

## **Slovakia: Sector Councils Alliance reshapes VET and LLL governance**

**Following long-standing criticism of Slovakia's outdated Act on Lifelong Learning, new legislation was adopted in October 2024. Rather than continuing the lifelong learning terminology, it was named the Act on Adult Education. This new law introduces fundamental changes to lifelong learning governance focusing on strengthening the Slovak qualifications framework by introducing flexibility instruments, microcredentials, individual learning accounts, recognition of prior learning via assessment portfolios and a new approach to quality assurance in adult education. The deepest and most strategic change relates to empowering the new Sector Councils Alliance (SCA) to become a crucial player and a future national quality and qualifications authority.**

### **A stronger role for the Sector Councils Alliance**

An amendment to the Act on Employment Services (5/2004) of 6 December 2022 established the Sector Councils Alliance (SCA), an association of interested legal entities: education and labour ministries, and bodies representing employers and employees. The SCA, a brick-and-mortar institution, replaced the former Alliance of Sectoral Councils, which was an advisory body to the labour ministry in the field of employment and active labour market policies. The new Act on Adult Education has transferred responsibility from the education ministry to the SCA for:

- shaping qualifications standards and publishing the national qualifications system on the SCA website alongside the national system of occupations;
- accreditation of adult education programmes, replacing the Accreditation Commission under the education ministry;
- validation of learning outcomes: the specialists authorised to validate learning outcomes must pass the SCA training programme and the national guarantors responsible for the quality assurance of the learning outcomes validation processes must be approved by the SCA.

### **Building capacities for evidence-based policy-making**

It is expected that the SCA will contribute to evidence-based policy-making and strengthening the tripartite and social dialogues. To ensure its effectiveness, the SCA benefits from two European Social Fund projects. The 2023-27 project, with a budget of EUR 23.7 million, focuses on 'building expert and analytical capacities'. The 2023-29 project, with a budget of EUR 29.9 million, aims 'to create a system environment for forecasting the needs of the labour market and aligning the educational offer with the needs of the labour market through the activities of experts in 24 Sector Councils'.

### **Balancing labour market demands and education**

The SCA's mission is to formalise cooperation between State bodies, employers, and trade unions, ensuring that qualifications and lifelong learning systems reflect labour market trends and innovation. However, concerns remain that a strong focus on immediate labour market needs may overshadow the development of key competences and transferable skills essential for workforce flexibility in a volatile economy. Striking a balance will be vital to ensuring both employability and developing learner potential.

### **Read more**

[Sector Councils Alliance website](#)