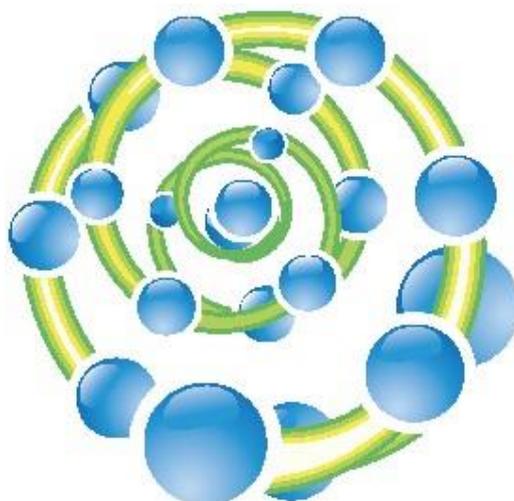


**Supporting teachers and trainers for successful
reforms and quality of VET – mapping their
professional development in the EU**

Slovakia



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Table of contents

1. Introduction	4
1.1 IVET definition and IVET staff positions	4
1.2 Policies and development of the last five years.....	5
2. Teaching and training professionals in school-based settings	9
2.1 Qualification requirements	9
2.2 Competence requirements – three approaches to standards setting	10
2.2.1 Professional standards according to Act No. 317/2009 Coll.	10
2.2.2 Occupational standards according to the National System of Occupations (NSO).....	11
2.2.3 Qualification standards according to the National Qualifications System (NQS)	12
2.2.4 A time for reconciliation.....	12
2.3 Entry into teaching/training force in VET	13
2.4 VET teachers and trainers statistics.....	15
2.5 VET teachers and trainers CPD.....	17
3. Apprentice tutors or practical training instructors in companies (work- based settings)	22
4. The world of education and the world of work.....	24
5. EU-funded projects to support VET staff professional development	25
6. Conclusions.....	27
Acronyms	29
Bibliography	30
Annex.....	32

1. Introduction

1.1 IVET definition and IVET staff positions

Although three segments of VET – initial VET, continuing VET and labour market training are distinguished in discourse, in Slovakia no explicit definitions are used. It is stipulated that competency within labour market training lies within the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (MPSVR) and that education, initial and continuing, is in the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (MŠVVŠ). Nevertheless, a variety of training that can be subsumed under continuing VET is out of control of MŠVVŠ and can be regulated by other subjects and even remains unregulated. The only official explicit VET related definition is offered in § 2(a) of Act No. 61/2015 Coll. on VET and reads as follows:

‘For the purposes of this Act: vocational education and training is an educational process offering knowledge, skills and competences (abilities) required for profession, group of professions or performance of professional activities; it consists of theoretical education and practical education’.

As visible this definition is not a definition of IVET. It is more narrow and reflecting a traditional approach. Although it highlights knowledge, skills and competences (abilities) required for performance, these are related to profession or groups of professions rather than to adoption of qualification and/or fulfilment of qualification standards, or some explicitly identified requirements. It also indicates a difference in objectives of VET. Performance related to profession and performing specialised activities is explicitly distinguished. This refers to traditional division of VET school programmes into study programmes (ISCED 354) and training programmes (ISCED 353). Finally, using terms theoretical education and practical education¹ clearly indicates strong reference to traditional school-based VET. A new Act No. 61/2015 Coll. on VET has been however developed to allow for strengthening work-based learning by introduction of ‘dual’ VET. According to § 2(i), it is defined as a sub-system of VET based on

- contractual relationship²;

¹ The Slovak legislation distinguishes between the following two forms of practical education: vocational training (odborný výcvik) and vocational practice (odborná prax). While the former refers to long-term practical training (a minimum of 1,200 hours), which is typical for programmes offering a certificate of apprenticeship, the latter refers to short-term practical training in companies within study branches that is similar to stagiaire placements. We will use the term vocational training whenever relation to this national terminology is relevant and the term practical training when national context is not important. It is important to distinguish that practical training (vocational training in the national terminology) can be offered in school workshops, in companies affiliated to schools, and in premises of contracted companies.

² A learning contract between a pupil (parent) and an employer and a contract between a school and an employer on provision of dual education.

- provision of practical education directly by employers in its own practical training facility; and
- financing practical education by employer.

This legislation wording must be, however, commented. Although a term employer is used young people in the 'dual' system are not employees of respective employers. They are still pupils³ of a respective VET school that in cooperation with a company (with a contract with this school and an individual pupil/student) offers them respective study or training programme. This is why instead of speaking about 'dual' VET introduction of elements of dual VET is often mentioned in order to distinguish this model from a genuine German-type dual VET.

Thus, there are officially three sub-streams of IVET now, differentiated according to the provision of practical training⁴:

- practical training offered in school workshops and/or school affiliated companies;
- practical training offered in companies based on an institutional contract between a school and a company; and
- practical training offered by companies in 'dual' VET based on an individual contract between an individual and a company and backed by a specific contract between a company and a school.

Practical training in a school-based form is provided by trainers who are similarly to general subject teachers and vocational subject teachers considered pedagogical staff. Their qualification is strictly regulated by Act No. 317/2009 Coll. on Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff and a Decree of Ministry of Education (MŠ) No. 437/2009 Coll. on qualification prerequisites and specific qualification requirements setting requirements for respective pedagogical staff and professional staff categories (see more in part 2). Practical training in companies is offered by instructors under coordination and supervision of trainers of respective VET school. Instructors are practitioners employed by companies. Qualification requirements prescribed for instructors are 'lower' compared to trainers (see more in part 3).

1.2 Policies and development of the last five years

There are three important developments affecting IVET:

- the 2008 curricular reform;
- the 2009 in-service training reform introducing a new continuing professional development (CPD) model; and

³ Legislation strictly speaks about pupils and does not recognise a term student that is commonly used describing secondary education pupils. We will further use the term student also in cases where relevant documents speak about pupils.

⁴ Sticking to the Slovak detailed terminology it would be vocational training (odborný výcvik) to distinguish between short-term and long-term training as explained in footnote 1.

- the 2009 VET governance reform complemented by introducing ‘dual’ VET elements in 2015.

The curricular reform

The curricular reform introduced by the Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. has decentralised curriculum development. Framework state educational programmes containing performance and content based standards for study fields and respective ISCED levels were issued by state as a basis for autonomous development of school educational programmes by individual schools. State educational programmes for IVET issued in 2008 were gradually revised and detailed to target also individual study and training branches. The curricular reform originally offered more room to VET schools for decision about teaching plans in terms of numbers of hours offered for respective subjects, their distribution across individual years of programme and for introducing new subjects. Since 2015, more strict regulation of teaching plans has been in progress based on issuing ‘Frame Teaching Plans’ putting more stress on subjects compared to an earlier, rather competence-based approach.

The curricular reform induced a need for retraining pedagogical staff in curriculum development, which was partly covered by an ESF project (see part 5). Nevertheless, a lack of experience with curriculum development and learning outcomes based programming IVET, and to some extent also introducing dual IVET, led to the decision of MŠVVŠ to regulate provision of IVET by tighter frame teaching plans.

The in-service training reform

A new CPD model has been introduced by Act No. 317/2009 Coll. on Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff. This act set seven categories of pedagogical staff: teacher; trainer; tutor; pedagogical assistant; foreign lector; trainer of sport school or sport class; and accompanist (conservatory), and the following categories of professional staff: psychologist, school psychologist; school speech therapist; special pedagogue, school special pedagogue, field special pedagogue; therapeutic pedagogue; and social pedagogue. Furthermore, four career levels were distinguished: beginner, independent worker, worker with the first attestation, and worker with the second attestation. Two specialisations – pedagogue-specialist and leader/manager are recognised in addition to mainstream continuing professional development. Instructors offering practical training provided for by companies are not addressed by this law.

Furthermore, newly developed professional standards should have guided continuing professional development and in-service training. New in-service training programmes eligible for public funding should have been strictly aligned to the

development of competences addressed by respective professional standards. This regulation of both pre-service and in-service training, together with creation of career paths and credit based provision of in-service training programmes, resulted from the 'Concept Paper for the Professional Development of Teachers in a Career System', adopted by the government on 18 April 2007. Nevertheless, the aforementioned professional standards are still pending, and in parallel to their development alternative qualification requirements descriptions are still in process of development (see part 2.2).

A credit based in-service training was introduced offering exchange of accumulated credits for a financial bonus or for progress in a career path (see more details in part 2.5). Nevertheless, this legislation was introduced into practice without an inevitable preparatory phase and was driven by an economic theory (creation of a supply driven market of in-service training services) rather than by educational theories stressing individualised CPDs. According to the 2014 Chamber of Teachers' survey, dissatisfaction with the legislation increased and satisfaction decreased in 2014 compared to the period immediately after adoption of this law (2009): 79.5% versus 40.4% negative assessments and 28% versus 33.1% positive assessments were reported⁵.

Although the 2013 OECD data⁶ do not refer to IVET teachers and trainers, it is generally assumed that similar results can be expected concerning upper secondary level and IVET teachers and trainers.

Table 1. Teachers' job satisfaction* (overall)

	Slovakia	Average (%)
The advantages of being a teacher clearly outweigh the disadvantages	58.0	77.4
If I could decide again, I would still choose to work as a teacher	71.5	77.6
I regret that I decided to become a teacher	13.8	9.5
I think that teacher profession is valued in society	4.0**	30.9
I wonder whether it would have been better to choose another profession	45.4	31.6

Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database, Table 7.2 adjusted by authors.

NB: * Percentage of lower secondary education teachers who 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with the following statements; ** The lowest figure among the TALIS countries.

⁵ Survey results are available in Slovak at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ljaJdSFBal1XCNIWpP_yaXBILuS_wkJFK_IDLs17Krc/viewanalytics.

⁶ See the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) at http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/talis-2013-results_9789264196261-en.

The TALIS data above clearly indicate frustration of pedagogical staff. In particular, a perceived status of teachers with 4% is alarming. This might be seen as a signal of the lowest status of teachers in Slovakia among all TALIS countries.

The following TALIS data indicate that the school environment *per se* is not harming teachers and that the system is in crisis rather than individual schools. Teachers in Slovakia are comparably more satisfied with the school they work in and they are less interested in moving to another school.

Table 2. Teachers' job satisfaction* (within school)

	Slovakia	Average
I would like to change to another school if that were possible	12.7	21.2
I enjoy working at this school	90.5	89.7

Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database, Table 7.2 adjusted by authors.

NB: * Percentage of lower secondary education teachers who 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with the following statements.

Not surprisingly, frustration of teachers resulted in the strike of pedagogical staff in 2012. The government responded with a 5% tariff wage increase annually until 2015 calendar year and with a 4% increase planned for 2016. This contributed to an increase of wages by about one quarter, but dissatisfaction with curriculum (state educational programmes) and in particular with in-service training continues.

The VET governance reform

Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on VET significantly strengthened involvement of professional/employers' representatives and also individual companies into secondary IVET. The National VET Council, regional councils and sectoral councils were gradually created and the influence of the world of work in programming IVET and school leaving examination strengthened. Thirteen professional/employers' organisations covering all VET fields were identified to represent interests of employers in provision of IVET in respective fields, as recently confirmed by a Decree of MŠVVŠ No. 64/2015 Coll.⁷ In 2015, a new Act No. 61/2015 Coll. on VET revised the original Act on VET and introduced elements of dual VET and has also institutionalised cooperation with professional/employers' organisations by creation of

⁷ Five of these 13 organisations cover health studies under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health. Seven organisations cover most important fields of study under the responsibility of MŠVVŠ. They participate in the ESF project 'Development of Secondary VET' and participate in implementation of 'dual' VET into practice.

the 'Employers' Council for the Dual Education System'. This offered businesses the opportunity to influence provision of practical training of secondary IVET students. 422 secondary students signed contracts with companies on provision of practical training from September 2015 and respective companies signed contracts on provision of 'dual' VET with respective VET schools. As a consequence 31 VET schools face a challenge of transforming their original model of IVET provision: they provide theoretical education only and practical training is provided by a workplace of practical training run by companies certified by respective professional/employers' body and offered by instructors employed by a company. VET school trainers only supervise provision of practical training delivered by instructors (see more in part 3).

2. Teaching and training professionals in school-based settings

2.1 Qualification requirements

The most important legislation is Act No. 317/2009 Coll. on Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff influencing in-service, and paradoxically, also pre-service training of teachers and trainers.

Pre-service training of teachers is organised by universities and regulated by Higher Education Act No. 131/2002 Coll. All programmes must be accredited by the Accreditation Commission affiliated to the government. HEIs are fully autonomous in the development of programmes. They are only limited by the so-called descriptions of study programmes developed autonomously by academic experts. Respective expert groups affiliated to the Slovak Rectors' Conference were assigned a task to elaborate the aforementioned descriptions of study programmes corresponding to the list of study fields. These descriptions were accepted by the MŠ as well as by the Accreditation Commission as an agreement of leading experts on obligatory requirements to be achieved by all study programmes eligible for offering higher education. Consequently, sticking to respective descriptions of the fields of study is required by the Accreditation Commission within the accreditation procedure. Requirements identified and set for programmes awarding teacher qualification contains graduate's profile, theoretical knowledge, practical skills and additional skills and abilities. Some items are at least partly outcomes oriented, but there are also some content-related formulations (known as 'core knowledge').

Trainer training bachelor studies are becoming gradually a mainstream way to VET school trainer profession. It is not obligatory, but many practitioners consider the first level of higher education more attractive than other programmes offering qualification, but not a Bachelor degree.

Interestingly, the aforementioned Act No. 317/2009 Coll. intervenes into HEIs autonomy stipulating that professional standards are to be developed and made obligatory also for teacher training offered by higher education. This has not materialised yet, as the aforementioned professional standards of teachers and trainers have not been officially adopted and published.

Decree of MŠ No. 437/2009 Coll. on qualification prerequisites and specific qualification requirements sets requirements for respective pedagogical staff and professional staff categories. Qualification prerequisites mean completion of relevant educational programmes. Part IX of Addendum 1 of this decree includes 57 items relevant for teachers of a variety of VET subjects in secondary VET schools, and Part XI contains 10 items relevant for trainers at secondary VET schools. All the other categories are handled in a similar way. Specific qualification requirements mean some additional certificates and/or years of practice in profession before entering teaching position at school. Interestingly, no specific requirements are set for the position of trainer in mainstream VET schools and only rarely for teachers in mainstream VET schools. They are required for schools for students with specific needs and for some health school programme subjects. In addition to this traditional approach several activities emerged aimed at description of standards or required learning outcomes.

2.2 Competence requirements – three approaches to standards setting

2.2.1 Professional standards according to Act No. 317/2009 Coll.

This act indicates continuing professional development in four levels (beginner, independent worker, worker with the first and with the second attestation) and in different career positions – pedagogue-specialist and leader/manager are recognised in addition to mainstream continuing professional development. Furthermore, the act envisaged establishment of professional standards corresponding to respective categories and career positions, and provision of credit based in-service training. First sets of professional standards were submitted to the public debate in 2008-09⁸. Professional standards for all career levels were represented by a competence profile covering three dimensions (pupil/student, education process, self-development) and four dimensions (strategic management, pedagogical management, personal management, self-development) in the case of leader/manager related standards. Competence profiles addressed all respective

⁸ See e.g. Valent (2009) for professional standards for trainers at <http://www.rozhlady.pedagog.sk/cisla/p1-2009.pdf>, and Porubská, Šnídlová, Valica (2008) for teachers at <http://www.rozhlady.pedagog.sk/cisla/p4-2008.pdf>.

dimensions with three sets of descriptions: (overarching) competences; specific competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes) and proofs of performance. Since 2009, new professional standards covering respective categories (and sub-categories) of pedagogical and professional staff and all career positions have been developed, partly capitalising on previous experience, and piloted in selected schools within the national ESF project 'Professional and Career Growth of Teaching Staff'. In contrast to the earlier professional standards all career levels are presented within the same professional standard allowing for the comprehensive presentation of changes between two consecutive career levels. Competences to be achieved in a lower level are not repeated anymore and increase in comparison to an earlier level is stressed. In addition to changes in descriptions caused by this 'gradation principle', a vocabulary of respective descriptions (indicators) has also been simplified in response to the criticism of the pedagogical community considering the earlier standards too academic and complicated. Furthermore, career levels are not applied in professional standards of career positions, and slightly changed four dimensions are used in professional standards of leaders/managers. In total 37 sets of new professional standards have been developed⁹.

In summer 2014, new professional standards were subjected to internal evaluation by a working group established by the MŠVVŠ. Currently, professional standards are considered completed, however, they have still not been published.

2.2.2 Occupational standards according to the National System of Occupations (NSO)

Based on a labour sector initiative and supported by the ESF, Trexima Ltd., cooperating closely for years with the MPSVR, started to develop the National System of Occupations (www.sustavapovolani.sk). Since 2009, national occupational standards have been produced based on multilateral cooperation. 731 occupational standards have been already developed and 270 are to be developed by the end 2015. A structure of the standard for a secondary VET school teacher illustrates the NSO approach to describing requirements for fulfilment of respective occupation: A competence model is in the core, complemented by pieces of information like ISCED, ISCO 08 and NACE codes and an EQF level. The competence model consists of a list of general competences (23 items), knowledge related to profession (10 items), skills related to profession (16 items). All items in the list of general competences are rated using a scale 'elementary', 'advanced' and 'high', and all items in the lists of knowledge and skills related to profession have assigned an EQF level.

⁹ See Šnidlová (2014) at http://www.mpc-edu.sk/library/files/pr1_2014.pdf.

Occupational standards from the NSO feed an ISTP portal (Internet Guide through the Labour Market, www.istp.sk) addressing a wide audience. This portal targets employers and job seekers, as it offers an instrument for announcement of vacancies and for creation of structured offers of job seekers (including their professional CVs). It also brings descriptions of jobs/professions for those who want to learn more about them. It informs about relevant legislation, alternative ways of education, it suggests personal skills requirements suitable for performance, health requirements, and it presents wages statistics (minimum, maximum, median). It also offers examples of tasks to be fulfilled in relevant jobs/professions derived from occupational standards. In the case of teacher of vocational subjects at secondary VET schools 16 personal skills requirements are indicated (9 of which labelled as 'over the average' and 7 labelled as a 'regular level'). 19 examples of tasks to be performed are listed.

2.2.3 Qualification standards according to the National Qualifications System (NQS)

In recognition of the need to make the qualifications system more flexible a new National Qualifications System (www.kvalifikacie.sk) and National Qualifications Framework are under the process of development. National qualification standards should capitalise on occupational standards and offer qualification standards for professions/occupations. Within the national ESF project 1,000 standards are planned to be developed by the end of 2015, of which 738 have been already finalised. Qualification standards are composed of three lists describing knowledge, skills and competences. All qualifications are presented by a qualification card containing diverse pieces of information (e.g., codes and methodological remarks) and a qualification standard and an assessment standard. In the case of teacher of vocational subjects at secondary VET schools 10 items were identified as required knowledge, 7 as required skills and 7 as required competences. The assessment standard contains comments concerning assessment criteria, assessment methods and assessment instruments.

2.2.4 A time for reconciliation

Despite all the aforementioned efforts, neither a shift to learning outcomes nor the competence based description of qualification requirements have been satisfactorily achieved so far. Slovakia developed or is in the process of developing a 'triad of standards'¹⁰ – educational standards, qualification standards and occupational standards, corresponding, respectively, to the education system, the NQS and the

¹⁰ See detailed explanation a 'triad of standards' in an analysis of NQS in selected EU countries in Vantuch et al. (2013), available at <http://www.tvorbansk.sk/files/AnalyzaNSK.pdf>.

NSO. Despite the difference in methodology all three concepts suffer from prevalence of academism. No functional analysis of requirements of jobs has been conducted during the development of the NSO and the NQS. Despite involvement of social partner representatives in NSO and NQS relevant ESF projects, a lack of experience and of detailed know-how caused difficulties in identification and formulation of requirements. All types of standards suffer from insufficient information from a real working life.

Existence of a triad of standards also induces debates about the relevance and functions of respective standards. With regard to teachers and trainers it resulted in the requirement of MŠVVŠ towards stakeholders to compare professional standards developed by the Methodological-Pedagogical Centre (MPC) with occupational standards of the NSO and with qualification standards of the NQS. This is why the professional standards developed by MPC have not yet been officially adopted and published.

This comparison of different approaches towards standards can boost a discourse about relevancy of standards and respective items and it can result in final setting of standards that can be *inter alia* used for recognition of non-formal and informal learning and or recognition of prior experiential learning. This is extremely important for attracting practitioners without formal training in pedagogy to enter VET schools.

2.3 Entry into teaching/training force in VET

There are no specific initial training programmes that prepare teachers of general subjects to teach in VET schools. It is possible that individual teachers in teacher training colleges reflect the specificity of provision of general subjects within VET, but it is not visible in teacher training programmes. There are no initial programmes aimed at converting teachers of general subjects into teachers of vocational subjects. Graduation from a field-relevant higher education non-teaching programme or from a targeted VET teaching programme is obligatory. Vocational theoretical subjects are only very rarely taught by teachers originally trained in VET teacher training programmes. These programmes aimed at preparing teachers for VET schools were originally predominantly offered for teachers specialising in economy subjects or mechanical engineering subjects. These programmes gradually diminished and vocational theoretical subjects are as a rule taught by graduates from non-teaching programmes at universities. These graduates are obliged to complete complementary pedagogical study (CPS for teachers) providing professionals with teaching competences. These CPS programmes must be accredited by the Accreditation Council of the Ministry of Education for Continuing Training of

Pedagogical and Professional Staff, with the exception of CPS affiliated to relevant HEI programmes accredited by the Accreditation Commission affiliated to the government. They can be offered by HEIs simultaneously or consecutively. The content of CPS with a minimum of 200 hours includes at least 80% of pedagogical-psychological and social science fundamentals and at least 40 hours of pedagogical practice under the supervision of pedagogical staff from a practice school. Without a programme quality guarantor (a relevant VET teacher with the second attestation or a university teacher with a PhD degree related to respective VET subjects and a minimum of 5 years practice) CPS programmes cannot be accredited.

VET trainers were traditionally specialists with a certificate of apprenticeship, completed complementary pedagogical studies and (surprisingly) also a completed upper secondary programme with a 'maturita' school leaving certificate. Requiring a 'maturita' certificate in addition to a certificate of apprenticeship is in some cases of VET (e.g. crafts related) questionable and could create an obstacle to bringing practitioners from the world of business to enter VET schools.

Training for school-based VET trainers to adopt required skills in pedagogy can be offered by HEIs within the aforementioned complementary pedagogical studies (CPS for trainers) with also a minimum of 200 hours, of which at least 80% of pedagogical-psychological and social science fundamentals, and accredited in a similar way. Alternatively, the already employed trainers without qualification can enter qualification studies offered by the in-service training institution MPC and regulated by the Decree of the MŠ No. 445/2009 Coll. on Continuing Education, Credits and Attestation of Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff. A currently offered qualification study for trainers accredited by the Accreditation Council of the Ministry of Education for Continuing Training of Pedagogical and Professional Staff offers 240 hours of training (75 hours of theory of education; 65 hours of psychological theories; and 100 hours of specific VET pedagogy, out of which 30 hours of direct practice) spread over a maximum of 36 months.

The third alternative refers to trainer training programmes offering Bachelor degrees. These programmes were newly developed by HEIs and accredited by the Accreditation Commission affiliated to the government, in particular to attract paying part-time students. These bachelor studies are increasingly attractive as they offer the first level of higher education as a result of a similar working load compared to the previous two alternatives.

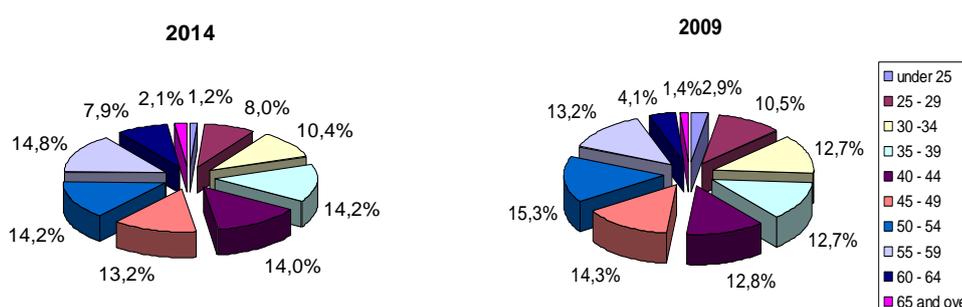
VET schools face a lack of young experienced trainers and partly also VET teachers. It is caused by low competitiveness of wages, but also by high formal qualification requirements. This is why new legislation partly weakened formal qualification requirements for involvement in VET. Non-qualified practitioners can teach in VET schools provided their weekly teaching load does not exceed 10 lesson hours. It is

hoped that this can attract practitioners to become part-time teachers. Provision of practical training within 'dual VET' is offered by 'trainers' employed by companies. They are called instructors in contrast to VET school affiliated staff (see part 3 for more details).

2.4 VET teachers and trainers statistics

There were 93,506 pedagogical employees in regional schooling as of 31 January 2014, out of which 17,448 in VET schools, 904 in conservatories and 7,242 in grammar schools. There were 3,755 trainers, of which 3,128 employed by VET schools¹¹. Teachers and trainers at VET schools were predominantly females. There were only 3,965 males (28.8%) among 13,779 teachers at VET schools, however 1,769 males (56.6%) among 3,128 trainers. The average age of teachers in VET schools was 47.6 years (47.0 females and 48.8 males) and the average age of trainers was 49 years (46.8 females and 50.6 males). Teachers at VET schools were the oldest in average compared to other schools, and teachers and trainers in the Bratislava region were older compared to other regions. The average age of teachers in VET schools in the Bratislava region was 49.6 years and of trainers 51.4 years. The lowest average age of teachers in VET schools was in the Nitra region with 46.9 years and of trainers in the Trnava region with 47.5 years. The distribution of age of teachers by age groups is visible from the Graph 1.

Graph 1: VET school teachers by age groups in 2014 and 2009



Source: ÚIPŠ-ŠVS Banská Bystrica, data as of 31 January 2014 and 30 November 2009.

Ageing of teachers is in more detail demonstrated in Table 1 in the Annex. It can be seen that the ageing structure is only shifted accordingly. This indicates that an inflow of young teachers is unfavourably low and an outflow of elderly insufficiently low, influenced also by increase in the retirement age significantly affecting predominantly

¹¹ 627 trainers were employed by diverse special schools created for pupils with special educational needs.

women. Furthermore, a share of teachers in the retirement age in VET schools (8.5%; 1,165 out of total 13,779) is higher compared to grammar school teachers as well as elementary and lower secondary teachers. This seems to indicate both a lack of younger specialists and low attractiveness of teaching profession compared to opportunities in business.

The following table presents the qualification level of teachers and trainers. It is slightly lower in VET schools compared to grammar schools, but higher compared to conservatories and schools for SEN students. In conservatories qualification is lower predominantly due to prioritisation of artistic quality over formal qualification, and in special schools it is predominantly caused by lacking obligatory qualification in special pedagogy.

Table 3. Qualification of teachers and trainers

Type of school	Teachers					Trainers				
	With qualification		Without qualification		?	With qualification		Without qualification		?
	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%	
Secondary VET schools	13 067	94.8	417	3.0	295	2 902	92.8	203	6.5	23
Conservatories	705	85.0	124	15.0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Special schools*	4 524	88.7	482	9.5	93	527	84.1	100	15.9	0
Grammar schools	6 757	97.1	70	1.0	132	0	0.0	0	0.0	0

Source: CVTI SR-ŠVS Banská Bystrica, data as of 31 January 2014.

NB: * Data refer to all special schools including VET schools for VET students. ? – not known.

Teachers are considered qualified for delivery of respective teaching provided at least 50% of their teaching load is compatible with their specialisation. Therefore, lessons can be taught by qualified teachers, however, without specialisation for this particular subject. Thus, 20,383 out of total 345,543 lesson hours taught in VET schools were taught by unqualified and/or inappropriately qualified teachers. A share of these lessons is low (5.9%) and it corresponds with a share of unqualified teachers (6.5%). This indicates that there is no substantial problem with the coverage of respective VET subjects by qualified professionals. Nevertheless, there are some subjects where a lack of professionals is warning, e.g. in food preparation technology, serving techniques, dining rules, where a share of unqualified teachers is very high – 19.8%, 24.5% and 15.3%, respectively. Difficulties lower in a share, but

higher in numbers are also visible in practice related subjects – 166 unqualified staff should be replaced and/or required to adopt qualification.

2.5 VET teachers and trainers CPD

CPD of teachers and trainers is regulated by the aforementioned Act No. 317/2009 Coll. on Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff and detailed by the Decree of the MŠ No. 445/2009 Coll. on Continuing Education, Credits and Attestation of Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff. This legislation introduced a CPD reform based on provision of credit based continuing education programmes. The most important provider of CPD programmes is MPC (www.mpc-edu.sk), an in-service training institution directly managed by MŠVVŠ with headquarters in Bratislava and three regional centres and six additional branches.¹² A list and basic information about offered programmes (in total 597 in October 2015) is available at <http://www.mpc-edu.sk/vzdelavacia-cinnost/akreditovane-vzdelavacie-programy-v-plnom-zneni-k-23-7-2015>. All programmes are co-financed from the national ESF project ‘Professional and Career Growth of Teaching Staff’ and accredited by the Accreditation Council of the Ministry of Education for Continuing Training of Pedagogical and Professional Staff.

Complementary to MPC, the State Institute of Vocational Education (ŠIOV) is also entitled to offer continuing education to VET teachers and trainers, but due to the lack of means only specialised trainings eligible for financing from respective ESF projects have been offered (see part 5). In contrast to MPC and its ‘Professional and Career Growth of Teaching Staff’ project, there is no similar ESF project aimed at development and provision of VET specific CPD programmes run by ŠIOV. Continuing education can also be offered by other institutions¹³, but not all types of programmes of non-state providers are eligible for accreditation. The following types of continuing education are recognised from 15 November 2009:

- adaptation education – it is obligatory for beginners, lasting from 3 months to a year and not offering credits for its completion;
- actualisation education – it is aimed at upholding the professional competence needed for standard performance or attestation, lasting 20 – 60 hours spread

¹² Five additional branches have seats in capital cities of regions and one branch serving schools and school establishments with the Hungarian language of instruction has a seat in Komárno.

¹³ Health schools staff can be served by specialised in-service courses offered under the supervision of the Ministry of Health.

over a maximum of 10 months and offering credits for its completion (except for the preparatory training for attestation);

- innovation education – it is aimed at improving professional competence of a teacher, lasting 60 – 110 hours spread over a maximum of 12 months and offering credits for its completion;
- specialisation education – it is aimed at acquiring professional competences to pursue specialised activities, lasting 100 – 160 hours spread over a maximum of 18 months, and offering credits for its completion (except for training focused on class teachers and mentors of beginning teachers);
- school leadership education – it is obligatory for teachers in administrative positions, lasting 160 – 200 hours spread over 24 months and not offering credits for its completion, as completion of this study is obligatory for respective position;
- qualification education – it provides teachers with additional qualification, lasting for at least 200 hours spread over a maximum of 36 months and offering credits for its completion (except for training focused on acquiring qualification for teaching other subjects or teaching SEN students).

It is precisely prescribed what kind of programmes can be offered by respective providers, e.g. regional schools themselves (adaptation, actualisation, specialisation) or non-state legal entities (actualisation, innovation, specialisation). Important providers are also HEIs.

More precisely stipulated adaptation education is one of the new legislation novelties: Mentoring for teachers and trainers is stipulated by law for a period of 3 months to one year, and a maximum of two years provided a beginner teacher or trainer fails to achieve required competences according to the assessment of a school director. No tutoring is envisaged by law for teachers and trainers in the second to the fourth career levels. Schools must have elaborated their own adaptation education programme that should lead to adoption of competences set by the second career level professional standards. These standards are still not made public (and obligatory), and therefore, a school director in cooperation with a three-headed examination commission decides upon the progress from the first to the second level career path fully autonomously. The director's decision is based on an assessment report of a tutor, observation of performance of a beginner in a classroom or workshop in the so-called 'open lesson', and on a final peer discussion. A failure of a beginner to complete adaptation education within two years leads to termination of his/her contract.

A list of all accredited programmes (in total 1,524 in October 2015) is available at <http://www.minedu.sk/data/att/8731.pdf>.

CPD lies in the responsibility of a school director. It is based on an annual continuing education plan that must be discussed with a school establisher before its issuing. Importance of this plan is in solving practical issues rather than in identification of detailed training needs of individual teachers and trainers. An application for participation in a programme can be sent by an applicant directly to the regional branch of MPC, signed by a school director or without a signature of director and supplemented with qualification certificates relevant for the respective CPD programme.

CPD programmes are credit rated, with one credit point corresponding to 5 hours of a working load. In the case of 60 and more accumulated credits, each 30 credits can be translated into financial bonuses equal to 6% of a tariff wage¹⁴ or can be used for progressing to the third and fourth levels in a career path. For entering first or second attestation procedures 60 credits or 30 credits and completion of specialised preparatory programmes is required. Teachers and trainers are obliged to choose one of prescribed topics (e.g. key competences in VET) for writing their attestation work and passing related examination. Credits are valid for 7 years only, and therefore, also credit related remuneration bonuses expire in contrast to bonuses related to progress in a career path.

Originally, legislation allowed for recognition of competences acquired through experience and/or self-learning, but this is not possible anymore. This contradicts the wishes of teachers and trainers who call for expansion of this kind of option according to the Chamber of Teachers' survey. 61.1% would agree with expansion of this option and only 7.7% disagreed. Possibilities for validation and recognition of competences acquired in job and in non-formal settings are very limited. Current in-service training and the CPD model prefer participation in accredited programmes and are therefore subjected to criticism as a model that prefers credit hunting over the personal development of teachers and trainers translating in an improved quality of teaching/learning in classrooms and workshops. Thus, the in-service training model is predominantly supply driven, heavily depending on an offer of accredited continuing education programmes.

Prior to renewal of in-service training, four needs analyses were planned within the national ESF project 'Professional and Career Growth of Teaching Staff' and conducted by the MPC¹⁵. The first survey of vocational subject teachers' needs was conducted in 2010 focusing on identification of teachers' competences categorised according to three domains of professional standards (student, educational process,

¹⁴ The following is an official example from the MŠVVŠ's website: If a bare tariff wage for a teacher is EUR 769, 6% from EUR 769 are equal EUR 46.14. Rounded up to EUR 46.50; taken two times (for 2 times 30 credits) it results in EUR 93 bonus monthly.

¹⁵ Outputs of these analyses are available at <http://pkrmpc.dev2010.lomtec.com/stranka/odborna-aktivita-2-1-10>.

self-development). The following competences were identified by teachers (N=348) as the most urgent and in need of addressing by in-service training: identification and fixing of socio-pathological behaviour of students (18.71%); creation of favourable learning climate in classroom (19.07%), followed by creation of individual learning plans for students with special needs (18.32%); and ICT (40.26%) in the three aforementioned domains, respectively¹⁶. This survey suggests that pedagogical/didactic competences are preferred over technical and transversal. Nevertheless, specific or transversal competences might be seen comparably urgent, however not stressed with regard to the MPC's survey due to the fact that MPC is traditionally focusing predominantly on pedagogical/didactic competences.

A more detailed analysis targeting teachers of vocational subjects and trainers and focused on the three aforementioned dimensions of envisaged professional standards (pupil/student, education process, self-development) was conducted by MPC in 2011¹⁷. Results of the survey based on a questionnaire completed by 318 teachers of vocational subjects and VET trainers can be summarised as follows:

'Most teachers of vocational subjects expressed a need for education in the areas of:

- the pupil/student dimension – developing pupil's/student's self-reflection and self-evaluation, using strategies and methods of pupil's/student's personal development, and developing of pupil's/student's evaluative thinking;
- the educational process area – creating conditions for a favourable climate in the classroom, using interdisciplinary links between subjects (programmes, ...), delivery of education;
- the self-development area – using ICT in one's work and professional development, using a foreign language in one's work and professional development.

Most trainers expressed the need for education in the areas of:

- the pupil/student dimension – identifying and solving socio-pathological phenomena among pupils/students, identifying learning styles of pupils/students and their individual educational needs and developing pupil's/student's self-reflection and self-evaluation;
- the educational process area – creating conditions for a favourable climate in the classroom, developing individual educational plan for pupils/students with special educational needs, using interdisciplinary links between subjects (programmes, ...);

¹⁶ See Sihelsky (2010) for vocational subjects teachers at <http://pkrmipc.dev2010.lomtec.com/subor/5600>.

¹⁷ See Almášiová (2012) for vocational subject teachers and trainers at <http://pkrmipc.dev2010.lomtec.com/subor/5582>.

- the self-development area – using ICT in one’s work and professional development, setting one’s own plan of personal professional growth’.¹⁸

Supply of new in-service programmes was assessed in the 2014 survey commissioned by the Chamber of Teachers. 37.1% out of 1,400 respondents considered the offer rich enough, 56.5% considered the offer insufficient, and 6.4% stated that they were not able to choose from the offer. In free comments a lack of programmes for vocational subject teachers and for trainers was indicated. This corresponds with lacking capacities to offer in-service training directly focusing on VET specific knowledge, skills and competences improvement. The public provider MPC has a long-term in-service training experience focusing on pedagogy and psychology and general education subject matters, and less concerning VET, as corresponds to the profiles of staff employed in MPC.

Furthermore, it is consistent with earlier findings of the MPC’s survey. The 2010 survey commissioned by the MPC with 1,339 respondents indicated the most attractive in-service training according to teachers’ preferences: 44.1% of teachers would have preferred training focused on competences closely related to the subject matter, in particular novelties needed for the state-of-the-art delivery of education/learning. An MPC representative indicated difficulties to prepare and accredit this kind of programmes¹⁹. Apparently, flexible short refreshers would be welcome by teachers and trainers.

A failure of state and public organisations to provide VET schools with state-of-the-art equipment and even provide them with rich enough supply information about relevant innovations in the world of work and the world of education relevant for provision of quality IVET resulted in creation of a new VET governance architecture introduced by the 2009 Act on VET and the new 2015 Act on VET. As already mentioned professional/employers’ organisations were assigned many responsibilities stipulated in detailed by law. Their involvement in in-service training of teacher and trainers is not yet backed by legislation. They are only made responsible for training of instructors of practical training offered by companies. It is inevitable to address CPD of vocational subject teachers and trainers, as appropriate legislative, institutional and personal backing of their CPD is missing. Although some bodies, e.g. guilds, offer diverse specialised training to VET staff, this kind of training is not sufficiently institutionalised. Similarly to not yet institutionalised master craftsman examinations that have still not been officially revived, improved capacities for retraining and assessing VET specific skills are needed. This is why the experience from Germany

¹⁸ See the description of survey results in Valent (2013) at [http://www.mpc-
edu.sk/library/files/pr_2_2013w.pdf](http://www.mpc-
edu.sk/library/files/pr_2_2013w.pdf).

¹⁹ See Valent and Sabo (2011) at <http://www.rozhlady.pedagog.sk/cisla/pr3-2011.pdf>.

and Austria in VET specific training should be further exploited. Professional/ employers' organisations must be enabled to support CPD of teachers and trainers substantially.

CPD is decentralised on school level. Therefore, there are no national data about CPD of individual categories of staff available. Furthermore, there are no data distinguishing vocational subject teachers and general subject teachers of VET schools. The only data that could be retrieved refer to programmes offered by the MPC within the national ESF project 'Professional and Career Growth of Teaching Staff' and within some other ESF project run by ŠIOV (see more in part 5).

3. Apprentice tutors or practical training instructors in companies (work-based settings)

Practical training instructors in companies

Instructors offering practical training provided for by companies are not addressed by Act No. 317/2009 Coll. on Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff, as instructors are not considered pedagogical staff. They work with a maximum of three students in cooperation with a partner school VET trainer who supervises a maximum of 40 students in total. Their position is regulated, in coincidence with the introduction of 'dual' VET, by Act No. 61/2015 Coll. on VET. Instructors are employed by a company offering practical training and they are required to have at least a certificate of apprenticeship in respective study field. In contrast to VET school trainers they do not need to have either a 'maturita' school leaving certificate or completed 'pedagogy' related studies. They need to have three years of practice, all certificates required for performing respective profession, and within one year of their appointment they need to complete 'Instructor Training'. These 'Instructor Trainings' are already under the process of development with regard to all fields within envisaged 'dual' VET. The following is the basic description of the 'Instructor Training' offered by the Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry that is responsible, *inter alia*, for very important fields of study in mechanical and electrical engineering sectors. Four modules of training are envisaged:

- practical training provided by employer (legislation);
- provision of practical training (administration);
- practical training content (standards, training plan, syllabi); and
- student in practical training (psychology and pedagogy);

with total 28 lesson hours, of which 16 hours of face-to-face learning and 12 hours of distance learning. Instructors will be trained by lecturers retrained also under the supervision of the Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Some lecturers have already been retrained within the national ESF project 'Development of Secondary VET' and/or other 'dual' piloting projects. A training programme for new lecturers is composed of four modules and lasts 40 hours in total. An innovative education programme for lectures with experience and relevant history lasts only 20 hours.

There were several 'dual' piloting projects run before adoption of the Act on VET. Two projects contained important trainer training component:

The Swiss – Slovak project 'Vocational Education and Training for the Labour Market', financed by the Swiss financial instrument (Swiss – Slovak Cooperation Programme), is testing the Swiss experience in 10 secondary VET schools across the country and 18 partner companies. 20-hour 'Training of Instructors of Practical Training' has been developed in cooperation with Swiss partners and accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Continuing Education affiliated to the MŠVVŠ.

The Austrian – Slovak project 'Young Stars' is testing the Austrian experience in Secondary VET School Zlaté Moravce and 10 partner companies. 12 instructors have been already trained within 32-hour training based on the Austrian experience.

In addition to instructors of 'dual' training there are also instructors providing similar work based training, however, within traditional ('non-dual') approach based on agreements (institutional contracts) between schools and companies. These instructors can also be now trained or retrained under the supervision of respective professional/employers' organisations. Before adoption of the new act on VET they often acquired qualification required for regular trainer, as they belong to a school-based VET sub-system.

CPD provision for this group has not yet been developed. In case of continuation of the Swiss – Slovak and Austrian – Slovak projects CPD will follow the experience of partner countries.

CPD in a 'dual' sub-stream of VET will have to be developed under the supervision of respective professional/employers' organisations responsible for respective study fields (as stipulated by the Decree No. 64/2015 Coll.). Other important players, e.g. guilds, should be gradually involved in retraining of instructors. Mapping of relevant partners is already in progress and should result in a 'Map of All Fields of Study Concerned Bodies'. It is not possible to consider a mechanism of CDP (needs analysis, coverage of competences, validation and recognition of competences, etc.) due to a very early stage of development.

4. The world of education and the world of work

Cooperation and partnerships between the world of education and the world of work in support of teachers and trainers' CPD must be improved. It lacks institutional support and is predominantly based on personal contacts and activities. Teachers and trainers in the school-based system should be served by the MPC and ŠIOV and can participate in accredited continuing education programmes²⁰ that are formally recognised as contributing to their CPD. They can also participate in other training programmes and other activities (e.g. offered by guilds) that can contribute to their professionalization, but are not officially recognised as contributing to their CPD, provided they are not accredited. Schools with contracts with companies on provision of practical training (a 'non-dual' sub-stream) can benefit from contacts with respective companies easier than other schools offering practical education in schools' workshops. This learning opportunities are however rather informal. It is hoped that cooperation between schools and companies within a 'dual' sub-stream can be stronger and even backed by contracts between a respective school and a company. In general, teachers and trainers complain about a lack of opportunities of vocationally targeted retraining. This is why Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on VET suggested creation of 'Centres of VET' with enhanced capacities to offer in-service training for teachers and trainers in addition to provision of regular secondary IVET programmes for students. These centres are in process of establishment based on the cooperation of self-governing regions and respective professional/employers' organisations. 63 already established centres are, however, not yet ready to offer this kind of assistance.

A change in philosophy is signalled by the new act on VET introducing 'dual' IVET and establishment of workplaces of practical training affiliated to companies. As already mentioned, professional/employers' organisations are made responsible for initial training and CPD of instructors employed by companies, including those who are not involved in 'dual' VET. This leads to suggestions to create institutions managed by companies and/or organisations representing professionals/employers that should contribute to professionalization of all VET staff (including teachers and trainers employed by VET schools) with regard to specific VET related competences. This should complement CPD predominantly focusing on the pedagogical/didactic competence offered by the MPC and ŠIOV.

In sectors with strong technological progress businesses regularly organise paid training for professionals. It is not rare that IVET staff participate in this kind of training for reduced fees or for free based on personal contacts between the world of

²⁰ A list of these programmes is available at <http://www.minedu.sk/data/att/8731.pdf>.

work and the world of education players. These activities are valued by VET staff, however, access to them is limited as they are often organised during teaching/training hours in schools. Many opportunities for informal and non-formal learning are offered within fairs and exhibitions, the most known being JUVYR and Young Creator.

5. EU-funded projects to support VET staff professional development

There are five national EU-funded projects containing new training programmes accredited by the Accreditation Council of the Ministry of Education for Continuing Training of Pedagogical and Professional Staff.

The MPC runs the project 'Professional and Career Growth of Teaching Staff' directly aimed at provision of programmes corresponding to a new model of in-service training. There were 53,350 participants trained within this project from 2010 to 30 June 2015, exceeding the projected number of 20,000 retrained. The exact numbers of VET teachers and trainers are however not available.²¹

Within the already completed project 'Teacher Training with Regard to Developing School Educational Programmes' run by ŠIOV, there were in total 8,021 people retrained (exceeding the projected number of 6,700 retrained), of which 2,875 were vocational subject teachers and trainers. This training was aimed at enhancing curriculum development skills of participants in response to requirements of the 2008 curricular reform. It focused on school educational programmes that are elaborated autonomously by schools based on respective state educational programmes.

The project 'Supporting Vocational Guidance of Basic School Pupils, Designing Polytechnic Education Focused on Development of Working Skills, and Working with Pupils with Gifts in Technology'²², run by ŠIOV, contains a training component aimed at implementing a 'polytechnic principle' into teaching of the subjects Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Technology. There were 722 participants retrained by 21 September 2015 (out of 1,000 projected). 221 teachers successfully completed training focused on innovative methods in the subject Technology. Although targeted trainees are lower secondary teachers and they do not work in VET schools, this

²¹ The aggregate data are based on lists of participants of respective courses. It would be possible to identify their employers, *inter alia*, VET schools, not necessarily, however, their positions.

²² The following translation of the project title is also used in some documents: 'Supporting the Career Guidance of Elementary School Pupils with a Focus on Vocational Education and Training through the Development of Polytechnic Education Enhancing Labour Skills and Work with Talented Youth'.

training as well as some other components of this project are aimed at improving links between education and the world of work and on development of employment relevant skills of pupils. It can be said that pre-vocational learning is supported by this project within a lower secondary (general) programme.

The project 'Development of Secondary VET', run by ŠIOV, contains a programme 'System of Dual Education in Secondary VET School'. Training of first 125 participants (out of 800 projected) started in October 2015.

Within the project 'Creation of the National Qualifications System', run by ŠIOV, 927 participants, of which 828 from VET schools, successfully completed training from 1 December 2014 to 21 September 2015.

The project run by the National Lifelong Learning Institute (NÚCŽV) is aimed at provision of specialised training of employed people to enhance their employability. Within this project a retraining programme for 'lecturers' (teachers/facilitators in adult learning) has been developed with a goal to retrain 280 'lecturers'. The goal has been already achieved. The programme is composed of three modules – 1. Andragogical competences (50 hours); 2. Didactic competences (50 hours); 3. Personal, social and reflexive competences (50 hours).

Programme completion requirements are composed of a test of theoretical knowledge, 45-minute demonstration of practical skills ('lecturing'), demonstrating programming skills (needs analyses, identification of learning objective, appropriate methodology and contents of direct education, etc.) and peer-discussion about respective specific VET-related issues. The programme and its successful completion is based on standards composed of two categories – professional knowledge with 22 identified items and professional skills with 6 identified items²³.

NÚCŽV intends to make this programme as well as included standards a basis for qualification requirements of 'lecturers' as a regulated profession in the future.

Lecturing is now a free trade according to the Trade Licensing Act and therefore, there are many companies indicating 'education' among their scope of business. A community of adult education providers is very critical about the fact that adult education/learning including continuing VET is not regulated or only partly regulated by sectoral arrangements. This is why setting qualification standards for lecturers (including teachers/trainers in CVET) is permanently discussed. It is not clear so far whether project suggestions will be accepted and mainstreamed. Nevertheless, in particular with regard to CVET, there is a risk of over-regulation in attempts to prescribe universal national regulations.

ESF demand driven projects as well as Erasmus+ projects offer the opportunity to address teacher and trainer training focusing on VET specific skills. Although best

practice examples are sometimes studied, capitalisation on results of small projects of this type is still 'weak', as there is no systemic exploitation of projects institutionalised.

6. Conclusions

A status of VET teachers and trainers is low. The 2013 OECD data confirm strong frustration of lower secondary level teachers in Slovakia compared to other countries. Even, with only 4% of teachers believing that teacher profession is valued in the society compared to the average of 30.9%, Slovakia ranked last among the TALIS countries. Similar results are also expected concerning VET teachers and trainers.

Despite significant improvement in wages since the strike of pedagogical staff in 2012, attractiveness of teaching profession is still low. This particularly endangers VET schools, as knowledgeable specialists find better opportunities in business. It is time to rethink measures to attract people in mid-age with a relevant history in business to enter VET schools. This should not be about a competitive wage only, but predominantly about flexibility in forms of their engagement. With regard to this, also new measures aimed at provision of CPD for VET teachers and trainers are urgently needed.

Ageing of teachers in VET schools is in progress with the average age of 47.6 years in 2014 compared to 43.2 years in 2009. Similarly, the average age of trainers was 49 years in 2014 compared to 45.1 years in 2009. Ageing of teachers and trainers is significantly influenced by postponement of retirement age, but it also signals a lack of young professionals interested in a teacher/trainer career. A share of retired teachers in VET schools is higher compared to grammar schools or lower secondary and elementary teachers.

No substantial barriers are visible in provision of pre-service training in contrast to in-service training. Both pre-service and in-service training suffer from a lack of specialists in VET specific pedagogy/psychology. This is harmful predominantly for in-service training. Furthermore, vocational subject teachers and trainers have comparably fewer opportunities for their subject related CPD programmes. Although provision of continuing programmes for pedagogical staff is also open to non-state bodies, the market of in-service training services is still dominated by public bodies. The MPC and ŠIOV, and NÚCŽV, three relevant institutions directly managed by the MŠVVŠ have however only limited opportunities to enrich this market due to a lack of funding and specialists to cover a variety of VET fields. This is why measures to

²³ A detailed description is available in Slovak at <http://cvanu.sk/files/articles/mvp->

strengthen a position of professional/employers' organisations in VET have been in progress since 2009. Since 2015, these institutions have been responsible for provision of training for instructors offering practical training in companies, and higher involvement of diverse professional/employers' organisations, in particular guilds, is envisaged towards teachers and trainers in VET schools. Lacking experience in provision of training of these bodies in a systemic quality assured way is however a very serious obstacle that should be addressed in cooperation with countries where professional/employers' organisations have long-term experience in this.

Bridging the divide between the world of education and the world of work is an ultimate challenge. Schools are permanently blamed for high unemployment of young people, but their partnership with companies is still insufficiently supported. Introduction of elements of dual VET by the 2015 Act on VET is a positive step in support of work-based learning opportunities, however, it should not be forgotten that this is not a panacea, despite high expectations of some politicians and employers' representatives. It is only one of a variety of work-based learning forms.

Acronyms

CPD	Continuing professional development
CPS	Complementary pedagogical study
CVET	Continuing vocational education and training
CVTI SR	Centrum vedecko-technických informácií SR (Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information)
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
HEI	Higher education institution
ICT	Information communication technology
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
ISTP	Internetový sprievodca trhom práce (Internet Guide through the Labour Market)
IVET	Initial vocational education and training
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)
MŠVVŠ	Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu (Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport)
NACE	General Classification of Economic Activities of the European Community
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NQS	National Qualifications System
NSO	National System of Occupations
NÚCŽV	Národný ústav celoživotného vzdelávania (National Lifelong Learning Institute)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SEN	Special education needs
ŠIOV	Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania (State Institute of Vocational Education)
ŠVS	Školské výpočtové stredisko (School Computing Centre)
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
ÚIPŠ	Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva (Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education)
VET	Vocational education and training

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Annex

Teachers in regional schooling by age groups in 2009 and 2014

(numbers and %)

Schools	under 25		25 – 29		30 – 34		35 – 39		40 – 44		45 – 49		50 – 54		55 – 59		60 – 64		65 and over		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
All schools 2009*	2453	2.9	8923	10.5	10833	12.7	10838	12.7	10859	12.8	12135	14.3	13041	15.3	11262	13.2	3490	4.1	1231	1.4	85065
All schools 2014*	966	1.2	6471	8.0	8501	10.4	11577	14.2	11417	14.0	10726	13.2	11568	14.2	12042	14.8	6394	7.9	1691	2.1	81353
Secondary VET schools 2009**	252	1.5	1490	9.2	1829	11.2	1710	10.5	1780	10.9	2523	15.5	3058	18.8	2350	14.4	949	5.8	342	2.1	16283
Secondary VET schools 2014**	15	0.1	787	5.7	1229	8.9	1712	12.4	1653	12.0	1646	11.9	2244	16.3	2710	19.7	1396	10.1	387	2.8	13779

Source: ÚIPS-ŠVS Banská Bystrica, data as of 30 November 2009 and 31 January 2014.

NB: * Kindergartens, basic schools, basic schools of arts, grammar schools, secondary VET schools, conservatories, language schools, special schools;

** Conservatories not included.