

Workshops on VET Teachers and Trainers: Key Actors to Make Lifelong Learning a Reality in Europe

Regional-specific background paper for country cluster 5:

The Situation of VET Teachers and Trainers in Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Slovenia and Turkey

Overview of the VET systems

The countries in this group share a common geographical, historical and cultural background. There are historical linkages between Croatia and Slovenia, and linguistic and cultural connections between Croatia, Slovenia and Bulgaria. Bulgaria and Croatia are covered by the Stability Pact for South East Europe (SEE) countries, which have started to modernise their VET systems. Currently, there is a significant private sector provision for both IVET and CVET that is still largely unregulated. Institution- and capacity-building have become central foci of attention. As a result, the SEE countries should be increasingly included into the Lisbon strategy and the Bruges-Copenhagen process to enhance the European cooperation in VET to improve the performance, quality and attractiveness of VET.

Unemployment in SEE countries remains at worrying rates despite some economic improvement during the last years. There is a positive correlation between the level of education and the rate of unemployment. Decisions on VET must be based on the concrete needs of the labour market, e.g. through the incorporation of a National Qualification Framework and an involvement of the social partners in curriculum development and reform.

While Greece, Cyprus and Turkey do not form part of the SEE, these countries also show common features and challenges like Croatia, Bulgaria and Slovenia. Geographically these countries fit into this group and have close historical linkages with each other.

Bulgaria has a system of predominantly school-based vocational education and training whereas apprenticeship training is less common. VET is provided in state and municipal training centres, vocational schools and vocational colleges. The apprenticeship system is under the responsibility of the employers and regulated by the Labour Code. Enterprises are responsible for both the theoretical and practical part of apprenticeship. Apprenticeship training takes place in company training centres.

The school-based VET system in **Croatia** is facing the need for major reforms. Major parts of the VET system are considered to be out of tune with the changed social, economic and lifelong learning requirements. Courses offered in schools do not necessarily focus on the development of the skills and experience needed in the modern workplace. The teaching process in schools is overly focused on theory, rather than on practice and application of theoretical knowledge. This is mainly due to lack of material conditions and modern teaching skills.

The Agency for VET established in 2005 needs to step up reform efforts to meet the new labour-market requirements and prepare for lifelong learning, as the Croatian VET system has not seen any major changes for more than a decade. An exception was the complete overhaul of all crafts trade programmes. The main challenges are: to streamline the programmes and the school network, develop national qualification standards, revise

curricula and teaching aids, upgrade workshop equipment, improve cooperation with the private sector and launch comprehensive school and teacher development schemes.

In **Cyprus** initial vocational education and training is available at the upper secondary level in three-year technical schools, which offer a completely school-based technical (theoretical) programme and a vocational (practical) programme with work placements of one day per week in the final year, and in the apprenticeship system, which offers two-year programmes that combine general and vocational education at technical schools and practical training in industry. Whereas the system of school-based VET is completely under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the responsibility for apprenticeship training is shared between the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance.

The theoretical and vocational programmes at technical schools cover vocational domains such as mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, building and civil engineering, hotel and catering, fashion design, graphic art and interior design, and other branches. Graduates of technical schools are eligible for university admission. However, the rate of students in upper secondary education enrolled in programmes at technical schools is only 13.4% (2003/2004), being one of the lowest percentages in European countries. The vast majority of students is enrolled in general education and aims to qualify for the labour market in the higher education system. The apprenticeship system is designed for 14- to 18-year old pupils who have not successfully completed secondary education and who wish to be trained in technical subjects. In-company training comprises three days a week. Apprenticeship training qualifies for the labour market but does not give any access to higher education.

In **Greece**, initial vocational education at the upper secondary level is provided in Technical Vocational Schools (*Technika Epagelmatika Ekpaideftiria*, TEE; *Epaggelmatika Lykeia*, EPAL, from September 2006) and by Apprenticeship Technical Vocational Schools (*TEE Mathiteias*). Apprenticeship is defined as alternating training in the school and in the workplace. In 2004 the distribution of students in upper secondary schools was 65% attending general education and 35% attending Technical Vocational Schools. The TEE or EPAL certificates give access to the labour market or to further specialisation through initial vocational training. Initial vocational training is part of post-secondary education and takes place at Vocational Training Institutes or Vocational Training Centres.

Slovenia has a system of mainly school-based upper secondary technical and vocational education as well as post-secondary vocational education at vocational colleges. Secondary schools, including vocational and technical schools, gymnasiums and school centres offer programmes varying in content, duration and goals. Some shorter programmes of two and a half to three years are primarily vocationally oriented and lead directly to labour market entry; extended 4-year programmes are either largely general or more or less vocationally oriented. Technical programmes (leading to professions in engineering and other fields) last for 4 years and are designed primarily as preparation for vocational and professional colleges. Secondary-school graduates can enrol directly after passing the final examination or, more recently, the “vocational matura”.

Pupils who have successfully completed elementary school can enrol in 3-year vocational programmes. These programmes can be provided by vocational schools themselves or in cooperation with employers as a dual system of apprenticeship and in-school education. They typically last for three years, ending with a final examination. The certificate of the final examination enables students to enter the labour market or to continue education in two year vocational-technical programmes, which end with a “vocational matura”, leading to a qualification at the level of a secondary technical school. On the other hand, graduates

who find a job immediately after completing a 3-years vocational programme can re-enter education after at least three years of employment to obtain a qualification at the level of a secondary technical school by passing examinations. By passing an examination for master craftsman, foreman or shop manager, they demonstrate a higher level of competence in their occupation. If they also pass examinations in the general subjects of vocational matura, they can continue their studies in post-secondary vocational education.

Vocational education and training in **Turkey** is organised as an integrated system of formal, non-formal and apprenticeship training. Formal initial VET takes place at vocational schools, which were established from the early 20th century onwards and restructured in the 1970s and 1980s. The system is coordinated by supervisory bodies at the national level (Vocational Education Council) and at the regional level (Provincial Vocational Education Councils), in which the social partners are represented. Non-formal training is provided by public training centres, which focus especially on learners with low educational attainments.

Initial vocational education in Turkey starts after 8 years of compulsory basic education. Students complete their compulsory education at 13 to 14 years of age. The entry age to formal vocational and technical high schools is around the age of 14 to 15. Under normal circumstances, students graduate from these schools at 17–18 years of age. Formal vocational and technical education institutions are divided into two categories, namely, 4-year *vocational high schools* and 4-year *technical high schools*. These schools implement vocational and technical education programmes. In addition there are *comprehensive high schools* that implement both general and vocational/technical education programmes.

In order to enter apprenticeship training the student must be 15 years old. Students who have completed their compulsory education before turning 15 are accepted into apprenticeship training as candidate apprentice. Apprenticeship training is given at *vocational education centres*.

Specific issues related to VET teachers and trainers

In Bulgaria a particular “trainer” profession that is distinct from VET teachers does not exist. Only for teachers in the system of general and vocational education there is a particular legislation with formal qualification pathways, while trainers either have a qualification as a teacher or are experienced practitioners such as HRD managers or skilled workers with considerable experience who then work as advisors or on-the-job trainers.

Teacher qualifications can be acquired at a Higher Educational Institution after successfully having passed theoretical courses, practical exercises and examinations in pedagogy, physiology and methodology of training in a particular subject. There are 3 levels of study relevant to the higher education system, namely bachelor, master, and doctoral programmes for initial teachers training. In addition, there are specialised universities that provide continuing teachers training for the up-grading of the qualification level. The education system gives additional opportunities for acquiring teacher qualifications after a completed bachelor degree. There are postgraduate studies departments at universities who provide programmes for future teachers. Students can obtain a teacher’s qualification for teaching subjects related to their undergraduate subjects.

The formal requirements for acquiring a teacher’s or trainer’s qualification include theoretical courses in didactics, physiology, methodology of training, and vocational subject-specific courses relevant to the area of study. This is followed by theoretical

examinations and practical exercises, which include at least 36 lessons delivered in school, and a final examination.

In Cyprus there is no clear distinction between teachers and trainers in VET. Typically all educators working in the formal system of vocational education and training, including both school-based VET and the apprenticeship system, are referred to as “teachers”, while the term “trainer” is applied to people working mainly in the non-formal part of the training system, more specifically in initial or continuing training programmes provided by public training institutions (including training for particular groups and specific economic sectors), training programmes offered by private training providers, and training programmes provided by enterprises with or without the assistance of public institutions. These programmes, with the exception of the training of civil servants, may be submitted to the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA) and, if approved, receive a subsidy.

Teachers, according to the job specifications, must hold an appropriate diploma in their subject area or a degree relevant to the subject they will teach. In the case of the teachers in public institutions of tertiary education and teachers of technological or workshop practice subjects in secondary technical and vocational education, work experience in their area of specialisation is also required. The most recent and significant development in teacher training has been the introduction of the Pre-service Training Programme (PTP), which is an obligatory requirement for all new appointments to the Educational Service.

There are no set requirements for trainers in private training institutions or enterprises but each training institution or enterprise sets these on an individual basis. In case the private training institutions or enterprises wish to submit training programmes to be approved and subsidised by the HRDA, through its initial training schemes, then their trainers need to conform to the HRDA pre-set criteria concerning their educational background, their work experience as well as their teaching experience. The most common training programme trainers attend regardless of the subject they teach is the “Training of Trainers”. This programme is organised by HRDA with the assistance of overseas collaborators and it is also provided by private training institutions. The body that defines the curricula of the “Training of Trainers” for IVET trainers is the training institution itself that provides the training programme. The HRDA approves specialised training programmes if the programmes comply with the criteria set by HRDA.

In Greece the teaching staff of Technical Vocational Schools and Apprenticeship Technical Vocational Schools is referred to as “teachers”, whereas the educators at Vocational Training Institutes are called “teachers/trainers”. The term “trainer” is reserved for educators in continuing vocational education and training, who work at Vocational Training Centres, Education Centres for Adult Education, and other CVET institutions. While the training professions are formally recognised by the national education system, the recognition of the training occupations depends on the institutions which employ trainers.

The educational requirements for teachers at Technical Vocational Schools and Apprenticeship TEE include a tertiary education certificate and a certificate in pedagogics (for those who had no pedagogical subjects included in the curriculum of their basic studies) gained after they complete a two-semester training programme in the Higher School of Pedagogical and Technological Education (Anotati Scholi Paidagogikis kai Technikis Ekpaidefsis, ASPAITE). There is no pre-service training for this group of teachers, but various types of in-service training.

Teachers/trainers in Vocational Training Institutes must have a tertiary education certificate and a certificate in pedagogy (in case that pedagogic subjects were not included in the curriculum of their basic studies) gained after they complete a two-semester training

programme in ASPAITE. Additionally, in this type of structures may serve Secondary Vocational Education graduates (TEE graduates) who work as assistants for recognised teachers/trainers. Besides formal qualifications, the recruitment of teachers/trainers depends upon professional experience, which is considered to be an important factor for admission. The number of years of prior professional experience varies and is usually correlated with formal qualifications and the training subject.

The entry requirements for trainers in CVET are either a tertiary education certificate or a Secondary Vocational Education certificate or an Initial Vocational Training certificate. Besides formal qualifications, the recruitment of trainers depends upon professional experience, which is considered to be an important factor for admission.

Slovenia with its school-based VET system also has a recognised professional group of VET teachers whereas people providing practical training in companies are not a distinct profession, but typically master craftsmen. VET teachers are part of the secondary school system. The qualifications for *teachers in vocational and technical education* (for the subject-specific theory) can be obtained in two stages. The first stage is the completion of a higher education study programme of the relevant specialisation (e.g. in engineering, agriculture, business etc.), the second stage is the subsequent completion of a one-semester post-graduate supplementary course leading to a teaching qualification. *Teachers of practical instruction* obtain the relevant qualification in three stages: by completing at least upper secondary technical school of the relevant specialisation, by obtaining three years of work experience in the field, and by subsequently completing a teacher training course or by passing a master craftsman's examination.

Employers in crafts shops and companies who provide practical training for students in the dual system of vocational education usually hold the title of master craftsman. In school workshops where practical training is provided in small groups, teachers of practical instruction give instruction. They hold either a qualification as a technician or a *diploma* from a post-secondary vocational college, while in some programmes (e.g., veterinary medicine) they also hold a university *diploma*.

In Turkey two categories of trainers exist, namely, technical trainers, who teach in VET institutions like vocational high schools and technical high schools, and "master trainers", who are responsible for the practical parts of secondary vocational education and apprenticeship training that takes place in enterprises. The establishment of a "training unit" is now mandatory for enterprises with more than 200 employees, as is the appointment of a master trainer with a qualification as a master craftsman and additional pedagogical training. Those who have a master certificate may attend master trainer courses without any preconditions. Upon successful completion of this course they receive a "master trainer certificate".

Technical trainers are qualified by undergoing a 4-year university programme. VET trainers graduate from around 20 vocational and technical education faculties. The weighting system of the scores in the entrance examination to higher education, gives somehow incentives to VET students to enrol in VET teachers training faculties and this leads to an apparent imbalance between the supply and the demand of VET teacher training in Turkey. In order to being enrolled in 4-year technical training faculties, the nationwide implemented university entrance exams should be taken after graduation from vocational, technical or normal high-schools.