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European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2018 update

COUNTRY REPORT: SLOVAKIA

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Acknowledgements

Disclaimer:

1   Introduction

Main changes since 2016

There is no substantial progress in VNFIL per se. VNFIL procedures are not in place and individuals still cannot apply for VNFIL, with only one exemption already introduced by legislation in 2009. (This is a certificate 'verifying professional competence' entitling originally an unqualified individual to start a business requiring a formal certificate of apprenticeship). Solid improvement is visible in the labour sector, with wider implementation of the "bilan de compètences" methodology (including training of labour office counsellors concerning the first two stages of validation). Expansion of this methodology into the education sector is under discussion.

Some important improvements relate to preconditions for implementing VNFIL. Slovak qualification framework was created and the Referencing report was accepted by National and European authorities in 2017. A description of 1 000 qualifications aligned to the National Qualification Framework (SKKR) embedded in the National Qualification Register (www.kvalifikacie.sk) create a first precondition for validation as qualification standards are contained therein. Qualifications required the by labour market and contained in the NQR will be gradually placed into the Information system of further education (ISDV)[1] and subsequently eligible for validation.

A new ESF funded project "System of Verifying Qualifications (SOK[2])" is in the pipeline (planned to start in spring 2019) containing a VNFIL related component. Opportunities for on-line self-testing should also be expanded within this project in addition to the already functional IT FITNESS test (www.itfitnesstest.sk) and a Slovak version of the on-line PIAAC testing which is ready to be launched (see part 10 of this report).

The preparation of a new legislation backing VNFIL should be supported by the SOK project and the new LLL strategy which will be presented by the end of 2019. A new law introducing a clear conceptual framework for VNFIL is expected in 2020.

Critical assessment of progress towards the 2012 Council Recommendation

No genuine and appropriately developed national model of validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) exists in Slovakia. Although Lifelong Learning (LLL) strategies address this issue, a fundamental legislative basis for VNFIL is still missing. Nevertheless, the 2009 Act on Lifelong Learning created at least some preconditions for gradual progress. First of all the National Qualifications System (Národná sústava kvalifikácií, NQS, www.kvalifikacie.sk) is backed by legislation which introduces a new approach based on linking learning outcomes to the description of qualifications.

Currently, validation according to the Act on LLL refers only to:

1. recognition of results of further education based on assessment of achieving qualification standards leading to a full or partial qualification, the former fully corresponding to all requirements of a profession and the latter only to some of the knowledge, skills and competences related to the respective profession; and

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[1] See the list of qualifications at http://isdv.iedu.sk/Qualifications.aspx and the list of authorised institutions for respective qualifications at http://isdv.iedu.sk/EligibleInstitutions.aspx
[2] This title is an unofficial translation of the Slovak title "Systém overovania kvalifikácií (SOK)", using the term qualification in compliance with a traditional Slovak context (see more about terminology in part 2.2).

2. verification of a professional competence necessary for running a business regulated by the Trade Licensing Act No. 455/1991 Coll. that is also based on assessing compliance with standards.

None of the two interrelated cases mentioned above is a clear case of VNFIL. The first case refers to accredited programmes leading to qualifications described by standards, hence linked to formal rather than non-formal learning. Validation is based on the examination of graduates from accredited programmes by authorised institutions accredited for validation that organise the examination. Nevertheless, individuals with five years of practice can apply for the examination in authorised institutions and can receive a certificate confirming compliance with qualification standards, without prior completion of the accredited programme.

The aforementioned ESF project "System of Verifying Qualifications (SOK)" should substantially contribute to the progress in this area. This project reflects the recommendations from the 'Learning Slovakia' strategy paper[3] to develop assessment manuals to complement existing qualification standards. Furthermore, the National programme for the development of education (NPRVV)[4] adopted by the government in June 2018 contains explicit commitments to implement VNFIL.

It must be stressed however that insufficient attention is still paid to the need to establish robust quality assurance procedures, a point that was emphasised also by the Learning Slovakia paper and consistent with the need to offer massive guidance and counselling to individuals interested in the validation of their learning. There is a risk of overreliance on self-testing and underestimation of the importance of professional assistance to individuals seeking validation. There is no clear plan on training and hiring counsellors/tutors that are urgently needed in the education sector and in particular for assisting low skilled adults. On the other hand, there is progress in retraining labour office counsellors who serve unemployed people.

Strengths and disadvantages

Some preconditions for implementing VNFIL are already met: existing standards and online self-testing tools and some experience of validation within institutions (such as schools, professional and employer associations). A background study exploring implementation of VNFIL in Slovakia was prepared in November 2016[5] , creating a solid basis for understanding the systemic changes needed. Unfortunately, too little attention is paid to this research by authorities. All activities focus predominantly on the first two stages of the validation process. Neither a clear conceptual framework for validation was created and accepted nationwide, nor does legislative backing for the full implementation of VNFIL based on robust quality assured processes exist so far. As mentioned earlier, the newest 2018- 2027 governmental policy paper (NPRVV) addresses this issue, and a new deadline for implementing VNFIL has been set – 2022.

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[3] Learning Slovakia strategy paper commissioned by the Ministry of Education has been written by six independent experts. After a two phase consultation process, Ministry of Education prepared a National programme for the development of education (NPRVV) with the implementation plan (specifying deadlines and financing for next ten years) drawing from Learning Slovakia recommendations. The first phase of a consultation process was initiated by publishing 'Learning Slovakia' theses in autumn 2016; the second phase by publishing a full strategy paper in March 2017. All documents concerning the development of the 'Learning Slovakia' paper are available at http://www.minedu.sk/uciace-sa-slovensko/.

[4] National programme for the development of education (NPRVV), including the implementation plan containing 106 measures with timelines and envisaged costs until 2027, is available at http://www.rokovania.sk/Rokovanie.aspx/BodRokovaniaDetail?idMaterial=27582.

[5] Detko J. et al (2016) Validácia výsledkov neformálneho vzdelávania a informálneho učenia sa v SR (Validation of non-formal and informal learning in the Slovak Republic), Bratislava, ŠIOV 2016, 79 pages, available at http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=31

2 National perspective

2.1 Overarching approach to validation

There is no national policy on validation in place so far. Neither of the earlier Lifelong Learning Strategies (2007 and 2011) resulted in the development of full-fledged policies although validation is considered an important contribution to both the:

- reduction of supply and demand mismatch in the provision of a qualified labour force and

- the enrichment of the qualification system.

Whenever validation was taken into account in the education sector, it was related to the reduced conceptual framework set by the Act on LLL No. 568/2009 Coll. The relevant article of this act (§ 17 Verification and assessment of the professional competence) refers to validation (meaning in fact assessment) and also:

- recognition of results of further education, and/or

- verification of a professional competence necessary for running a business regulated by the Trade Licensing Act No. 455/1991 Coll.

In the second case a person applying for a trade license in crafts requiring a qualification certified by Certificate of apprenticeship obtained via formal education can substitute missing qualifications from initial VET by a document received pursuant to Act on LLL certifying his/her 'professional competence'. Achieving this professional competence is a result of the examination leading to obtaining a qualification certificate, complying with qualification standards (and assessment standards) set and issued by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports (further Ministry of Education). Legislation speaks explicitly about examination of compliance with qualification standards required for full qualification (full coverage of a profession) and a partial qualification (partial coverage of a profession) as represented by respective qualification standards developed with reference to the Act on LLL.

Nevertheless, certificates issued pursuant to this act are not equivalent to the qualification certificate from initial education. Thus, the validation of non-formal and informal learning or in fact predominantly validation of prior learning directly in the work place focuses on easing access to labour market, however not to continuing formal education.

In January 2016, the evaluation of the LLL strategy was discussed by government and it was explicitly stated that the "missing validation mechanisms" will be addressed by the "new Act on LLL and VNFIL". A new law was considered inevitable to back VNFIL more appropriately and the National Lifelong Learning Institute was expected to support creation of a new legislation. Nevertheless, neither the working group created in November 2015 to prepare a new Act on LLL, nor the systemic ESF funded National project „CVANU" implemented by the National Lifelong Learning Institute[6] resulted in a breakthrough: A clear conceptual framework for VNFIL agreed by

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[6] Ďalšie vzdelávanie a poradenstvo pre dospelých ako nástroj lepšej uplatniteľnosti na trhu práce (Further education and guidance for adults as a tool for better succeeding on the labour market), description of details in Slovak is available at http://www.cvanu.sk/doc/31.

stakeholders is still missing, although a strategy paper to back VNFIL policies was prepared by a group of experts already in 2016.[7]

Dissatisfaction with the performance of the National Lifelong Learning Institute led to transferring the LLL agenda to other institutions. Ministry of Education appointed Slovak Academy of Sciences to prepare a first draft of a new LLL strategy to be submitted for public discussion until the end of 2018. Subsequently a new legislation addressing VNFIL should be prepared. In 2018, only limited amendment of the Act on LLL is envisaged. Thus a legal basis for VNFIL can hardly be expected before 2020. Verification of a professional competence necessary for running a business backed by the Act on LLL remains therefore the only relevant measure. The most important difference compared to 2016 is improvement in the monitoring of examination and provision of training by the Ministry of Education.

In the labour sector, "bilan de compétences" methodology, originally adjusted to the Slovak conditions within the Transfer of Innovation Leonardo da Vinci "Qual-n-Guide" project (see Box 1 below for more), is gradually being implemented by public employment services. Counsellors were trained (to work with individual portfolios) within the ESF funded National project "Road to the Labour Market"[8]. Upskilling long-term unemployed people is being prepared under the 2017-2021 ESF project "Supporting individual counselling for the long-term Unemployed"[9].

> **Box 1 'Qual-n -Guide' Project**
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> This 2013-2015 'Transfer of Innovation' Leonardo da Vinci Project contains important validation relevant components. A private BKS Úspech Ltd ran this project after absorbing FECBOP (Fédération Européenne des Centres de Bilan et d´Orientation Professionnelle) experience (see the dedicated portal on "bilan de compétences" in Slovakia www.bilanciakompetencii.sk which presents project results as well as many crucial documents in Slovak and English at http://bilanciakompetencii.sk/bilancia-kompetencii/podklady-na-prevzatie/). See also the project description in the ADAM Portal at http://www.adam-europe.eu/adam/project/view.htm?prj=11064#.VuGNU5wrLDc   BKS Úspech received a National Career Guidance Award 2015 for its contribution to the development of a career guidance system in public employment services. This award explicitly valued the FECBOP Quality Management System implementation into the Slovak Republic's employment services. See more in English at http://web.saaic.sk/nrcg_new/kniznica/2015/Compendium2015_Slovak_Republic.pdf. The Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (ÚPSVaR) continues now in the gradual implementation of "bilan de compétences" methodology into its labour offices' practice.

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[7] Detko J . et al (2016) Validácia výsledkov neformálneho vzdelávania a informálneho učenia sa v SR (Validation of non-formal and informal learning in the Slovak Republic), Bratislava, ŠIOV 2016, 79 pages , availalbe at http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=31

[8] See more about the project Cesta na trh práce (Road to the Labour Market) at http://www.upsvar.sk/europsky-socialny-fond/narodne-projekty-v-programovom-obdobi-2014-2020/narodny-projekt-cesta-na-trh-prace.html?page_id=696506

[9] See more about the ESF project Podpora individuálneho poradenstva pre dlhodobo nezamestnaných (Supporting individual counselling for the long-term unemployed) at http://www.upsvar.sk/sluzby-zamestnanosti/odborne-poradenske-sluzby/narodny-projekt-podpora-individualizovaneho-poradenstva-pre-dlhodobo-nezamestnanych-uoz-aktivita-c.2.html?page_id=762754 .

2.2   Validation in education and training

As stated above (see part 2.1), no genuine national system for validation has been established. There is no full four stages validation (identification, documentation, assessment, and certification) in place. A new legislation is considered an inevitability. In order to understand the Slovak education and qualifications system two legal concepts need to be distinguished:

■ The level of education ('stupeň vzdelania'); this gives certain entitlements, for example in terms of access to education at higher levels. A person can achieve a certain 'level of education' only by having completed the formal education and training pathway and the related summative assessment. The level of education is defined as:

> *'Level of knowledge, skills and competences achieved after successful completion of an education programme or of its part that is recognised by the state as a precondition for continuing in consequent education and training or as a precondition for integrating into the labour market'*[10].

■ The qualification ('kvalifikácia') – which is linked to the capacity of a person to carry out all activities of a specific profession as defined by the qualifications' standard.

Consequently, while the level of education gives certain general entitlements, the qualification is related to the labour market and to a specific occupation.

Some programmes are considered to offer only the level of education (this is typical for general education[11]). Other programmes (typical for VET schools) offer the level of education and qualification. In some cases two certificates are issued, in some cases only one certificate is issued confirming both the level of education and qualification.

Education standards of the formal IVET cover requirements for completion of a programme (with prescribed ISCED classification) leading to achieving a level of education as stipulated by the Education act No 245/2008 Coll. and specified by the respective State educational programme (National curricula). Awarding qualifications from the formal education system (corresponding to a level of education as described above) is the sole responsibility of formal education providers. Thus, the validation according to the Act on LLL is relevant and 'valid' for the purpose to run a business only (as explained also earlier in the part 2.1).

The Trade Licensing Act No. 455/1991 Coll. specifies which qualifications give access to which professions/professional activities. In addition to the formal qualification possessed, the person can also provide evidence that he/she has the required professional capacity to access the given profession through the recognition of professional practice. The person has to demonstrate he/she has practiced in the required profession for a pre-defined number of years (several combinations of years of experience and positions held are possible).

The Act on LLL No. 568/2009 Coll. creates a specific possibility which people can use in the sector of VET/further education. The 'validation' applies to some crafts specified by Trade Licensing Act No 455/1991 Coll. and cannot be applied to otherwise regulated qualifications, e.g. (sectoral) qualifications regulated by sectoral legislation

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[10] Education Act No 245/2008 Coll,, §2 w).

[11] A change in legislation can be however expected soon. It is visible also from the intention to indicate level 4 of the national qualification framework (equivalent to EQF 4) in respective of secondary general school leaving certificates that is signalled in the Referencing report (see more on the Slovak Qualification Framework in part 3).

and awarded by varying sectoral authorities. It also does not apply to higher education.

The Act on LLL makes a difference between "full" and "partial" qualifications, the former fully corresponding to all requirements of a profession as set by standards and the latter to some knowledge, skills and competences related to a profession, again as set by standards. This approach is considered outdated and hampering the increase of flexibility in the provision of qualifications. This is why the term "partial qualification" will be exempt from the Act on LLL via the amendment already in preparation. Slovak qualification framework SKKR allows for making a difference between four sub-frameworks qualifications: first three corresponding to general, IVET and higher education formal qualifications and the fourth – a sub-framework to occupational qualifications (containing also former partial qualifications).

Despite the title, Act on LLL addresses further education rather than lifelong learning/education and makes it possible to acquire a qualification after an examination which assesses the compliance with the qualification standards set for the qualification as registered by the Ministry of Education in its Information system of further education (ISDV).[12] Such a qualification certificate is also considered a certificate 'verifying professional competence' (*overenie odbornej spôsobilosti*) and entitles the holder to start a business which otherwise requires a Certificate of apprenticeship.

In order to have his/her knowledge, skills and competence recognised through examination pursuant to the Act on LLL, the person has to be at least 18 years old, have completed compulsory education and completed accredited further education or five years working practice in the relevant position confirmed by his/her employer.

There are no detailed validation procedures elaborated yet. The examination is the only obligatory part of the process defined also for the purpose of recognition/validation of further education and recognition/validation of partial or full qualification. Regulation (see http://isdv.iedu.sk/Documents/Usmernenie_skusky.rtf) addresses in detail administrative aspects of examination, but there is neither regulation nor guidance available concerning the four stages of validation (identification, documentation, assessment and certification). The validation procedure to be followed is at the discretion of the authorised institutions listed in the Information system of further education (ISDV) (http://isdv.iedu.sk/EligibleInstitutions.aspx).

Currently valid legislation does not create a 'right' for persons to apply for VNFIL to gain a certificate identical or at least equivalent to the formal education certificate in general education, IVET and higher education. A specific case of validation is possible with regard to CVET/adult learning as explained above. In the youth sector, validation of non-formal learning is debated some years, however respective procedures are not yet implemented (see more later). Sectoral differences in approach towards validation are induced by demand for validation rather than by national authorities' preference or priority in policy making.

Financing validation services is not yet clarified. There is neither specific funding policy nor policy focus, except assistance to people without a Certificate of apprenticeship required by Trade Licensing Act to start a business and those affected within specific ESF projects. Costs in the only functional case (certificate 'verifying professional competence') are borne by individuals in need of such a certificate.

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[12] See the list of qualifications at http://isdv.iedu.sk/Qualifications.aspx and the list of authorised institutions for respective qualifications at http://isdv.iedu.sk/EligibleInstitutions.aspx

It is up to the Ministry of Education to harmonise earlier processes and to prevent the application of now redundant practice in standards setting (education standards, occupational standards, LLL standards, qualification standards) on the one hand; also, on the other hand, the same Ministry is required to create overarching NQS in cooperation with other stakeholders, in particular the Ministry of Labour and employer representatives (see Section 4). Priority should be given to the setting/revision of standards for qualifications needed on the labour market.

There is no strategy addressing VNFIL interlinked with OER, MOOCs and Open courses where initiatives are promoted as learning alternatives or a complementary activity enriching formal and/or non-formal education. There are however neither regulations nor specific policy papers taking this into account with regard to VNFIL.

The replacement of face to face training by individual learning which makes use of digital resources is increasing in further education where private providers aim to obtain qualifications valued in the labour market (e.g. providers of care). This approach is however driven by efforts to increase the cost efficiency of training.

With regard to validation, no specific actions are visible concerning the quality assurance and/or adjustment of assessment and validation techniques. However, with regard to the provision of training according to the Act on LLL, all accredited educational programmes since January 2013 go through a certain kind of 'quality assurance' procedure – this relates to the guarantor, the lecturers and the technical preconditions of the courses. Ministry of Education staff is monitoring provision of training and examinations via an inspection plan (50 visits per year in general).

2.3   Validation and the labour market

Creation of the National System of Occupations (NSO) is backed by the Act on employment services No 5/2004 Coll. NSO and specific types of occupational standards were developed within ESF projects run by Trexima Ltd. under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Labour; for further details see the NSO portal at www.sustavapovolani.sk and a Register of Occupations in the ISTP (Internet Guide through the Labour market) portal at http://www.istp.sk/kartoteka-zamestnani. In addition to the Register of Occupations complying with ISCO-08 and containing occupational standards; the NSO interactive platform also contains the Register of Competences with a number of databases identifying relevant knowledge, skills, and general abilities for occupational standards. NSO is relevant for future improvement of validation activities from two perspectives: NSO supports the development of qualification requirements (standards) within the National Qualifications System (NQS) contained in the National Register of Qualification maintained by the State Institute of VET under the supervision of the Ministry of Education; NSO can also inform individuals (young people, employed people and unemployed job seekers) about the requirements of respective occupations/working positions.

Qualification standards are a precondition for both programming courses that can be accredited by Ministry of Education (and also paid within RE-PAS, an active labour market tool) and for assessing learning outcomes prescribed for receiving certificates permitting the running of private business.

Requalification Passport (RE-PAS) is a type of voucher entitling an unemployed person to attend a retraining course of his/her choice for free. The choice of training can be drawn from a list of accredited or some specific non-accredited courses (e.g. ICT related). The cost of the selected course must be approved by the labour office. This project supported by ESF which was launched in October 2014 contributed to the substantial increase of labour market training in 2015 (in numbers of participants and employment policy expenditure). Although labour market training is still

insufficiently developed, this initiative significantly contributed to the revival of the training market. Although the RE-PAS courses offered by both private and public providers (incl. VET schools) must be classified as formal rather than non-formal, they contribute to dismantling the traditional rigid qualification system. In addition, a more frequent emergence of retraining certificates creates better conditions for the development of recognition and validation services including VNFIL. 13 598 learners were offered training with a total cost of EUR 6 775 604.89 in 2016. In 2017, 12 871 learners were offered training with total cost of EUR 7 606 456.31 and additional 2 148 learners were affected by a newly introduced RE-PAS+ instrument.

As already signalled in the 2016 report, the attitude to information and guidance services has been changed. This was caused by the amendment of the Act on employment services opening the door to the more sophisticated provision of guidance services to unemployed people and due to projects funded from European sources. Transfer of Innovation Leonardo da Vinci "Qual-n-Guide" project translates the "bilan de compétences" methodology and practice into Slovakia, including its contribution to the development of VNFIL (see also 2.3.1). In 2017, a further 30 counsellors were internally trained to apply "bilan de compétences" methodology with a special focus on personal portfolios. Currently ESF projects are crucial: 55 Labour office counsellors were trained within the ESF funded National project "Road to the Labour Market"[13]. Upskilling long-term unemployed people is being prepared under the ESF project "Supporting individual counselling for the long-term unemployed"[14]. Currently there are 156 labour office counsellors located country-wide[15] retrained to work with personal portfolios. 30 000 unemployed people out of a targeted 80 000 will be offered a personal competence portfolio through the external provision of "bilan de compétences".

Public employment services are gradually learning to work with personal portfolios to facilitate the access to retraining of individuals as well as to better target retraining to improve the efficiency of labour market training. The ultimate goal is employment rather than VNFIL per se.

No information is available about private initiatives, in particular in enterprises. It is assumed that companies validate prior learning of employees or even some unemployed people, however for the purpose of appropriately performing tasks in the work place. There is no evidence about a growing relationship to formal education and there are no incentives to support this. Businesses are of course primarily interested in filling vacancies. Nothing related to validation is a subject of collective labour agreements.

2.3.1 Skills audits

The situation has not changed since 2016 substantially (see more on the earlier pivotal change in the 2016 country report). The Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (ÚPSVaR) continues now to translate the "bilan de compétences"

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[13] See more about the project Cesta na trh práce (Road to the Labour Market) at http://www.upsvar.sk/europsky-socialny-fond/narodne-projekty-v-programovom-obdobi-2014-2020/narodny-projekt-cesta-na-trh-prace.html?page_id=696506

[14] See more about the ESF project Podpora individuálneho poradenstva pre dlhodobo nezamestnaných (Supporting individual counselling for the long-term unemployed) at http://www.upsvar.sk/sluzby-zamestnanosti/odborne-poradenske-sluzby/narodny-projekt-podpora-individualizovaneho-poradenstva-pre-dlhodobo-nezamestnanych-uoz-aktivita-c.2.html?page_id=762754

[15] Special attention was paid to districts identified by the government as districts lagging behind in the development, thus featuring higher unemployment.

methodology brought to Slovakia by a Leonardo da Vinci "Qual-n-Guide" project (See Box 1 and part 2.3) into services to job seekers provided by labour offices. Skills audits related to "bilan de compétences methodology focus on the first two steps out of the full three-step process (skills assessment, learning offer, recognition).

Implementation of skills audits is partly hampered by lack of time on behalf of labour office counsellors. 134 cases of comprehensive assistance with respective developed personal portfolios were recorded in 2017. In 2018, an additional 129 counsellors were retrained and subsequently involved in the development of personal portfolios. With further progress in the retraining of counsellors, skills audit methodology derived from "bilan de compétences will be more widely implemented, including support from ESF (see more in part 2.3).

These skills audits lead to retraining and/or informing unemployed people about future career options. No links to formal education are planned. Personal portfolios are used by public employment services and therefore targeting depends on respective active labour market tools; for example they need not be used in the case of offered language training and some soft skills training, they are however applied in the case of retraining aimed at vocational skills. There are no external quality assurance measures in place. There are only internal guidelines on applying the methodology.

There is no official information about employers' initiatives concerning skills audits. It can be assumed that the first steps related to the identification of relevant skills and possible weaknesses are applied to assess the employability potential of individuals; however validation processes in cooperation with formal education institutions or initiatives resulting in the offer of formal education can be excluded.

2.4   Validation and the third sector

Besides diverse local initiatives, there are also important national activities in the third sector that are at least partly related to VNFIL. Nevertheless, both crucial terms "non-formal" and "validation" are discussed with reference to a specific context: Validation usually refers to increasing the social status of youth work, in particular volunteering, sometimes also to the recognition of the results of learning related to volunteering. However, It must be admitted that measures to encourage valuing, visibility and higher social status of youth work dominate over efforts aimed at the recognition/validation of non-formal learning per se. There is no quality assurance and there are no data available concerning validation.

The Youthpass certificate is nevertheless increasingly used to enhance reflection on competence development in youth work as well as to confirm participation in projects supported by Erasmus+. The Youthpass certification data are provided in 9.4.1.

"Non-formal and informal learning" are terms rarely used compared to the term "non-formal education"; the latter is also explicit in the relevant youth legislation. This term within the context of youth work is considered a 'further education' that is 'organised by educational facilities with the aim of gaining new knowledge, practical experience and skills needed for youth work' as visible in Youth work Act No 282/2008 Coll. § 2 G) definition, (see this legislation in English at https://www.iuventa.sk/files/documents/legislativa/2008_youth_work_act_2822008_en.pdf). Neither the term validation nor a similar term is used in this legislation. Furthermore the term validation does not appear in relation to VNFIL in policy papers as well as in policy discourse.

Meanwhile, the 2008 Youth Work Act is considered outdated by stakeholders and a substantial amendment is considered inevitable by stakeholders. Although focusing on financing, governance and the revision of the conceptual framework is highlighted

in preliminary proposals, this is also an opportunity for legislative backing of VNFIL also in the third sector. This is in line with the still valid National strategy paper: The 2014 Youth Strategy of the Slovak Republic for the years 2014 – 2020 (available in Slovak at http://www.rokovania.sk/File.aspx/ViewDocumentHtml/Mater-Dokum-164154?prefixFile=m_) suggests „the adoption of a set of legislative measures to validate the pedagogical skills and qualifications in formal and non-formal education" and "to promote the recognition of skills acquired through youth volunteering by systems of formal and non-formal education and the labour market side". It was also suggested to include a "youth worker" qualification in the National Qualifications Register to allow for obtaining this qualification through non-formal education. This suggestion was repeated in the newest policy paper "Concept of youth work development for the years 2016 – 2020 adopted in the January 2016 (available https://www.iuventa.sk/files/documents/legislativa/koncepcia%20rozvoja%20pr%C3%A1ce%20s.pdf in Slovak). Significantly, it is contained within a strategic goal addressing the value of youth work (and usefulness of youth work). Nevertheless, this proposal has been examined and the qualification standards were developed and approved by authorities.

Two ESF projects were implemented in the field of youth work in 2011 – 2015: "KomPrax- competencies for practice" and "Praktik - practical skills through non-formal education in youth work". They focused on innovation and identification of examples of good practice in youth work. The KomPrax project resulted in publishing a crucial publication as well as the 2013 Declaration on the recognition of the contribution of non-formal education in youth work. (See more in English at www.iuventa.sk/files/documents/4%20iuventa/publikacie/ilf_krok_za_krokom/___step_by_step_web.pdf). Now efforts to attract important companies to join the Declaration were revitalised. Iuventa also commissioned a survey run by CVTI (Slovak Center of Scientific and Technical Information) aimed at mapping the impact of the 2013 Declaration on recognition. First results are expected in September 2018.

One objective of a 2012-2014 Transfer of Innovation Leonardo da Vinci project "Volunteering – Way to Employment (VOLWEM)"[16] run by Matej Bel University (see also Box 2 below) was to make "institutions of formal education aware about opportunities and existing systems of recognition of non-formal education", exploiting a Scottish experience with an on-line instrument "V Skills for Employability". The rationale for implementation of this project and for a change is visible from the following: "... we lack a legal framework that would enable the recognition of non-formal education and thus also the skills acquired through volunteering as well as the systems for validation of these skills and the interest of formal education institutions and employers" (Brozmanová Gregorová, A. et al. (2014), page 3).

> **Box 2 'VOLWEM' project**
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> The 2012-2014 Transfer of Innovation Leonardo da Vinci Project 'Volunteering – Way to Employment'[17], implemented by the Matej Bel University, focused on the "recognition of non-formal education" and explored the Scottish experience with an on-line instrument „V

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[16] For the description of the project results in English see Brozmanová Gregorová, A. (2014) et al.: Volunteering as a Way to Employment. Summary of outcomes and results of this project, available in English at http://volwem.dobrovolnickecentra.sk/subory/Produkty_projektu/WOLVEM_vystupy_EN_web.pdf.

[17] A short project description in English is available at http://talentumonkentes.hu/v44v/good-practices/volwem-project-volunteering-employment .

> Skills for Employability". The summary of main outcomes and results of the VOLWEM Project is available in English at http://volwem.dobrovolnickecentra.sk/subory/Produkty_projektu/WOLVEM_vystupy_EN_web.pdf.
>
> A methodology referring to unemployed volunteers "Try it another way. Methodology for work with unemployed volunteers for volunteer centres and organizations involving volunteers." has been produced and a "V Skills for Employability" instrument has been transferred over to Slovak needs. A dedicated portal titled "D-zručnosti pre zamestnanie", see http://dzrucnosti.dobrovolnickecentra.sk/ is operational containing a manual within which recognition and validation processes are addressed (e.g. the administrative process is comprehensively presented in Picture 2, page 31). See more in Brozmanová Gregorová, A. – Mračková, A.: Manuál pre dobrovoľníkov a dobrovoľníčky, dobrovoľnícke organizácie a dobrovoľnícke centrá. (Manual for volunteers, volunteer organisations and volunteer centres), available in Slovak at http://dzrucnosti.dobrovolnickecentra.sk/subory/D_ZRUCNOSTI_Metodika_web.pdf.
>
> Capitalising on this project Matej Bel University continued with activities in this field with 2015-2017 KA2 Erasmus+ project titled Competent in Volunteering – Competent in Life aimed at involving vulnerable young people in volunteering activities to increase their employability as a result recognised competencies and skills acquired through volunteering; and to study already functional tools abroad for recognition and validation of skills and competencies gained through volunteering (see more in English at http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/0afdc9c5-2955-4129-96a1-4f727c1f8e42).

Platform of volunteer centres (www.dobrovolnickecentra.sk/en/welcome/) operational since 2011 includes a focus on promoting volunteering as a tool for informal education and offers information about the volunteer centres' activities (projects , publications, news). One example is the follow up project to the aforementioned VOLWEM project entitled Competent in Volunteering, Competent in Life which aims at the social inclusion and better integration of young people with disabilities. This is achieved through volunteering and also the recognition and validation of competences acquired during voluntary activities. Using the aforementioned online tool (V-skills for employment/D-zručnosti pre zamestnanie) it is planned to recognise and validate these competences and strengthen the employability of young people with disabilities.

3   Links to national qualification systems

The 2013-2015 ESF project "Creation of NQS"[18] resulted in the development of NQS covering 1 000 qualifications contained in the National Qualification Register (www.kvalifikacie.sk). A Slovak Qualifications Framework (SKKR) has been developed for the purpose of assigning levels of SKKR to qualifications and to enable comparisons with qualifications abroad through EQF. The number of NQR qualifications distributed by SKKR level 1 to 8 are as follows: 0, 34, 310, 262, 72, 139, 181 and finally 2 qualifications. Furthermore, 439 qualifications from the NQS register are labelled as belonging to the non-formal education area (see www.kvalifikacie.sk/statistika). This is caused by differences between national and international definitions: 'non-formal education' is considered equal to the term 'further education' leading to partial or full qualifications (see e.g. definition at https://nsk.asseco-ce.com/slovnik-pojmov-a-skratiek).

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[18] In some documents also titled "Development of the National Qualifications Register"

The Referencing Report which links the Slovak Qualifications Framework (SKKR) to the European Qualifications Framework was accepted by the EQF Advisory Group on 4 October 2017 and subsequently discussed by the government at its meeting on 22 November 2017. The national conference aimed at presenting SKKR to an audience which involved the participation of international experts was held on 4 December 2017. The revision of traditional qualification systems within NQS and NQF (SKKR) declared a learning outcomes based approach, however further work is still needed. Assessment manuals to complete assessment standards and a unit based approach to designing qualifications (producing also a modularised provision of VET) has been advocated by ESF analytical studies (Vantuch, J. et al, 2013, 2014). This is expected to materialise within the next phases of development of NQS, supported also by subsequent ESF project "System of Validation/Verifying of Qualification (SOK)" that is expected to start in autumn 2018. Although SKKR is expected to help make Slovakia's education and training system more flexible, no direct impact on VNFIL is expected in the short term. SKKR will need to be made better known, and NQR further developed in order to make it relevant for validation processes. Currently qualification standards placed in the Information System of Further Education (ISDV) rather than NQR and SKKR are relevant for 'verifying professional competence' (certificate entitling originally unqualified individuals to start a business requiring a formal certificate of apprenticeship). NQR-related qualification standards were approved by the qualification authority (National council for education and qualifications), but they have not yet been embedded into the ISDV yet and they are therefore not used for validation according to the Act on LLL. As already indicated these certificates are different from certificates that are obtained in formal education. Similarly, skills audits within "bilan de compétences" practice of public employment services and subsequent retraining does not lead to certificates equal to formal education certificates.

Credits are used in higher education although not all higher education institutions have implemented a system fully compatible with ECTS. Learning outcomes based programming is also insufficiently visible in higher education. Nevertheless a KA 3 Erasmus + project SIHE[19] indicates a solid progress as documented by the National seminar "European credit transfer system and learning outcomes".[20]

Credits in VET are used in an even more limited way. ECVET concentrates on the improvement of the quality of mobility of VET students. Transfer of properly assessed learning outcomes is considered crucial and more relevant than transfer and/or accumulation of credit points according to the feasibility study for Slovakia.[21]

4   Standards

There are several standardisation movements in Slovakia:

■ Education standards were developed first reflecting the "shift to the learning outcomes" philosophy in regional schooling as a whole (from kindergarten to post-secondary programmes); they are backed by the Education Act No 254/2008 Coll.;

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[19] Podpora reformných opatrení v slovenskom vysokoškolskom vzdelávaní (Support for Implementation of Reform Tools in Slovak Higher Education - HISE), see http://www.saaic.sk/_main.php?prog=SIHE&str=sihe_o_projekte.html (in Slovak).

[20] Seminar was organised within aforementioned HISE project, see more on outputs at http://www.minedu.sk/narodny-seminar-europsky-system-prenosu-kreditov-a-vzdelavacie-vystupy/,

[21] It is available in English at http://web.saaic.sk/llp/sk/doc/ecvet/vystupy/ECVET_feasibility_study_for_Slovakia.pdf

- Qualification standards (and assessment standards) were produced by the Act on LLL No 568/2009 Coll. to regulate the provision of further education and examination leading to obtaining "partial or full" qualifications. These standards were developed as temporary solutions to fill the gap caused by delay in renewing National Qualifications System and developing National Qualification Register. These standards are registered and maintained by the Ministry of Education Information System of Further Education (ISDV; http://isdv.iedu.sk/EligibleInstitutions.aspx http://www.isdv.iedu.sk/ and will be replaced by NQR standards in the future. Although these qualification standards were often developed in cooperation with specialists from VET schools, they focused on (professional/vocational) knowledge and skills, while key competence should be reflected in assessment standards;

- Qualification standards developed within the 2013-2015 ESF project "Creation of NQS" are not yet embedded into the ISDV. The register of qualifications (with qualification and assessment standards) is available at http://www.kvalifikacie.sk/kartoteka-kariet-kvalifikacii#/). These standards are strictly composed of identified knowledge, skills and competences.

- Furthermore, within the creation of National System of Occupation (NSO), occupational standards referring to ISCO 08 working positions were developed supported by ESF projects run by Trexima Ltd under the surveillance of the Ministry of Labour. Register of Occupations (including occupational standards composed of professional knowledge, professional skills and general competences) is maintained at National System of Occupation website (www.sustavapovolani.sk) and is also visible in the ISTP (Internet Guide through the Labour market) portal at http://www.istp.sk/kartoteka-zamestnani .

Thus, there were four sets of standards created quite independently with respect to the supporting legislation, ESF projects and the methodology of their development. Although partly interrelated, they are also different. For validation (in terms of the Act on LLL) only standards from the Ministry of Education Information System of Further Education (ISDV) are currently relevant. http://www.isdv.iedu.sk/.

In the labour sector, occupational standards that were developed earlier than qualification standards are more visible and they are also reflected in preference by public employment services within counselling and skills audit practice.

Two analytical studies (Vantuch, J. et al., 2013, 2014) included warnings about the likelihood of this fragmentation and suggested that decisions about harmonisation and/ or selective functionality of these standards are inevitable. An exclusive normative function of NQS qualification standards supported by assessment manuals and a stronger focus within NSO on technological change and division of labour in the workplace has been suggested. Qualification standards should have the highest 'market value' in the future as they are backed by legislation as normative.

5 Organisations and institutions involved in validation arrangements and its coordination

There are neither changes in legislation nor institutional arrangements. Therefore, the original Table 2.1 from the 2014 report is reproduced and only slightly modified here.

Table 5.1   National institutional framework in Slovakia

Function	(Type of) institution responsible
Definition of qualifications in the qualifications system and design of standards	Ministry of Education in cooperation with representatives of: employers, employees, regional authorities, education and training institutions and central public administration.
Assessment and validation according to qualifications standards.	Assessment commissions organised by bodies entitled to carry out such assessments. These can be either education and training institutions (schools or higher education institutions), chambers or other organisations accredited specifically for this procedure. The guidance for application for accreditation to become an organisation entitled to carry out these assessments states that these bodies can be: schools, legal and natural entities that have education activities among their core activities.
Recognition of non-formal and informal learning pursuant to the Act on LLL following the successful assessment and validation in view of qualifications in the qualifications register (i.e. issuing of the certificate)	Same as above
Accreditation of education and training institutions to carry out recognition of NFIL	Accreditation commission governed by the Ministry of Education based on criteria defined in the Act on lifelong learning
Withdrawal of the above accreditation and monitoring provision of education and examination before issuing certificates	Ministry of Education
Design of assessment method	Accredited institutions (see above). The law stipulates that there is a theoretical and practical part. The theoretical part must comprise oral and written components, while the practical part consists of a demonstration of professional competences.
Verification of the procedure for achievement of full or partial qualifications	Ministry of Education

No information is available about competence assessments in enterprises as a part of validation. These processes are autonomous with no impact on public sector. There are partnerships between public employment services and enterprises aimed at reducing unemployment and filling vacancies, however there is no evidence about VNFIL related activities.

6 Information, advice and guidance

6.1 Awareness-raising

There is not yet a genuine VNFIL in place in Slovakia. Therefore directing any individuals (including marginalised adults/young people) to validation systems is not yet relevant. Partially relevant are promotions by national authorities and respective affiliated institutions. With regard to:

■ 'recognition/validation' pursuant to the Act on LLL and related to 'verifying professional competences' - it is up to the Ministry of Education and authorised organisations, and by the Ministry of Interior and Trade Licensing authorities,

■ pre - 'validation' activities such as skills audits - it is up to the Ministry of Labour and public employment services (ÚPSVaR and its labour offices),

■ 'validation' in Youth work - it is up to the Ministry of Education and Iuventa – The Slovak Youth Institute.

There are no specific awareness raising campaigns/approaches in place to reach out to individuals. The most important case (verifying professional competence) is automatically attractive as people interested in starting a business must meet obligatory requirements; they are subsequently served by the earlier presented online Information system of further education (ISDV) platform.

6.2 Information, advice and guidance

Currently valid legislation does not create a 'right' for persons to apply for VNFIL to gain a certificate identical or at least equivalent to the formal education certificate in general education, IVET and higher education. Therefore provision of information, advice and guidance (IAG) on validation is limited. There is of course basic information available, concerning

■ 'recognition/validation' pursuant to the Act on LLL and related to 'verifying professional competences' at the Ministry of Education website (ISDV) and later on the NQR already under development (www.kvalifikacie.sk , see more details earlier).

■ pre - validation' activities such as skills audits by public employment services (ÚPSVaR and its labour offices) by ISTP and NSO platforms (www.istp.sk , see more details earlier);

■ the 'validation' in Youth work offered by Iuventa – The Slovak Youth Institute, (www.iuventa.sk/en, see more details earlier).

7 Validation practitioners

7.1 Profile of validation practitioners

There are no genuine validation practitioners active, although tutors/adult counsellors' qualification standards were already developed (see more in 7.2). It is expected that the profession/qualification requirements of the practitioners (including the profile) will be addressed later with substantial progress in validation. There are formal requirements set for examiners (years of practice and graduation from respective studies) active concerning 'verifying professional competence'.

7.2 Qualification requirements

There are as yet no mandatory requirements for practitioners in terms of additional training and/or an additional qualification. These should be addressed by further development of NQS and the new legislation. The qualification standards for tutors/adult counsellors for further education were developed by NÚCŽV within the ESF project (www.cvanu.sk) that were also approved by the Ministry of Education and embedded into the ISDV information system (http://isdv.iedu.sk/EligibleDetail.aspx?qualification=39). According to these standards, there were also training programmes containing some developed VNFIL relevant components. The required minimum level of education was graduation from the second level of higher education. Setting qualification standards is needed also concerning other validation specialists.

7.3 Provision of training and support to validation practitioners

There is no specialised training offered to validation practitioners (see 7.1). Other types of support are at the discretion of national authorities (see also part 7.2 and part 2.3 concerning retraining public employment services counsellors).

8 Quality assurance

There is as yet no genuine VNFIL in place in Slovakia. Consequently there are no specific quality assurance arrangements in place. There is no model in preparation to distinguish between internal and external evaluations. Quality assurance that is already in place refers to existing partial procedures as mentioned earlier - accreditation of education and education institutions, certifying professional competences according to the Act on LLL and Youth Work Act and to the "bilan de compètences" methodology.

Further progress has been expected from the 2015 Erasmus+ project "Peer Review VNFIL Extended" in which National Lifelong Learning Institute (NÚCŽV) participated[22]. Nevertheless, it is not clear how this project experience will be disseminated in Slovakia after restructuring NÚCŽV is completed.

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[22] See the European Peer Review Association website (http://www.peer-review-network.eu/pages/peer-review-vnfil-extended.php?lang=EN for more

9 Inputs, outputs and outcomes

9.1 Funding

There are no funding arrangements in place for VNFIL. Relevant activities in the labour sector are co-funded by ESF as mentioned earlier. There are also arrangements to cover recognition/validation of non-formal education pursuant to the Act on LLL:

■ The accredited education and training institutions can raise fees and the maximum amount is stipulated in the law on lifelong learning. It is a maximum EUR 300 for the cost of the first assessment of the validation application and in case the learner has failed the first assessment and requested a second additional assessment s/he needs to pay this sum again. This fee is meant to mainly cover the human resources and possibly any materials needed to carry out the assessment.

■ Accredited institutions must be able to provide the technical equipment and other material resources needed to carry out the assessment;

■ Education and training institutions wishing to obtain the accreditation need to pay a fee that will cover the costs of the accreditation process.

9.2 Distribution of costs

Only institutions already offering accredited programmes are eligible to apply for accreditation to become an authorised institution for organising "qualification" exams. Institutions applying for accreditation are required to pay an administration fee only (200 EUR per authorisation of a qualification).

The upper limit EUR 300 per examinee is considered high enough to cover costs of institutions related to organising the examination and also reasonable for individuals seeking for a certificate entitling them to start a business. There are no data available about costs of examinations and there are no analyses of decisions of institutions concerning setting of fees.

9.3 Evidence of benefits to individuals

Youthpass is promoted in the Youth work area and certification of "professional competences" to individuals interested in starting their own business in the education sector. These two activities are closest to the concept of VNFIL, but there is no genuine VNFIL in Slovakia. There is no evidence of the benefits of validation (including no cost-effectiveness studies).

9.4 Beneficiaries and users of validation processes

9.4.1 Validation trends

There are no detailed data making a difference between individuals who have entered, gone through and succeeded in the different stages of validation. There are only data on certification concerning:

■ 'recognition/validation' pursuant to the Act on LLL and related to 'verifying professional competences' in table 9.1 and

■ 'validation' in Youth work - in table 9.2.

The following are data indicating the trend in issuing certificates 'verifying professional competences' entitling people without the Certificate of Apprenticeship (required by the Trade Licensing Act) to start a business.

Table 9.1   Numbers of certifcations of professional competences in 2013-2015

Year	Number of certificates issued
2013	640
2014	805
2015*	819
2016	786
2017	1044
2018**	577

Source: Ministry of Education, * except 2 387 certificates issued by the National Lifelong Learning Institute (NÚCŽV) within the ESF project targeting employed job seekers ; ** until 17 June 2018.

The following are data indicating the trend in issuing Youthpass. The number of organisations issuing Youthpass has stabilised since 2013 with a slight increase in 2017. The number of certificates is increasing compared to previous year, with the only exception in 2014.

Table 9.2   Youthpass certificate statistics since 2011

Year/Number	Certificates Issued	Organisations issuing certificates	Projects with certicates
2011	826	77	109
2012	903	73	96
2013	1602	106	148
2014	1233	108	131
2015	2579	109	177
2016*	2863	107	167
2017	2915	118	162
2018*	1296	52	73

Source: Iuventa – Slovak Youth Institute, * until 24 June 2018

9.4.2   Validation users

There is no detailed data and analyses on validation users available. There are only data about most attractive professions, for which certificates 'verifying professional competences' to run a business were demanded. The following are top 5 professions: manicurist, beautician, pedicurist, hairdresser, confectioner with 233, 214,188, 89 and 39 certificates, respectively, issued in 2017, and 151, 162, 133, 66 and 26 certificates, respectively, issued in 2016.

9.4.3   Validation and disadvantaged groups

Validation is not used to address the needs of migrants/ refugees, partly due to their marginal numbers. Slovakia is not attractive for migrants/ refugees. There are only pre-validation activities in place concerning unemployed people and those at risk of unemployment.

10   Validation methods

There is no evidence about methods used in practice and there are no relevant studies about this issue. There are only assumptions relating to regulations and expectations (especially where foreign practices have been transferred).

The dominant methods in procedures pursuant to the Act on LLL are tests and examinations. Higher variability in methods is expected in the future as a consequence of the new legislation and fully implemented VNFIL processes. The validation methodology and tools are to be explicitly addressed by new legislation expected until 2020 and at least partly capitalising on ESF project "System of Validation/Verifying of Qualification (SOK[23])" to be launched in spring 2019.

A manual for counselling in counselling centres for adults developed within an ESF project run by NÚCŽV (http://cvanu.sk/files/articles/metodika-pre-poskytovanie-poradenstva-v-poradenskych-centrach-pre-dospelych.pdf) offers some support relevant also for VNFIL.

Specific approaches concerning identification and documentation phases are in place in public employment services inspired by the "bilan de compétences" methodology that has already been introduced into labour offices.

A Scottish experience with an on-line instrument "V Skills for Employability" has been transferred to Slovakia and piloted by Matej Bel University. This introduces specific methods of "recognition of non-formal education" in youth work. This procedure is still not yet legally backed. It is only institutionally backed by the aforementioned university.

Neither ICT based assessment methods nor EU templates are being used for validation. Nevertheless, online testing is considered important by the Ministry of Education and it is expected that it will be widely applied in the future, despite the hesitation of experts afraid of unintended discrimination of low educated people and other at risk groups. There is however a very successful self-testing online instrument already implemented: IT FITNESS test (www.itfitnesstest.sk) has been developed in cooperation with Comenius University (content of testing), Technical University Košice (technical solutions and maintaining the portal) and IT Association of Slovakia (promotion and certification of self-testing). 24 638 self-tested individuals were registered in 2017.

Furthermore, PIAAC online in a Slovak language has been successfully piloted and will be open to the public from July 15, 2018. This should allow for better diagnostics of basic skills (maths, reading literacy and problem solving in the technically rich environment). It is the plan of the Ministry of Education that acquiring a certificate of apprenticeship outside of the formal system could be composed of already existing 'verifying professional competence' and validation of general education related learning outcomes based on on-line self-testing. After further piloting of diverse online instruments in the ESF National project SOK, a respective legislative backing will be created until 2020.

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[23] This title is an unofficial translation of the Slovak title „Systém overovania kvalifikácií (SOK)" using the term qualification in compliance with a traditional Slovak context (see more about terminology in part 2.2).

11 The position of validation in society: visibility and trust

Validation per se is almost invisible in society from an individual learner point of view. Currently valid legislation does not create a 'right' for persons to apply for VNFIL leading to the receipt of a certificate equivalent to the formal education certificate. Validation is however indicated as an important issue within strategy papers and more attention will certainly soon be paid to it: the Learning Slovakia[24] strategy paper written by independent experts addresses validation within measure 3-04.5. The National programme for the development of education (NPRVV)[25] together with the implementation plan (specifying deadlines and financing for the next ten years) prepared by the Ministry of Education and drawing from Learning Slovakia recommendations, plans for a full implementation of validation (including tertiary qualifications) from 2022.

The only process resulting in official certification – 'verifying professional competence' entitling the holder to start a business which otherwise requires a Certificate of apprenticeship is trusted by employers and society as it is backed by law.

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[24] Learning Slovakia paper commissioned by the Ministry of Education has been written by six independent experts. The first phase of a consultation process was initiated by publishing the 'Learning Slovakia' theses in autumn 2016; the second phase was initiated by publishing a full strategy paper in March 2017. All documents concerning the development of the 'Learning Slovakia' paper are available at http://www.minedu.sk/uciace-sa-slovensko/.

[25] Documents discussed by the government are available at http://www.rokovania.sk/Rokovanie.aspx/BodRokovaniaDetail?idMaterial=27582.

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