SUPPORTING TEACHERS AND TRAINERS FOR SUCCESSFUL REFORMS AND QUALITY OF VET

SLOVAKIA

Mapping their professional development in the EU
Please cite this publication as:

Authors: Juraj Vantuch and Dagmar Jelínková
The authors wish to thank:
Mária Fartelová, Gabriela Horecká, Ladislav Kováč, Renáta Majerníková, Viera Žatkoivičová, State Institute of Vocational Education;
Marian Galan, Anna Jurkovičová, Míriam Kováčiková, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport;
Martina Krišková, Commercial Department of the Austrian Embassy in Slovakia;
Miloš Novák, Marián Valent, Methodological-Pedagogical Centre, Regional Centre Banská Bystrica.

Under the supervision of Cedefop
© ŠIOV/SNO (Cedefop ReferNet Slovakia), 2016
Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

The thematic perspectives series complements the general information on vocational education and training (VET) systems provided in ‘VET in Europe’ reports. The themes presented in the series feature high on the European agenda.

Thematic perspectives provide national overviews of specific themes in a common format and offer comparative dimension across the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. They are available at:

This thematic perspective was prepared based on data/information from 2015. The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of Cedefop. Thematic perspectives are co-financed by the European Union and ReferNet national partners.
ReferNet is a network of institutions across Europe representing the 28 Member States, plus Iceland and Norway. The network provides Cedefop with information and analysis on national vocational education and training (VET). ReferNet also disseminates information on European VET and Cedefop’s work to stakeholders in the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway.
# Table of contents

1. Introduction ............................................................................................................ 5  
   1.1. IVET definition and IVET staff positions .......................................................... 5  
   1.2. Policies and development of the last five years .............................................. 7  
       1.2.1. The curricular reform ........................................................................... 7  
       1.2.2. The in-service training reform .............................................................. 7  
       1.2.3. The VET governance reform ............................................................... 9  
2. Teaching and training professionals in school-based settings ............................. 10  
   2.1. Qualification requirements ............................................................................ 10  
   2.2. Competence requirements – three approaches to standards setting .......................................................... 11  
       2.2.1. Professional standards according to Act No 317/2009 Coll. .................. 11  
       2.2.2. Occupational standards according to the National System of Occupations (NSO) .......................................................... 12  
       2.2.3. Qualification standards according to the National Qualifications System (NQS) .......................................................... 13  
       2.2.4. A time for reconciliation ..................................................................... 13  
   2.3. Entry into teaching/training force in VET ....................................................... 14  
   2.4. VET teachers and trainers statistics .............................................................. 16  
   2.5. VET teachers and trainers CPD .................................................................... 18  
3. Practical training instructors in companies (work-based settings) ....................... 23  
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  

References ............................................................................................................... 30  

ANNEX 1. 
Qualification standard (national qualifications system) Teacher of professional (vocational) subjects at secondary schools ........................................... 33  

ANNEX 2. 
Teachers in regional schooling by age groups in 2009 and 2014, numbers and percent ........................................... 34
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 competence 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 (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2015) 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 a profession, group of professions or performance of professional activities; it consists of theoretical education and practical education”.

As can be noted, this definition is not a definition of IVET. It is narrower and reflects a traditional approach. Although it highlights knowledge, skills and competences (abilities) required for performance, these are related to a profession or groups of professions rather than to acquiring a qualification and/or fulfilment of qualification standards, or some explicitly stated requirements. It also indicates a difference in objectives of VET. Performance related to a profession and performing specialised activities is explicitly distinguished. This refers to the traditional division of VET school programmes on study programmes (ISCED 354) and training programmes (ISCED 353). Finally, using terms ‘theoretical education’ and ‘practical education’ (1) clearly indicates strong reference to traditional school-based VET. A new Act No 61/2015 Coll. on VET (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2015) has been however developed to

---

(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 traineeship placements. We will use the term ‘vocational training’ whenever relation to this national terminology is relevant and the term ‘practical training’ when the 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 on the premises of contracted companies.
allow for strengthening work-based learning by introduction of dual VET. According to Paragraph 2(i), the latter is defined as a sub-system of VET based on:

(a) contractual relationship (2);
(b) provision of practical education directly by employers in their own practical training facility;
(c) the employer financing practical education.

This legislation wording must be, however, commented. Although the term ‘employer’ is used, young people in the dual system are not employees of the respective employers. They are still pupils (3) 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 the introduction of elements of dual VET is often mentioned in order to distinguish this model from a genuine German dual VET.

Thus, there are officially three sub-streams of IVET now, differentiated according to the provision of practical training (4):

(a) practical training offered in school workshops and/or school affiliated companies;
(b) practical training offered in companies based on an institutional contract between a school and a company;
(c) practical training offered by companies in dual VET based on an individual contract between an individual and a company and backed by a contract between a company and a school.

Practical training in the 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 (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2009b) and a Decree of Ministry of Education (MŠ) No 437/2009 Coll. (Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, 2009a) on qualification prerequisites and specific qualification requirements setting requirements for respective pedagogical staff and professional staff categories (see more in Section 2). Practical training in companies is offered by instructors under coordination and supervision of trainers of respective VET school. Instructors are

(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.

(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.
practitioners employed by companies. Qualification requirements prescribed for instructors are ‘lower’ compared to trainers (see more in Section 3).

1.2. Policies and development of the last five years

There were three important developments affecting IVET:

(a) the 2008 curricular reform;
(b) the 2009 in-service training reform introducing a new continuing professional development (CPD) model;
(c) the 2009 VET governance reform complemented by introducing dual VET elements in 2015.

1.2.1. The curricular reform

The curricular reform introduced by the Education Act No 245/2008 Coll. (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2008) has decentralised curriculum development. Framework state educational programmes containing performance and content-based standards for study fields and respective ISCED levels were issued by the 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 the years of the 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 required retraining pedagogical staff in curriculum development, which was partly covered by an ESF project (see Section 5). Nevertheless, a lack of experience in curriculum development and learning-outcomes-based programming IVET, and to some extent also the introduction of dual IVET, led to the decision of MŠVVŠ to regulate provision of IVET by tighter frame teaching plans.

1.2.2. The in-service training reform

A new CPD model has been introduced by Act No 317/2009 Coll. (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2009b). This act set seven categories of pedagogical staff: teacher; trainer; tutor; pedagogical assistant; foreign lector; trainer of sport school or sport class; and companion (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 the mainstream CPD. Instructors offering practical training provided 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 with the development of competences addressed by respective professional standards. This regulation of both pre-service and in-service training, together with the 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 the process of development (see Section 2.2).

Credit-based in-service training was introduced offering the exchange of accumulated credits for a financial bonus or for progress in a career path (see more details in Section 2.5). Nevertheless, this legislation was introduced into practice without an inevitable preparatory phase and was driven by an economic theory (to create 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 the adoption of the law (2009): 79.5% versus 40.4% negative assessments and 28% versus 33.1% positive assessments respectively were reported (5).

Although the TALIS data (OECD, 2014) 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.

The TALIS data above clearly indicate frustration of pedagogical staff. In particular, a perceived positive status of teachers by 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 (Table 2) 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.

_survey results are available in Slovak at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1JaJdSFBai1XCNiWp_yaXBIJwJkF_IDLs17Krc/viewpoints.
Table 1. **Teachers’ job satisfaction (*) (overall), in percent**

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

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

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

Not surprisingly, the 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 the dissatisfaction with curriculum (state educational programmes) and in particular with in-service training continues.

Table 2. **Teachers’ job satisfaction (within school), in percent**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Slovakia</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would like to change to another school if that were possible</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy working at this school</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>89.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

**1.2.3. The VET governance reform**

Act No 184/2009 Coll. on VET (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2009a) significantly strengthened the 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 (6) covering all VET fields were identified to

(6) 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.
represent interests of employers in provision of IVET in respective fields, as recently confirmed by a Decree of MŠVVŠ No 64/2015 Coll. (MŠVVŠ, 2015) In 2015, a new Act No 61/2015 Coll. on VET (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2015) revised the original Act on VET and introduced elements of dual VET and also institutionalised cooperation with professional/employers’ organisations through the creation of the Employers’ Council for the Dual Education System. It offered businesses the opportunity to influence the provision of practical training of secondary IVET students.

422 secondary students signed contracts with companies on practical training from September 2015 and the respective companies signed contracts on provision of dual VET with the 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 while practical training is provided at a workplace in companies certified by respective professional/employers’ body and offered by instructors employed by a company. VET school trainers only supervise the provision of practical training delivered by instructors (see more in Section 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 (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2009b) 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. (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2002). All programmes must be accredited by the Accreditation Commission affiliated to the government. Requirements identified and set for programmes awarding teacher qualification contain graduates’ 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. (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2009b) 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. Furthermore, the provision of qualification programmes aimed at expanding the scope of qualified staff is stipulated within the so-called expanding studies. Completion of these studies can e.g. entitle a qualified teacher to teach additional subjects not covered by his/her initial training.

Decree No 437/2009 Coll. on qualification prerequisites and specific qualification requirements (Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, 2009a) sets requirements for respective pedagogical staff and professional staff categories. Qualification prerequisites mean completion of relevant educational programmes, sometimes also additional certificates and/or years of practice in profession before entering teaching position at school. These requirements are very detailed, sometimes setting requirements with regard to individual subjects taught (7). 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 for the pedagogical staff.

2.2. Competence requirements – three approaches to standards setting

The development of competence requirements for teachers and trainers followed the three approaches applied to standard setting in Slovakia:

(a) professional standards following Act No 317/2009 (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2009b);
(b) occupational standards within the National System of Occupations (NSO);
(c) and qualification standards within the National Qualifications System (NQS).

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

First sets of professional standards were submitted to the public debate in 2008/09 (Valent, 2009). Professional standards for all career levels and staff categories (see Section 1.2.2) were represented by a competence profile covering three dimensions (pupil/student, education process, and self-development) and four dimensions (strategic management, pedagogical management, personal management, and self-development) in the case of leader/manager-related standards. Competence profiles

\(^7\) This decree includes 57 items relevant for teachers of a variety of VET subjects in secondary VET schools, and 10 items relevant for trainers at secondary VET schools. All the other categories are handled in a similar way.
addressed all respective 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 at a lower level are not repeated anymore and the 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 been also 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 developed (Šnídlová, 2014).

In summer 2014, new professional standards were subject 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 (8), cooperating closely for years with the MPSVR, started to develop the National System of Occupations (9). Since 2009, national occupational standards have been produced based on multilateral cooperation. 731 occupational standards out of envisaged 1 000 have been already developed (10). A structure of the standard for a secondary VET school teacher illustrates the NSO approach to describing requirements for fulfilment of respective occupation (11). Much wider information about respective occupations is

---

(8) Trexima Ltd is a private company cooperating with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education in provision of labour market monitoring services, see www.trexima.sk.

(9) www.sustavapovolani.sk

(10) Already approved standards are available at: http://www.sustavapovolani.sk/register_zamestnani.

(11) 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
available in ISTP (12) containing assessment of required proficiency in personal skills, examples of tasks to be performed in the workplace, but also about vacancies and wages offered in respective regions. In the case of teachers of vocational subjects at secondary VET schools (13), 19 examples of tasks to be performed in the workplace are listed (e.g. applying creative and alternative teaching methods, making use of new working methods). Furthermore, nine personal skills required from VET teachers are labelled as ‘over the average performance’ (e.g. patience; practical thinking; self-control) and seven labelled as a ‘regular level performance’ (e.g. communication skills; sense of initiative; imagination).

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 (14) and National Qualifications Framework are under development. National qualification standards should capitalise on occupational standards and offer qualification standards for professions/occupations (15). In the case of teachers of vocational subjects at secondary VET schools, ten areas of knowledge, seven skills and seven competences were identified to describe the qualification standard (see Annex 1). 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’ (Vantuch et al., 2013) – educational standards, qualification standards and occupational standards, corresponding, respectively, to the education system, the NQS and the NSO. Despite the difference in methodology, all three concepts suffer from prevalence of academism. No functional analysis of requirements of jobs has been

---

(12) www.istp.sk
(14) www.kvalifikacie.sk
(15) Within the national ESF project, 1 000 standards were planned to be developed by the end of 2015, of which 738 have been already finalised.
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 relevance 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 on the specificity of teaching general subjects within VET, but it is not visible in teacher training programmes. There are no 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 for teaching VET subjects. Vocational theoretical subjects are 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 a complementary pedagogical study (CPS for teachers) providing them with teaching competences. CPS can be delivered by HEI only, either simultaneously or consecutively. It can be offered as an additional programme to the already accredited teaching programme. In case HEI does not provide respective initial teaching programme accredited by the Accreditation Commission affiliated to the government accrediting higher education programmes, CPS must be accredited by the Accreditation Council of the Ministry of Education for Continuing Training of Pedagogical and Professional Staff. 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 in 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 five years of experience), 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 acquire 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. (Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, 2009b). 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. Practitioners without teacher training can teach VET subjects, but no more than 10 lesson hours per week. It is hoped that this can attract practitioners to teach part-time. Practical training within 'dual VET' is provided by instructors employed by companies (see Section 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 schools (16). Teachers and trainers at VET schools were predominantly female. There were only 3,965 men (28.8%) among 13,779 teachers at VET schools, however, 1,769 men (56.6%) among 3,128 trainers. The average age of teachers in VET schools was 47.6 years (47 for women and 48.8 for men) and the average age of trainers was 49 years (46.8 for women and 50.6 for men). Teachers at VET schools were the oldest on 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 presented in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. VET school teachers by age groups in 2014 and 2009](image)

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

As seen in the Table in Annex 2, the ageing structure is only shifted accordingly from 2009 till 2014. This indicates that the inflow of young teachers is unfavourably low and the outflow of the elderly insufficiently low, influenced also by the increase in the retirement age, significantly affecting predominantly women. Furthermore, the share of teachers in the retirement age in VET schools (85.5%; 1,165 out of total 13,779) is higher compared to grammar school, elementary and lower secondary school teachers.

---

(16) 627 trainers were employed by diverse special schools created for pupils with special educational needs.
This seems to indicate both a lack of younger specialists and low attractiveness of the teaching profession compared to opportunities in business.

Table 3 below presents the distribution of teachers and trainers by qualification. The share of teachers with qualifications is slightly lower in VET schools compared to grammar schools, but higher compared to conservatories and special schools for SEN students. In conservatories, the share of qualified teachers is lower predominantly due to the 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of school</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Trainers</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With qualification</td>
<td>Without qualification</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>With qualification</td>
<td>Without qualification</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary VET schools</td>
<td>13 067</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>2 902</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatories</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special schools</td>
<td>4 524</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar schools</td>
<td>6 757</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NB:** Data refer to all special schools including VET schools for VET students.

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

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 in VET schools were taught by unqualified and/or inappropriately qualified teachers. A share of these lessons is low (5.9%) and it corresponds to the 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 get a qualification.

As regards teacher and trainer CPD, it is decentralised at the school level. Therefore, there are no national data about CPD of individual categories of staff. 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 MPC within the national ESF project, ‘Professional and Career Growth of Teaching Staff’, and within some other ESF project run by ŠIOV (see Section 5).

2.5. VET teachers and trainers CPD

CPD of teachers and trainers is regulated by Act No 317/2009 Coll. (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2009b) and detailed by the Decree No 445/2009 Coll. (Ministry of Education, 2009b) that introduced a CPD reform based on provision of credit-based continuing education programmes. The most important provider of CPD programmes (17) is MPC (18). 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 Section 5). In contrast to MPC and its ‘Professional and Career Growth of Teaching Staff’ project, ŠIOV does not run any ESF project aimed at development and provision of VET specific CPD programmes.

Continuing education can also be offered by other institutions (19), 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:

(a) adaptation education, obligatory for beginners, lasting from three months to a year and not offering credits for its completion;
(b) actualisation education, aimed at upholding the professional competence needed for standard performance or attestation, lasting 20-60 hours spread over a maximum of 10 months and offering credits for its completion (except for the preparatory training for attestation);

---


(18) An in-service training institution directly managed by MŠVVŠ with headquarters in Bratislava and three regional centres and six additional branches (five with seats in capital cities of regions and one branch serving schools and school establishments with the Hungarian language of instruction has a seat in Komáro): www.mpc-edu.sk.

(19) Health schools staff can be served by specialised in-service courses offered under the supervision of the Ministry of Health.
(c) innovation education, 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;
(d) specialisation education, aimed at acquiring professional competences to pursue specialised activities (e.g. class teacher, drug addiction prevention, career guidance, mentoring of novice teachers), 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);
(e) school leadership education, obligatory for teachers in administrative positions, lasting 160-200 hours spread over 24 months and not offering credits for its completion, as c it is obligatory for the position.

It is precisely prescribed what kind of programmes can be offered by respective providers, e.g. regional schools (adaptation, actualisation, specialisation), 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 within adaptation education is stipulated by law for a period of three months to one year, and a maximum of two years, if a beginner teacher or trainer fails to achieve required competences according to the assessment of a school director. No mentoring is envisaged by law for teachers and trainers in the second to the fourth career levels. Schools must elaborate their own adaptation education programme that should lead to the acquisition of competences set by the second career level professional standards. These standards are still not public (and obligatory), and therefore, a school director in cooperation with a three-member 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 mentor 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 the termination of his/her contract.

All aforementioned types of programmes except strictly school-based adaptation education must be subjected to accreditation by the Accreditation Commission for Continuing Education affiliated to the MŠVVŠ (20).

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 being officially

\[(20)\] A list of accredited CPD programmes (in total 1 524 in October 2015) is available at http://www.minedu.sk/data/att/8731.pdf.
issued. This plan is important to solve practical issues rather than to identify detailed training needs of individual teachers and trainers. An application for participation in a CPD programme can be sent by an applicant directly to the regional branch of MPC, signed by a school director or not, supplemented with qualification certificates relevant for the respective CPD programme.

CPD programmes are credit-rated, with one credit point corresponding to five hours of workload. In the case of 60 and more accumulated credits, each 30 credits can be translated into financial bonuses equal to 6% of a tariff wage (21) or can be used for progressing to the third and fourth levels in a career path (30 credits or 60 credits and completed specialised preparatory programme are required for entering first or second attestation procedures). 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 seven years only, and therefore, credit-related remuneration bonuses expire in contrast to bonuses related to progress in a career path.

Originally, the 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; according to the Chamber of Teachers’ survey (22), 61.1% of teachers and trainers agree with the expansion of this option. Possibilities for validation and recognition of competences acquired on the 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 subject to criticism as a model that prefers credit hunting over the personal development of teachers and trainers that would translate in improved quality of teaching/learning in classrooms and workshops. Thus, the in-service training model is predominantly supply-driven, heavily depending on the offer of accredited continuing education programmes.

Prior to the renewal of in-service training, four needs analyses were conducted by the MPC within the national ESF project ‘Professional and Career Growth of Teaching

\(^{(21)}\) The following is an official example from the MŠVVŠ’s website: If a base tariff wage for a teacher is EUR 769, 6% from EUR 769 are equal to EUR 46.14. Rounded up to EUR 46.50; taken two times (for 2 times 30 credits) it results in EUR 93 bonus monthly.

Staff (23). The first survey on vocational subject teachers’ needs, conducted in 2010, focused on the identification of teachers’ competences categorised according to the three domains of professional standards (student, educational process, and self-development). Teachers (N=348) identified as the most urgent and in need of addressing by in-service training: identifying and fixing 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, respectively (Sihelsky, 2010). These results suggested 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.

MPC conducted a more detailed analysis in 2011 (Almášiová, 2012). 318 teachers of vocational subjects and VET trainers took part. The results can be summarised as follows (Valent, 2013):

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

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

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

(a) 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/student self-reflection and self-evaluation;
(b) the educational process – 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 or programmes;

(23) Outputs of these analyses are available at http://pkrmpc.dev2010.lomtec.com/stranka/odborna-aktivita-2-1-1o.
(c) the self-development – using ICT in one’s work and professional development, setting one’s own plan of personal professional growth.

The 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. A lack of programmes for vocational subject teachers and for trainers was indicated. This is related to lacking capacity 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 the earlier findings of the MPC’s survey mentioned above, where 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 programmes (Valent and Sabo, 2011). 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 innovations in the world of work and the world of education relevant for provision of quality IVET resulted in the creation of a new VET governance architecture introduced by the 2009 Act on VET and the new 2015 Act on VET (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2015). As already mentioned, professional/employers’ organisations were assigned many responsibilities; however, their involvement in in-service training of teachers and trainers is not yet backed by legislation. They are only responsible for training of instructors of practical training offered by companies. It is inevitable to expand offers in support of CPD of vocational subject teachers and trainers, and legislatively back their CPD in a more appropriate way. 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 German speaking countries in VET specific training should be further exploited. Professional/ employers’ organisations must be enabled to support CPD of teachers and trainers substantially.
3. Practical training instructors in companies (work-based settings)

Instructors offering practical training in companies are not considered pedagogical staff and, therefore, are not addressed by Act No 317/2009 Coll. (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2009b). They work with a maximum of three students in cooperation with a VET trainer from a partner school who supervises a maximum of 40 students in total. Their position is regulated with the introduction of dual VET by Act No 61/2015 Coll. on VET (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2015). Instructors are employed by a company that provides practical training and they are required to have at least a certificate of apprenticeship in respective study field. They need to have three years of experience, all certificates required for performing respective profession, and within one year of their appointment they need to complete an Instructor Training. These trainings are already under development with regard to all fields within envisaged dual VET. The following is a 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 with total 28 lesson hours, of which 16 hours of face-to-face learning and 12 hours of distance learning:

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

Instructors will be trained by lecturers retrained 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 VET pilot projects. A training programme for new lecturers is composed of four modules and lasts 40 hours. Training of lecturers with experience and relevant history of earlier employment lasts only 20 hours.

There were several dual VET piloting projects run before adoption of the Act on VET (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2015), two of which contained important trainer training component:

(a) The Swiss-Slovak project, ‘Vocational Education and Training for the Labour Market’, financed by the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme, is testing the Swiss experience in 10 secondary VET schools across the country and in 18 partner companies. A 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.
(b) The Austrian-Slovak project, ‘Young Stars’, is testing the Austrian experience in the Secondary VET School Zlaté Moravce and in 10 partner companies.
instructors have been already trained in a 32-hour training based on the Austrian experience.

In addition to instructors of dual training, there are also instructors providing similar work-based training within the 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 the qualification required for a regular trainer, as they belong to the school-based VET sub-system. CPD provision for this group has not yet been developed. If the two above-mentioned projects continue, instructor CPD will follow the experience of the partner countries.

CPD in the dual sub-system of VET will have to be developed under the supervision of professional/employers’ organisations responsible for respective study fields (as stipulated by the Decree No 64/2015 Coll. (MŠVVŠ, 2015)). Other important players, e.g. guilds, should be gradually involved in retraining 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 its 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 MPC and ŠIOV and can participate in accredited continuing education programmes (see Section 2.5) 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 professionalisation, 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 their workshops. These learning opportunities are however rather informal. It is hoped that the 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 the lack of opportunities for vocationally-targeted retraining. This is why Act No 184/2009 Coll. on VET (Parliament of the Slovak Republic, 2009a) suggested creating ‘Centres of VET’ with enhanced capacities to offer in-service training for teachers and trainers alongside with regular
secondary IVET programmes for students. These centres are being established, 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 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 professionals/employers’ organisations that should contribute to professionalisation of all VET staff (including teachers and trainers employed by VET schools) with regard to specific VET-related competences. This should complement CPD focused on the pedagogical/didactic competence offered by 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 with the world of work. These activities are valued by VET staff; however, the 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 (24) and Young Creator (25).

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.

MPC runs the project, ‘Professional and Career Growth of Teaching Staff’, directly aimed at the provision of programmes corresponding to the new model of in-service

(\textsuperscript{24}) Basic information (in Slovak) about 2015 event is at \url{http://www.siov.sk/index.php/sk/projekty-a-aktivity/prioritne-cinnosti/juvyr-2}.

(\textsuperscript{25}) Basic information (in Slovak) about 2015 event is at \url{http://www.economy.gov.sk/mlady-tvorca-2015/144551s}. 

training (see Section 1.2.2). The project trained 53 350 participants from 2010 to 30 June 2015 overall, exceeding the projected number of 20 000 (26).

Within the already completed project, ‘Teacher Training with Regard to Developing School Educational Programmes’, run by ŠIOV, 8 021 people were retrained (exceeding the projected number of 6 700), of which 2 875 were vocational subject teachers and trainers. This training was aimed at enhancing curriculum development skills in response to the requirements of the 2008 curricular reform (see Section 1.2.1).

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’ (27) run by ŠIOV, contains a training component aimed at implementing a ‘polytechnic principle’ into teaching of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Technology. 722 participants had been re-trained 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 school teachers and they do not work in VET schools, this training as well as some other components of this project is aimed at improving links between education and the world of work and at the development of employment-relevant skills of pupils. It can be said that the project supports pre-vocational learning 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, a CPD programme aimed at qualifications system development was accredited. 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. The project has developed a retraining programme for ‘lecturers’ (teachers/facilitators in adult learning) and retrained 280 ‘lecturers’. The programme is composed of three

(26) The exact numbers of VET teachers and trainers are not available. 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.

(27) 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’.
modules: andragogic competences (50 hours), didactic competences (50 hours) and 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 specific VET-related issues. The programme is based on standards composed of two categories: professional knowledge and professional skills (28). NÚCŽV intends to make this programme and standards a basis for qualification requirements of ‘lecturers’ as a regulated profession in the future.

Lecturing is now a free trade according to 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) are 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 and 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 or institutionalisation of project results.

6. Conclusions

A status of VET teachers and trainers is low. The 2013 OECD data confirm the strong frustration of lower secondary level teachers in Slovakia compared to other countries. Even, with only 4% of teachers believing that the 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 the significant improvement in wages since the strike of pedagogical staff in 2012, the attractiveness of the 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 the extension of the retirement age, but it also signals a lack of young professionals interested in a teacher/trainer career. A share of pensioners working as teachers in VET schools is higher compared to grammar schools or lower secondary and elementary teachers.

No substantial barriers are visible in the 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 the 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. MPC, ŠIOV and NÚCŽV, three 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 strengthen the position of professional/employers’ organisations in VET have been in progress since 2009. Since 2015, these institutions have been responsible for the provision of training for instructors of 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 of this bodies in providing training 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS</td>
<td>Complementary pedagogical studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVET</td>
<td>Continuing vocational education and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVTI SR</td>
<td>Centrum vedecko-technických informácií SR (Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>European Social Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEI</td>
<td>Higher education institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information communication technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISCED</td>
<td>International Standard Classification of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISCO</td>
<td>International Standard Classification of Occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISTP</td>
<td>Internetový sprievodca trhom práce (Internet Guide through the Labour Market)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVET</td>
<td>Initial vocational education and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPC</td>
<td>Metodicko-pedagogické centrum (Methodological-Pedagogical Centre)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPSVR</td>
<td>Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny (Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MŠ</td>
<td>Ministerstvo školstva (Ministry of Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MŠVVŠ</td>
<td>Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu (Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACE</td>
<td>General Classification of Economic Activities of the European Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Qualifications Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQS</td>
<td>National Qualifications System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSO</td>
<td>National System of Occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NÚCŽV</td>
<td>Národný ústav celoživotného vzdelávania (National Lifelong Learning Institute)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEN</td>
<td>Special education needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŠIOV</td>
<td>Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania (State Institute of Vocational Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŠVS</td>
<td>Školské výpočtové stredisko (School Computing Centre)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TALIS</td>
<td>Teaching and Learning International Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ÚIPŠ</td>
<td>Ústav informácii a prognóz školstva (Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational education and training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References
[URLs accessed 6.4.2016]

http://pkrmpc.dev2010.lomtec.com/subor/5582


http://www.rokovania.sk/Rokovanie.aspx/BodRokovaniaDetail?idMaterial=790


ANNEX 1.
Qualification standard (national qualifications system)
Teacher of professional (vocational) subjects at secondary schools

Knowledge

- characterise the school system in the Slovak;
- identify the socio-cultural context of student’s development;
- define developmental and individual characteristics of student;
- characterise psychological and social factors of student’s learning;
- define subject content and pedagogy;
- define a procedure for assessing the process and results of teaching and student’s learning;
- describe different education theory disciplines, importance of education theory and its cooperation with other sciences;
- describe teaching methods and determine their role in the education process;
- characterise individual pedagogic principles and their application;
- explain the nature of processes of social interaction, interpersonal perception and social communication in general, as well as with regard to teacher – student/class relation specificities.

Skills

- adhere to the syllabi/curriculum within the educational process;
- apply a systemic approach to modern teaching of vocational subjects in secondary schools;
- check and assess the work of students and their achievements;
- keep pedagogical documents (class book, class report, student catalogue sheet);
- prepare are present background documents for commissions and parents' associations;
- develop learning and education aids for students;
- apply psychological knowledge in own methods and procedures of presentation of the subject matter, checking and assessment in interaction and communication with students.

Competences:

- responsibility for fulfilling the tasks and duties;
- autonomy in organising and planning work;
- autonomy in solving and analysing problems;
- autonomy in presenting;
- creativity;
- working in a team;
- motivating people.
## ANNEX 2.
### Teachers in regional schooling by age groups in 2009 and 2014, numbers and percent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>under 25</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>30-34</th>
<th>35-39</th>
<th>40-44</th>
<th>45-49</th>
<th>50-54</th>
<th>55-59</th>
<th>60-64</th>
<th>65 and over</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All schools 2009 (*)</td>
<td>2 453</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>8 923</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>10 833</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>10 838</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>10 859</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>12 135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All schools 2014 (*)</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>6 471</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8 501</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>11 577</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>11 417</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>10 726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary VET schools 2009 (**)</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1 490</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>1 829</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>1 710</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>1 780</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>2 523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary VET schools 2014 (**)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>1 229</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>1 712</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>1 653</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>1 646</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: (*) Kindergartens, basic schools, basic schools of arts, grammar schools, secondary VET schools, conservatories, language schools, special schools;  
(**) Conservatories not included.  
Source: ÚIPŠ-ŠVS Banská Bystrica, data as of 30 November 2009 and 31 January 2014.