



A report on the response of the Slovak Republic to country-specific recommendations on vocational education and training for 2012

European semester assessment of Member States' reform programmes – collecting news in a new format

In 2011 the Council of the European Union endorsed a new economic governance process. This process is also known as the 'European semester' ⁽¹⁾. It helps identify the main challenges facing the EU and provide strategic advice on policies. This strategic advice goes beyond economy, finance and employment to include education and training. Assessing challenges, developing 'recommendations' for countries' national reform programmes and following them up annually, leads to an increased need for systematic and sound country-specific information and analysis.

The European Commission has asked Cedefop to provide concise country-specific analysis on VET systems and developments updated twice a year (in February and October). This information will help the Commission in formulating and following up recommendations on VET which countries receive within the general policy guidance and annual assessment of progress towards the Europe 2020 objectives.

To respond to the European Commission's request, Cedefop will draw to a large extent – though not exclusively – on existing ReferNet deliverables: policy reporting, VET in Europe – Country reports and National news on VET. Therefore, the information provided by the network will not only form a substantial contribution to monitoring and understanding progress towards the Bruges objectives, it will also feed into and support the overall governance of Europe 2020.

Some, but not all, Member States have received country-specific recommendations on vocational education and training. According to the ReferNet work plan 2013 ReferNet partners are expected to report on measures² taken to meet these recommendations twice annually – in January and September. The first input, in the form of news on development in VET, has a deadline in **January 2013**.

Template for reporting on measures taken in 2012

To ensure a common approach on the ReferNet partners' reporting on measures taken to meet the country-specific recommendations, Cedefop has developed a template to be used for the January 2013 news exercise. Please note that this is a news activity and you are therefore kindly asked to report on recent measures taken to meet the recommendations. For the January news, please report on activities in 2012. For the September news, please report on measures taken between January and September.

The template may be fine-tuned before the September 2013 reporting if necessary to ensure an optimal process based on the experiences in January 2013. Partners are kindly asked to fill in all relevant boxes in the template. If there are separate measures taken for the same recommendation, please duplicate this template and use one for each measure.

⁽¹⁾ <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/14>
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/chart_en.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm

² By measures we mean activities, pilot projects, policy action, new or changed legislation, etc.

Country: SK - 1

Objective/description of recommendation:

Enhance the administrative capacity of public employment services with a view to ensure more individualised employment services for the young, the long-term unemployed, older workers and women.

Measures taken to meet this recommendation in 2012

General comments:

Substantial amendment of Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on employment services restructuring active labour market policies and enhancing administrative capacities of public employment services was approved by the government and submitted to the parliament. Further progress and respective measures will be reported within the next deadline in September 2013.

To support employment of young and older workers a national ESF project was prepared by public employment services. An initiative targeting young people aged up to 29 years is presented below (see Measure SK - 1.1). An initiative targeting older workers (respective call) has been announced for the future.

Further activities addressing long-term unemployed and women are announced and will be subject of our monitoring/reporting within the next deadline in September 2013.



Individual measures taken in 2012

Measure SK - 1.1

Title of measure:

Supporting job creation for young people

Description of measure (please be clear, accurate and complete; include essential characteristics, distinctive features, and how the measure is supposed to function in practice. Include examples if necessary):

Small traders and businesses, other organisations (e.g. civic associations) performing economic activity and non-profit organisations conducting community activities from all regions, except the Bratislava Region, with at least 12 months of working history, can apply for contribution from ESF to cover part of employee costs for newly created jobs for young people up to 29 years of age.

Two activities are announced within the call announced by public employment services (Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family) in November 2012:

Activity 1 - Creation of job for at least 18 months with contribution lasting for 12 months;

Activity 2 - Creation of job for at least 30 months in the area of SK NACE rev. 2 49.41 (freight transport by road), 49.42 (removal services), 49.31 (urban and suburban passenger land transport), 49.39 (other passenger land transport) with contribution lasting for 9 months.

Responsible authority/-ies:

Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family

Funding (sources and amount):

Funding Activity 1: EUR 23,472,000

Funding Activity 2: EUR 5,868,000

Co-financing share: state budget 15 %, ESF 85 %

Within Activity 1 the contribution is provided on monthly basis in amount of 90 % of total labour costs of employee, however up to the minimum total labour costs set for 2013, which is EUR 456.54 monthly. The contribution is provided to beneficiary of financial assistance over a maximum period of 12 months.

Within Activity 2 the contribution is up to 95% of total labour costs in maximum, however it cannot exceed 1.2 times the minimum total labour costs set for 2013, it means EUR 547.85 monthly. The contribution is provided to beneficiary of financial assistance over a maximum period of 9 months. The maximum aid to any beneficiary cannot exceed during three fiscal years EUR 200,000 in total, in case of beneficiaries from road transport sector EUR 100,000.

Legislative background:

Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on employment services, § 54 Pilot projects

ESF Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion,

Priority axis 1: Supporting employment growth

Measure 1.1: Promoting programmes in the area of supporting employment and solving unemployment and long-term unemployment

National Project XXI: Supporting job creation

Stakeholders involved:

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR

Public employment services (Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family with its network of offices of labour, social affairs and family in all regions except the Bratislava Region)

Timetable for implementation of measure (please indicate if the measure has been implemented or is in its planning/project phase):

Project applications are accepted from November 2012 to October 2013.

Contributions to beneficiaries are offered from January 2013 to July 2015.

Web page/links to relevant documents:

Project description (in Slovak):

www.upsvar.sk/buxus/docs/download/Opis_projektu_NP_XXI.rtf

Text výzvy v slovenčine: Text of the call (in Slovak):

www.upsvar.sk/buxus/docs/KGR/Vyzvy_VO/Oznamenie_o_moznosti_predkladania_ziadosti_o_poskynutie_financneho_prispevku_na_podporu_vytvarania_pracovnych_miest_1.pdf

Notes:

In response to a letter by José Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission, asking eight EU countries to rethink actions to fight their disproportionately high youth unemployment rate, the Slovak government decided to reallocate EUR 70 million from ESF Operational Programme Education (OPE) to Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion (OPESI). This reallocation was approved and the National Project XXI "Supporting job creation" targeting the young unemployed up to 29 and people over 50 with allocation of EUR 50,000,000 within ESF Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion was prepared by public employment services.

The first call targeting young people was launched in November 2011 with details presented in this template.



Country: SK - 2

Objective/description of recommendation:

Adopt and implement the youth action plan, in particular as regards the quality and labour market relevance of education and vocational training, including through the introduction of an apprenticeship scheme. Improve the quality of higher education by strengthening quality assurance and result orientation.

Measures taken to meet this recommendation in 2012

General comments:

A draft version of the youth action plan has been prepared, however not yet submitted for public commenting. Further progress and respective measures will be reported within the next deadline in September 2013. Nevertheless, labour market relevance of VET has also been addressed by other measures (see Measures SK - 2.1 and SK - 2.2).

Improving the quality of higher education is addressed by two other measures (see Measures SK - 2.3 and SK - 2.4). Quality assurance is explicitly tackled by ESF projects responding to calls launched in 2010 to 2012 (see Measure SK - 2.5).

Individual measures taken in 2012

Measure SK - 2.1

Title of measure:

Quality and labour market relevance of secondary VET

Description of measure (please be clear, accurate and complete; include essential characteristics, distinctive features, and how the measure is supposed to function in practice. Include examples if necessary):

Some measures were introduced to improve quality and labour market relevance of secondary VET by Act No. 324/2012 Coll. amending substantially the Act on VET No. 184/2009 Coll., Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on upbringing and education (education act) and also some other acts:

- The obligation of professional associations to elaborate the so-called plans of labour market needs consisting of anticipation of graduates from respective fields of study for the following five years, originally introduced by the Act on VET, was abolished and professional associations are now asked to cooperate with public employment services responsible for analysing and forecasting labour market developments;
- This is why the Act on employment services has also been amended and the obligation has been newly laid to Committees for Employment affiliated to respective labour offices to approve analyses and forecasts of labour market developments that are prepared by labour offices and are submitted to the Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. By this, cooperation between education and labour sectors should be strengthened in order to identify fields of education needed and in contrast not needed, or required with lesser amount of graduates. In the absence of genuine know-how (no employer surveys are conducted and no graduates tracking data are available) a proxy indicator for assessing success of schools in placement of graduates on the labour market is applied: unemployment rate of graduates registered with labour offices broken by individual schools and fields of study. This kind of newly calculated indicators is useful however quite rough for feedback to schools, not speaking about fiscal regulation based on it, as it does not offer information on employment of graduates and therefore non-biased information on transition of graduates into work;
- The amendment further stipulates a new mechanism, based on newly identified nine criteria, for setting numbers of new entrants' classes in upper secondary schools. Self-governing regions have been made responsible for issuing a regulation on numbers of new entrants' classes in respective study fields in all upper secondary schools maintained by self-governing region, church and private subjects in their territory. This regulation must comply with criteria set by law, the strategy of education in secondary schools elaborated under the responsibility of self-governing region, and the aforementioned analysis and forecast of labour market development elaborated by public employment services. Thus, quality of graduates and labour market relevance of secondary VET should be strengthened, regulated by opinions of regional council members (with 60% of the membership for a quorum);
- More strict rules for secondary school admission procedure are set by the amendment of the Education Act: A grade point average in the first half of the last year of study at basic school (usually Grade 9) and at the end of the preceding year (usually Grade 8) was introduced as a regulating indicator since the 2014/2015 school year. The average grade 2.0 or better is prescribed for grammar schools and 2.75 or better for ISCED 3A VET programmes. Basic school graduates with the average higher than 2.75 can only apply for ISCED 3C programmes. (A five-point scale with mark 1 as excellent and 5 as fail is used in Slovakia). Furthermore, entrance examinations are newly introduced as obligatory for all applicants for ISCED 3A studies (both general and VET), except those who achieved at least the level of at least 90 % of total points within the national testing in Grade 9.



Responsible authority/-ies:

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR

Self-governing regions

Funding (sources and amount):

Within the limits of the state budget

Legislative background:

Act No. 324/2012 Coll. amending substantially the following acts:

Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on VET

Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on upbringing and education (education act)

Act No 5/2004 Coll. on employment services

Stakeholders involved:

Schools

Self-governing regions

State regional authorities

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR

Sectoral and professional associations and chambers

Timetable for implementation of measure (please indicate if the measure has been implemented or is in its planning/project phase):

All measures already in force

Web page/links to relevant documents:

None

Notes:

Full texts of all pieces of relevant legislation are available in the Slovak version at www.minedu.sk.
English versions are not available.

Measure SK - 2.2

Title of measure:

Strengthening labour market relevance of secondary VET provision

Description of measure (please be clear, accurate and complete; include essential characteristics, distinctive features, and how the measure is supposed to function in practice. Include examples if necessary):

Some measures to improve labour market relevance of IVET provision were introduced by Act No. 325/2012 Coll. amending Act No. 597/2003 Coll. on financing primary schools, secondary schools and school establishments and Act No. 596/2003 Coll. on state administration in education and school self-government:

- Material, technological and spatial requirements (MTSR) were originally set by state educational programmes for broad fields of study. Issuing of more detailed “MTSR normative” for all study branches and the power of the ministry to close the VET school or other VET establishments not complying with “normative”, based on a report of chief school inspector revealing significant shortcomings in equipment, is newly stipulated;
- Strengthening financing of centres of VET that are in process of creation by regional authorities according to Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on VET as a sort of centres of excellence offering best quality VET for students and in-service training for staff in respective field of study;
- Establishing new VET schools with trans-regional focus by state to train students for professions in shortage that cannot be efficiently maintained regionally by self-governing authorities;
- Abolishing funding of programmes (new entrants’ classes at respective schools) that were identified by self-governing regions as redundant, but allowing covering costs of running these classes by establisher of respective school.

Responsible authority/-ies:

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR

Funding (sources and amount):

Within the limits of the state budget

Legislative background:

Act No. 325/2012 Coll. amending substantially the following acts:

Act No. 597/2003 Coll. on financing primary schools, secondary schools and school establishments

Act No. 596/2003 Coll. on state administration in education and school self-government

Stakeholders involved:

Schools

Self-governing regions

State regional authorities

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR

Timetable for implementation of measure (please indicate if the measure has been implemented or is in its planning/project phase):



All measures already in force

Web page/links to relevant documents:

None

Notes:

Full texts of all pieces of legislation relevant to VET are available in the Slovak version at www.minedu.sk. English versions are not available.

Measure SK - 2.3

Title of measure:

Improving the quality of higher education

Description of measure (please be clear, accurate and complete; include essential characteristics, distinctive features, and how the measure is supposed to function in practice. Include examples if necessary):

An explanatory report of the education ministry to the draft act amending Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on higher education institutions explicitly declares the intention to enhance the quality of higher education. The following shortcomings were identified and highlighted by the education minister at the 66th meeting of the Accreditation Commission held on 10 July 2012, and later also by the aforementioned explanatory report, and subsequently addressed by Act No. 455/2012 Coll.:

- Insufficiently functioning internal system for quality assurance in education in Slovak higher education institutions;
- Discrepancies among schools in quality of “habilitation and inauguration” processes (for awarding titles “docent” and “profesor”);
- Insufficient international dimension and a lack of programmes offered in English;
- Lower quality of part-time studies compared to full-time studies.

As a consequence, the Accreditation Commission has been empowered to intervene in a larger extent to assist in improving the quality of education:

- Internal systems of quality assurance in education in Slovak higher education institutions must reflect “Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area” of European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. They have become a basis for preparation of background materials for assessment of quality of higher education institutions by the Accreditation Commission and should lead to provision of a sufficient amount of objective information on study programmes and their graduates;
- Habilitation and inauguration processes, initially fully autonomously regulated by respective schools, will be checked by the Accreditation Commission and in case of violating criteria, the Accreditation Commission can propose to the education ministry to withdraw this authorisation from such school.

To prevent professors and assistant professors (who are needed by respective schools as guarantors for accreditation of programmes) to serve at many schools (which happens extensively to the detriment of quality of education) a ceiling was introduced limiting a maximum number of contracts with higher education institution to three of which only one can be a full-time contract.

To motivate schools to offer programmes in English, tuition fees are introduced for study in these programmes provided alternatives in Slovak are offered for free. Furthermore, provision of common study programmes is also promoted and more clearly regulated.

Recent practice relying on provision of education in part-time studies significantly based on autonomous learning and consulting proved ineffective and leading to erosion of education standards. Therefore, a standard length of part-time studies has been expanded (three to five years for 1st cycle and two to four years for 2nd cycle) to offer more time for studying to achieve equivalent quality graduates compared to full-time studies.

Responsible authority/-ies:

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR



Funding (sources and amount):

Within the limits of the state budget

Tuition fees for English speaking programmes from the pocket of students

Legislative background:

Act No. 455/2012 Coll. amending

Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on higher education institutions

Stakeholders involved:

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR

Higher education institutions

Slovak Rectors' Conference

Higher Education Council

Accreditation Commission, advisory body to the Slovak Government

Timetable for implementation of measure (please indicate if the measure has been implemented or is in its planning/project phase):

All measures already in force

Web page/links to relevant documents:

None

Notes:

A full text of the act is available in the Slovak version at www.minedu.sk. The English version is not available.

Measure SK - 2.4

Title of measure:

Improving the quality of higher education by supporting students with special educational needs

Description of measure (please be clear, accurate and complete; include essential characteristics, distinctive features, and how the measure is supposed to function in practice. Include examples if necessary):

The most important change introduced by Act No. 57/2012 Coll. amending Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on higher education institutions relates to students with special educational needs. It is not just about a change in terminology, as instead of students with special needs students with physical handicap were addressed by the original wording of the law. Coordinators in respective schools had to be named in support of students and people with special needs interested in study. Their activities were however hampered by a lack of expertise. New legislation specified in more detail responsibilities of coordinators and stipulated establishment of two centres of special education at the Technical University in Košice and Comenius University in Bratislava to offer and further develop know-how, and to provide assistance to coordinators. Significant improvement of conditions for students and better quality of their education is expected.

Responsible authority/-ies:

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR

Funding (sources and amount):

Within the limits of the state budget

Legislative background:

Act No. 57/2012 Coll. amending

Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on higher education institutions

Stakeholders involved:

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR

Higher education institutions

Timetable for implementation of measure (please indicate if the measure has been implemented or is in its planning/project phase):

All measures already in force

Web page/links to relevant documents:

None

Notes:

A full text of the act is available in the Slovak version at www.minedu.sk. The English version is not available.

**Measure SK - 2.5**

Title of measure:

Supporting quality assurance in higher education

Description of measure (please be clear, accurate and complete; include essential characteristics, distinctive features, and how the measure is supposed to function in practice. Include examples if necessary):

A call titled "Support for enhancing the quality at higher education institutions" was launched within Operational Programme Education on 27 July 2012, followed by a wider call "Support for enhancing the quality at higher education institutions and the Slovak Academy of Sciences" launched on 15 October 2012. Both calls can be seen as continuity in earlier activities, as visible from the list of earlier calls focusing on enhancing quality.

For all regions except the Bratislava Region:

- 2010/1.2/02-SORO, date of call: 31 December 2010, allocation: EUR 13 million;
- 2011/1.2/03-SORO, date of call: 22 December 2011, allocation: EUR 50 million;
- 2012/1.2/04-SORO, date of call: 27 July 2012, allocation: EUR 13 million, just for higher education institutions;
- 2012/1.2/05-SORO, date of call: 15 October 2012, allocation: EUR 26 million.

For the Bratislava Region:

- 2010/4.2/03-SORO, date of call: 31 December 2010, allocation: EUR 1.8 million;
- 2012/4.2/04-SORO, date of call: 17 January 2012, allocation: EUR 2 million.

The call 2010/1.2/02-SORO resulted in 22 projects of higher education institutions and 3 projects of institutes of Slovak Academy of Sciences in 2011 already in progress, more or less focusing on introducing internal systems of quality assurance based on "Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European higher education area" that was explicitly mentioned as eligible activity.

Within the call 2011/1.2/03-SORO, 20 projects (all from higher education institutions) have been supported.

Within the call 2012/1.2/04-SORO, five projects are expected to be supported.

Within the call 2012/1.2/05-SORO, 42 proposals, of which 41 from higher education institutions, have been subjected to formal checking.

Within the call 2010/4.2/03-SORO, three projects (of which two from higher education institutions) have been supported.

Within the call 2012/4.2/04-SORO, five projects (all from higher education institutions) have been supported.

Responsible authority/-ies:

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR

Agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR for the EU Structural Funds as the Intermediate Body under the Managing Authority for Operational Programme Education.

Funding (sources and amount):

Allocation of funds for respective calls is presented within the lists of calls above.

Co-financing shares:

In case of public schools: state budget 10 %, ESF 85 % (total 95 % in maximum), own resources 5 % (minimum)

In case of private schools: state budget 14.25 %, ESF 80.75 % (total 95 % in maximum), own resources 5 % (minimum)

In case of state schools (and also institutes of Slovak Academy of Sciences): state budget 15 %, ESF 85 %; co-funding from own resources is not required

Legislative background:

Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on higher education institutions

Operational Programme Education

Priority Axis 1: Reform of the Education and Vocational Training System

Measure 1.2: Higher education institutions and research & development as the driving forces in the development of a knowledge-based society

Priority Axis 4: Modern Education for a Knowledge-Based Society for the Bratislava Region

Measure 4.2: Raising competitiveness of the Bratislava region through the development of higher and continuing education

Stakeholders involved:

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR

Agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR for the EU Structural Funds as the Intermediate Body under the Managing Authority for Operational Programme Education.

Higher education institutions

Timetable for implementation of measure (please indicate if the measure has been implemented or is in its planning/project phase):

All measures are already in force.

Maximum length of projects within the calls 2012/1.2/04-SORO and 2012/1.2/05-SORO is 24 months. Maximum length of projects within the call 2012/4.2/04-SORO is 36 months. Results of projects from these calls will be seen in 2015. Impact of projects from the call 2010/1.2/02-SORO, that are already in progress, can be monitored in 2014.

Web page/links to relevant documents:

Operational Programme Education (in English):

www.asfeu.sk/uploads/media/20120920_OPV_rev_2012_ENG.zip



A list of projects and beneficiaries within call 2010/1.2/02-SORO (in Slovak); one of these 25 projects (No. 17) was terminated:

www.asfeu.sk/uploads/media/1.2_02_Zoznam_prijimatelov_NFP_jun_2012.pdf

A list of projects and beneficiaries within call 2011/1.2/03-SORO (in Slovak):

www.asfeu.sk/uploads/media/1.2_03_Zoznam_prijimatelov_NFP_november_2012.pdf

A list of projects and beneficiaries within call 2010/4.2/03-SORO (in Slovak):

www.asfeu.sk/uploads/media/4_2_03_Zoznam_prijimatelov_NFP_jun_2012b.pdf

A list of projects and beneficiaries within call 2012/4.2/04-SORO (in Slovak):

www.asfeu.sk/uploads/media/4.2_04_Zoznam_prijimatelov_NFP_december_2012.pdf

Notes:

A full text of the Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on higher education institutions is available in the Slovak version at www.minedu.sk. The English version is not available.

Country: SK - 3

Objective/description of recommendation:

Take active measures to improve access to and quality of schooling and pre-school education of vulnerable groups, including Roma. Ensure labour market reintegration of adults through activation measures and targeted employment services, second-chance education and short-cycle vocational training.

Measures taken to meet this recommendation in 2012

General Comments:

Although no ethnic statistical data are available ethnic Roma, in particular those from the marginalised Roma communities, suffer from low qualification level. Measure SK - 3.1 below is hoped to address country specific recommendation addressing the need to improve access to quality schooling of Roma.

An ESF project described below (see Measure SK - 3.2) addresses improving pre-school education of Roma. Expanding capacities for pre-school education is expected to be addressed in 2013, *inter alia*, in relation to amendment of the Decree of the Ministry of Education of the SR No. 306/2008 Coll. on kindergartens.

Labour market re-integration of adults will be substantially addressed by the aforementioned amendment of Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on employment services. Some support for integration of adults into labour market can result from amendment of the Act No. 568/2009 Coll. on lifelong learning presented in Measure SK - 3.3 below.

Typical second-chance education activities aimed at offering completion of studies of early school leavers has a marginal tradition in Slovakia due to a low share of early school leavers (5.0 % in 2011, Eurostat). Recent activities within ESF aimed at completion of ISCED 2 general education seems not to be successful, as early school leavers, in dominance socially disadvantaged people and very often Roma, need alternative approaches rather than returning to traditional school environment offered by mainstream basic schools. Instead, adoption of initial ISCED 2C VET is more promoted, as also visible from Measure SK - 3.1.

Substantial transformation of provision of initial VET is expected in 2013, however, designing and provision of short-cycle IVET programmes seems not to be put on the table yet. Accredited courses according to Act No. 568/2009 Coll. on lifelong learning (see also Measure SK - 3.3) offer alternative to formal education, awarding certification of professional capability based on short practice-oriented vocational training.



Individual measures taken in 2012

Measure SK - 3.1

Title of measure:

Supporting education of members of the marginal Roma communities by supporting establishment of dependencies of secondary VET schools

Description of measure (please be clear, accurate and complete; include essential characteristics, distinctive features, and how the measure is supposed to function in practice. Include examples if necessary):

Running dependencies of regular secondary VET schools should shorten the way of students to schools and should offer easier access to VET for students from socially disadvantaged families of the marginalised Roma communities. Two years lasting programmes offering lower secondary vocational education to graduates and drop outs from basic schools (joining primary and lower secondary level of education), teaching/learning materials and aids, training of educational staff and remedial activities to help students acquire practical skills important for receiving a certificate of apprenticeship are pronounced.

Responsible authority/-ies:

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR

Agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR for the EU Structural Funds as the Intermediate Body under the Managing Authority for Operational Programme Education

Eligible applicants are secondary specialised (vocational) schools established by self-governing regions, private secondary specialised (vocational) schools and church-affiliated secondary specialised (vocational) schools from all regions, except the Bratislava Region, offering 2-year ISCED 2C VET programme completed by a certificate of apprenticeship. Applicants must declare that over 50 % of pupils attending the school dependency are disadvantaged pupils coming from the marginalised Roma community.

Funding (sources and amount):

Total amount allocated for the call: EUR 7 million

Minimum amount for one project: EUR 150,000

Maximum amount for one project: EUR 300,000

Co-financing shares:

In case of schools established by self-governing region: state budget 10 %, ESF 85 % (total 95 % in maximum), own resources 5 % (minimum)

In case of private and church-affiliated schools: state budget 14.25 %, ESF 80.75 % (total 95 % in maximum), own resources 5 % (minimum)

Legislative background:

Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on upbringing and education (education act)

Act No. 596/2003 Coll. on state administration in education and school self-government

ESF Operational Programme Education

Priority Axis 3: Support to education of persons with special education needs

Measure 3.1: Raising the educational level of members of the marginalised Roma communities

Strategy of the Slovak Republic for the integration of Roma up to 2020, adopted by the government on 11 January 2012.

Concept of upbringing and education of Roma children and pupils including the development of secondary and tertiary education, adopted by the government on 2 April 2008.

Stakeholders involved:

Schools

Self-governing regions

Private and church-affiliated schools establishers

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR

Timetable for implementation of measure (please indicate if the measure has been implemented or is in its planning/project phase):

Open call for submission of demand-driven project proposal: 31 October 2012

Deadline for submission of project proposal: 31 January 2013

The length of projects is from 12 months to 18 months, affecting all regions except the Bratislava Region.

Web page/links to relevant documents:

Text of the call (in Slovak): www.asfeu.sk/uploads/media/OPV_2012-3.1-04-SORO.pdf

Strategy of the Slovak Republic for the integration of Roma up to 2020 (in English):

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_slovakia_strategy_en.pdf

Notes:

Experience of a secondary school that already established its dependency directly in a Roma settlement serves as a good practice example for mainstreaming.



Measure SK - 3.2

Title of measure:

Inclusive pre-primary education

Description of measure (please be clear, accurate and complete; include essential characteristics, distinctive features, and how the measure is supposed to function in practice. Include examples if necessary):

This national project ESF is aimed at development of competences of educational and professional staff working with children from the marginalised Roma communities. An inclusive model of education at pre-primary level should be created and implemented. Specific learning needs of children must be addressed.

The following are some of eligible activities:

- Developing in-service programmes for educational and professional staff;
- Adjusting curricula, supporting alternative teaching/learning approaches and developing teaching materials and aids;
- Creating materials for promotion of pre-primary education for people from the marginalised Roma communities.

Enhancing cooperation of schools with local players involved in education of members of the marginalised Roma communities and activities targeting Roma families as specific units can also be supported within this project. Methodological-Pedagogical Centre, in particular its subsidiary located in Prešov (eastern Slovakia) with a high density of the marginalised Roma communities has a long history of performing activities in this field aimed at improving educational level of disadvantaged Roma inhabitants. While the Methodological-Pedagogical Centre is expected to take care of know-how, municipalities are expected to create conditions (stipulated by law) for increased enrolment of children from the marginalised Roma communities into kindergartens.

Responsible authority/-ies:

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR

Methodological-Pedagogical Centre - MPC (in-service teacher training institution directly managed by the education ministry)

Municipalities

Financing (sources and amount):

Total amount allocated: EUR 7.4 million

Co-financing share: state budget 15 %, ESF 85 %

No co-funding is required from the Methodological-Pedagogical Centre.

Legislative background:

ESF Operational Programme Education

Priority Axis 3: Support to education of persons with special education needs

Measure 3.1: Raising the educational level of members of the marginalised Roma communities

Stakeholders involved:

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR

Methodological-Pedagogical Centre

Municipalities

Social sector regional/local authorities and social workers

Participating kindergartens

Timetable for implementation of measure (please indicate if the measure has been implemented or is in its planning/project phase):

Restricted call (invitation) for project proposal submission: 11 December 2012

Deadline for submission of project proposal: 11 February 2013

The expected length of the project is 34 months affecting all regions except the Bratislava Region.

Web page/links to relevant documents:

Text of the call (in Slovak): www.minedu.sk/data/att/4257.pdf

Notes:

The call for submission of the project proposal with the same objectives was announced on 7 September 2012 with no result.



Measure SK - 3.3

Title of measure:

Supporting integration of adults into labour market

Description of measure (please be clear, accurate and complete; include essential characteristics, distinctive features, and how the measure is supposed to function in practice. Include examples if necessary):

Act No. 315/2012 Coll. amending Act No. 568/2009 Coll. on lifelong learning expanded its focus to encompass independent study of individuals, or employers' activities in employees' training in addition to institutionalised continuing education (accredited by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR), enabling these individuals to enter examination for receiving a certificate of professional capability allowing them to start respective businesses, in particular trades bound to relevant qualifications, according to Trade Licensing Act No. 455/1991 Coll. Furthermore, in addition to schools, professional associations are newly entitled to apply to become authorised bodies for examination. Amendment of the LLL Act redefined setting of the National Qualifications System in line with the National Qualification Framework as part of the Information System of Continuing Education and as a tool to describe respective qualification requirements tested by these examinations.

Thus, in addition to formal ISCED 3C education, an alternative way for adults to enter labour market based on re-training within accredited short practice-oriented courses and the aforementioned examination has been created.

Responsible authority/-ies:

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR

Accreditation Commission for Continuing Education, an advisory body to the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR

Funding (sources and amount):

Tuition fees for accredited courses and fees related to examination by authorised bodies borne by individuals

Creation of National Qualifications System and National Qualification Framework funded from the state budget and since 2013 also from ESF

Legislative background:

Act No. 315/2012 Coll. amending

Act No. 568/2009 Coll. on lifelong learning

Stakeholders involved:

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR

Accreditation Commission for Continuing Education, an advisory body to the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR accrediting courses and examination bodies

Authorised examination bodies for issuing certificates on professional capability

Timetable for implementation of measure (please indicate if the measure has been implemented or is in its planning/project phase):

All measures already in force

Web page/links to relevant documents:

None

Notes:

The full text of the act is available in the Slovak version at www.minedu.sk. The English version is not available.