, and thus e.g. it does not cover examina rigorosa based awards which are linked to prior intensive self-study; it does not cover § 17 of the Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. (addressing levels of education attained within basic art education and language education) and programmes within special education and other sectors (e.g. healthcare - Regulation of the Government No. 12/2008 Coll.); it does not cover continuing education and so far it does not address outputs from other than formal education setting.

** In further detailing to sub-levels we propose to distinguish at each level an “upper sub-level (plus)” to cover any additional formal or non-formal education not leading to recognition of higher level of education, and thus not appropriate for inclusion into a higher level within the NQF, and also e.g. education that will lead to recognition of partial qualification according to the future act on LLL, which is under preparation, or other sectoral norms.

*** Higher Education Act No. 131/2002 Coll.; and Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. (§ 16 - levels of education).

**** Catholic Theology only.

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Institute for Labour and Family Research (Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny, IVPR) www.sspr.gov.sk

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Ministry of Finance of the SR (Ministerstvo financií SR, MF) www.finance.gov.sk

Ministry of Health of the SR (Ministerstvo zdravotníctva SR, MZ) www.health.gov.sk

Ministry of Interior of the SR (Ministerstvo vnútra SR, MV) www.minv.sk

Ministry of Justice of the SR (Ministerstvo spravodlivosti SR, MS) www.justice.gov.sk

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR (Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny, MPSVR) www.employment.gov.sk

National Institute for Education (Štátny pedagogický ústav, ŠPÚ) www.statpedu.sk

Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology (Výskumný ústav detskej psychológie a patopsychológie, VÚDPaP) www.vudpap.sk

Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation (Slovenská akademická asociácia pre medzinárodnú spoluprácu) www.saaic.sk

State Institute of Vocational Education (Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania, ŠIOV) www.siov.sk

Statistical Office of SR (Štatistický úrad SR, ŠÚ SR) www.statistics.sk

Trexima Bratislava, Ltd. (Trexima Bratislava, s.r.o.) www.trexima.sk

12.3 LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIVD	Asociácia inštitúcií vzdelávania dospelých v SR (Association of Adult Education Institutions in the SR)
AK	Akreditačná komisia vlády Slovenskej republiky (Accreditation Commission of the Slovak Republic Government)
AK MŠ	Akreditačná komisia Ministerstva školstva (Accreditation Commission of the Ministry of Education)

ALMP	Active labour market policy
AZZZ	Asociácia zamestnávateľských zväzov a združení Slovenskej republiky (Federation of the Employers' Association of Slovakia)
CQAF	Common Quality Assurance Framework
CVET	Continuing vocational education and training
CVTS	Continuing Vocational Training Survey
DPŠ	Doplňujúce pedagogické štúdium (complementary pedagogical study)
EQARF	European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET
ENQA-VET	European Network for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
EQF	European Qualification Framework
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
G	Gymnázium (grammar school)
GDP	Gross domestic product
HEI	Higher education Institution
ICT	Information communication technology
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
ISTP	Integrovaný systém typových pozícií (Integrated System of Typal Positions)
IVET	Initial vocational education and training
IVPR	Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny (Institute of Labour and Family Research)
IZ	Inštitút zamestnanosti (Employment Institute)
JŠ	Jazyková škola (language school)
KOV	Klasifikácia odborov vzdelania (classification of education branches)
KOZ	Konfederácia odborových zväzov (Confederation of Trade Unions)
KZAM	Klasifikácia zamestnaní (classification of occupations)
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LLL	Lifelong learning
LLP	Lifelong learning programme

MF	Ministerstvo financií (Ministry of Finance)
MPC	Metodicko-pedagogické centrum (Methodological-Pedagogical Centre)
MPSVR	Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny (Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family)
MŠ	Ministerstvo školstva (Ministry of Education)
MV	Ministerstvo vnútra (Ministry of Interior)
MZ	Ministerstvo zdravotníctva (Ministry of Health)
NACE	Nomenclature générale des activités économiques (General Classification of Economic Activities of the European Community)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NQF	National Qualification Framework
NSQ	National System of Qualifications
OP	Operational Programme
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
QMS	Quality management system
R&D	Research and development
RÚZ	Republiková únia zamestnávateľov (National Union of Employers)
SAAIC	Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation (Slovenská akademická asociácia pre medzinárodnú spoluprácu), LLP National Agency
SITES	Second Information Technology in Education Study
SKK	Slovak crown (currency)
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
SOP	Sectoral Operational Programme
SOP	Stredisko odbornej praxe (centre of vocational practice)
SOŠ	Stredná odborná škola (secondary specialised school)
SOU	Stredné odborné učilište (secondary vocational school)
SPD	Single Programming Document
SPV	Stredisko praktického vyučovania (centre of practical training)
SR	Slovak Republic
SŠ	Spojená škola (joined school)

ŠH	Školské hospodárstvo (school farm)
ŠIOV	Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania (State Institute of Vocational Education)
ŠPÚ	Štátny pedagogický ústav (National Institute for Education)
ŠÚ	Štatistický úrad (Statistical Office)
UOE	UNESCO, OECD, Eurostat
ÚIPŠ	Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva (Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education)
ÚPSVaR	Ústredie práce sociálnych vecí a rodiny (Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family)
VET	Vocational education and training
VÚDPaP	Výskumný ústav detskej psychológie a patopsychológie (Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology)
ZMOS	Združenie miest a obcí Slovenska (Association on towns and municipalities of Slovakia)
ZSŠ	Združená stredná škola (associated secondary school)
ZŠ	Základná škola (basic school)
ZUŠ	Základná umelecká škola (basic school of arts)

ANNEX I

NACE CATEGORY REV. 1.1	2003		2004		2005		2006		2007		2008	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
AGRICULTURE INCLUSIVE FISHING (A+B)	125.3	5.8	109.8	5.1	105.1	4.7	100.8	4.4	99.3	4.2	98	4.0
INDUSTRY INCLUSIVE CONSTRUCTION (C-F)	829.0	38.3	846.6	39.0	858.9	38.8	892.6	38.8	928.0	39.4	960.6	39.5
SERVICE (G-Q)	1 208.3	55.8	1 210	55.8	1 248.6	56.3	1 306.4	56.8	1 329.6	56.4	1 375.1	56.5
UNKNOWN	1.9	0.1	4.1	0.2	3.8	0.2	1.9	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.3	0.0
TOTAL EMPLOYED	2 164.6	100	2 170.4	100	2 216.2	100	2 301.4	100	2 357.3	100	2 433.8	100

Source: Statistical Office (ŠÚ, Štatistický úrad), LFS annual data.

NACE REV. 2	2008		2009	
	N	%	N	%
ALL NACE ACTIVITIES TOTAL	2 433.8	100	2 365.8	100
A AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHING	96.3	3.96	84.9	3.59
B MINING AND QUARRYING	14.1	0.58	10.9	0.46
C MANUFACTURING	639.9	26.29	565.2	23.89
D ELECTRICITY, GAS, STEAM AND AIR CONDITIONING SUPPLY	29.9	1.23	30.7	1.30
E WATER SUPPLY; SEWERAGE, WASTE MANAGEMENT AND REMEDIATION ACTIVITIES	35.2	1.45	33.4	1.41
F CONSTRUCTION	257.6	10.58	257.2	10.87
G WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE; REPAIR OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND MOTORCYCLES	292.3	12.01	312.7	13.22
H TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE	158.4	6.51	151.3	6.40
I ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICE ACTIVITIES	107.6	4.42	107.1	4.53
J INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION	45.8	1.88	48.8	2.06
K FINANCIAL AND INSURANCE ACTIVITIES	55.5	2.28	50.0	2.11
L REAL ESTATE ACTIVITIES	13.0	0.53	13.0	0.55

M PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES	76.5	3.14	82.0	3.47
N ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICE ACTIVITIES	60.2	2.47	58.6	2.48
O PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEFENCE; COMPULSORY SOCIAL SECURITY	167.0	6.86	178.4	7.54
P EDUCATION	164.0	6.74	162.0	6.85
Q HUMAN HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK ACTIVITIES	151.2	6.21	149.8	6.33
R ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION	24.6	1.01	28.7	1.21
S OTHER SERVICE ACTIVITIES	38.6	1.59	35.2	1.49
T ACTIVITIES OF HOUSEHOLDS AS EMPLOYERS	5.7	0.23	5.1	0.22
U ACTIVITIES OF EXTRATERRITORIAL ORGANISATIONS AND BODIES	0.7	0.03	0.8	0.03
NO RESPONSE	0.3	0.01	0.3	0.01

Source: ŠÚ, LFS annual data.

TOTAL	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	2 170.4	2 216.2	2 301.4	2 357.3	2 433.8	2 365.8
WITHOUT SCHOOL EDUCATION	-	-	-	-	-	-
ISCED 2	110.3	102.6	107.0	105.9	109.9	92.8
ISCED 3C (CoA)	728.1	700.5	738.7	756.6	769.4	739.7
ISCED 3C (WITHOUT CoA)	48.7	55.8	56.2	61.3	60.5	57.3
ISCED 3A (MSLC) + CoA	111.9	115.5	120.6	123.7	126.0	105.3
ISCED 3A (MSLC) GEN	95.9	97.8	100.8	101.7	103.6	100.8
ISCED 3A (MSLC) VET	746.7	778.5	788.6	822.3	857.4	842.4
ISCED 5B	16.9	21.1	22.7	18.4	19.5	20.1
ISCED 5A - Bc	9.6	12.5	15.2	20.2	24.7	36.4
ISCED 5A - M	299.5	326.8	345.7	341.8	356.1	362.8
ISCED 6	2.9	5.2	5.9	5.6	6.6	8.2

Source: ŠÚ, LFS annual data.

Notes: CoA - Certificate of Apprenticeship (výučný list), MSLC - "Maturita" School Leaving Certificate (vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške) GEN - general education stream, VET vocational stream.

Bc- Bachelor, M- master.

TABLE 4: UNEMPLOYMENT BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION IN 2004 - 2009 (IN THOUSANDS)						
TOTAL	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
		480.7	427.5	353.4	291.9	257.5
WITHOUT SCHOOL EDUCATION	-	0.2	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.1
ISCED 2	115.5	116.0	99.0	85.2	71.6	66.1
ISCED 3C (CoA)	187.8	161.6	133.8	106.4	93.4	119.9
ISCED 3C (WITHOUT CoA)	11.8	8.2	8.9	7.5	4.8	7.2
ISCED 3A (MSLC) + CoA	22.9	21.1	17.6	11.0	11.5	18.5
ISCED 3A (MSLC) GEN	15.9	14.5	10.5	10.2	8.6	14.9
ISCED 3A (MSLC) VET	106.4	86.7	69.8	55.4	52.0	78.6
ISCED 5B	2.1	1.9	0.7	1.5	1.2	1.2
ISCED 5A - Bc	0.5	0.9	0.7	0.8	1.2	3.1
ISCED 5A - M	17.8	16.3	11.5	13.3	12.7	14.4
ISCED 6	-	-	-	0.2	0.2	0.2

Source: ŠÚ, LFS annual data.

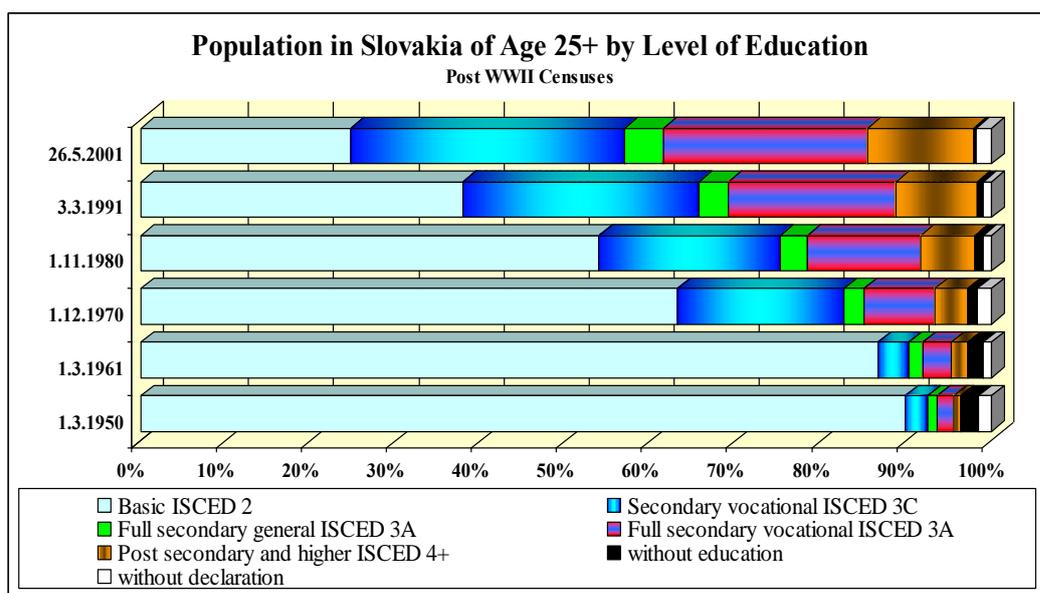
Note: CoA - Certificate of Apprenticeship (výučný list), MSLC - "Maturita" School Leaving Certificate (vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške) GEN - general education stream, VET vocational stream.

Bc- Bachelor, M- master.

TABLE 5: UNEMPLOYMENT IN 2003 - 2009							
YEAR	UNEMPLOYED (LFS, EUROSTAT)	UNEMPLOYED (4Q LFS)		DISPOSABLE REGISTERED UNEMPLOYED (31 ST DECEMBER)		REGISTERED UNEMPLOYED (31 ST DECEMBER)	
	RATE (%)	NUMBER	RATE (%)	NUMBER	RATE (%)	NUMBER	RATE (%)
2003	17.6	458 200	17.4	413 086	15.6	452 224	16.7
2004	18.2	455 100	17.1	342 294	13.1	383 155	14.6
2005	16.3	407 600	15.3	293 801	11.4	333 834	12.9
2006	13.4	319 000	12.0	240 567	9.4	273 437	10.7
2007	11.1	275 300	10.3	207 863	8.0	239 939	9.2
2008	9.5	234 400	8.7	218 920	8.4	248 556	9.5
2009	12.0	374 600	13.9	335 490	12.7	379 553	14.3

Source: ŠÚ (LFS), ÚPSVaR.

DIAGRAM 1



Source: ŠÚ.

TABLE 6: CURRENT EXPENDITURE NORMATIVES PER STUDENT IN 2004, 2007 AND 2008 (IN EUR**)**

SCHOOL CATEGORY***	WAGE NORMATIVE			OPERATIONAL NORMATIVE (MINIMUM)			NORMATIVE TOTAL (MINIMUM)**		
	2004	2007	2008	2004	2007	2008	2004	2007	2008
REGULAR ZŠ	409.0	593.1	661.2	98.2	152.5	169.1	507.2	745.7	830.3
REGULAR G	490.5	720.8	803.5	99.8	156.0	174.3	590.2	876.8	977.8
SOŠ	682.6	926.0	1032.2	103.6	161.5	182.8	786.2	1 087.4	1 215.0
CA	682.6	752.1	838.4	103.6	156.8	175.6	786.2	908.9	1 014.0
SOŠ OF HEALTH	792.5	1 228.6	1 369.6	105.8	169.6	195.2	898.2	1 398.2	1 564.7
SOŠ OF ART	792.5	1 418.9	1 581.6	105.8	174.6	203.0	898.2	1 593.5	1 784.6
CONSERVATORIES	1 707.9	2 702.9	3 013.0	123.8	209.0	255.7	1 831.7	2 912.0	3 268.7
SOU AND U	746.7	1 079.1	1 202.8	120.6	190.5	213.2	867.4	1 269.5	1 416.0
SPV	309.3	419.5	467.6	96.2	147.9	162.0	405.5	567.4	629.6
G, SOŠ FOR DISABLED	1 056.6	1 482.8	1 652.9	142.5	201.3	229.7	1 199.2	1 684.1	1 882.6
SOU FOR DISABLED	1 056.6	1 791.7	1 997.3	142.5	209.6	242.4	1 425.0	2 001.3	2 239.7
OU AND PRACTICAL SCHOOLS	1 056.6	2 045.8	2 280.5	142.5	216.4	252.8	1 425.0	2 262.2	2 533.3

Source: Ministry of Education (MŠ, Ministerstvo školstva).

Notes: * In case of SOU and U without practical training normatives were only 394.5 and 505.8 respectively.

** Sum of two normatives (wage and operational); the range in operational normatives (only

minimum is presented in the table) is in detail regulated according to specific variables (one of variables was represented by eight climate categories with different heating requirements), the maximum normative was higher in each category by EUR 22.3 in 2004 and 21.6. in 2005. In 2006, it represented EUR 24.5, however in case of special schools normatives varied more (also depending on the category of disability) with maximum EUR 5 721.8.
 *** ZŠ - basic schools (základné školy). G - grammar schools (gymnázia). CA - Commercial academies. U - vocational schools (učilištia). SPV - centres of practical training (strediská praktického vyučovania); ZŠ and G data are presented for the sake of comparison, special ZŠ for disabled and G specialising on sports are not included.
 **** 2004 data according to the exchange rate EUR 1 = SKK 41.16 as of 31st December 2003; 2007 data according to the exchange rate EUR 1 = SKK 34.573 as of 29th December 2006, 2008 data according to the exchange rate EUR 1 = SKK 33.603 as of 31st December 2007.

TABLE 7: CURRENT EXPENDITURE NORMATIVES PER STUDENT IN 2009 (IN EUR)			
SCHOOL CATEGORY***	WAGE NORMATIVE	OPERATIONAL NORMATIVE (MINIMUM)	NORMATIVE TOTAL (MINIMUM)**
REGULAR ZŠ	833.50	212.28	1045.78
REGULAR G	957.08	216.94	1174.02
CONSERVATORIES	3 422.74	363.10	3785.84
SOŠ - CATEGORY 1	1 199.67	226.09	1425.76
SOŠ - CATEGORY 2	1 509.88	237.79	1747.67
SOŠ - CATEGORY 3	1 418.44	234.34	1652.78
SOŠ - CATEGORY 4	1 490.17	267.03	1757.20
SOŠ - CATEGORY 5	1 530.01	283.53	1813.54
SOŠ - CATEGORY 6	1 490.17	297.02	1787.19
SOŠ - CATEGORY 7	1 569.38	270.02	1839.40
SOŠ - CATEGORY 8	1 577.82	285.33	1863.15
SOŠ - CATEGORY 9	1 636.89	302.56	1939.45
SOŠ - CATEGORY 10	1 789.43	301.50	2090.93
SOŠ - CATEGORY 11	1 882.63	281.83	2164.46
SOŠ - CATEGORY 12	1 721.26	245.77	1967.03
SOŠ - CATEGORY 13	1 740.38	261.48	2001.86
SOŠ - CATEGORY 14	1 797.76	278.63	2076.39
SOŠ - CATEGORY 15	1 807.32	293.99	2101.31
SOŠ - CATEGORY 16	1 778.63	307.90	2086.53
SOŠ - CATEGORY 17	1 852.11	250.70	2102.81
SOŠ - CATEGORY 18	1 831.98	294.92	2126.90
SOŠ - CATEGORY 19	1 976.26	270.37	2246.63
SOŠ - CATEGORY 20	2 050.63	288.17	2338.8
SOŠ - CATEGORY 21	1 955.01	299.56	2254.57

SOŠ - CATEGORY 22	1 962.23	269.84	2232.07
SOŠ - CATEGORY 23	2 214.69	309.36	2524.05
SOŠ - CATEGORY 24	2 180.26	323.04	2503.3
SOŠ - CATEGORY 25	1 029.95	219.70	1249.65
SPV	528.46	200.77	729.23
G, CONSERVATORIES FOR DISABLED	1 887.86	282.03	2169.89
SOŠ FOR DISABLED	2 390.43	300.99	2691.42
OU AND PRACTICAL SCHOOLS	2 621.96	309.71	2931.67

Source: MŠ.

Note: For school category abbreviations see Table 6 above. According to the Regulation of the government No. 630/2008 Coll., as amended, each category comprises the exactly listed number of study/training branches delivered at SOŠ, e.g. the study branch coded 6317 6 Commercial academy is the only branch listed in Category 25, study branch 2679 4 Mechanic-mechatronic worker is the only branch in Category 9. The highest number of branches is included in Category 1.

TABLE 8: FUNDING OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT* IN 2004-2008 (IN EUR)									
SCHOOL CATEGORY	MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT, ETC.					CONTINUING TRAINING OF PEDAGOGICAL STAFF			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2005	2006	2007	2008
REGULAR ZŠ	14.2	16.4	17.6	22.0	24.6	2.3	2.4	3.0	9.9
REGULAR G	15.8	18.3	20.6	24.8	27.7	2.8	3.2	3.6	12.1
SOŠ	19.6	22.7	24.3	29.3	32.7	3.8	4.1	4.6	15.5
CA	19.6	18.3	21.2	25.5	28.5	2.8	3.3	3.8	12.6
SOŠ OF HEALTH	21.8	27.8	29.8	35.9	40.1	5.1	5.4	6.1	20.5
SOŠ OF ART	21.8	31.0	38.1	40.0	44.7	5.9	7.4	7.1	23.7
CONSERVATORIES	39.8	46.1	56.4	68.0	75.9	9.6	11.9	13.5	45.2
SOU AND U	20.9	24.2**	25.9	32.6	36.5	4.2**	4.4	5.4	18.0
SPV	12.2	14.1	15.1	18.3	20.4	1.7	1.8	2.1	7.0
G, SOŠ FOR DISABLED	27.0	24.1	44.1	41.4	46.3	6.0	7.5	7.4	24.8
SOU FOR DISABLED	27.0	24.1	44.1	48.2	53.8	6.0	7.5	9.0	30.0
OU AND PRACTICAL SCHOOL	27.0	24.1	49.3	53.7	60.0	6.0	8.9	10.2	34.2

Source: MŠ.

Notes: * means out of total normatives per student intended for direct funding of learning environment.

** In SOU and U not offering practical training normatives were reduced - only 15.1 and 2.0, respectively.

No means were specified for staff training in 2004. Since 2008 equivalent of 1.5 % of wages is available to cover continuing professional development of staff compared to 0.5 % in previous years. For school category abbreviation explanation and exchange rates see the Table 6 above.

TABLE 9: FUNDING OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT* IN 2009 (IN EUR)		
SCHOOL CATEGORY	MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT, ETC.	CONTINUING TRAINING OF PEDAGOGICAL STAFF
REGULAR ZŠ	30.94	12.50
REGULAR G	33.74	14.36
CONSERVATORIES	89.76	51.34
SOŠ - CATEGORY 1	39.26	17.99
SOŠ - CATEGORY 2	46.30	22.65
SOŠ - CATEGORY 3	44.22	21.28
SOŠ - CATEGORY 4	45.86	22.35
SOŠ - CATEGORY 5	46.76	22.95
SOŠ - CATEGORY 6	45.86	22.35
SOŠ - CATEGORY 7	47.66	23.54
SOŠ - CATEGORY 8	47.85	23.66
SOŠ - CATEGORY 9	49.19	24.56
SOŠ - CATEGORY 10	52.65	26.85
SOŠ - CATEGORY 11	54.77	28.24
SOŠ - CATEGORY 12	51.11	25.82
SOŠ - CATEGORY 13	51.54	26.11
SOŠ - CATEGORY 14	52.84	26.97
SOŠ - CATEGORY 15	53.06	27.11
SOŠ - CATEGORY 16	52.41	26.68
SOŠ - CATEGORY 17	54.08	27.78
SOŠ - CATEGORY 18	53.62	27.48
SOŠ - CATEGORY 19	56.90	29.64
SOŠ - CATEGORY 20	58.59	30.76
SOŠ - CATEGORY 21	56.42	29.32
SOŠ - CATEGORY 22	56.58	29.43
SOŠ - CATEGORY 23	62.32	33.22
SOŠ - CATEGORY 24	61.53	32.70
SOŠ - CATEGORY 25	35.41	15.45
SPV	24.01	7.92
G, CONSERVATORIES FOR DISABLED	54.89	28.32
SOŠ FOR DISABLED	66.31	35.86
OU AND PRACTICAL SCHOOLS	71.56	39.33

Source: MŠ.

Note: For category explanation see Table 7 above. For school abbreviations see Table 6 above.

TABLE 10: FUNDING ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES IN 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009

ALMP TOOLS	PEOPLE AFFECTED OR PLACES CREATED				BUDGET ASSIGNED (IN EUR)				AVERAGE CONTRIBUTION PER PLACE OR PER PERSON (IN EUR)			
	2004	2007	2008	2009	2004	2007	2008	2009	2004	2007	2008	2009
§ 32	- *	- *	3 207	4 901	- *	- *	32 567.42	49 103.48	- *	- *	10.2	10.0
§ 43(7)	- *	- *	524	736	- *	- *	6 266.65	7 877.68	- *	- *	12.0	10.7
§ 43(10)	- *	- *	129	1 129	- *	- *	1 899.65	29 303.43	- *	- *	14.7	26.0
§ 43(11)	- *	- *	5	48	- *	- *	145.39	790.78	- *	- *	29.1	16.5
§ 46	27 208	8 890	12 143	17 924	5 455 898.5	1 923 460.1	3 725 446.92	5 841 204.64	200.5	216.4	306.8	325.9
§ 47	- *	12 537	13 863	29 921	- *	7 097 743.8	8 501 069.87	30 642 710.81	- *	566.1	613.2	1 024.1
§ 48B	- *	- *	1 693	1 066	- *	- *	401 026.46	251 399.11	- *	- *	236.9	235.8
§ 49	5 618	10 038	12 096	12 870	8 250 424.5	20 647 259.6	33 516 119.40	39 383 573.61	1 468.6	2 056.9	2 770.8	3 060.1
§ 49A	- *	- *	65	250	- *	- *	33 415.09	136 392.95	- *	- *	514.1	545.6
§ 50	1 778	2 550	1 016	128	2 823 537.4	6 241 442.9	2 502 800.74	287 325.18	1 588.0	2 447.6	2 463.4	2 244.7
§ 50A	- *	- *	820	1 502	- *	- *	2 964 567.08	5 847 572.15	- *	- *	3 615.3	3 893.2
§ 50C	- *	- *	n.a.	437	- *	- *	n.a.	2 732 522.58	- *	- *	n.a.	6 252.9
§ 50D	- *	- *	- *	38 197	- *	- *	- *	2 555 404.23	- *	- *	- *	66.9
§ 50E	- *	- *	- *	6 559	- *	- *	- *	20 822 633.00	- *	- *	- *	3 174.7
§ 50F	- *	- *	- *	156	- *	- *	- *	143 286.10	- *	- *	- *	918.5
§ 50G	- *	- *	- *	3	- *	- *	- *	2 508.69	- *	- *	- *	836.2
§ 50H	- *	- *	- *	0	- *	- *	- *	0.0	- *	- *	- *	0.0
§ 51	14 462	8 937	13 435	11 764	5 152 065.6	2 526 441.7	4 815 714.30	10 989 976.03	356.2	282.7	646.3	934.2
§ 52	219 876	257 299	166 630	36 459	25 414 077.6	27 624 551.3	27 768 303.43	5 729 467.23	115.6	107.4	166.6	157.1
§ 52A	- *	- *	16 599	3 981	- *	- *	13 176 775.64	4 771 247.67	- *	- *	793.8	1 198.5
§ 53	51	- *	12 311	16 052	11 820.5	- *	1 460 378.97	4 149 691.89	231.8	- *	118.6	258.5

§ 53A	- *	- *	6	42	- *	- *	2 726.32	30 745.94	- *	- *	454.4	732.0
§ 53B	- *	- *	n.a.	6 521	- *	- *	n.a.	37 681.51	- *	- *	n.a.	5.8
§ 54	- *	- *	8227	2 274	- *	- *	4 261 079.53	1 607 150.08	- *	- *	517.9	706.8
§ 56	138	862	739	1 417	359 044.6	4 926 230.8	5 241 730.00	11 284 043.64	2 601.8	5 714.9	7 093.0	7 963.3
§ 56A	- *	- *	189	297	- *	- *	104 007.27	459 186.28	- *	- *	550.3	1 546.1
§ 57	107	389	337	439	275 596.0	2 496 066.3	2 471 561.44	3 580 254.75	2 575.7	6 416.6	7 334.0	8 155.5
§ 59	18	73	159	275	53 850.9	356 504.3	858 177.52	1 622 146.69	2 991.7	4 883.6	5 397.3	5 898.7
§ 60	- *	2 674	6 592	12 668	- *	3 761 704.0	11 842 725.42	9 186 743.37	- *	1 406.8	1 796.5	725.2
§ 110	4 098	- *	- *	- *	3 269 257.3	- *	- *	- *	797.8	- *	- *	- *
TOTAL	273 354	304 249	270 785	208 016	50 789 976.9	77 601 404.9	123 688 504.51	162 181 943.50	185.8	255.1	456.8	779.7

Source: Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (ÚPSVaR, Ústredie práce sociálnych vecí a rodiny).

Notes: EUR 1 = SKK 38.796 as of 31st December 2004; EUR 1 = SKK 33.603 as of 31st December 2007; 2008 and 2009 data provided by ÚPSVaR, * not implemented.

§ 32 - Mediating employment (in particular contribution to travel costs of job seeker related with entry interview with employer), § 43(7) Contribution to travel costs of job seekers related with attendance in activities focused on guidance and counselling services for job seekers, § 43(10) Payment of accommodation, meals and travel costs for job seekers/interested in change attending activities focused on guidance and counselling services for job seekers that last more than three days, § 43(11) Contribution to services for families with children for job seekers/interested in change attending activities focused on guidance and counselling, § 46 Education and training for the labour market of the job seeker and person interested in employment, § 47 Education and training for the labour market of employee, § 48b Provision of benefits during training for the labour market and preparation for assertion at the labour market of disabled citizen, § 49 Contribution for self-employment, § 49a Contribution for adjusting to working conditions of disadvantaged job seeker, § 50 Contribution for employing a disadvantaged job seeker, § 50a Contribution to provide support in maintaining employees with low wages in jobs, § 50c Contribution to support creation and maintaining jobs in social enterprise, § 50d Contribution to support maintaining employment, § 50e Contribution to support creation of new jobs, § 50f Contribution to employee's wage, § 50g Contribution to support self-employment, § 50h Contribution to support self-employment in production of and trade in agricultural products, § 51 Contribution for the graduate practice, § 52 Contribution for activation activity, § 52a Contribution for activation activities carried out through voluntary services, § 53 Contribution for commuting to work, § 53a Contribution for moving to work, § 53b Contribution for transport to work, § 54 Programmes and projects (focused on verification of newly implemented active labour market policy measures), § 56 Contribution for establishing and maintaining the sheltered workshop or sheltered workplace, § 56a Contribution for maintaining a disabled citizen in job, § 57 Contribution for operating or performing self-employment to disabled citizens, § 59 Contribution for activities of the assistant at work, § 60 Contribution to cover operating costs of the sheltered workshop or sheltered workplace and employees' transport costs; § 110 of the older act on employment (387/1996 Coll.) subsidies for sheltered workshops and workplaces.

TABLE 11: DISTRIBUTION OF ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES MEANS IN 2004 TO 2009 (%)						
ALMP TOOLS	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
§ 32	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.03	0.03
§ 43(7)	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.01	0.00 ⁴
§ 43(10)	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.00 ¹	0.02
§ 43(11)	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.00 ²	0.00 ⁵
§ 46	10.7	10.6	2.1	2.5	3.01	3.60
§ 47	0.0*	0.0*	0.8	9.1	6.87	18.89
§ 48B	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.32	0.16
§ 49	16.2	24.3	26.2	26.6	27.10	24.28
§ 49A	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.03	0.08
§ 50	5.6	9.2	10.3	8.0	2.02	0.18
§ 50A	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	2.40	3.61
§ 50C	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	n.a.	1.68
§ 50D	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	1.58
§ 50E	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	12.84
§ 50F	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.09
§ 50G	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.00 ⁶
§ 50H	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.00
§ 51	10.1	13.5	5.4	3.3	3.89	6.78
§ 52	50.0	33.4	42.5	35.6	22.45	3.53
§ 52A	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	10.65	2.94
§ 53	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.18	2.56
§ 53A	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.00 ³	0.02
§ 53B	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	n.a.	0.02
§ 54	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	3.45	0.99
§ 56	0.7	2.2	4.4	6.3	4.24	6.96
§ 56A	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.08	0.28
§ 57	0.5	1.7	3.0	3.2	2.00	2.21
§ 59	0.1	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.69	1.00
§ 60	0.0	4.4	4.7	4.8	9.57	5.66
§ 110	6.4	0.2	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*	0.0*
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.00	100.00

Source: ÚPSVaR.

Notes: ¹ 0.0015, ² 0.0001, ³ 0.0022, ⁴ 0.0049, ⁵ 0.0005, ⁶ 0.0015, * measure not implemented, n.a. data not available.