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1.   Introduction

This document intends to give a broad view on teacher and trainer professions and the existing support in order to develop their competences and skills, hence ensuring the quality of vocational education and training (VET). In this respect, the initial and continuous VET main characteristics are presented.

To contextualise the environment where these professionals develop their activity, a broad view of the national education and training system is presented, in terms of its description, governance and structure.

2.   The education and training system – governance

The central government has overall responsibility for the Education and Training (E&T) system. The Ministério da Educação e Ciência (MEC – Ministry of Education and Science) is traditionally responsible for the educational sector (pre-primary education, basic education, secondary education, school based training and higher education). Ministério da Solidariedade, Emprego e Segurança Social (MSESS – Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security), particularly the Instituto para o Emprego e Formação Profissional (IEFP – Institute for Employment and Training), is traditionally responsible for training – IVET, CVET, apprenticeship and Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs). The two Ministries share the responsibility for Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional (ANQEP – National Agency for Qualification and VET). Overall responsibility for the E&T services lies with central departments of both Ministries that are the key bodies in implementing policy. Non-higher education regional authorities and VET regional authorities (respectively, under the coordination of the MEC and MSESS) are responsible for the implementation of policies at local level.

The main stakeholders for VET are:

(a) internal stakeholders: ANQEP and IEFP, schools and IEFP training centers, certified VET providers, learners, teachers/trainers;
(b) external stakeholders: social partners, including confederations of both employers' associations and trade unions that participate in the VET advisory bodies.

Higher education (universities and polytechnic institutes) are autonomous institutions.

At each level of the E&T system a number of advisory bodies, including social partners, deliver technical views and recommendations.

3. Education and training system – structure

3.1. Compulsory education: basic, secondary and post-secondary levels

In 2009, compulsory education was extended to 12 years of schooling, between the age of 6 and 18 years ([1]). In line with these policy changes and as of 2012, compulsory education comprises two stages: basic education (1st – 9th year) and secondary education (10th – 12th year). Compulsory education is provided in state schools which are publicly-funded but also in private schools (independent private and government dependent private).

Traditionally VET programmes were an option only after the age of 15. In the academic year 2012/13, vocational programmes for youngsters aged 13+ were introduced at the 3rd cycle as a pilot experience. These *Cursos vocacionais no ensino básico* ([2]) (vocational programme in basic education) have been gradually extended to schools who gather technical and pedagogical conditions recognised by the Direção-Geral dos Estabelecimentos Escolares (DGEstE – Directorate General for Educational Establishments).

Secondary education is characterised by subject specialisation and is organised in different paths, leading to either further studies and/or vocational qualifications. Permeability has been ensured between general/academic paths (leading to further studies) and VET paths (leading to the labour market). Qualifications are provided within the Quadro Nacional de Qualificações (QNQ – National Qualifications Framework).

The Apprenticeship courses ([3]) are initial alternance training courses (there is a balance of theoretical and practical training taking place in both in an educational institution or training centre and in the workplace). These courses are aimed at young people under the age of 25 who have successfully completed the 3rd cycle of basic education or who have attended, but not completed, a secondary level course. The courses are specifically designed to help young people enter the labour market, although they also allow further studies in higher education. A double certificate of

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([1]) *Lei n.º 85/2009, de 27 de Agosto* (Law 85/2009, of 27th August – available only in Portuguese).

([2]) *Portaria n.º 292-A/2012 de 26 de Setembro* (Ordinance 292-A/2012, of the 26th September – only available in Portuguese).

([3]) *Portaria n.º 1497/2008, de 19 de dezembro* (Ordinance 1497/2008, of the 19th of December – only available in Portuguese).

educational attainment (12th year of schooling) and of vocational training level 4 of QNQ is granted upon successful completion.

The Technological specialisation courses ([4]) provide learners with the scientific knowledge and the technological skills to: (a) enter a career by deepening their scientific/technological knowledge in a specific field of training; (b) enhance their career by upgrading their competences; (c) take further studies in higher education by attaining level 5 of QNQ.

4. Accreditation of vocational education and training provision: trainers and providers

In the Portuguese VET system, accreditation (certification in the national context) is mandatory for VET providers that receive public funding and certification is mandatory for VET trainers who work for them or for public providers. Accreditation constitutes one of the foundation stones, among others (e.g. the external evaluation studies), of the mechanism to ensure quality of delivery by VET trainers, particularly in the government-regulated VET provision, and of VET provision in the case of private providers.

4.1. VET trainers: entry conditions and requirements

A VET trainer is defined as someone who performs in many different contexts, modalities and levels of learning by using different strategies, methods, techniques and instruments of assessment/evaluation. Trainers are expected to establish a diversified and effective pedagogical relationship with various groups or individuals in order to facilitate their acquisition of knowledge and competences as well as the development of attitudes and behaviours adequate to their professional performance, bearing in mind both present and future labour market needs.

The profession is regulated at two levels:

(a) at the level of the MSESS through an ordinance ([5]) that establishes the basic conditions to accede the profession of VET trainer as well as the requirements to get the mandatory pedagogical certificate;

([4]) *Decreto-Lei n.º 88/2006, de 23 de maio* (Decree-Law 88/2006, of the 23th of May – only available in Portuguese).

([5]) *Portaria n.º 214/2011, de 30 de maio* (Ordinance 214/2011, of the 30th of May – only available in Portuguese).

(b) at the level of the MEC through the legal requirements to enter the teaching profession ([6]).

In addition to these general requirements, individual candidates must have a sound knowledge of the Sistema Nacional de Qualificações (SNQ – National Qualifications System), particularly of the different VET paths available.

4.2. Access to the profession of VET trainer

The current national legislation intends to strengthen the quality of vocational training through the pursuit of the following objectives:

(a) to enhance the trainers' pedagogical competences certification, stimulating the mobilisation of skills capable of inducing an effective pedagogical relationship in different contexts of learning;

(b) to establish mandatory initial teacher training, ensuring a qualified intervention in this area, and

(c) to promote the continuous training of trainers, stressing the need for its continuous updating, particularly those that intervene in actions aimed at the most disadvantaged groups, training in mediation, training of trainers, in distance learning, training in labour context, management and coordination of training, as in training consultancy, particularly to SMEs.

Basic conditions to be a VET trainer includes either a higher education degree or the professional experience of a minimum of five years (in case these professionals are responsible for more practical training) and a pedagogical certificate. This certification is granted upon:

(a) completion of a course of initial pedagogical training; or

(b) recognition, validation and certification of pedagogical competences acquired through prior experience; or

(c) equivalence of degrees, i.e. recognition of diplomas or certificates of higher education equipping the respective holders with pedagogical competences in line with those defined in the skills' referential.

Initial pedagogical training of VET trainers is based on a skills' referential, organized in a structured modular path, with a reference length of 90 hours. It includes the following dimensions:

([6]) *Decreto-Lei n.º 22/2014 de 11 de fevereiro* (Decree Law 22/2014, of the 11 of February – only available in Portuguese).
Decreto-Lei n.º 79/2014 de 14 de maio (Decree-Law 79/2014, of the 14th of May – only available in Portuguese).

(a) educational, aimed at the acquisition and development of skills needed, depending on the modalities target group, and intervention contexts;

(b) organisational, including the techniques and methods of training planning, management, organization, monitoring and evaluation;

(c) practical, which consists in the application, in real or simulated situation, of the technical and pedagogical skills acquired;

(d) deontological and ethical, covering respect for rules and professional values as well as for gender equality and ethnic and cultural diversity.

Continuous pedagogical training of VET trainers is based on several skills' referential, organized in structured modular paths, with a variable duration, based on a lifelong learning perspective, and includes one or more of the following dimensions:

(a) educational, which includes modules targeted for the improvement, diversification of competences and reinforcement of several skills previously acquired in initial teacher training course such as organizational, practical, ethical and ethics dimensions;

(b) scientific and technological, including modules aimed at securing a permanent update, in the trainer particular area of intervention;

(c) study or operational research, based on modules aimed at analysis, research and optimization of 'referentials', models, processes and training methods, ensuring their portability or use in different situations, with special focus on learning in a working environment.

The pedagogical training of trainers and the certification can be provided by the Institute for Employment and Training (IEFP), by higher education institutions or other accredited training providers who established protocols with IEFP specifically for this purpose.

In this scope also the National Center for Trainers Qualification (integrated in IEFP) must be mentioned. The Center develops its activity in the coordination of training measures and vocational rehabilitation, along with other public institutions, social partners and other socio-economic relevant organizations to ensure quality standards, and institutional coherence in management and services provided by the IEFP in this field.

It also diagnoses the needs of the active population and employers and the development of different instruments, through the promotion of a training and vocational rehabilitation offer adjusted to the labour market, especially in terms of recognition and certification of teaching skills and the professional development and qualifications of trainers and other professionals in education and training.

Also to contribute to the improvement of the quality of the training interventions, IEFP established several partnerships (as such professional associations, companies and higher education institutions) as part of the training and certification of trainers system,

promoting activities in cooperation with other organizations, public and private, in areas such as:

(a) design of benchmarks for the continuous pedagogical training of trainers;
(b) organisation and implementation of educational training sessions for trainers, promoting the development of a more targeted training for learning outcomes, focusing on asset utilization methods and flexible learning methodologies as well as the use of collaborative platforms and e-learning;
(c) organisation and promotion of seminars and workshops of a technical nature in fields / areas considered most strategic for the country's development;
(d) development of recognition, validation and certification of teaching skills of trainers;
(e) other activities or projects that contribute to greater innovation and adaptation of strategies and methodologies of intervention by trainers and other education professionals.

Presently there are more than 350 000 certified trainers in 77 areas of education and training in IEFP's database.

4.3.   VET provision: accreditation of providers

The certification of VET providers is legally framed ([7]) by law. Any public or private entity, namely educational, scientific and technological can apply for an accreditation to develop training activities, unless it is foreseen in the legislation that supports its establishment or in a special arrangement. The accreditation of a VET provider is the overall recognition of its capacity to develop the different phases of the training cycle in a specific area or areas of education and training (described in the national classification of the education and training areas).

Validation of the VET provider's specialised performance requires:

(a) an evaluation of the existing conditions (resources and practices) in relation to the accreditation reference framework;
(b) a technical assessment of such dimensions as the correlation between training objectives and training content, trainers' professional competences and minimum requirements for buildings and equipment needed for the specific types of training.

([7])   *Portaria n.º 851/2010, de 6 de Setembro* (Ordinance 851/2010 of the 6th September – only available in Portuguese).

4.4. Access to the profession of teacher

In Portugal, qualified teachers have to have a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (EQF level 7). The qualification is obtained after having attended and passed one initial teacher training course offered at Higher Education polytechnic institutes and universities, structured according with teacher-education profiles. Such courses lead to a professional qualification at the level of a Master's degree according to terms laid down in the law governing vocational training for teachers in pre-primary schools and in compulsory and secondary education.

The vital role played by professional training programmes that are specifically aimed at satisfying the needs of the Portuguese educational system, has been fully acknowledged. Acting upon the clear, firmly-entrenched notion to up-grade educational human resources, the Ministry of Education has implemented several programmes in partnerships with different actors.

Initial teacher training for pre-primary teachers and teachers in basic and secondary education leads to a teaching qualification at the respective level of education or teaching.

Initial teacher training aims at providing candidates in the profession with basic scientific, technical and pedagogical skills and know-how so that they may embark upon teaching activity with respect to the following dimensions: professional and ethical competences; developing teaching and learning; taking part in school life and relating to the community; lifelong learning.

Currently, a professional teaching qualification is essential to teach in public, private and cooperative education and teaching establishments that offer pre-school, basic and secondary education.

On 19th September, 2013, the Council of Ministers approved the Regulating Decree regarding the entry test for the teaching profession. This test was designed for those with a teaching qualification who wish to apply for a teaching post, aiming to ensure that teaching positions are filled by those who fulfil the necessary requirements for high-quality, specialised work.

Considering that teaching is the variable with the greatest impact on the quality of student learning, the Ministry of Education and Science is committed to improving teaching quality standards. It is essential to strive towards excellence in those who have the demanding task of giving classes. With this objective in mind, this knowledge and aptitude test was created for access to the teaching profession. This test is part of a set of measures aimed at improving teaching quality:

(a) establishing stricter entry requirements for basic teacher training courses, namely by requiring entrance exams in Portuguese and mathematics for teacher training colleges;

(b) changing and enhancing in-service teacher training.

The Knowledge and Skills Assessment Test is designed to test fundamental knowledge and skills transversal to teaching any subject, subject area or level of education, such as reading and writing, logical and critical reasoning or resolving problems in non-subject areas, such as the mastery of knowledge and specific skills essential for teaching in each age cohort and level of teaching. This ensures that schools have the best prepared and most suitable teachers.

Currently in Portugal, an action plan is being drawn up in order to guarantee the quality, attractiveness and relevance to the job market of education and vocational training via partnership with enterprises and other bodies. This plan includes a revision of the initial teacher training model for primary and secondary education teachers, in order to improve quality, as well as redefining the system of access to the teaching profession.

Regarding the continuing professional development of VET teachers, on-going education and specialised training for teachers are two ways to pursue this.

On-going education is ensured as a right and a duty and has the aim of up-grading and updating the teacher's professional knowledge and competences, his/her professional mobility and progress in his/her career.

There are different kinds of activities based on continuous vocational training: training courses, training workshops, study circles, short courses or, at the request of the Scientific-Pedagogic Council of Continuous Vocational Training, internships and projects.

Continuous training is organised by different sorts of sponsors: Higher Education establishments; training centres run by school associations (there are about 90 School Association Training Centres); Municipal and inter-municipal run initiatives put on by schools and kindergartens that get together for the purpose; not-for-profit professional or scientific association training centres; Ministry of Education and Science central services, training in areas considered relevant for developing the educational system and other sponsors whose intervention is deemed useful in this domain.

The accreditation of training bodies, trainers and training courses is the responsibility of the Scientific-Pedagogic Council of Continuous Vocational Training. Short courses are recognised and certified by the training bodies. For the purposes of career progress, teachers must attend and pass 25 hours at the 5th grade and 50 at the remaining grades of continuous training or specialised training courses.

The teacher performance assessment system established in 2012 introduced changes to previous models, such as the simplification of procedures, longer assessment cycles and the introduction of an external aspect focussed on classroom observation. As a result of legislation, and in order to strengthen and consolidate the specific skills of the

teachers involved in classroom observation, in 2013 and 2014 the General-Directorate of School Administration implemented training programmes for the external assessors of the scientific and pedagogical aspect of teacher performance assessment. This nationwide training, given by the School Association Training Centres (SATC), covered around 4 300 external assessors of teachers in over 200 classes in two stages.

Recently, with the new legislation (Decree-Law No 22/2014), which establishes the new legal regime of teachers' training, in-service training becomes geared towards improving the quality of teacher performance focusing the training system on priorities identified by the school and teachers' professional development.

At each School Association Training Centre, there is a focus on creating groups of internal trainers that boost the level of qualifications of existing education professionals in schools and allow quality training to be given in the areas identified as priorities by the schools themselves. The quality of training is guaranteed via a variety of regulation mechanisms, via monitoring by the General-Directorate of School Administration and external evaluation, which is the responsibility of the Inspectorate-General of Education and Science. This new model of continuous vocational education involves short training courses (recognised and certified by training bodies) that last a minimum of three hours and a maximum of six hours. This training is important for career development, alongside accredited training and specialized training, with a maximum of five hours at 5th grade and ten hours at the remaining grades.

This new legislation applies to all teachers working in state schools, in Portuguese schools abroad and private and cooperative schools teaching of the Schools Association Training Centres. This model ensures free compulsory continuing vocational training and involves short training courses (between three and six hours) recognised and certified by training bodies with a maximum of five hours at 5th grade and ten hours at the remaining grades.

Teachers do not have to pay for training if the Government education services have launched the initiative. Time off school so as to take a training course is deemed working time and as such is remunerated. Leave of absence in order to take a course may be obtained for not more than five consecutive or eight random working days per year.

5.   Partnerships and challenges

The investment on the pedagogical qualification of tutors is seen as a priority in the scope of the National Qualification System in Portugal.

A project signed under the Memorandum of Understanding by Portugal and Germany, aims at defining a training program for tutors working at enterprises with the purpose of improving the learning conditions in the real workplace context. This pilot project for the

professional qualification of tutors is called: the pedagogical intervention of tutor/trainer in working context.

A skill referential for the teacher/trainer of professional education has been developed by ANQEP. It takes under consideration inputs coming from countries such as Brazil, Spain, Canada (Quebec), France, and also integrates the perspectives of ILO and EU/CEDEFOP. The design of this referential is structured on two dimensions: the 'context of professionalism and performance' and the 'operational intervention'

6.   Conclusion

Teacher and trainers are considered as cornerstones of quality in the national vocational education and training system.

In this scope, strong efforts have been made in order to strengthen the initial and continuous training of these professionals in order to assure its competences and skills update. This effort, along with other mechanisms, aim to develop a strong and diversified vocational and education system, assuring its quality in its several components.

Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security and Ministry of Education and Science, through various complementary institutions, provide and implement the necessary conditions for teacher and trainers accessing and updating to and in the profession.

Apart the mandatory training, defined by law, several training offers are available to these professionals.

Sources

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