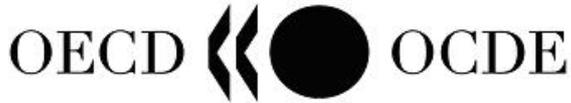
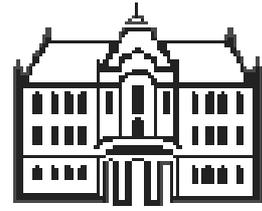


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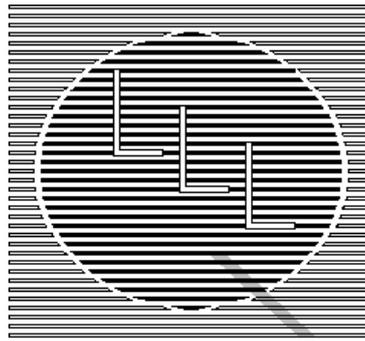
ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

DIRECTION DE L'ÉDUCATION
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The Role of National Qualifications Systems in Promoting Lifelong Learning



Background Report for Slovenia

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Abbreviations used in the text:

ACS – Institute for Adult Education
CC – Chamber of Crafts
CCI – Chamber of Commerce and Industry
CPI – Centre for Vocational Education and Training
CVT – Continuing Vocational Training
ENIC - European Network of Information Centres
ESS – Employment Service of Slovenia
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
IMAD – Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development
IVET – Initial Vocational Education and Training
JAP – Joint Assessment Paper
LFS – Labour Force Survey
LLL – Lifelong Learning
MOESS – Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
MOLFA – Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs
NARIC - National Academic Recognition Information Centres
NCE – National Council of Experts for VET
NQS – National Qualification System
PUM – Project Learning for Young Adults
SKP – Standard Classification of Occupations
SORS – Statistical Office of Republic of Slovenia
VET – Vocational Education and Training

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THE ROLE OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATION SYSTEMS IN PROMOTING LIFELONG LEARNING - Country Background Report - Slovenia

Component 1: Description of national qualification systems, participation and outcomes

37. Brief background description of the national qualifications system

1.1 Slovenia is a relatively new European country which gained its independence in 1991, after the collapse of the former Yugoslavian federation. The geographical location (it is situated between Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia, with the population of two million people) and the culture of Slovenia are rather Central than South European.

1.2 This Central European influence could be also partially traced in the way the education system and VET system were organised, despite the predominant influence of the socialist philosophy and planning economy of the ex-Yugoslav federation. This heritage makes Slovenian educational system still relatively connected to the educational systems of the other ex-Yugoslav countries.

1.3 Until the beginning of the 1980ies educational system in Slovenia was organised in two parallel ways. On one hand there was a school-based education, for which practical training was provided partially in the schools' workshops and partially in the enterprises. On the other there was an apprenticeship system similar to the German dual model. The school-based form was especially used for the longer (4 years) technical education. Several bigger enterprises had their own training centres, which offered training for the employees, apprentices and students. There were two parallel and not fully comparable structures: educational levels that one could reach on the basis of education in the school and qualification levels achieved on the basis of apprenticeship and on the job training. The institute of 'recognised qualifications acquired on the job' was introduced. However, it soon became discredited because of the state determined remuneration system, which was based on the education and qualification levels of the employees. In order to increase wages in self-managed enterprises employees' qualifications were recognised without checking of their factual knowledge and skills.

1.4 The educational reform of the 1980ies introduced by the socialist regime abolished the apprenticeship system. Gymnasiums also were abolished because they were considered to be 'elite general schools' causing unjustified social differences. Most of schools and training centres that had operated within the enterprises became a part of a unified public school system. The idea was to forecast long-term needs on the labour market, according to which schools would offer the appropriate number of training places for particular occupations. In the environment of the planned economy in which the person had guaranteed work and mostly stayed in one working place through its working life, his/her education was directly

related to the occupation that he/she acquired with the employment. In spite of good intentions the VET system became highly school centred. The distinction between the educational profile and occupation was not made. It was understood that students when they finished their education and training and were awarded certificates got an 'occupation'. Under conditions of full employment there was little concern about the matching of certain educational profiles and occupations. At the end nobody was satisfied. Those who would prefer general education to lead directly to the university were lacking this possibility because the quality of general education fell and universities introduced entry examination. At the same time more or less vocationally oriented schools did not pay enough attention to the practical skills needed in the sphere of production. Employers were complaining increasingly.

1.5 The second part of the 1980ies brought big social, economic and political difficulties in the Yugoslav federation, which forced Slovenia in 1991 to take its own faith in its own hands. The decision was to make a radical break with the past in political and economic terms. In the sphere of politics the transition included:

- a shift from one party system to political democracy and the state of the law,
- approaching the international organisations as an independent state, and
- the application for the full membership of the EU.

1.6 In the economic area the transition included in particular:

- a shift from planned to market economy,
- privatisation in terms of substitution of well defined private owners for nobody's and state ownership, and
- a shift from predominantly internal to external markets.

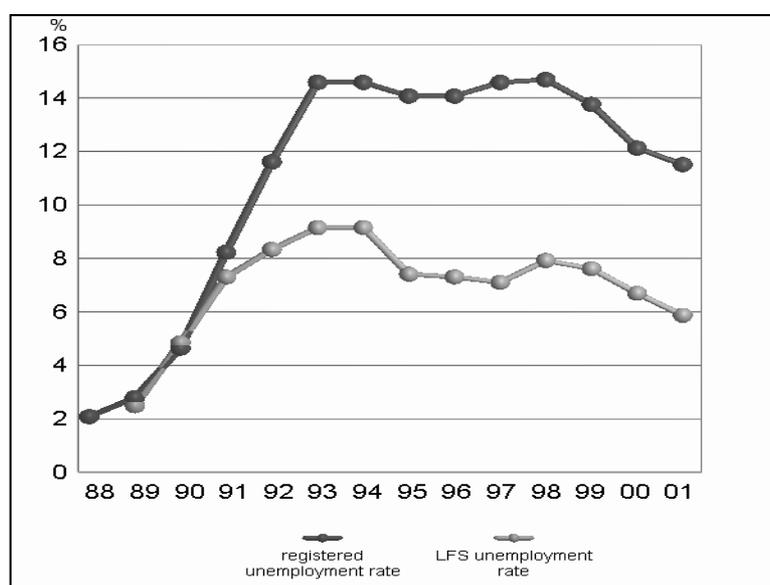
1.7 Under the described conditions Slovenia entered the process of transition, which demanded a profound restructuring of its economy, educational and other systems. New production units oriented to the new markets and using new technologies started to demand workers with new skills.

1.8 Slovenian economy, in addition to the shift from planned to market model, was faced with the loss of a great deal of markets in the former Yugoslavia and in the Eastern Europe. Both factors contributed to a deep crisis in the first period of transition, i.e. from 1989 to 1993. The GDP fell by around 20%, there was three-digit inflation, enterprises were collapsing and the unemployment was rising. However, after 1993 there has been a steady growth at about 4% of GDP per year.

1.9 From 1991 onwards, legal barriers to **free entrepreneurship** have been removed, and a rapidly growing number of new enterprises of different status have occurred. The number of registered economic units has more than tripled. The number and the importance of small firms have increased and the number of big ones has decreased significantly. Several big firms have fallen apart and caused a fragmentation of industrial structure. Micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises generated 57% of total revenue in Slovenia, 49% of value added, and accounted for 53% of all employment in 1998. Small companies are the most dynamic sector with 8.3% economic growth, positive business results and strong employment growth (10%). Micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises are a very dynamic and flexible sector of the economy. It is, however, also the most vulnerable. Their business results are below the average: they accounted for 57% of total net profits and up to 75% of total net losses (Spring report 2000, IMAD).

1.10 The economy has been also **de-regulated**. Part of the overall restructuring and de-regulation of Slovenian economy has been also a restructuring and liberalisation of the labour market. As one of the main consequences of the transition is the number of **registered unemployment which has increased** dramatically in ten years, from 2.2% in 1988 to 14.5% in 1998. In the same period the number of persons in employment fell from 960,514 in 1987 to 745,169 in 1998. (IMAD, 1999:8) After that period, with some passive and active employment policy measures taken (especially deleting from the register those who do not meet the criteria for being enlisted) the registered unemployment rate fell to 11.6 in January 2003). At the same time, the rate of unemployment measured on the basis of the labour force survey dropped to 6.0 in the third quarter of 2002. (SORS, 2002)

Chart 1.1 The difference between registered and LFS unemployment rate in Slovenia



1.11 This striking difference between registered and LFS unemployment rate reveals informal work activities of the registered unemployed and rather relaxed practices of the employment offices.

1.12 Among the registered unemployed, in the period 1988-2002, the position of younger unemployed and first-time job seekers improved. At the same period the position of older workers beyond 40 years of age dramatically worsened - they represent 50.7% of all registered unemployed in 2000.

1.13 **Structural inconsistencies between labour demand and labour supply are increasing** in terms of education and skills of job seekers lagging behind the knowledge and skills demanded for offered vacancies. The percentage of registered unemployed without any formal qualifications slightly decreased in the period 1988-2000, but it is still around 50% in 2000. As a consequence the share of long-term unemployed is also increasing. It has reached 61.4% of all the unemployed in 2000.

1.14 Along with the rising unemployment there has been an **increasing accent on labour market policies** with special attention to the active measures. Among those education and training programmes have been widely used. Activation of the unemployed by means of tailor

made employment plans for individuals and their involvement in different programmes as a condition for the receipt of benefits has been put in practice. Special attention has been paid to persons with biggest difficulties in employment such as those over 55 years and long-term unemployed. However, at the same time the duration of entitlement to unemployment benefits has shortened for the majority of the unemployed and the eligibility conditions have been more closely scrutinised.

1.15 **Restructuring of employment** is continuing. The industrial sector is gradually declining while the service sector is growing and bringing new demands for more educated and flexible workers with additional skills such as languages, computer literacy, communication skills, and so on. In 1993 the share of the persons in employment in services exceeded for the first time the share of the persons in employment in industry. In 1999 the share of the persons in employment in services exceeded for the first time 50% of all person in employment.

Table 1.1 Sectoral structure of persons in employment 1991-2000 (%)

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Agriculture	15.0	13.3	10.7	11.6	10.5	10.2	12.1	12.1	10.8	11.4
Industry	45.1	44.6	44.2	42.3	43.2	42.2	40.6	39.6	37.9	37.6
Services	39.9	42.1	45.1	46.2	46.3	47.6	47.3	48.4	51.3	51.0

Source: Ignjatović et al., 1992; Ignjatović et al., 1993; SORS, LFS 1993-2000

1.16 **Flexibility of the labour market is still rather low**, although it is increasing. The fastest increasing form is temporary employment, which represents nearly 11% of all jobs in 1999. A bit under 12% are self-employed, and only 6.6% of all are part-time jobs. **Employment growth**, which started in 1999 after ten year period of falling and stagnation in 1997 and 1998, continued.

1.17 In order to complete the transition process and to fulfil conditions for a successful EU accession, Slovenia will have to intensify the restructuring of its economy and to reallocate resources in the next few years. The promotion of human resources will ease the restructuring of the economy and the institutional adaptation of EU rules. Labour market flexibility will, along with a unified monetary policy, become an even more important factor for securing the competitiveness and adaptability of the economy.

1.18 The process of intensive bargaining with the **EU for full membership** has been under way and Slovenia is accepting the *acquis communautaire* in all the fields including economy. It is establishing the conditions for free trade, investment, services and production as they are in the EU.

1.19 In line with the European model, human resource development asks for a comprehensive approach towards reducing unemployment and promoting employment. This implies above all an active and harmonised co-operation among various ministries (such as of economy, finance, labour and social affairs, education, science and technology) for implementing the agreed employment policy objectives. The strategy agreed in Slovenia also foresees active involvement of the social partners at different levels, reflected in the planning, implementation and financing of employment policy, which is focused on the four pillars of the European Employment Strategy.

1.20 In order to ensure harmonised strategic guidelines during the period 2000 - 2006, the employment strategy will build on the Strategy for Slovene Economic Development. Furthermore, the employment strategy also takes into consideration the orientations of all the adopted development programmes in related policy areas (such as in education and regional development). The proposals and suggested measures also reflect the findings and conclusions from the joint assessment paper (JAP) on the labour market situation in Slovenia, prepared in co-operation with the EU Commission.

1.21 Thus, an efficient implementation of the employment strategy will be ensured by:

- integration of policies of economic and other line – ministries with the employment policy;
- development of measures and guidelines for active employment policy aimed at increasing the population's employability, especially under the conditions of an ageing society;
- upgrading and improving the infrastructure of institutions implementing labour market programmes at the national, regional and local level;
- establishing a permanent monitoring system and undertaking progress reviews and evaluations.

1.22 The agreed strategic goals of labour market and employment development policy up to 2006 are to:

- increase the level of education and competence of the labour force;
- reduce the share of long-term unemployed (to around 40%) and of the share of unskilled unemployed persons (to around 25%);
- ensure the participation in active employment programmes of all unemployed young people, who within 6 months of becoming unemployed have not found new employment and for adults, who within 12 months of becoming unemployed have not found new employment;
- reduce regional discrepancies on the labour market;
- create over 1% growth in employment in the 2000-2006 period which will help to reduce the unemployment rate (LFS definition) to around 5% or - alternatively - the registered unemployment rate to around 8% by 2006;
- further develop social partnership.

1.23 The key guidelines for reaching the strategic objectives follow the guidelines agreed by the common EU employment policy, and will focus more in particular to:

- actively solve the problem of unemployment;
- develop a culture of life-long learning;
- raise educational levels and to reduce labour market structural discrepancies;
- reduce the dropout rate;
- improve the position of young people on the labour market;
- develop an entrepreneurial culture;
- improve conditions for the creation of new jobs in enterprises;
- promote partnerships for ensuring sustainable development and the creation of new jobs within local employment initiatives;
- monitor constantly the impact of tax levies and incentives on employment;
- increase the flexibility and competitiveness of the economy;

- ensure equal labour market access.

Qualifications: The recognition of learning

38. Main qualifications and the arrangements for the recognition of formal learning

1.24 In majority of modern countries, the educational system that provides NQS is still divided in two separate streams (W-D.Greinert in UNEVOC,1995b:109) of formal education: general educational stream or pathway for academic occupations (professions), which takes the learner through upper secondary education and on to university, and vocational stream for so called skilled worker occupations, which prepares the learner for entering the employment via a mode of training which offers a high practical content and enables a person to assume particular position on the labour market. The “third way” is the certification system as the most direct way of gaining qualifications.

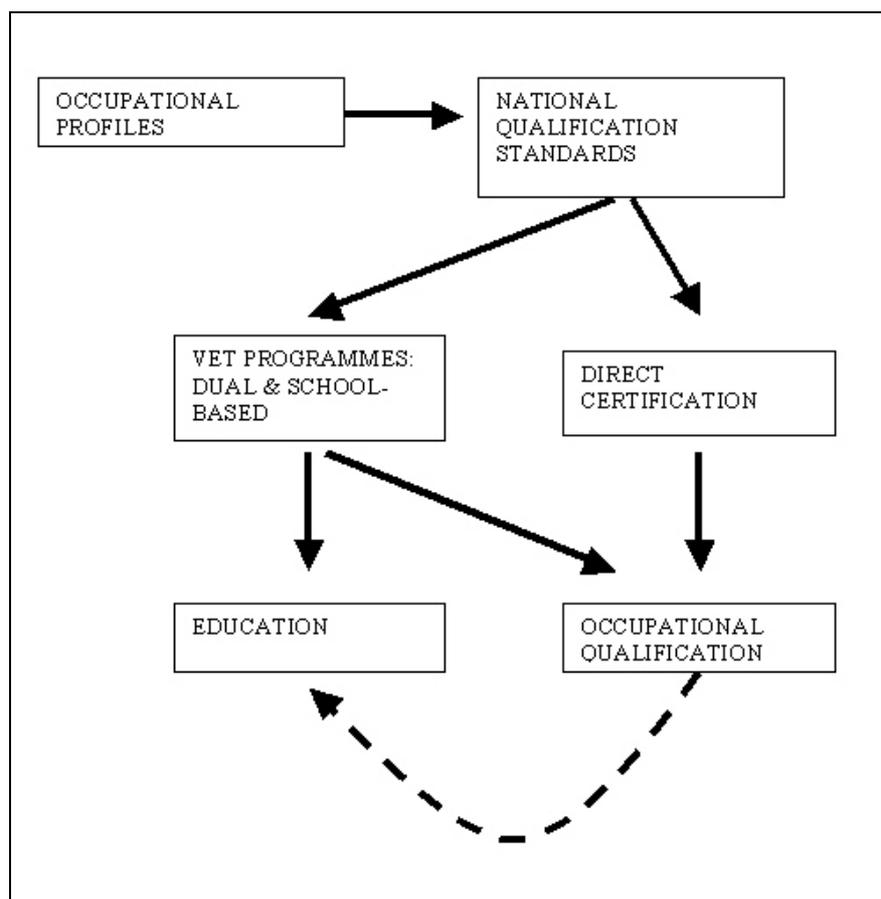
1.25 This structure is true also for Slovenian educational system. The educational system provides for two main streams that one can choose in order to reach national qualification and from the year 2000¹ also the (direct) certification way. Introduction of the market economy, loss of some “guaranteed” markets, rapid changes in the Slovenian society and the labour market (high unemployment, high turnover of jobs and enterprises), and desire to get educational system and qualifications more European, accentuated, among others, the need to make a distinction between vocational qualifications on the one hand and occupation, on the other, more transparent. The starting point is the elaboration of occupational profiles and relevant national qualification standards.

1.26 While the school way leads to the education and vocational qualification, the certification way leads directly only to vocational qualification. This distinction is based on the traditional understanding of education and qualification. Qualification is understood instrumentally as individual’s possession of knowledge, skills and competencies needed to enter certain occupation. It is focused on work situations and jobs. Education in addition should give an individual also competencies needed in his/her public and private life. Even more, in accordance with the humanities tradition it has a value in itself enriching one’s personality and enabling him/her to reflect his/her position in the society and wider life environment. While it is desirable that qualifications go beyond their instrumental job focus, it occurs that some individuals are not interested in the ‘education surplus’ or schools are not able to present it properly.

1.27 Both ways are inter-linked as it is shown in chart 1.2. In order to prevent from building two parallel qualification systems there have been attempts to use certified national qualifications as building blocks of education in case of going back to school.

¹ Adoption of the Act on National Vocational Qualifications

Chart 1.2: Broad Structure of the National Qualification System



Source: Svetlik, 2001a

1.28 The system of formal education (see annex 1) that provides for majority of national qualifications in Slovenia includes pre-school education, basic education (single structure of primary and lower secondary education), upper secondary education, post-secondary vocational and higher education. On the following pages we will present the structure of the secondary and post-secondary education.

Upper secondary general education

1.29 Upper secondary education follows 9 years of compulsory general education. It is provided by general-education secondary schools (gymnasiums), lasting for 4 years, and vocational-oriented schools, offering two and a half-, three- or four-year programmes.

1.30 *Secondary general schools* – gymnasiums were re-established at the beginning of the 1990s. All general education programmes last for four years and are completed by an external maturity exam.²

1.31 The *professionally-oriented gymnasium programme* is a general secondary school programme incorporating a professional field module, ending with the maturity exam and leading directly to university studies. It is designed as part of the general educational stream

² Matura (the maturity exam) is an external (state) certification exam for all students finishing gymnasiums. The maturity exam is run and controlled by the State Examination Centre. It consists of five subjects: three subjects are compulsory (the mother tongue, mathematics and the first foreign language) and two are elective.

and introduces theoretical professional subjects into general education. Around 70% of the curriculum of professionally-oriented gymnasium programmes is the same as the general gymnasium programme.

1.32 After passing the maturity exam, students can directly enrol in higher education studies. General secondary school graduates have also an option to enrol in a post-secondary vocational course. Vocational courses represent a transfer possibility from the general education stream to VET (vocational education and training) and have been introduced to provide secondary school graduates who do not want (or in most cases have no direct access to) university education with a professional qualification. In the 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 school years only three education institutions delivered vocational courses in the fields of tourism and economics, for less than 100 students. In addition, the success rate each year is less than 50%.

Upper secondary vocational and technical education and training

1.33 The duration of vocational and technical programmes at secondary level differs according to the programme requirements, which in turn depend on the skill level of a particular occupational profile. The following programmes are offered within the VET stream at the secondary level of education:

- two-and-a half-year vocational education programmes (short-term vocational education),
- three-year vocational education programmes,
- two-year vocational-technical programmes of up-grading the three-year vocational education programmes and
- four-year technical education programmes.

Lower vocational education programmes

1.34 These programmes finish with a final exam, consisting of theoretical and practical parts and provide for a semi-skilled workers qualification. Pupils can enrol in short-term vocational programmes after finishing elementary school. However, also those pupils who did not manage to complete elementary school can enrol (if they successfully completed at least 6 classes of elementary schooling and thus fulfil the basic legally compulsory education requirement). After completing a short-term vocational programme, pupils can enter the labour market or enter the first year at any other (upper) secondary school.

3-year secondary vocational programmes

1.35 The three-year vocational programmes are intended to provide qualifications at skilled worker level for work in the industrial, crafts and service sectors. These programmes can be provided by vocational schools or in co-operation with employers in the apprenticeship system.

1.36 The introduction of a dual system is often stressed as one of the most important reform changes in VET at secondary level, especially in the light of linking the education and work systems. However, some form of apprenticeship system already existed in Slovenia in the past, but was abolished (together with the gymnasium) at the beginning of the 1980s with the introduction of Career-Oriented Education. At the end of the 1980s, employers from the craft sector initiated more practice-oriented vocational programmes, the so-called "craft programmes".

1.37 In the dual system, the weight of theoretical (school-based) knowledge and practical training is 40 and 60% respectively. Theoretical education is provided by schools, whilst the

majority of practical training is provided by trainers in enterprises. With the introduction of the dual system, the existing school-based three-year vocational programmes have not been abolished. They continue to exist as a parallel alternative. In many cases, both dual system and school-based programmes are available. In both cases - the dual system and school-based programmes end with a final exam testing both theoretical and practical knowledge. The practical part of the final examination is the responsibility of the chambers. For monitoring both parts of the final exam, special exam commissions are appointed, consisting of representatives of social partners, schools and some other key institutions.

Vocational-technical programmes

1.38 A graduate of a three-year vocational education programme can enter the two-year vocational-technical programmes, which ends with a vocational maturity. These programmes lead to a qualification at the level of a secondary technical school. They also provide the possibility of continuing studies at post-secondary vocational colleges or at higher professional schools. In fact, vocational-technical programmes are an alternative to four-year technical programmes.

4-year technical education programmes

1.39 Secondary technical education programmes last four years. Technical programmes, leading to technician and middle management positions in engineering and other fields, 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 maturity. However, they often find jobs with a broad profile also requiring theoretical knowledge of a specific field.

1.40 A *maturity course* has been designed for graduates who have passed a final examination but who wish to enrol in more demanding academic programmes. This course prepares them for sitting the maturity examination. Also some amendments to the Higher Education Act will make transfers between professional and academic studies considerably easier.

Master craftsmen, foremen and managerial examinations

1.41 Another innovation in the VET system is the master craftsmen, foremen and managerial preparatory courses and examinations. These programmes provide a vertical progression route within the dual system. The examinations are the responsibility of the chambers (Chamber of Crafts for master craftsmen examinations and Chamber of Commerce and Industry for foremen and managerial examinations). According to the legislation on crafts, any person wanting to run his/her own craft business must pass the master craftsmen examination. Also the tutors of apprentices will have to pass these exams. As a condition for applying for master craftsmen and foremen examinations, one first has to complete a three-year vocational school and must have a minimum of three-year work experience or a degree of post-secondary vocational college with at least one year of work experience.

Post secondary vocational education

1.42 Post-secondary vocational education was introduced by the Vocational and Technical Education Act in 1996. It is provided by post-secondary vocational colleges, which are considered as separate from higher education.³ Post-secondary vocational programmes are

³ The first post-secondary vocational colleges were established in October 1996 and curricula have been developed with support from the Phare VET Reform programme.

designed as a special form of tertiary education with a more practical character. Practical training represents around 40% of the programme and is carried out within enterprises. These programmes last for 2 years.

1.43 One of the following admission requirements has to be met for enrolment in vocational colleges: maturity exam, vocational maturity exam or final examination, respectively, or the general part of the vocational maturity exam in combination with the master craftsmen examination.

1.44 Post-secondary vocational education ends with a diploma exam. A student who has successfully passed the exam receives a diploma with the name of the programme and the title of the vocational qualification. A post-secondary vocational diploma enables students to start work in specific occupations. Since the academic year 1998/99, vocational college graduates have had the possibility to enrol in the second year of professional types of higher education programmes if the higher education institution providing this type of studies makes such an arrangement possible.

1.45 In the 1999/2000 academic year there were nine post-secondary vocational colleges operating in Slovenia. They had 2,447 students, which was 65.5% more than in the previous academic year. Besides the rapidly increasing numbers of students, the number of public and private vocational colleges has been increasing as well. The first provisional data for the 2000/2001 academic year show that there are over 5,000 students taking part in education programmes at 18 post-secondary vocational colleges⁴. Although the number of students enrolled in post-secondary vocational colleges (3%) is still negligible in comparison with the number of students enrolled in higher education institutions, it seems that these programmes will successfully fill up the gap between secondary and higher education. This is particularly relevant for higher education programmes in the field of technical sciences, where the interest of students has been decreasing or stagnating.

Structure of enrolment in upper-secondary education

1.46 Of all pupils in upper secondary education, in the 2002/2003 school year, 62% were enrolled in vocational and technical education programmes and 38% in general secondary education programmes. These figures are the result of considerable shifts in student choices over the past 10 years and it is expected that the balance will further change in favour of secondary general education.

Table 1.2 Enrolment by the type of education

Type of education	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
Short-term vocational	3.3	3.1	3.1	2.8	2.6	3.3	2.9
Secondary vocational	28.3	30.1	29.5	28.1	26.4	24.5	23.1
Secondary technical	41.5	38.4	37.8	35.7	34.2	32.1	31.0
Technical (3+2)	2.7	3.7	4.6	5.9	6.9	7.4	7.6
Vocational courses	-	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
General secondary education (gimnazije)	24.1	24.6	25.0	27.2	29.6	32.2	34.7
Matura courses	-	-	-	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.6
Total (number)	104,073	106,606	107,149	106,536	105,455	104,508	103,230

Source: Cek, 2002

⁴ Among them there are 12 public post-secondary vocational colleges and 6 private colleges and colleges established by an enterprise or the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia.

School-based programmes

1.47 In general, in recent years in Slovenia a trend of increasing enrolment in secondary general education programmes and vocational-technical programmes has been noticed (from respectively 24% and 0.8 in 1993/94 to 29.6% and 6.9% in 1999/2000). On the other hand, the interest of young people for short-term (from 3.6% to 2.6%), secondary vocational programmes (from 30.6% to 26.4%) and technical programmes (from 41.1% to 34.2%) has been declining. Half of all students enrol in the general gymnasium and in programmes in the field of economics. In both programmes girls are over-represented with almost 70% in gymnasium and more than 60% in economic schools. Boys normally choose for industrial and technical programmes.

1.48 The projection of the MOESS on enrolment in upper-secondary education until 2005 shows that enrolments between 2001 and 2005 will decrease by 11%. The number of students and apprentices enrolled in the first grade will go down as a consequence of a decreasing elementary school population. But due to the longer duration of schooling, the total number of secondary school students will not decline rapidly though internal shifts are expected to occur. Actually, the demographic trend has enabled to extend the schooling age without much additional costs.

1.49 The ministry also expects that the proportion of students in dual programmes will increase from 15% in 2001 to 36% in 2005. Consequently, enrolment in school-based secondary vocational programmes will decline from 85% in 2001 to 64% in 2005. A drop of enrolment in secondary technical and vocational-technical education will also result from an expected increase in the number of students in professionally-oriented gymnasiums. About 30% of all students are expected to enrol in secondary technical education programmes in the period between 2001 and 2005. More than one third of all students are expected to enrol in gymnasium.

1.50 All figures taken together will result in an increase of the educational levels of the new generations of school leavers, in line with the strategic goals of increasing the overall educational levels of the labour force. However, given present problems with the apprenticeship system expected figures may be not very realistic.

Dual system programmes

1.51 The reintroduction of the dual system has been rather disappointing. In the period 1996-2000 all together 29 dual programmes have been prepared but only 19 different dual programmes have been delivered until the 1999/2000 school year. There has been insufficient demand from potential students and employers for the remaining 10 programmes. The number of apprentices has been slowly increasing, but not as much as expected. The supply of training places and interest of students for certain occupations do not follow the development and supply of programmes. In many cases there have even been more training places available than interested students. Thus, in the 1999/2000 school year apprentices (2,549) accounted for less than 10% of students enrolled in 3-year secondary vocational programmes and an average occupancy rate of only 54% has been achieved, basically the result of a relatively large number of apprentices in the first year of introduction. The situation indicates that the development of dual programmes has been rather supply-led so far creating a certain over supply of programmes beyond what is currently demanded by both students and firms.

1.52 Against the background of these developments, analysts are now calling for an overall development strategy for the dual system of vocational education, which should be aimed at:

- better anticipating demographic developments;
- introducing new dual programmes, particularly in the field of services;
- defining in which areas the school-based vocational education will have priority, where school-based and dual systems will be carried out in parallel and where only dual programmes will be offered;
- developing incentives for employers;
- ensuring establishment of inter-company training centres;
- encouraging young people and adults to enrol in dual system programmes (such as through scholarships).⁵

1.53 Until the end of 2000, the Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education has approved the exam catalogues for altogether 48 master craftsmen, 2 foremen and 3 managerial exams. In the same year, the MOESS, the Ministry of Small Business and Tourism and the Ministry of Economic Relations and Development have adopted the Regulations on conditions and methods for the implementation of master craftsmen exams. The Chamber of Crafts is responsible for carrying out master craftsmen exams and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry for foremen and managerial exams.

Drop-outs from secondary vocational and technical education

1.54 A high drop-out rate, especially in vocational education and training is considered one of the bigger problems in Slovenia. This consideration is based more on the fragmented data than on the systematic monitoring of the school population, which was suspended in the second part of the 1990ies for different reasons. The latest data concerning Generation 93 (pupils who enrolled secondary education for the first time in the 1993/94 school year) show that in a 5-year monitoring period, altogether 13% of students failed to complete the study programmes. The drop-out rate was the highest in short-term vocational education (31.9% for Generation 93) and this proportion is estimated to be increasing in recent years, while the drop-out rate in gymnasiums was considerably lower (6.5%). Analyses done by the Employment Service of Slovenia show that the majority of students drop out already after the first year (40 to 50% of all drop-outs). Those who leave after the second year account for about 30% and those who drop out after the third year account for the remaining 20%. Only very few students drop out in the last year. This trend is characteristic for all types of secondary education.

1.55 To some extent, the VET drop-out phenomenon can be explained by a gap between the aspirations and the motivation of students for certain occupations and the real possibilities they have for enrolling into different programmes. Apparently this gap has not been completely closed by the liberalisation of enrolment policy. But apart from restricted access to preferred programmes there is increasing evidence that the quality of the learning process is not adequate to learning needs and abilities of too many students.

1.56 The drop-out phenomenon has also received more attention in the light of strategic policy declarations aimed at providing more school leavers with at least full secondary education. A large number of drop-outs re-enter afterwards in programmes for adults, in searching for some kind of the occupational qualification.

⁵ Medves, Z. a.o., Evaluation of the vocational and technical education reform and proposal for future development, Phare MOCCA, Ljubljana 2000.

39. Most important arrangements for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning

1.57 Continuing vocational training (CVT) in Slovenia is since the mid-1990s characterised by a strong legal basis which defines roles and responsibilities of public authorities, national support institutions, the social partners (but mainly at the national level) and training providers, both public and private. As its development is closely related to developments in the labour market the Employment Service of Slovenia is playing a significant role. A dedicated research and development institution for adult education (The Institute for Adult Education) has been established in 1991 which increasingly is also active in the field of continuing vocational education and training. The Centre for Vocational Education and Training provides professional assistance to the social partners in developing occupational standards, and standards of knowledge and skills in the certification system.

1.58 Since the late 1990s, developments have concentrated on expanding the area of CVT, increasing the involvement of social partners, developing social partnership at regional level and relating CVT to regional development policies, integrating CVT for adults and initial vocational education for youth (through the development of the certification system), and most recently on aligning CVT as part of a lifelong learning system.

1.59 The field of CVT may be divided into two parts:

- State regulated and financed CVT which encompasses education and training programmes leading to a recognised title of vocational/professional education, and regulated training not financed by the State but leading to publicly recognised certificates for vocational qualifications;
- non-State regulated training which does not provide publicly recognised certificates (which in Slovenia is called "non-verified training").

1.60 CVT providing publicly recognised diplomas and certificates is regulated at the national level while other types of CVT are more or less adjusted to individual users and are either under the jurisdiction of partners on the labour market or are regulated by market principles of supply and demand.

1.61 The main acts regulating formal CVT and non-formal training are the three education acts, adopted in 1996: the Act on Organisation and Financing of Education, the Act on Vocational and Technical Education and Training, and the Act on Adult Education. In 2000, the Act on National Vocational Qualifications was adopted. It provides a formal basis for the acquisition of nationally recognised vocational qualifications based on assessment and certification of knowledge and skills acquired outside the formal school system. Similar to initial vocational education and training (IVET) also the regulation of CVT is centralised and regional regulating mechanisms are legally even not foreseen. However, the Act on Adult Education gives local communities the possibility to prepare local annual plans for adult education.

1.62 The responsibility for the development and implementation of VET – CVT included - is shared by the state and the business sector. At the state level the main competencies are assigned to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. Formal CVT providing a recognised diploma of vocational/professional education is under the authority of the Ministry of Education; non-formal regulated training

and the national vocational qualifications (vocational certificates) are under the authority of the Ministry of Labour.

1.63 Both ministries propose and adopt respective laws and by-laws, take care of the development and implementation of training policy, and the allocation of public funds. They are competent for the adoption of training programmes, as well as for the supervision of the quality of these programmes. The Ministry of Education is also responsible for the management of public training providers, for the school inspectorate and for funding public schools and public adult education providers. Providers of programmes of regulated CVT must register with the Ministry of Education. On the other hand organisers of assessment and certification procedures in the certificate system must register with the Ministry of Labour.

1.64 The Act on Vocational and Technical Education and Training authorises the Ministry of Labour for the co-ordination of the involvement of social partners in the field of CVT. Furthermore, it proposes the methodology for the development of occupational standards in formal education and training and of standards of knowledge and skills in the certification system. The essence of the certification system lies in the provision of access to publicly valid certificates for a vocational qualification regardless of the way of acquisition of knowledge and skills, thus it enables recognition of prior learning and experiences of adults.

Policy framework

1.65 Although the regulatory framework is largely defined by educational legislation, continuing vocational education and training policy itself is basically developed as an integral part of labour market and employment policy.

1.66 Given current trends in employment, CVT policy is presently mainly focussed on the improvement of educational levels and qualifications of long-term unemployed young adults who do not have appropriate qualifications. This group is defined as the priority target group. It is expected that demographic developments in the near future may substantially reduce the needs for educational provisions for young people and schools could and should therefore redirect their resources to adult education (see Table 1.3). Lower numbers of young people entering the labour market will also require an increased investment in training of the adult population. These developments are reflected in a number of recently developed national education and training policy documents such as the National Programme for Higher Education and the National Programme for Adult Education. They are also at the root of recent measures that aim at increasing the participation of adults in education and training, such as assessment and certification of prior learning, and the development of new forms and methods of learning and teaching.⁶ However, the existing training facilities in initial vocational education and training are far from being ready and equipped for such shifts. This especially holds for the teaching staff in schools who have insufficient skills and competencies to teach adults.

⁶ Muršak et al, 2000.

Table 1.3: Projection of de jure population (persons who have worked abroad excluded), by age groups for years 2001, 2011, and 2020 – medium adjusted fertility

Age groups	2001	2011	% of increase ¹	2020	% of increase ²
0-6	143,268	158,849	110.9	148,285	93.3
7-14	182,241	169,853	93.2	182,423	107.4
0-14	325,509	328,702	101.00	330,708	100.6
15-49	1,028,703	950,891	92.4	888,070	93.4
15-59	1,262,430	1,242,917	98.4	1,168,484	94.0
5-year age groups					
5-9	102,207	110,872	108.5	112,325	101.3
10-14	119,973	104,031	86.7	114,321	109.9
15-19	135,578	103,084	76.0	110,448	107.1
20-24	150,430	123,241	81.9	106,159	0.86
45-49	154,016	147,825	96.0	137,645	93.1
50-54	130,566	146,657	112.3	140,269	95.6
55-59	103,164	145,369	140.9	140,145	96.4
60-64	102,010	119,524	117.2	137,549	115.1
65-69	95,178	90,165	94.7	128,036	142.0

Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Slovenia 2000, p. 89, tab. 4.10.

Note: ¹ 2001 is the basis for calculation; ² 2011 is the basis for calculation.

Providers of CVT

1.67 There is no separate monitoring of organisations providing CVT. Since providers of adult education mostly provide work related training programmes, it could be assumed that the same network covers also CVT. While there is no single reliable database, clearly private training providers dominate the adult education scene. The survey data on providers and programmes for the school year 2000/2001 indicate that of all providers 38% are private organisations, 16% are people's universities, 16% secondary schools, 7% societies and associations of societies, and 4% units for adult education in schools and other institutions.⁷ Statistical data concerning providers of further education for the school year 1997/1998 show the following composition: 20% people's universities, 9% school units, 18% companies' training centres, 47% other specialised organisations (including primarily private providers of adult education, post-secondary schools and universities, specialised training centres, institutes and similar organisations).⁸

1.68 The available data on training programmes and providers⁹ confirm that an uneven regional distribution continues to exist. In the school year 2000/2001, of all providers 75% are

⁷ Such as public institutes, post-secondary schools and institutions of higher education, special educational centres, institutes, libraries, chambers, crafts associations, Brenk, 2001.

⁸ The remaining 6% were represented by other suppliers (drivers schools are not included) Rapid reports, No. 169/2000.

⁹ Brenk, 2001.

located in industrially more developed and thus most populated and the distribution of programmes shows a similar pattern.

1.69 The data also indicate that employer organisations only form a small share of the CVT providers¹⁰. More often however they co-finance other training providers. Currently there are no training centres established jointly by the social partners. Preparations have been going since some time now about the establishment of inter-company/regional training centres but little progress has been made mainly due to unsolved financial issues. In contrast 13% of firms and enterprises maintain their in-company training centres.¹¹ Training centres are also organised by several industrial branches.

1.70 Improvement of the level of formal education of the Slovene population is an important goal of adult education. Adults can obtain a formal education degree either by enrolling in education and training programmes for young people which may (or may not) be adjusted to the specific learning needs of adults, or by enrolling in programmes specially developed for adults. In practice, however, at the secondary level there are virtually no special programmes for adults. Formal secondary education is provided by schools – some of them have special departments for adult education - as well as by adult education organisations, which are accredited for delivering these programmes. Non-formal training, be it regulated or not, is not recognised by the formal VET system. Although the Act on Adult Education (article 7) has introduced the possibility for assessment of equivalency of standards of the training regulated by non-school regulations and their recognition in the formal system as yet no such procedures exist in practice.

1.71 The introduction of the certification system has not solved this issue since the certification system is not yet an integral part of the formal VET. Currently preparations for the development of modular training are taking place, which will enable the acquisition of a certificate for each module that has been achieved. It is expected that the certificates will open the possibility for the integration of qualifications obtained outside school-based VET with formal school certificates and diplomas. Preparations for this to happen have already been started.

Assessment and certification of training

1.72 Assessment and certification connected with the acquisition of national (educational) qualifications is based on education and training programmes. It is carried out for each subject separately. The school year is divided into three assessment periods. The subjects are assessed by the teachers. In each assessment period, the grades are usually oral and written and are numerical. The assessment scale is from 1 to 5, where 1 means that the pupil did not show the satisfactory level of knowledge. At the end of the school year, an overall achievement grade is awarded depending on all grades in individual subjects. Pupils go on to the next class if they have passed all the subjects and have met all the other conditions set by the curriculum. At the end of the school year, pupils can retake the exams in a maximum of three subjects they failed.

¹⁰ On the other hand, since CVT is a central component of Active Employment Policy measures, the Employment Service of Slovenia, as the principal implementation agency of the employment policy, has an important role to play in the system of CVT.

¹¹ Statistical Office of the Republic Slovenia, 1998, ŠOL-ZAP questionnaire, AOP table 1

1.73 After completing the vocational curriculum, pupils receive a certificate of achievement, which is a public document. After completing the technical curriculum, they receive a final examination certificate with the title of the course and the qualification they have achieved. After completing the technical curriculum, the qualification of technician is obtained (the qualification specifies the relevant occupation or range of occupations).

1.74 A student that successfully finished four years of education in secondary technical school takes vocational matura (*poklicna matura*) in front of commission (board of examiners) where members are not only teachers but also experts proposed by the appropriate chamber of employers. Part of this exam is external.

1.75 The certificate of completion, (*spričevalo o poklicni maturi*), gives entry to the labour market in specific occupations, and a possibility to continue education in vocational colleges (*višje strokovno izobraževanje*) or in higher professionally oriented education (*visoko strokovno izobraževanje*). It is also possible to pass an examination in an additional subject and then continue studying at the most advanced levels within the selected field.

1.76 Assessments are also carried out in state regulated non-formal education and training and adult education and are training course based. Although they deliver publicly recognised certificates these are not equivalent to school certificates. Examinations on the basis of “non-school” regulations are run at the level of individual industries, and as part of in-company training in some enterprises. The Craft Chamber carries out certification of qualifications for pursuing activities, which do not require master craft examination. Most recently the Chamber of Commerce and Industry has also established its own assessment and certification system. The validity of certificates acquired in these systems, however, is still limited to the issuing company or organisation.

1.77 National Vocational Qualification Act enacted the possibility for assessment and certification of non-formal and informal learning and work experience which is intended to provide nationally recognised certificates. The certification is undertaken under the authority of the Ministry of Labour. These publicly recognised certificates provide modular qualifications which are recognised by the labour market but not by the education system.

Collecting and updating information on CVT

1.78 The National Statistical Office collects yearly data on enrolment in education and training and on education and training provision. Separate data sets for individual levels of education as well as for further adult education and training of the employed are maintained. Data sets include numbers of enrolled persons by types of programmes and, in some cases, providers. By combining all these data sets an approximate figure of the number of enrolled persons in various forms of formal and non-formal education and training may be obtained. For the adults enrolled in formal education information on age and gender is available while in the case of non-formal training and training of the employed only information on gender exists. Standardised indicators of the development of CVT and its effects are also missing which makes it difficult to monitor and assess developments regarding the implementation of policies.

Table 1.4: Participation of adults in education and training programmes in school year 1997/1998 by type of training programmes

<i>Type of training programmes</i>	No. of participants	%
Formal university and higher education ¹	15,541	7.1
2-year post-secondary vocational colleges	232	0,1
4- and 5-year technical and professional secondary education	4,305	2.0
2-year vocational-technical education	2,050	0.9
3-year secondary vocational education and training	3,638	1.6
Lower level vocational education and training	328	0.2
Other formal CVT programmes at the secondary level	1,212	0.5
Non-formal verified training programmes	17,039	7.8
Non-formal non-verified training programmes	174,820	79.8
Total	219.165	100

Sources: a) formal secondary education: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Research results No. 745/2000, tables 4.1.4; 4.1.5; 4.1.6;4.1.7; 4.1.8; 4.1.9;

b) university and higher education and 2-year post-secondary vocational colleges: Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Slovenia 2000, tables 6.12; 6.14.

c) organised non-formal verified and non-verified training: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Rapid report, No. 169/2000.

¹ Also those students are included, who did not fulfil criteria to enrol as full-time students.

Client groups

1.79 Given the insufficient information system on CVT at the national level it is also difficult to identify groups who are clients of CVT in Slovenia. Based on the results of the SIALS research the largest share of participants in CVT is formed by the self-employed (46%), followed by the employed (41%) and the unemployed (16%). Individual groups outside the labour market do not exceed 11% while retired people have the smallest share (6%).¹² The results also demonstrate that better educated persons (with at least 4 year secondary education), persons at the age between 25 and 40 years, and the employed occupying managerial and supervising positions are participating most regularly in training. Moreover, looking at the statistical data on the distribution of the employed enrolled in training it is evident that the majority of the participants comes from government and public services, financial and business services and the distribution of electricity, gas and water. Thus the data indicate that employees in private industry are relatively underrepresented among those who are involved in CVT.

¹² Ivančič and Mirčeva , 2001

40. Funding of the main sets of qualification

1.80 Within the education system, the resources for funding public services are provided by the State budget and by the municipal budgets. The State budget covers the following fields in their entirety: higher education institutions and post-secondary vocational colleges, secondary schools and secondary school students' halls of residence, and schools and institutions for children with special needs. It covers salaries and partly the equipment costs in compulsory education, and all other tasks required to improve quality within the education system.

1.81 The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MOESS) is the key body responsible for allocating funds in the field of education. The allocation of public funds to schools is standardised. Criteria for allocation of finances to individual institutions carrying out public education programmes primarily depend on the type of the programme, the number of classes and the number of students enrolled in individual programmes. As far as salaries are concerned, the scale of remuneration and the methods of promotion of teachers and other staff are determined by law. The state and trade unions have also determined some specific features of the collective agreement, additionally affecting the system of salaries in this field. The acquisition of equipment for and major maintenance works on school buildings are planned within long-term investment programmes for educational institutions.

1.82 Schools and residential halls (dormitories) can obtain their own resources by selling their products and services to the market. Schools manage their incomes independently, but when they allocate the profits, the basic rules stipulating the percentage to be reinvested in maintenance and equipment must be applied.

1.83 The financing of the educational system for youth is very centralised at the moment. According to the Organisation and Funding of Education Act, MOESS is expected to establish 14 school boards (administrative regions) as part of reorganisation of the Ministry. These school boards would, among other activities, allocate (state) funds at the regional level. Some financial and administrative power would thereby be delegated to lower, regional units. However, the regional school boards have not yet been established.

1.84 In 1995, the share of public funds for education of all public expenditures in Slovenia was 12.64% (calculated by the MOESS, following the UNESCO method). In 1998 the share of the GDP allocated to education increased to 6% and it was foreseen to remain at this level also in the following years. The public funds for vocational and technical education accounted for 0.64% of the GDP in 1996.¹³

1.85 With the introduction of the dual system, employers are obliged to financially contribute to organisation and provision of practical training. Employers' financial responsibility includes the preparation of practical placements for apprentices, delivery of practical training (including salaries for trainers) and the payment of some kind of pocket money to the apprentices for the duration of their apprenticeship contracts.¹⁴ Employers have

¹³ These are the latest data for financing of VET and the situation indicates the absence of a proper management information system for the sector.

¹⁴ Apprentices are also socially insured (health and pension insurance) for the duration of their apprenticeship contracts. The state covers the social insurance of apprentices for the first year of apprenticeship contracts and 50% for the following years (while the other 50% is covered by employers).

constantly been arguing for the introduction of special funds to cover some of their costs for the dual system training, since the costs of apprentices' practical training can be quite high, in particular for small companies.¹⁵ Also municipalities and enterprises are expected to jointly participate in the establishment and funding of schools, in particular with regard to investments in school buildings and training equipment. All in all, however, vocational education and training of young people is currently mainly financed from the state budget (through the MOESS) and an acceptable organisation of employers and employees contribution is still pending.

1.86 According to the Organisation and Funding of Education Act, private schools may be organised at all levels. If they apply for financial support from the state, their programmes must be verified and state- approved and they have to sign a special licence agreement with the MOESS. Private schools can charge tuition to pupils and students. The amount of the tuition fee is limited to 25% of the cost per student in a public school.

1.87 Concerning vocational education and training, municipalities and enterprises are expected to jointly participate in the establishment and funding of schools, in particular with regard to investments in school buildings and training equipment. However, vocational education and training of young people is currently mainly financed from the state budget (through the MOESS).

Financing of CVT

1.88 State financial resources spent on CVT are not monitored separately and reliable data on the amount of public spending on CVT are therefore not available. Information is also difficult to collect because different ministries are involved. In the national budget 0.1% of GNP is earmarked for adult education. These funds are allocated by the Ministry of Education on the basis of public tenders. Public funds for education and training in the framework of the Programme of Active Employment Policy, however, are allocated by the Ministry of Labour through financing of measures of the Employment Service of Slovenia. Also, a certain amount of funding is earmarked for training by other ministries (Ministry of Economy - primarily for the development of small businesses related to craft, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Interior).

1.89 Employers are by collective agreements required to cover the costs of education and training of their employees when they attend training on their request. The employers are obliged to cover direct costs (tuition fee, learning materials, travelling costs) and indirect costs (remuneration of wages and salaries for the time of absence from work due to the training). Individuals finance training themselves mainly when training is not initiated by the employer; sometimes they also co-finance training when they need upgrading of knowledge and skills for their work. Research indicates however that funds of employers are by far the most important source of direct financing of participation in training. Employers (co-) finance 65% of training of employees while individual employees themselves cover about 25% of the costs.¹⁶ According to these data the scope of training (co-) financed by the employers is increasing with the size of enterprises. In organisations with up to 20 employees, the

¹⁵ According to estimations, prepared by the chambers, a three-year practical education per apprentice costs the employer approx. 20,000 Euro and for the chambers an additional 550 Euro.

¹⁶ Ivančič and Mirčeva, 2001

employer (co-) funds approximately 50% of the training of the employed and in large organisations (500 and more employees) about 80%.

1.90 Data from the international research CRANET which covered for Slovenia (Svetlik, 2001b) over 200 big enterprises in 2001 show that employers invested in education and training on average 2.27% of the annual labour costs. The share is higher in enterprises with less than 500 employees (2.42%), in public services (2.63%) and enterprises with better educational structure¹⁷ (2.93%).

1.91 There are no joint funds of social partners dedicated for education and training of the employed. At the moment, a private fund, which is financed exclusively by the employers, is existing only in the crafts sector where 1% of gross salaries is accumulated in a training fund.

1.92 Regarding the certification system, the cost of the procedure of acquiring the certificate is yet to be set by the Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs based on the proposals by both Chambers or competent ministries. The cost of the programmes depends on the length and the number of the participants.

1.93 In recent certification procedure for getting the National Occupational Qualification “BEEKEEPER” the programme was subsidized by the Phare 2000 programme and expenses covered by the Razvojna agencija (development agency) Savinja Žalec. Participants had to contribute only 13.000 SIT and to buy their own textbooks. It is expected that the expenses of the normal (not subsidized) procedure of acquiring the certificate would be much higher.

41. Other features of the patterns of participants

Table 1.5: Active population by educational attainment 1995 - 1999 (in percent)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Basic education or no formal education	24.4	23.2	24.3	22.0	21.3
(Upper) secondary education or above	75.6	76.8	75.7	78.0	78.7

Source: Ministry of Education and Sport, Eurydice unit, (2000b)

¹⁷ Enterprises with over 14% of graduates.

Table 1.6: (UPPER) SECONDARY EDUCATION

	1980/81	1985/86	1990/91	1995/96	1998/1999
Secondary schools	177	155	149	154	140
Classes	3,225	2,911	3,209	3,895	4,025
Students of whom:	90,874	80,451*	92,060*	102,079	106,558**
- in <i>gimnazije</i>	17,976	-	-	24,904	29,244
- in technical programmes	32,203	-	-	43,011	44,290
- in vocational programmes	40,695	-	-	34,164	33,024
Graduates of whom:	22,517	20,056*	21,330*	23,337	25,500
- <i>gimnazija</i> programmes	4,414	-	-	5,188	5,992
- technical programmes	6,466	-	-	7,677	9,272
- vocational programmes	11,637	-	-	10,472	10,236
Teaching staff	7,695	6,294	6,701	8,143	8,646

Source: Ministry of Education and Sport, Eurydice unit, (2000b)

Data refer to the end of school year

* Career-oriented education

** The beginning of the school year

Table 1.7: Enrolment of youth in regular full-time upper secondary education of the 1998/99 school year by field of study and sex

FIELD OF STUDY	1998/99 school year			
	No. of enrolled persons	No. of women	% of enrolled persons	% of women
Agriculture and food-processing	6,334	3,349	5.9	52.9
Forestry	113	6	0.1	5.3
Leather processing	143	128	0.1	89.5
Textiles	3,389	3,284	3.2	96.9
Chemistry, pharmacy, rubber processing, non-metals	1,360	938	1.3	69.0
Wood processing	3,520	72	3.3	2.0
Construction	2,910	324	2.7	11.1
Catering and tourism	5,944	2,566	5.6	43.2
Economics	22,631	15,595	21.2	68.9
Paper and printing	660	276	0.6	41.8
Electrical engineering and computer science	7,880	61	7.4	0.8
Metallurgy and mechanical engineering	9,895	133	9.3	1.3
Transport and communications	1,084	334	1.0	30.8
Mining	230	1	0.2	0.4
Health care	5,013	3,916	4.7	78.1
Teacher training	805	794	0.8	98.6
Social sciences	1,267	1,122	1.2	88.6
Culture	744	547	0.7	73.5
Gymnasium general education	25,964	15,831	24.4	61.0
Personal services	2,870	2,555	2.7	89.0
Professionally oriented gymnasium	3,280	1,484	3.1	45.2
Internal affairs	522	26	0.5	5.0
TOTAL	106,558	53,342	100.0	50.1

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 1999.

Table 1.8: BASIC AND UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION OF ADULTS

	1980/81	1985/86	1990/91	1995/96	1999/2000
Adults in basic education	...	1,671	1,639	1,204	2,137**
Adults in (upper) secondary education	14,826	9,017	9,610	9,617	11,886*
Adult graduates in (upper) secondary education	5,793	3,210	2,539	2,707	4,374*

Source: Ministry of Education and Sport, Eurydice unit, (2000b)

Data refer to the end of school year

* 1997/98

** The beginning of the school year

Table 1.9: POST-SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AT VOCATIONAL COLLEGES

	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
Vocational colleges	5	5	6	9
Students of whom:	342	864	1,478	2,447
– youth	342	632	817	1,189
– adults	-	232	661	1,258
Graduates of whom:	-	-	151	170
- youth	-	-	81	121
- adults	-	-	70	49
Teaching staff *	22	47	67	81

Source: Ministry of Education and Sport, Eurydice unit, (2000b)

* Full-time equivalents (estimation for 1996/97)

Qualification Systems: Governance, linkages and pathways

42. Existence of the national qualifications system

1.94 As already described, NQS was in the past and predominantly still is a centralised and formalised one. Basics for major qualifications – educational programmes are defined on the national level, while the implementation is left to the educational institutions. But recently – with the adoption of the Act on National Vocational Qualifications in 2000 – this procedure is relaxed and social partners, especially Chambers and enterprises were enabled to participate more intensively in proposing new occupations for which new educational programmes and occupational standards should be prepared¹⁸. Centre for VET has the major role in developing and cataloguing educational programmes, in collaboration with the social partners, especially with enterprises that have special needs for certain occupations, have their own internal educational facilities and are interested in making them recognized at the national level. Consequently, the building of the NQS could be described as “partially bottom up approach”.

1.95 The position of the higher education considering the National Qualification System is not clear since the Law on National Occupational Standards does not exclude it from the framework and there are some occupational standards already approved. The real role of the authorities of the higher education in National Qualification System is yet to be defined.

43. Main goals and principles of the qualification system

1.96 Slovenia recognises that its economic and social welfare in a competitive and globalised world economy can only be secured by a high-qualified and flexible labour force. The strategic goals for education and training for the period 2000-2006 form an integrated part of the national employment strategy and these strategic goals are very much in line with

¹⁸ For the detailed procedure of development of new and reviewing existing occupational standards see new proposals in Annex 9 and Annex 10.

employment strategies currently being implemented by EU member states. They also cover VET reform priorities agreed in the Joint Assessment Paper of 2000.¹⁹ The reform of the VET system has been conceived as an integral part of overall education reform aimed at improving and increasing educational levels of the population. The nature of the strategic goals asks for a comprehensive VET reform policy that integrates initial vocational education with continuing vocational education and training. Such a comprehensive perspective is not much different from what is currently being discussed under lifelong learning but is only gradually being developed. Systemic and systematic approach to the lifelong learning is still missing. The conceptual and institutional obstacles for its implementation cannot be underestimated for an educational system that is still coping with the need to adopt to market economic conditions and learner needs.

1.97 The main vehicle used by Slovene education decision-makers to change the system of education has been the liberalisation of enrolment to secondary and higher education and to abandon the system where enrolment was directly defined by the needs of individual enterprises. This has forced schools to adapt to educational aspirations of students and has led to a considerable shift in the structure of secondary education. At present the enrolment structures seem to have been stabilised with about 60% of primary school leavers choosing for some form of vocational education and training, as opposed to the 85% who did so before. This indicates that there remains considerable interest among the population for choosing vocational education pathways. In parallel to liberalising enrolments other structural changes have been introduced, such as the re-establishment of an apprenticeship system, and the creation of a variety of VET pathways at post secondary and tertiary level. The result is a rather flexible and open structure, which should allow at each level for either the acquisition of recognised vocational qualifications, or continuation of studies at the next higher level. Horizontal transfer pathways have also been enabled.

1.98 Centralised and input-based quality control instruments (centralised curricula and funding system, accreditation procedures and teacher qualification requirements) have initially been complemented by attempts to modernise already existing output standards (through standards of knowledge and skills based on occupational standards). Only towards the end of the 1990s, under pressure of actual developments on the labour market, high school drop-out rates in vocational education and internal CVT needs from successful enterprises, attempts have started to decentralise and deregulate the education system. While during the 1970s and 1980s the education system was much more decentralised (in the framework of the Self-management communities of interests for education) with more say of regional partners and local communities with respect to programmes and financing (at least of infrastructures), during the early 1990s a shift back to centralisation has occurred in Slovenia based first of all on allowing a gradual and well-organised reform of the system. Against this background recent decentralising developments are still met by some degree of reluctance, both from the side of educational experts and policy makers as well as by their colleagues from the social partners. The search is now to find a new balance between further developing a sustainable and quality securing national framework with decentralising decisions regarding delivery and contents.

¹⁹ It should be remembered that the JAP while signed in October 2000 was already drafted in 1999. Much of the agreed actions therefore have in the meantime already been taken up by policy intentions. The matter is now rather one of policy implementation than of formulation.

1.99 The challenge for policy makers is to find the ways to further improve the responsiveness of VET to needs of learners and enterprises while at the same time securing a high level of educational quality and impact from the formal education system. There remains a strong conviction that high-quality education can only be provided by schools and teachers. But there is at the same time growing concern that this can only be done when the quality of the teaching process in schools is improved. There is also growing understanding that learning not only takes place in the formal school system and that it will become important to be able to assess and recognise alternative learning sites and learning routes against agreed quality standards;

1.100 In this context, three approaches are now being developed that are of major importance for improving the relevance of VET for individuals and companies. If implemented seriously they will also contribute to further developing a lifelong learning system.²⁰

- Greater attention to quality of learning processes (by reformulating roles and qualifications of teachers, changing pre- and in-service teacher training, giving greater attention to individual learner needs, and facilitating schools to experiment with educational innovations).
- More autonomy for schools allowing them to better respond to local and regional developments (by flexibilisation of the national curriculum framework and modularisation of educational programmes, the introduction of school-based quality-control mechanisms, strengthening the innovative capacities in schools, as well as changing financing mechanisms from itemised funding to providing schools with budgets).
- Attempts to improve quality and capacities for practical learning (better integration of theory and practice and development of Inter Company Training Centres) and to link up the recognition of non-formal and informal learning made possible by the recent Law on National Occupational Qualifications with diplomas from the formal school system. This will further improve the integration of initial and continuing training.

44. Main organisations or authorities

Ministries:

1.101 **The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MOESS)**²¹ has the overall responsibility for the entire school system from pre-school education through basic, (upper) secondary, post-secondary to higher education. It is responsible for both initial and adult education, while some responsibilities for labour market related adult education are shared with the Ministry of Labour. Prime responsibilities of the MOESS relate to the structuring and funding of the system, the management of public institutions, inspection procedures and

²⁰ See for the most recent reviews and policy documents, Slavko Gaber a.o., Accession strategy of the Republic of Slovenia in the field of human resource development, Phare MOCCA Ljubljana 2000; and Bostjan Zgonc a.o., Memorandum on further development of vocational education and training, Phare MOCCA, Ljubljana 2000.

²¹ The Ministries of Education and Sports and of Science and Technology have been merged in 2001 into a single Ministry of Education, Science and Sports.

financial assistance to students. It prepares legislation and is responsible for implementing education acts and all associated administrative decisions.

1.102 **The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (MOLFSA)** is responsible for approving occupational standards that form the basis for the officially recognised vocational and technical education and training programmes delivered by the formal education system. Proposals for inclusion of new occupational titles and definition of standards are prepared by the chambers, with technical assistance from the educational support institutes, who present them for a final opinion to the Council of Experts. MOLFSA normally follows the advice of the Council but is formally responsible for acceptance of any changes in occupational profiles and their standards. MOLFSA is also the leading ministry with regard to labour market related continuing vocational education and training²².

1.103 This particular division of responsibilities between the two ministries is still a heritage from the former times during which the Nomenclatura²³ also formed the basis for the recognition of occupational titles and more in particular for classification in the national wage and salary system, for which the MOLFSA was responsible. In practice co-operation appears to work quite smoothly with the MOESS typically stressing the importance of the formal education system and MOLFSA being more inclined to also recognise non- and informal learning.

National Council of Experts for VET (NCE)

1.104 The National Council of Experts is a consultative body for the MOESS and MOLFSA, composed of 16 experts from the fields of VET, labour market and employment. Members are appointed by the Government on the basis of proposals made by the ministries, chambers and trade unions. They participate in the NCE on a voluntary basis. The only professional post is its secretary. In spite of its consultative nature the NCE brings most important decisions about the qualification standards, VET programmes, textbooks, appointments of high school teachers etc., which are more or less formally approved by the ministers. It also discusses the evaluation reports and proposes development policies. Among its most important responsibilities there are:

- final proposals of the national qualification standards,
- final proposals of the nationally accredited VET programmes,
- approvals of the appointments of high school teachers,
- approval of recommended textbooks,
- policy recommendations,
- approval of the evaluation reports, and

²² Labour market and employment research is currently undertaken by several university institutes and by the Employment Service. The absence of structured policy-oriented labour market and VET analysis has only recently been addressed. Capacities of the National Observatory have been insufficient to fill this gap.

²³ The "Nomenclatura" contains a list of all publicly recognised professional qualifications for which formal educational programmes are offered by the education system.

- approval of the relevant methodologies.

1.105 Because of complexity of its tasks and non-professional membership, the NCE is helped by its board and commissions, in which all social partners are represented. By the rule the preparatory expert work for the discussion in the boards and commissions is made by the Centre RS for VET. At present the board and commissions are:

- Board for the National Qualification Standards

Its main role is to discuss and elaborate proposals for new national qualification standards or revision of the existing ones. Although representatives of employers co-operate as equal partners, they play the main role and chair the Board.

- Commission for VET Programmes

This commission discusses and elaborates proposals for new VET programmes or eventual changes of the existing ones. It also examines the evaluation reports and methodologies related to the programme making and implementation.

- Commission for Post secondary High School Teachers Appointments

Post secondary high vocational schools represent a new element in the VET system. It seems very important that they reach high quality, which depends a lot on the teaching staff. Although the recruitment of teachers is made by the schools, their final appointment is approved by the NCE on the basis of its Commission proposals.

- Commission for Textbooks

This Commission examines proposals for the new textbooks made by the authors or publishers. If approved by the NCE textbooks get the status of recommended teaching material. The Commission also suggests textbooks publishing policy to the MOESS, which gives relevant subsidies.

National Council of Experts for Adult Education

1.106 It gives an opinion on regulated CVT, mostly from the point of view of appropriateness of organisation and implementation of the teaching process for adults. Through participation in the preparation of the National Programme of Adult Education and in the annual plans of adult education it exercises its advisory role also in the field of non-regulated CVT.

National Examination Centre

1.107 The National Examination Centre is a professional institution established by the MOESS in order to run the external assessment and examination. It especially develops methodologies and organises final exams for youth and adults upon their finishing compulsory education and certain upper secondary school programmes. It also organises training of examination commissions' members, awards relevant licences and monitors the examination procedures. In this capacity it takes the responsibility for the proper composition of commissions for certification of national qualifications and for adequate qualification of their members.

Research and development institutes:

1.108 Both ministries are supported by research and development institutes that have been established for each of the educational sub-sectors.²⁴ For the area of vocational education, the two support institutes are:

Centre RS for VET

1.109 Centre RS for VET was established in 1995 by the social partners (ministries and chambers), who finance it. Most of the staff are former teachers from the VET system. It is given a central development and counselling role. In this capacity it is expected to:

- prepare an expert basis for decision making on matters within the competence of the NCE, e.g. qualification standards, teaching programmes, evaluation reports and methodologies;
- make field research as a basis of its expertise, such as analysis of the appearing occupations and their changing nature;
- monitor and evaluate the implementation of teaching programmes and their outcomes, the implementation of new teaching methods, the relevance of national qualification standards etc.;
- offer consultant services to schools and employers who carry out VET programmes;
- provide in-service training of teachers;
- keep files of national qualification standards;
- design methodologies needed for the generation of qualification standards, elaboration of teaching programmes, writing of textbooks etc., and
- follow the development of the VET field abroad and proposes adequate policies and measures to the NCE and the ministries, etc.

and the Institute for Adult Education (ACS)

1.110 The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education was established by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia in October 1991. Its mission is to foster the development of a culture of lifelong learning in Slovenia by research, development, counselling, and educational activities all supported by AE information system. It has a key role in the development of in-service training of managers, trainers and organisers of adult education and training. Its activities in this area are divided in basic andragogic training²⁵, specialised training for obtaining international certificates, and training related to implementation of innovations in the field of

²⁴ They also co-operate with other national institutions such as the National Examination Centre (on secondary school exams), the Statistical Office (on classifications and statistics) and the Employment Service (on labour market training).

²⁵ Basic andragogic training encompasses: communication skills; effective methods and techniques of teaching and learning in adult education; assessment and accreditation in adult education; programming in adult education; changing role of teacher in adult education; counselling in adult education.

methods and forms of adult education developed by the Institute. The lack of high quality trainers represents an important limitation in the efforts of the Institute to meet the needs of adult education and training staff.

Chambers:

1.111 In Slovenia there are two main chambers in the field: **the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI)** and **the Chamber of Crafts (CC)**. Some new chambers are appearing, such as the Chamber of Agriculture. They represent employers. The participation of chambers is valuable because of their experiences with education and training as well as with autonomous certification of qualifications, which was in place before the certification of national qualifications was established. On the basis of their role and experiences they participate in all the partner bodies and take organisational and financial responsibilities for the implementation of VET programmes, for generation of national qualification standards and certification of qualifications. They are involved in the NQS in different respects:

- propose national qualification standards, as well as standards for master craftsmen examination;
- participate in the development of the training programmes,
- appoint their members for the examination commissions as well as for all the other partner bodies in the field,
- verify proposed places for training of apprentices in the firms, keep the register of these places and help making contracts between apprentices and employers,
- help organise training in the firms, give advice to employers and monitor the training, and
- organise examination for the apprentices and master craftsmen as well as certification of qualifications.

VET Schools:

1.112 VET schools carry out the accredited VET programmes. Most of schools are founded by the state and by local communities. The school system is highly centralised meaning that the MOESS approves the appointment of head masters, regulates the number of teachers by detailed standards, such as the number of students in a class, the number of teaching hours per teacher per week, allocates programmes in the school network etc. The autonomy of schools is limited also by the content of programmes that are determined by the NCE on the national level. The network of public schools in Slovenia is rather fragmented and locally dispersed. The co-operation between them is rather weak. Several schools in smaller towns run more programmes than could be expected. They try to keep the number of classes and teachers, the positions of which have been jeopardised by the falling number of youth. Only gradually they turn towards the adult population.

1.113 Apart from public schools there is an increasing number of private schools founded by local communities and other legal entities, such as companies. They operate especially in the field of higher education. However, they aim at running of the publicly accredited

programmes in order to be more attractive for students. On this basis they subsequently ask also for the public money. Among these schools there are also people universities aiming at education and training of adults. People universities and other private schools offer also a big number of non-accredited programmes, which are getting importance in the procedures of direct certification of qualifications.

1.114 Relatively important role in this system has also the **SORS – Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia**, which is responsible for developing, arranging and maintaining the Standard Classification of Occupations (SKP). Based on the ISCO-88 the SKP is also compliant with the ISCED classification. That is particularly important since the article 11 of the Law on Vocational and Professional Education determines that educational programmes of vocational education are formed on the basis on the nomenclature of occupations (now occupational standards). The nomenclature of occupations (now occupational standards) is a register that connects two basic elements – occupations as a kind of jobs with very similar main tasks and duties and educational programmes with titles of vocational and professional education whose purpose is to transfer knowledge and skills to perform an occupation or a set of occupations.

45. The roles of social partners

1.115 The principle of social partnership in the area of vocational and technical education started to be implemented after the adoption of new education legislation in 1996, since partnership was formally introduced by the new Vocational and Technical Education Act. The new Act gave social partners new areas of competence and new responsibilities in creating and implementing the policy of vocational and technical education. But the question of how to ensure conditions for the implementation of these new tasks remains open. Social partners participate in all main expert and working bodies in the VET area at the national and regional levels. At the national level, the National Council of Experts of the RS for VET and the Council of Experts of the RS for Adult Education, were appointed by the Government on a tripartite basis.

1.116 The main institutions representing employers in the field of vocational education and training are the two Chambers.²⁶ According to the Vocational and Technical Education Act, the main responsibilities of the Chambers in the VET area are to propose those occupations for which programmes of vocational and technical education should be prepared, and to organise and monitor practical training (in enterprises) as part of vocational education.²⁷

²⁶ The Chamber of Economy and the Chamber of Craft.

²⁷ More particularly, the chambers are required to:

- propose (define) the standards of practical knowledge and skills;
- propose additional (further) training programmes to the competent expert council;
- organise the practical part of final exams for apprentices and organise master craftsmen, foremen and managerial exams;
- appoint their members to final exam committees at short-term and secondary vocational schools;
- control the training places for apprentices in enterprises, maintain a register of apprenticeship places and of concluded apprenticeship contracts;
- organise the implementation of the practical component of vocational education in enterprises;
- offer advice to employers regarding practical training of apprentices and monitor the performance of such training and
- organise partial exams to establish if the practical training of apprentices is proceeding well.

While membership in the chambers is obligatory these institutions also tend to try to regulate, on behalf of their members, access to specific occupational domains which from time to time leads to some discussions with the MOESS on the issue of enrolment to vocational education and training.

1.117 The role of Trade Unions is, as in many other European countries, very limited. Their main responsibility is basically to assure that the rights of apprentices guaranteed by the Act, apprenticeship contracts and collective agreements, are not violated. The Unions also propose their representatives to the exam committees of vocational schools (for the school part of exams) and to exam committees of Chambers (for the practical part of exams).

1.118 Involvement of trade unions, social partnership at the regional level and financial involvement of employers are still critical unsolved issues. One of the biggest obstacles appears to be the limited capacities and resources on the side of social partners. As a result, and more by force than by design, the Ministry of Education has retained a key role. However, advisory councils of national experts have been established at the national level for all sub-sectors of education, including VET and adult education. The Council of Experts for VET includes social partners, representatives of MOESS, MOLFSA, the Employment Service, and of the main support institutions and is chaired by a labour market specialist from Ljubljana University. As the role and status of these councils have been defined by law they have remained untouched by government and political changes and have thus secured additional continuity of education reform.

1.119 The implementation of social partnership in Slovenia in the area of vocational and technical education is also confronted with problems, especially in ensuring the conditions for greater involvement of social partners. Transferring certain areas of competence and responsibilities to social partners is not enough. Lack of funding and lack of expertise create obstacles at implementing the principle of social partnership in the area of vocational and technical education.

46. Is there a single authority or collection of authorities responsible for the integration of and linkages between qualifications

1.120 The Slovenian education system is still rather centralised and compact. Thus, the national qualifications are defined on the national level. Main authorities responsible for the integration of and linkages between qualifications are both ministries – MOESS for general education and MOLFSA for vocational part of the formal education and for the certification system. During the 1990s much effort has been undertaken to open more horizontal and vertical pathways by introducing new types of educational programmes, especially at post-secondary and higher education level in vocational education. In addition, the establishment of a dual system has reintroduced an alternative to the school-based secondary vocational path, with openings to the “master craftsman” degree and higher education. The intention has been to establish a varied and flexible system of secondary and tertiary education enabling to achieve similar qualifications through different routes. Bridging programmes should enable transition between general and vocational education pathways at any level.

1.121 The situation is different when certificate system is in question. The bottom-up approach of building the certificate system makes integration of qualifications inside much

harder as well as making linkages between occupational qualifications. On the systemic level certificate system is not linked to the formal education system yet.

1.122 In the reality there is much to be done before it would be possible to start with the actual integration of those two systems. The experts from CPI are preparing and testing the methodology for the integration and linkages of vocational qualifications. On the other hand, at the MOLFSA, which is responsible for the field, the work on the Act on Mutual Recognition of Vocational Qualifications is marked as a priority but the Act is not prepared yet.

47. Quality assurance for qualifications

1.123 The responsibility for the supervision of quality of formal programmes is entrusted to the competent ministries. For the supervision of the provision of conditions for practical training in the dual system the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Crafts are responsible.

1.124 The relevance of the training outcomes is assured by involving social partners in the development and approval of occupational standards/standards of knowledge and skills in the certification system, in assessment and certification procedures, and also in the development, approval and execution of training programmes in the state regulated CVT. The quality of the achieved educational and training standards is assured via external examinations.

1.125 Several mechanisms are applied in order to assure quality of the teaching process in formal education and training. Social partners are involved in all phases. Competent ministries define norms and standards for carrying out formal training programmes leading to the national qualifications. These include material conditions and qualification requirements for staff in order to be accredited for carrying out a particular regulated training programme or to obtain public financing. However, compliance with the requirements is checked only at the time of registration/verification. Special guidelines for adjusting training programmes for youth to the needs of adults were recently issued by the Ministry of Education²⁸. Systematic evaluation is legally required only when new and/or modernised training programmes are implemented on an experimental basis. By and large therefore, quality control remains a mixture of input and output control mechanisms with little attention to the learning process where self-evaluation by teachers is implemented. As elsewhere in Europe, the search is for quality control instruments that will allow private training providers to develop and implement adequate quality management themselves, without state control, but that will also allow as much as possible public recognition of certificates achieved in the informal and non formal training system.

48. Formal credit arrangements

1.126 Since the National Qualification System is still under development, at the present there are no formal credit arrangements between the main sets of qualifications. Modularization of the programmes is expected, but still not implemented.

²⁸ Velikonja, Klenovšek-Vilić, Lorenčič, 1999

49. Other types of direct linkages

1.127 The recognition of the foreign qualifications is achieved through the process of nostrification. This is based mainly on the bilateral agreements between countries, on international conventions (EU, Lisbon 1997) and declarations (Bologna), and on the co-operation with international networks (NARIC²⁹, ENIC) that are specialized in providing the information needed. For nostrification of certificates and diplomas from the basic and secondary education the MOESS is responsible, while for the diplomas from higher education the appropriate institution of higher education is responsible.

1.128 Concerning the regulated occupations, “The Act on the Procedures for Recognizing Qualifications for EU Citizens to Perform in Regulated Occupations in Slovenia”, enables quick recognition of qualifications for EU citizens and also for other foreigners, where bilateral agreement on mutual recognition of qualifications exists.

50. Data on the granting of credit and the transfer between qualifications

1.129 At the moment no data are available on the matter.

51. Openness, transparency and effectiveness of the credit and linkage systems

1.130 To determine openness, transparency and effectiveness of the credit system and linkage systems, these systems should be established and fully operable. On the other hand, reliable data must be available on the systems’ outcomes. At the moment no data are available on the matter.

52. Is there a qualifications framework?

1.131 At the present time there is no national qualifications framework in Slovenia. There are no formal links between formal and non-formal learning implemented in practice. The structure of the formal education is still very rigid and does not enable incorporation of the certification based vocational qualifications into the system yet. Discussions among policy makers and other stakeholders concerning the integration of formal, non-formal and informal learning has only recently started and formally recognised diplomas so far can only be achieved within the formal education system. Since the certification system is still in development and many more certification based vocational qualifications are expected in the near future, there is an obvious need for the framework that would join together two main streams of acquiring vocational qualifications.

²⁹ The NARIC programme started in Slovenia in 1997, by the appointment of the national co-ordinator and programme council, which was renamed in 2001 in Commission for NARIC.

53. Existence of the information system

1.132 The information system that would provide information and advice on the qualification systems is yet to be set up. Many of the information needed are already available but they are fragmented and scattered through the educational and labour market institutions.

1.133 The Centre for Vocational Education and Training (CPI) that is in charge of carrying out research and development in the field of technical and vocational education and training, and is, after defining the needed job profiles by the Chambers, responsible for coordination and support of the curriculum development for the corresponding vocational training programmes, started in 2000 establishing the informational-documentation system for occupational standards and occupational qualifications. This database would enable recording and reviewing current and new occupational standards and vocational qualifications. At the CPI web site (<http://www.cpi.si>) there is a page dedicated to brief presentation of the already approved occupational standards, occupational qualifications and educational programmes³⁰. At the same time new web site of the National Reference Point for Occupational Qualifications (<http://ris.cpi.si>) has been introduced recently where titles, education levels and more detailed description of the already approved occupational standards, occupational qualifications and educational programmes could be found online. At the moment, the already mentioned National Reference Point for Occupational Qualifications - Slovenia is still long way from taking its role in giving information about:

- vocational education and training and about certification of non-formally acquired competencies;
- nomenclatura and national occupational standards, as bases for acquiring national occupational qualifications through formal education and through certification;
- educational programmes of vocational education on upper secondary and higher levels of education with all key elements;
- catalogues of knowledge standards, as bases for certification and about places where occupational qualifications could be acquired;
- procedures of assessment and evaluation of non-formally acquired competencies and knowledge;
- transparency of occupational qualifications on national and international level.

54. Main changes in the qualifications system over the past decade

1.134 Over the last decade, the Slovene education system has experienced thorough and all-encompassing modernisation. The basic document of the modernisation, **the White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia** (1995) established not only a policy framework but also the overall philosophy, values and principles forming the basis for the renewal. These

³⁰ Currently there are 131 Occupational standards in 15 occupational fields, 48 titles of master craftsman and 24 occupational standards from certification system approved. See the Annex 2 for schematic review of the number of occupational standards by educational level.

are: (1) accessibility and transparency of the public education system, (2) legal neutrality, (3) choice at all levels, (4) democracy, autonomy and equal opportunities, and (5) quality of learning to take precedence over the accumulation of facts.

1.135 This led to the establishment of the legal framework of the present education system that was adopted in 1996, as the result of national debates and preparation that had already started at the end of the 1980s.³¹ Legislation has been based on a critical review of the legal framework inherited from the former times and has sought to restore a genuine Slovene education system compatible with those of developed European countries. It includes a set of six acts: the Organisation and Funding of Education Act, the Pre-school Institutions Act, the Elementary Schools Act, the Gymnasiums Act, the Vocational and Technical Education Act, and the Adult Education Act, all adopted in February 1996.³² A special characteristic of the new legislation was that it provided for a gradual implementation of changes based on availability of material, staffing, and financial resources. Slovene education reform has not gone through major upheavals and has been characterised by a high degree of continuity and consistency from the early 1990s up to today. Subsequent legislation has further built on the legal fundamentals laid by the first set of laws.

1.136 In the area of initial VET, the most important legislative acts are the Organisation and Funding of Education Act, the Vocational and Technical Education Act and the Act on National Occupational Qualifications.

1.137 The Organisation and Funding of Education Act (1996) is an "umbrella act" for all educational areas. It defines the aims of the educational system and the ways of its organisation and financing; it regulates the development, accreditation and implementation of providers (public and private), programmes and textbooks and defines roles and responsibilities of consultation and support bodies. It also regulates the financing mechanisms, including qualifications, salaries and careers of teaching and non-teaching staff.

1.138 The Vocational and Technical Education Act (1996) regulates the acquisition of publicly recognised qualifications through vocational and technical education at (upper) secondary and post-secondary levels in the formal education system. It stipulates educational programmes, conditions of enrolment, the status of apprentices and students, as well as the training of adults. This Act covers the whole vertical VET structure.

1.139 Among the acts in the field of education adopted in 2000, the Act on National Occupational Qualifications is an important milestone for the further development of vocational education and training. It was initially intended to regulate the acquisition of a

³¹ The legislation has followed closely the policy thinking presented in the White Book favoured by the fact that responsible education policymakers of the early 1990s have themselves been the principal authors of the White Book.

³² Other acts covering the area of initial education of youth are:

- Higher Education Act (1993). Note that this has been the first piece of new legislation to be introduced. At the end of 1999, the Act on Changes and Amendments to the Higher Education Act was passed by the Parliament. The majority of these changes were put into force in 2000.
- School Inspection Act (1996).
- Act on Implementation of Special Rights of Members of the Italian and Hungarian Nationalities in the Area of Education (1982), the only legislation taken over from the earlier period. This is in force in both ethnically mixed regions (Slovenian-Hungarian and Slovenian-Italian).
- The Act on Maturity Exam.

limited number of qualifications for which the formal education system did not provide educational programmes and for which the legal basis had disappeared with the introduction of the 1996 VTE Act. In its final version, it now regulates more generally the procedures, bodies and organisations competent for approving standards for selected qualifications as the basis for assessment and recognition of prior and non-formal learning.

1.140 Current legislation gives a prominent role to national ministries and reflects a rather centralised and regulated notion of a national education system which tends to fortify the priority position of formal education. Slovene educational traditions give high value to formal educational diplomas, as indicated for example in the importance given to academic titles in society. On the other hand, however, the present legislative situation is also a reaction to the many education reforms that have been introduced during the Yugoslav times and which have been considered by Slovene educationalists as increasingly detrimental to the quality of education. After independence recentralisation of the system, but within the confines of the new state of Slovenia, has been used to control a balanced and gradual modernisation of the overall education system. Control remained in the hands of national authorities but has been deliberately shared at the national level – at least as far as VET is concerned – with the social partners. It has been a conscious policy during the 1990s to make social partners co-responsible for vocational education and training. In practice – and in legislation - this has mainly referred to the chambers (as the traditional representative organisations of enterprises) that at national level actively co-operate in policy and programme development. Employers are at company level also engaged in delivery and examination of VET.

1.141 The first important change of the 1990ies related to the educational system was re-introduction of gymnasiums and ‘matura’ as a form of external examination. In the middle of the decade two reforms started. The first has reshaped the institutional system by means of new legislation introduced in 1996.

- In the secondary education (after the compulsory one that has been prolonged to 9 years) in which youth at the age of 15 is enrolled, the supply of different possibilities of education and training has increased. The education and training last from 2 to 5 years, and there is a choice between vocational training programmes, more technically oriented ones and general education in general and technical gymnasiums.
- Master craftsmen courses and examinations have been introduced.
- A post-secondary technical non-university education has been introduced as a new segment in the educational system.
- In the VET segment the dual system similar to the German model has been re-introduced enabling students the choice between the two tracks: school-based and the dual one.
- The regulation of VET is based on the social partnership.
- New bodies, such as National Council of Experts for VET and National VET Institute have been established.
- The distinction has been made between educational titles acquired in the process of education and training and occupations in terms of job that one performs.

1.142 The second was a curricular reform responsible for the change of the content of education and training. The old content of the programmes have been replaced by the modern one, the number of goals to be achieved and contents to be dealt with in the course of education has been reduced in order to lower the burden of students and to increase the quality of education and training. Teaching programmes have become more goal oriented and new teaching approaches and methods have been recommended. It has aimed primarily at the change of the content of education in order to adjust it to the change of technology, and to the

change of political and economic systems. It should also diminish some of the most pressing current problems of education, such as:

- a big share of population without vocational education and training, which is still over 40%,
- a relatively high drop-out in the secondary, especially vocational schools, which is estimated to about 15%,
- too low quality of education accentuating memorising facts rather than learning how to learn and creativity, causing thus tiredness and de-motivation of students,
- small percentage of population with post-secondary education, which reaches only about 10%,
- undeveloped life-long education and neglect of the knowledge and skills obtained informally, on the job etc.

1.143 The change of the VET system has been rather complex and therefore demanding. All the teaching programmes have not been reviewed yet. In addition, VET has been most directly exposed to the pressures coming from the changing labour market. This is why all its segments have not been equally adjusted to the new situation and why new challenges have appeared in the course of transition. The evaluation shows, for instance that the drop-out has not been much reduced, that structural inconsistencies on the labour market are increasing rather than decreasing, that generation of new occupations and qualification standards remains low, that the mobility of students in the VET system as well as transition from school to work and to higher levels of education has been limited due to several hindrances, that functional literacy of the adults is unacceptably low, etc. There have been considerations about further developments. One of the most important has been further elaboration of the national qualification system, which has been enacted by the Act on National Vocational Qualifications in the year 2000.

Component 2: The impact of qualification systems

2.1 As indicated in section 1 in Slovenia currently there are two systems of national qualifications: the mainstream one encompassing the traditional school qualifications which are based on standardised national education and training programmes (curricula) and are under the authority of the education ministry. The second system is called certification system; it is under the authority of the labour ministry. Qualifications obtained from the formal education system are recognised both in the education system and in the employment system. The certificate system was established only recently as a response to the rigidity of the formal educational system in relation to the labour market training needs and qualification needs of the labour force. Qualifications obtained from the certificate system are not integrated to formal qualifications obtained from schools; they are in a way complementary. It is important that they do not replace school certificates and diplomas but while properly combined they can lead to school qualification. When a training programme covers two or more occupational standards, each standard can enable acquisition of qualification in certificate system. In this case the qualification should make part of the education programme (module). Otherwise these qualifications are automatically recognised by the labour market but not by the formal education system. The main difference between educational qualifications and certificate system is that the first are based on training programmes while the second takes into consideration all knowledge and skills of the candidate regardless of the learning paths.

55. Evidence on the impact of the qualification system on access to learning, learning experiences and providing rewards

2.2 We have not been able to identify adequate empirical evidence which could be used in searching for answers to questions stated in this component. Research in education which would deal with educational paths and educational careers of individuals is virtually absent. Social inequality connected with the organisation of the system of national qualifications seems to be a topic which no one wants to touch upon. In the absence of such empirical studies the issues considered within this component will be treated only on the basis of formal regulations provided either by the state or social partners. However, one can only speculate to what extent formal regulations are implemented in everyday practice and how their effects are reflected. Some conclusions are also made on the basis of personal involvement of the authors in these processes.

56. Improving or reducing access to learning

2.3 The existing situation considered qualifications obtained from formal education system (“educational qualifications”) are crucial in providing access to formal education. The qualification structure outlined in component 2 is demonstrating that the system is constructed in the way which enables promotion to higher levels of qualification hierarchy only on the basis of adequate school certificates/diplomas defined as a precondition for enrolment into a

particular training programme. Successfully completed primary education is required in order to be admitted to secondary initial vocational and professional education, and general education.³³ Enrolment in 2- year secondary vocational technical programmes requires completed 3-year vocational education and training. Final exam after completed 3-year vocational education does not give access to tertiary studies. To gain access to university studies matura exam or vocational matura exam is required. However, it is not just the matura exam but also the vocational/professional field covered by the previous qualification which is considered. Gymnasium makes the only educational path that opens the door to all tertiary studies with no additional requirements.

2.4 Persons without the required level of education are excluded from access and such exclusion is final. The worst prospects in this respect are linked to secondary vocational training. Persons with lower vocational qualifications who want to attain higher level vocational qualification have to start from the beginning. People with 3-year vocational qualifications who want to enrol in vocational college must first complete 2-year differential programme or pass some differential exams.

2.5 The issue of entry requirements is especially accentuated in relation to enrolment of adults in formal training. No difference is made between children/youth and adults with work and life experiences. Adults who want the admission to formal education are obliged to fulfil the same conditions; for the time being there are no alternative ways for their enrolment in formal programmes. As already mentioned above certification system and modular approach to the development of curricula are meant to bridge this gape. However they are at the very beginning and do not yet show any effects in this respect.

2.6 Transfer of former learning represents one of the key issues also when horizontal transition between programmes is concerned. Only knowledge and skills which correspond with new curriculum and can be proved by publicly recognised evidence are considered.

2.7 One may thus conclude that when national qualifications act as a regulatory mechanism of entry in formal education programmes the way in which they are conceptualised makes them rather a mechanism of exclusion from access to education an not an indicator of successfulness in the study programme. Qualification requirements for entry into a study programme may also act as a closure in order to protect status and employment prospects of a particular profession. Higher level qualification in the same qualification field is sometimes above all meant to assure career development of those from the field and is not necessary a response to the labour market needs. On the other side the decision to establish a new higher level qualification also induces new learning needs among those working in the respective professional/occupational area. From this point of view national qualifications may be regarded as a pressure to individuals to improve their qualification achievements.

2.8 Already in the 1970s and 1980s some Slovenian adult education experts called attention to the fact that formal education programmes should be developed and carried out so as to take into consideration needs, possibilities and particularities of adults. The request for recognition of prior learning and knowledge and skills obtained outside regulated educational programmes was among strongly outlined particularities to be considered while adults aspired to improve their education/qualification achievements. The law on career directed education

³³ 2,5 year vocational training is an exception since enrolment requires successful completion of at least 6 grades of compulsory education.

from 1981 enacted the possibility for acquisition of formal education via passing exams as citizens. No enrolment in preparatory training programmes was required to sit for exams. Individuals who utilised this path had access to consultations at school as well as to learning material. With the educational reform in 1990s this opportunity was annulated.

2.9 New conception of education in Slovenia (White Paper, 1996) has directed special attention to the introduction of measures for improving access of adults to education. They are enacted in the Adult Education Act and in other school laws regulating individual educational subsystems (e.g. in Vocational and Professional Education Act). The Adult Education Act provides legal basis for examination system as well as for recognition of certificates obtained on the basis of non-educational legislation (laws regulating individual occupations or industries, laws by the labour ministry). On the other side the Vocational and Professional Education Act offers adults three alternative opportunities to obtain formal vocational/professional education: educational programmes developed specially for adults, programmes for youth adjusted to the needs of adults, and modularised programmes. Some evaluations point out that these possibilities have still not found their way from legal acts and methodological guidelines towards the practice.

2.10 Special bylaw on the methodology guiding the adjustment of training programmes for youth to the needs of adults was issued by the Minister of education programmes. Nevertheless, it depends on teachers' competences how far the adjustments follow the principles of advanced andragogic discipline. Preliminary results of an evaluation study dealing with the designing of national syllabus in vocational and professional education of adults (ACS, 2001) show that this process is at its very start. More over they suggest that the adjustment is not always connected to characteristics of adult learners; it may as well be initiated by other reasons, e.g. prior experience of teachers in adult education, the financial resources available, requirements of those who order the delivery (for instance, employment office in case of education of unemployed). Adjustments are also not necessarily linked to the introduction of new teaching and learning methods and techniques, just the opposite: teachers frequently mention that the time available is too limited to introduce new methods therefore they mostly use traditional ones. Answers by teachers and adult learners alike suggest that some adjustments considering the content and the scope of delivery may even have a negative effect: they may hinder participants in achieving better learning results and affect the quality of educational standards.

2.11 Concerning recognition of prior education and learning, only those parts of curriculum are recognised by schools for which publicly valid evidence can be produced. It lies with teachers of individual subjects how they treat knowledge and skills not proved by "proper" evidence. On the other side, methodological guidelines for the development of training programmes in lower and middle vocational education and professional and technical education for adults make it possible to adults with occupational experiences in the length at least twice as long as the scope of practical training in the programme to be exempted from practical training.

2.12 Furthermore it is characteristic that training programmes, on which "school" qualifications are based, are divided into three parts - general part, professional-theoretical part, practical part - without any proper integration of them. Such organisation of curricula causes serious difficulties to adults. They often have rather low achievements in general subjects (foreign language, mother tongue, mathematics, science). Those subjects are also regularly blamed for high attrition rate in youth education, and even more so in case of adults

who return to school. Programmers do not seem to be capable of defining learning goals and designing learning process in a way which could make sense to adult learners and contribute to better achievements as well as to the durability of knowledge and skills learned.

2.13 Adult education experts emphasise that small participation rate of adults in formal education in comparison with their actual needs is largely a consequence of the fact that their needs, possibilities and particularities are not adequately recognised in the process of learning. Adults simply do not consider formal training relevant to their needs. Data on the rate of participation of adults in formal and non-formal education and learning, collecting in the national survey on literacy of adults and participation in education reveal that there is a statistically significant association between the level of attained formal education and participation in adult education. The higher the level of formal qualification, the higher the percentage of participants in adult education.³⁴ The data also show that the share of participants who wanted to obtain higher level of formal education increased in all qualification categories compared to 1987. (Radovan, M., T., Vilić Klenovšek, 2001, pp. 110, figure 50). Considering such figures one could suggest that it is likely that national qualifications which are defined as entry requirement to tertiary education actually motivate adults to invest in their education and learning, be it in the form of higher degree of formal education or non-formal education, training, and advanced training. Above all adults with 4-year secondary education tend to improve their degree of education/qualification, which reflects through the increase of numbers of enrolled in vocational colleges. On the other hand 3-year vocational qualifications seem to be least motivating in this respect.

2.14 To summarise, the national qualification system which is currently in operation in practice could hardly be regarded as one conceptualised in the way which is supporting the realisation of lifelong learning principles. In IVET as well as in the state - regulated CVT under the authority of the educational ministry national qualifications can only be obtained as a whole. The structure of training programmes is rigid, organised by subjects and classes, and does not enable easy adjustment to new concepts and requirements. Horizontal transfer of knowledge and skills between training programmes is poor. No credit schemes are developed as yet. Furthermore, no mechanisms enabling recognition of knowledge and skills obtained outside national curricula which are not proved by publicly recognised evidence are assured yet. All this renders the transition between work and education difficult; this goes also for horizontal shifts between programmes. Possibilities for gradual acquisition of qualification legally granted to adults are not yet become a reality. In addition, basic entry conditions to individual qualifications are defined for young people and adults with work experiences alike. At the same time the position legally guaranteed to national qualifications in the education and training system as well as in the employment system creates pressure for constant upgrading of formal qualifications and increased investment in non-formal training. Since non-formal education and learning does not provide adequate returns in terms of improvement of social status the number of those aspiring to education and training leading to national certificates, diplomas, and degrees is being lately in constant increase. Data also suggest that while choosing education and training programmes both young and adults take into consideration the opportunities for professional career development. The division of secondary education on vocational stream and academic (general) stream creates a strong

³⁴ Of those with completed primary education or less the participation amounted to 12%, of those with lower vocational training to 7%, with 3-year vocational training to 24%, with 4- and 5-year professional and technical education it increased to 42%, and of the population with tertiary education it reached as much as 72%. (Ivančič, A., Mirčeva, J., 2001, pp. 35, figure 6).

pressure by young people on qualifications which at the end provide better choice of options. 2- and 3-year vocational qualifications give only limited opportunities therefore they have become less interesting in this respect. This reflects through strong decrease in numbers of those enrolled in these programmes. Simultaneously there is very strong pressure on 4-year professional, technical and - above all general - qualifications.

57. Evidence of trends of this outcomes

(see Annexes 3, 4, 5 and 6)

58. Match between learning and the skill needs of the workplace

2.15 Till 2000 when the certification system has been enacted by the National Qualification Act a single system of national educational qualifications existed. It was regulated by the educational legislation. Via labour and employment legislation qualifications obtained from the educational system have been also recognised by the employment system. With the educational reform in 1990s social partnership has been introduced in VET system which has additionally strengthened ties between national qualifications and the employment system. Participation of representatives of employers and employees in all phases of the development and acquisition of qualifications may be expected to guarantee that they are relevant for the labour market and no additional recognition procedures by social partners are needed. Social partnership should thus assure that public certificates, diplomas and degrees present relevant information to employers that their holders are either properly trained for pursuing particular job or occupation or provide the information on the kind of competence they possess.

2.16 National qualifications act as an important regulating mechanism in the Slovenian labour market and the employment system. Formally they represent main selection mechanism in the process of hiring and allocating people to jobs. Work organisations are legally required to define the system of jobs (posts) as well as qualification requirements to pursue the jobs. Qualification requirements are defined in terms of levels and fields of formal education. Indeed, employers are free to decide about the level and type of qualifications, and are in no way obliged to stick to the existing national qualification structure.

2.17 No empirical studies on the role of education in allocation processes and labour market outcomes have as yet found place in labour market studies in Slovenia. As a consequence there is no empirical evidence on the role of national qualifications in hiring and allocating processes. Some assumptions can only be made on the basis of limited practical experiences. Following the data on vacancies registered with the National Employment Office or their announcement in media it is evident that employers often avoid being too restrictive in defining qualification requirements: they ask for alternative levels of the same qualification, where lower level is usually compensated for by greater work experience. The field of qualification is also often defined fairly broadly or not at all (e.g. “higher education in the adequate field”; “higher education in social sciences”). This provides employers with enough space for taking into consideration additional criteria while hiring new workers. There is an assumption that certain services (above all financial and business services) regard tertiary level qualifications as an indicator of general skills and abilities while field specific

qualifications are developed on-the-job or in specially designed training organised by the employer. Although a basic criterion for promotion is still represented by formal qualification other criteria are likely to be more decisive (special field- or firm-specific competencies, the amount and type of social capital etc.). Again, no studies are available which could empirically support/reject this assumption. At the same time the scope of activities and occupations where access is legally regulated by formal qualifications has increased lately.

2.18 All available information considered it may be argued that the matching between national qualifications and occupational requirements in firms and enterprises is stronger at the level of secondary vocational qualifications which are more strongly based on occupational requirements and emphasise practical training. This above all applies to qualifications connected with craft occupations.

2.19 National qualifications are not to not provide firm-specific skills and competencies but broad occupational skills and transferable qualifications while employers expect that newcomers from schools to the labour market should be fully competent to pursue certain job. The main criticism made by employers is that educational qualifications are not relevant for workplace as young people are not capable to apply knowledge obtained from school in practical circumstances. All young people who for the first time start the employment after completing schooling start as interns. The duration of the internship depends on the level of education but should not exceed 1 year. It is common that employers require in addition to formal qualification a certain length of work experience. Also regulated professions often require, in addition to formal qualification, some evidence on professional skills and competencies. All this suggests that employers are not likely to rely on national qualifications as relevant indicators of individual proficiency at work.

2.20 As already mentioned, some large firms and services have started to develop their own systems of qualifications and competences and their own training delivery systems. However, these qualifications are usually of internal nature and supplement national qualifications. In such cases national qualification above all serve as an indicator of “trainability” of newly hired workers.

2.21 All this applies while hiring from external labour market, whereas models of promotion and career development in organisations differ from firm to firm, from sector to sector. There are differences between public and private sector, between public services and state administration, hierarchical and democratic organisation of work etc. In public services such as health care, education, research, state administration, promotion is regulated by formal rules. Still, holding national qualification a constant, factors such as years of work experiences and additional professional training facilitate promotion. An improvement in the level of national qualification should be followed by promotion when it is acquired within the human resource development plan of the organisation. When such improvement is not in line with the needs of organisation promotion is more likely to occur in the external market.

2.22 It should be stressed that the Slovenian labour market is still fairly regulated. Although firms have developed a kind of internal markets they are obliged by law to make their vacancies available also to job-seekers from external market. Accordingly, people from external market and from within firms compete for vacant positions which are limited in numbers. In this competition game educational qualification mostly functions as a basic criterion that equips a person for queuing for a vacancy; this makes national qualification

relative individual mobility resources. Promotion is possible only when there is a vacancy commensurate with individual qualification achievements.

2.23 No research on career mobility or labour market outcomes has been conducted lately. A national retrospective survey on life histories was carried out in 1994 for the period 1974-1994 which contained data on employment histories of population. An analysis of the data demonstrated that attained occupational positions and years of service are more important in shifting between jobs and organisations than attained level of education. Formal education proved to be significant in relation to upward mobility (Ivančič, 1997). Moreover, the results suggest that occupational/qualification markets are in operation. According to the data most shifts occur within the same occupational group which explains the significance of occupational experience. In order to move to a job within another occupational grouping, corresponding national qualification is required. Taking into account that national qualifications are based on occupational standards it may well be expected that effects of an occupational position may outbalance effects of national qualification while the significance of occupation/job specific skills obtained by on-the-job training become crucial. The study mentioned also shows that the risk of moving between jobs and occupations is significantly higher with higher level qualifications and transversal qualifications which span more occupations. Least horizontal as well as vertical transfer is displayed by qualifications related to skilled manual (craft) occupations in primary and secondary sector, and personal services.

2.24 Occupational markets which are equalised with qualification markets are mostly found in regulated professions and activities, and craft sector. These markets are virtually not permeable for those who do not possess the required qualification.³⁵

2.25 From the point of view of labour market outcome it is further important that controlling for the attained occupational position and certain socio-demographic characteristics (age) the attained national qualification does not guarantee the employment security. On the other side unemployed persons with higher level qualifications are significantly less likely to become long-term unemployed.

³⁵ Some interesting issues concerning the coupling of national qualifications and occupations and their effects are presented in Kramberger (1999).

Table 2.1: Unemployment growth by levels of education

Education	Index				Unemployment rate (as share of active population)			
	1998	1999/1998	2000/1999	2001/2000	1998	1999	2000	2001
Primary education	100	95,5	89,1	95,2	26,2	27,4	24,9	23,6
Lower vocational education	100	89,7	86,0	90,1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Secondary vocational education	100	94,4	88,5	94,2	10,8	10,7	10,2	9,4
Secondary professional and general education	100	93,2	91,4	97,9	9,4	8,4	7,0	6,8
Tertiary non-higher education	100	87,2	88,5	86,3	4,6	4,0	3,7	3,5
Higher education	100	90,9	103,2	112,4	3,0	2,6	2,5	2,5

Source: National Employment Office; Annual Reports 1999, 2000, 2001; tab. XVI.

National Statistical office: Statistical information 7 Labour market; No. 178, 9 July 2002; No. 146, 17 July 2000; No. 202, 26 July 2001; No. 219, 9 August 2001; tab. 4, LFS data.

Note: In calculating the share of unemployed with secondary vocational education lower and secondary vocational education have been gathered into the category "secondary vocational education" since the information on education of the active population does not provide separate data for the two categories.

Table 2.2: Labour market needs for workers and interns by levels of qualification

Levels of qualification	Registered needs for workers (Numbers)				Needs for interns (Numbers)			
	1998	1999	2000	2001	1998	1999	2000	2001
No formal qualification	46348	47294	47832	43660	-	-	-	-
Lower vocational qualification	2191	2100	3645	2080	123	102	65	51
Secondary vocational qualification	42889	45653	48804	45243	4368	3596	2741	1831
Secondary professional/general education	21440	23524	24830	23604	3555	3022	2734	2278
Tertiary non-higher education	7184	7305	6758	6063	873	781	638	437
Higher education	11514	13112	14504	15246	2151	2305	2540	2625
Total	131566	138988	146373	135896	11070	9806	8718	7222

Levels of qualification	Registered needs for workers %				Registered needs for interns %			
	1998	1999	2000	2001	1998	1999	2000	2001
No formal qualification	35,2	34,0	32,7	32,1				
Lower vocational qualification	1,7	1,5	2,5	1,5	1,1	1,0	0,7	0,7
Secondary vocational qualification	32,6	32,8	33,3	33,3	39,4	36,7	31,4	25,4
Secondary professional/general education	16,3	16,9	17,0	17,4	32,1	30,8	31,4	31,5
Tertiary non-higher education	5,6	5,3	4,6	4,5	7,9	8,0	7,3	6,1
Higher education	8,7	9,4	9,9	11,2	19,4	23,5	29,1	36,3

Source: National Employment Office, Annual reports 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001; Table 11

2.26 Data by the National employment office on current needs of employers for qualifications spanning years 2000 and 2001 show that only higher education qualifications indicate the tendency of slight increase while the demand for qualifications on other educational levels is in decrease (Annex 4). Of all registered needs for workers those without any formal qualification still amount to about one third. But large share of these needs is related to temporary employment.

2.27 National qualifications are also important in regard to self-employment opportunities and especially to the opening of craft workshops. The law on crafts divides craft activities into

groups A and B. Access to group A is only possible through possession of national qualification of a master craftsman. And access to this qualification is conditioned by at least secondary vocational/professional qualification.

2.28 As far as national qualifications under the authority of the labour ministry are concerned, their actual role in improving access to jobs and employment is not yet regulated. Moreover, people who passed the assessment and certification procedures so far were already employed.

59. Pecuniary benefits of the recognition of learning through qualifications.

2.29 In the Slovenian labour market wages and salaries are not individual characteristics but characteristics of a particular job/workplace; accordingly employers do not pay national qualifications attained by the employed but qualifications required to pursue particular job/occupation. From this point of view it is not rational for a person to accept the job with lower qualification requirements than her/his qualification achievements.

2.30 National educational qualifications are a basis for defining a tariff scale at the national level as well as the branch level. The tariff scale defining the starting pays for individual occupational categories is based on the national qualification hierarchy where individual levels of proficiency of work are measured by the duration of the required publicly recognised training.

2.31 Tariff scales are defined in collective agreements. General Collective Agreement for the economy sector which states the frame for collective agreements at branch- occupational and enterprise levels has arranged jobs/posts into nine tariff categories. This arrangement is done on the basis of the required professional education, defined by the corresponding organisational act. They are as follows:

- I. **Tariff category** (simple jobs): jobs for which uncompleted primary education is sufficient and no training is required;
- II. **Tariff category** (less demanding jobs): jobs for which completed primary education is required; in addition on the job training in the duration from one to more months is required;
- III. **Tariff category** (jobs of an intermediate complexity): jobs for which 2 years of publicly recognised vocational training is required;
- IV. **Tariff category** (demanding jobs): jobs, for which at least 2 years of publicly recognised vocational training is required;
- V. **Tariff category** (more demanding jobs): jobs for which 3 years of publicly recognised vocational education upgraded with master craft examination or examination for foreman/head clerk is required; or
4- or 5-year publicly recognised training is required
- VI. **Tariff category** (very demanding jobs): jobs for which publicly recognised 2-year higher education (university programme) /completed 2-year vocational college is required;
- VII. **Tariff category** (highly demanding jobs): jobs for which higher education (university, non-university) is required;

- VIII. **Tariff category** (most demanding jobs): jobs for which master degree, specialisation or state examination after a completed university study is required;
- IX. **Tariff category** (extremely important most demanding jobs): jobs for pursuing of which doctoral degree is required.

2.32 The ratio between the starting pays for full-time work characteristic of the lowest and the highest pay category amounts to 1:3 which would hardly stimulate greater individual investment in educational qualifications. This ratio may be changed by arranging typical jobs of individual tariff categories into pay scales by collective agreements at the branch/enterprise level. Characteristics such as: additional training, duration of work experiences, higher level of responsibility, more hazardous working conditions make the basis for such arrangements. This suggests that these additional characteristics may level-off differences in payments stemming from differences in formal qualifications and thus diminish the market value of educational qualification.

2.33 However, pay scales defined by collective agreements at the branch level do not differ considerably from those in general collective agreement; some of them literary resemble definitions from the general agreement and leave the arrangement into pay categories to the enterprise/firm level.

2.34 Arrangement of jobs into tariff categories in Collective agreement for social services and state administration somewhat differs from the one in General agreement for commercial sector. The main difference is that no jobs without completed primary education are assumed. The classification also maintains 9 basic tariff classes but for classes V, VI, VII, VIII subcategories of supporting (*nosilnih*) occupations/professions are introduced (Annex to the Collective Agreement for non-economy sector in Slovenia).

2.35 As far as salaries of public servants are concerned national law on payments is in preparation.

Position of national qualifications obtained in certificate system

2.36 Since certificate system has been enacted only recently, national qualifications acquired in this system have not yet found their place in any classification hierarchy used in the employment and social welfare system. As a consequence their value is not yet determined by any state or private regulations. Currently it is left to individual employers or social partners at the enterprise level how they treat them. To integrate them into existing classifications would require fundamental change in classification criteria.

60. Non-pecuniary rewards for national qualifications

The role of national qualifications in the process of defining redundant workers

2.37 Despite the strong declarative accent on the role of national qualifications for the improvement of productivity and competitiveness of firms and enterprises as well as national economy, among the criteria for defining redundant workers stated in collective agreements the attained qualification is defined as the second criterion. In comparison to the worker with lower educational achievements the worker with higher educational achievements may keep employment only under the conditions of equal or better performance. Thus, higher

educational qualifications do not automatically provide job/employment security. This seems important because of considerable qualification mismatch in the labour market at the upper part of qualification hierarchy and because of changes in qualification requirements for certain occupations which are not always followed by changes in qualification achievements of the employed. Laws regulating some services (e. g. education) create spaces for exceptions when more years of service may compensate for a missing level of formal qualification.

2.38 On the other side the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act is stipulating that unemployed person is entitled to the job which is commensurate to his/her national qualification. This gives him/her the opportunity to reject an inadequate job without risking lose of unemployment benefits. Only long-term unemployed (6 months and more) loose this right.

2.39 Not all branch collective agreements follow the rules defined by general collective agreement when it comes to redundancies: collective agreement for trade states that the attained professional³⁶ qualification is the basic selection criterion in the process of defining redundant workers.

2.40 For the time being no special benefits such as more favourable pension insurance or special health insurance are related directly to national qualifications. Where such benefits exist they are connected to the occupational position or professional activity which is pursued under special (more hazardous) working conditions. However, in general all welfare transfers are linked to occupational positions.

Non-pecuniary rewards to national qualifications under the authority of the labour ministry

2.41 Currently only the Employment and Unemployment insurance Act treats national qualifications obtained in certification system equally to educational qualifications. The right of the unemployed to adequate job does not only relate to educational qualifications but also to qualifications obtained in certification system. Also when it comes to the right of unemployed to training and retraining within the active employment policy programme national qualifications obtained in certification system are treated in equal way.

³⁶ Among particularities found in the labour market regulations in Slovenia the difference between “educational” professional qualification (formal education) and “professional competence” (knowledge, skills and abilities which are not attested by school diplomas and certificates but are regulated by other actors) can be mentioned. These particularities are enacted either by legislation regulating particular activities, professions and occupations or by collective agreements.

Component 3: Pressures and initiatives

62. Major drivers of changes

3.1 Slovenia has become an independent state in 1991, when the former socialist Yugoslavia fell apart. It has opted for political democracy and market economy, which demanded major reforms of all subsystems. The field of education and training was not exempted. In 1996 major changes in the education and training system were enacted. In the area of VET the dual system has been introduced apart from school-based one, post-secondary vocational schools have been given the space to develop anew, social partners have been given their role in the VET system and educational programmes have become based on national vocational standards. In the same year curricula reform started with the aim to modernise the content and methods of teaching including in the field of VET. It lasted for three years. Some VET programmes have been renovated and some elaborated anew. The process continues within the framework of the National VET council. It has been agreed that the standards of education and training for youth and adults should not differ. Only the methods of education and training should be adjusted to the specific group needs. By the end of 1990ies a EU funded Phare MOCCA programme on modernisation of VET for youth and adults was launched. It showed that further change in the VET and adult education was needed.

3.2 In the beginning of 1990ies Slovenian economy was hit by the loss of the majority of markets in the Former Yugoslavia and in the Eastern Europe. Producers that were not yet oriented to the Western markets had to quickly restructure and adjust their activities to the market forces if they wanted to survive. This brought to the fore some very hot issues. The first was low qualification structure of the labour force since more than 40% of the adult population was without formal qualifications. Companies, which wanted to introduce new technologies and to comply with the quality standards, such as ISO, needed better qualification structure of their employees. If they could to some extent substitute skilled workers for the unskilled ones this issue only aggravated for the public employment services, which were supposed to re-insert the increasing numbers of the unemployed back to the active economic life. This challenged the old concept of qualifications, which did not comply with constantly changing requirements in the labour market. Effective solutions, which would accelerate the improvement of qualifications and adjustment of the labour force, were searched for. There was increasingly stressed need for the reform of the concept of qualifications, which would encompass the basis for designing qualifications, the structure of qualification standards, national curricula as well as the roles of actors involved in the conceptualisation, design and delivery of qualifications.

3.3 Soon after the independence Slovenia set on the way to access the EU. In this process there has been the requirement to adjust the system of qualifications to developments going on in the EU. Above all comparability of qualification standards and transparency of qualifications is expected. Therefore all the reform changes have had a strong EU comparative element and try to follow the main trends, such as identification, development and provision of generic skills, elaboration and description of comprehensive qualification system, and issuing of certification documents that make qualifications transparent.

3.4 One should not overlook the demographic trend that encounters low birth rates and ageing of the population and the labour force, which is common to nearly all the European countries. This has made schools, which used to be oversupplied by pupils, more active. They search for new more attractive VET programmes and for new ways of organisation of the teaching process in order to enrol big enough groups of students as to be eligible for public financing. In addition, they have started to discover new clients, the adults, who seek for training themselves, via their employers or via the support of public programmes. On the other hand employers are becoming dependent on the existing, although increasingly old labour. The pension age has been pushed to 63 for both sexes, and it is expected to go further up. Within the next decade labour shortage has been forecasted. This raises the awareness of all social partners about the importance of lifelong learning.

63. Major reforms in qualifications and qualification system intended for adults

3.5 It should be stressed that at the beginning the reforms aimed at the improvement of VET system for youth, especially at their better preparation for employment and better motivation for education and training as to decrease the drop-out. A better choice of programmes has been offered in terms of their duration from 2 to 7 years, if one takes into account post-secondary vocational programmes, and in terms of their focus on practical training, which is highest in the dual system, less accentuated in the school-based system and least in so-called technical schools and vocational gymnasiums. In order to better prepare students for working life the programmes have been based on vocational standards. Social partners, particularly employers, have been given active role in the elaboration of vocational standards and vocational programmes as well as in the process of certification of qualifications and education and training of youth and adults.

3.6 The evaluation of the VET system made in the framework of the EU Phare MOCCA programme by the end of 1990ies showed that the introduced changes did not go far enough neither with respect to the problems, which they were supposed to diminish, nor with respect to the developments elsewhere in Europe. In particular they did not take into account the increasing need for the promotion of lifelong learning. Therefore the Memorandum on further development of VET and other documents accepted by the National VET council put forward the following three changes:

- opening of the curricula,
- modularization of programmes, and
- higher level of knowledge integration.

3.7 **Opening of the curricula** means first of all that the programmes should not be hundred percent determined on the national level and then sent to schools to carry them out. It has been estimated that such a practice has two major deficiencies. First, it does not respect enough the needs of regional employers and other interested partners. Second, any change of the curricula takes too much time if it is submitted to the centralised national procedure. The responsiveness of the VET system to the labour market and to the needs of interested partners is thus too (s)low. Therefore the National VET council has accepted the model according to which 20% of the programme should be elaborated in co-operation between the schools and their regional or branch partners. For the moment this seems to be a viable compromise

between the need to nationally guarantee the achievement of vocational standards and the need to fluently respond to the changing labour market.

3.8 The effectiveness of this arrangement highly depends on the interests and activity of regional and branch partners. It has been stressed in particular that they should formally agree to every solution in order that specific school needs, e.g. to employ redundant teachers would not prevail. In some regions the co-operation between the school centres and other partners has been traditionally firm, in others however it has still to be established. Among partners there are not only traditional social ones, such as local employers, trade unions and local government. Depending on the situation others, such as employment offices, development agencies and representatives of interest groups and associations of parents, disabled, etc. should be involved. The needs of adults for lifelong learning would be met easier by VET programmes on this basis.

3.9 **Modularization of programmes** reflects the need to increase the access of adults to educational opportunities, especially in order to improve their formal qualification attainments. In Slovenian VET legislation this is called 'education by parts of educational programmes'. In the Slovenian VET system modules are based on vocational standards and lead to vocational qualification. Each module should cover one occupational standard. Modularization of training programmes is possible if they are developed for at least two vocational standards. A module is described in terms of standards of knowledge and skills derived from the vocational standard, accompanying learning goals defined in catalogues of knowledge and skills, duration of training and assessment specification. No separate national curricula for modules are prepared and adopted since they are constitutive parts of teaching programmes. On the other hand a certification of knowledge and skills covered by a certain module and acquired outside national school system is possible via the national certification system. It is left to schools and providers of adult education to find organisational forms for the implementation of modularised programmes. Some typical solutions have been sought, however.

3.10 Modular approach has several advantages for the adults, and enables realisation of lifelong learning principles:

- gradual acquisition of formal qualification is enabled where the pace depends on learner's possibilities; they do not need to continue with the study from the beginning of the programme to the end without interruption;
- there is no compulsory enrolment in training programme; instead assessment and certification of non-formal and informal learning and experience is assumed;
- the module is a constitutive part of a training programme which enables automatic recognition of publicly awarded qualification and thus its integration into school certificate in case the holders return to formal education;
- national qualification holders do not need to always start in the first class or continue till the end if they want to acquire higher level of education;
- the drop-outs who have successfully finished at least one module can, on the basis of their practical experiences, turn to the certification system to get a qualification covered by this module certified.

3.11 It has to be stressed, however, that formal education cannot be obtained by simply adding modular qualifications. There is an important difference between training programmes and modules. Modules are built on vocational standards and focus on vocational competencies, while the scope of key qualifications and general knowledge and skills is

limited to the minimum required to master the occupation. To attain formal education and qualifications that the programme leads to all requirements from the training programme must be completed. This means in particular to study additional general subjects that could be framed in so-called general module. Besides that final examination is required. Considering all the requirements the question arises whether adults will be motivated to attain formal education including all the qualifications or will they simply be satisfied with modular qualifications.

3.12 **Higher level of knowledge integration** focuses on two issues. The first is a rather high fragmentation of knowledge and skills caused by the traditional subject structure of curricula. Students who finish the programme may have good knowledge in specific subjects but have difficulties in its application in concrete working, daily and public life situations, where they usually face interdisciplinary problems. The other issue is similar to the first one and is related to the traditional division between general subjects, specific vocational subjects and practical training. It has been observed that there is not enough synergy if these modes of education and training are kept separate in the programmes as well as in the teaching process. Such programmes are also less motivating for youth with accentuated practical interests and adults with practical experiences.

3.13 Higher level of knowledge integration is planned to be achieved by gradual restructuring of curricula. Programmes should be organised rather around the life and work problems and situations than according to subjects shaped along scientific disciplines. In addition, more general and vocational knowledge should be conveyed during practical training, general knowledge should be better linked to the vocational one and both should be more competence focused. Higher level of knowledge integration could be achieved also by modern teaching methods. Such an orientation for the preparation of new programmes has been accepted in the guidelines of the National VET council. It is hoped that it will have motivation effects for youth and adults and that both will be more competent upon finishing the programmes.

3.14 **Assessment and certification of non-formal and informal learning and experiences.** The issue of assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning was already treated in the White Paper on Education in Slovenia of 1996³⁷ and has subsequently been included in the Act on Adult Education of 1996. It is considered as an important measure to support lifelong learning and - after long discussion - was introduced at the end of the 1990s in the form of the so called certification system. The assessment takes place against nationally agreed standards of knowledge and skill requirements for performing certain jobs existing on the labour market. With the support of the Phare MOCCA Programme procedures for assessment and certification were developed and tested in 2000.³⁸ A National Qualification Act which creates a legal basis for assessment and certification was also passed in 2000. The system is under authority of the labour ministry.

3.15 Certificates obtained in the certificate system are nationally valid but currently they are recognised only on the labour market. In order to be recognised by the educational system (and allow for access to the formal education system) an assessment of equality of standards is required. Considering the existing structure of the formal VET programmes, this would

³⁷ White Paper on Education in Slovenia, 1996

³⁸ Svetlik, 2000

obviously not be an easy task. Nevertheless through the certification system an important step towards opening up of the formal education system has been made.

3.16 Other systemic changes that would have to be introduced for this to happen (such as in governance, financing, modularisation and decentralisation of curriculum responsibilities), have been recognised but also need practical implementation.³⁹ However, assessment of prior and informal learning has started to become applied also in other areas of non-formal training such as in foreign language training.

3.17 It has to be pointed out that not only representatives of the formal educational system but also the social partners are rather suspicious about the quality of qualifications achieved on the basis of assessment of prior learning and work experience. This reflects the long tradition of formal education and the importance in society attributed to educational diplomas. In addition there is some concern that recognition of non-formal and informal learning might undermine the status and quality of formal education, especially when it comes to young people. Another major obstacle in this area is the lack of financial and human resources.

3.18 **Acquisition of national qualifications by modules.** The need to increase the access of adults to educational opportunities, especially in order to improve their formal qualification attainments lead to the introduction of diverse paths for adults to educational qualifications. One of the new paths to educational qualification is represented by modular approach, in Slovenian VET legislation also called 'education by parts of educational programmes'. In the Slovenian VET system modules are based on occupational standards and lead to qualifications. Each module covers at least one occupational standard. To enable acquisition of modular qualifications training programme must be developed for at least two occupational standards. Module is defined by standards of knowledge and skills derived from the occupational standard, accompanying learning goals defined in catalogues of knowledge and skills, duration of training and assessment specification. No separate national curricula for modules are prepared and adopted. It is left to schools and providers of adult education to develop preparatory training programmes or courses in non-formal training.

This approach has several advantages for adults which also enable the realisation of lifelong learning principles:

- gradual acquisition of formal qualification is enabled where the pace depends on learner's possibilities;
- no compulsory enrolment in training programme is required; assessment and certification of non-formal and informal learning and experience is assumed;
- module is derived from a training programme which enables automatic recognition by the formal training system. This suggests that in case the holders returns to formal education modular qualification is integrated in school certificate;
- certification of qualification according to the National Qualification Act (2000) provides recognition of qualification by the labour market.

3.19 On the other side, it has to be stressed that educational qualification cannot be obtained by simply adding modular qualifications. There is an important difference between training programmes and modules. Modules are built on different principles and are above all defined by occupational competences, while the scope of key qualifications and general knowledge and skills is limited to the minimum required to master occupation specific competences. However, to attain educational qualification all requirements from the training

³⁹ Zgonc, et al., (2000), Memorandum on Further VET Modernisation

programme must be completed. Besides, final examination is required. Considering all the requirements the question arises whether adults will be motivated to attain the whole education qualification or will they simply stay with modular qualifications.

3.20 Based on experience with the dual system there is a **tendency to reduce the share of general education and to increase the share of training in the general schools**. This is done to better meet the requirements of employers and to improve competencies of graduates. It should be mentioned though, that the school based vocational training in Slovenia has had strong accent on general education in the past comparing the solutions in other countries.

3.21 There have been some other initiatives apart from the above mentioned. Assessment of prior and informal learning has started to become applied in various areas of non-formal training such as in foreign language training. The standard of the dual system of vocational education will be gradually applied also in the school-based programmes as to stress the training in competencies and the link with the employers. In search for the big enough groups of students, whose number is falling due to demographic decline and increasing popularity of general gymnasium programmes, vocational schools are proposing combined classes of students attending different programmes. A network of public VET schools has been examined with the aim to adjust to the decreasing number of pupils. Part of this initiative is to strengthen regional VET centres by investments of social partners into so-called inter-company training workshops as to raise the level of training by the help of modern technology.

3.22 The implementation of the described changes is far from being easy and quick. Several obstacles are to be removed and solutions found. We can enumerate just a few.

- If vocational standards are not to reflect just the existing occupational structure the analysis of a changing structure of occupations including their anticipation and elaboration in the form of occupational profiles should be strengthened. A group of professionals should permanently work in this area.
- In some regions potential partners of VET and LLL institutions are rather poorly profiled and organised. They react to labour market individually. When identifying and motivating them, one should set a formal procedure of their co-operation. This includes initiation of vocational standards, programmes' elaboration, co-operation in the teaching process, certification of qualifications, investments in training facilities etc.
- Opening of the curricula and other changes demand immediate decentralisation of financing of VET schools. The present system according to which every teacher is paid for a predetermined number of hours and subjects taught directly from the Ministry of Education does not allow for the expected flexibility.
- Modularization and the aim to better integrate the knowledge have hit the problem of long lasting tradition of curricula planning. There is a lack of experience and knowledge for the development work in this field.
- It is not only curricula planning but also the implementation of change in the teaching process at stake. The majority of teachers teach in an old fashioned way and should be retrained for the new approach to teaching. Among them and among their associations there is a fear of novelties and a fear of losing jobs.
- Since a major change of a paradigm is in question there are other and sometimes ill defined insecurities related to the quality of education and training, the level of general education etc.

- The Act on National Occupational Standards does not exclude the educational level of higher education from the framework. However, the procedures in which high education authorities should take part are not defined yet.

3.23 In order to help implement the change a special programme financed by the Ministry of Education has been launched. Its aim is to speed up the work of experts, to bring the lacking knowledge into the country and to directly involve the schools. Teacher training is accentuated in particular. The school centres are expected to give a push to the process since they are directly interested in staying in their business via modernisation and attraction of youth and adults.

64. Successful initiative - Assessment and certification of non-formal and informal learning and experiences.

3.24 The issue of assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning was already treated in the White Paper on Education in Slovenia of 1996⁴⁰ and has subsequently been included in the Act on Adult Education of 1996. It is considered as an important measure to support lifelong learning. With the support of the Phare MOCCA Programme procedures for assessment and certification were developed and tested in 2000.⁴¹ A National Vocational Qualification Act, which gives legal basis for assessment and certification, was passed in 2000. The elaboration of bylaws, necessary institutions and bodies followed. After a long time of discussion and preparation it has been first applied in 2002. The system is under the authority of the Ministry of Labour, which sees it as one of the main tools for the re-insertion of the unemployed into the work active population.

3.25 The assessment takes place against national vocational standards, which are elaborated and agreed upon by the social partners. Technical and professional support to the social partners is provided by the National VET Centre. Vocational standards are approved by the National VET council, which is also composed of social partners. Finally they are signed and published by the Minister of Labour. On the basis of vocational standards the catalogues of knowledge and skills are prepared and approved by the National VET council in order to be used in the certification procedures, where candidates must prove that they meet them.

3.26 The Ministry of Labour authorises certification institutions, which organises certification procedures. These could be the Chamber of Economy and the Chamber of Crafts, which have the role of employers' representatives, bigger companies, schools' centres, employment offices, adult education institutions and others, which meet the expected criteria. Candidates are expected to apply for certification of certain qualifications at the authorised institutions, which are supposed to advice them on how to provide the documentation, what is missing, how to prepare for the assessment of prior learning and certification, including checking the possibilities to successfully pass. Certification is carried out by the qualification specific commission, of which members are appointed from the list of experts to which all social partners contribute. The experts must be trained professionally and for the certification

⁴⁰ White Paper on Education in Slovenia, 1996

⁴¹ Ivančič et al, 2000; Svetlik, 2000

procedure. Certification takes place on the predetermined date one or more times a year. Candidates who pass the certification are issued a publicly valid certificate signed by the Minister of Labour. Authorised institutions keep the lists of certificate holders. Certification procedure is monitored by the Ministry of Labour. Institutions which do not comply with the rules may be withdrawn the authorisation.

3.27 Up to 2003 nearly 200 vocational standards have been prepared and approved. In 2002 qualification certificates were awarded to 140 surveyors of dangerous means transportation, 25 home carers and 25 chemical processors. The authorised institutions in the last two cases were The Chamber of Social Care and the pharmaceutical company respectively.

3.28 The obtained certificates are nationally valid but currently they are recognised only on the labour market. In order to be recognised by the educational system in terms to allow for access to the formal education system new provisions, such as modularization of programmes and formal rules are being prepared. Considering the existing structure of the formal VET programmes, this would obviously not be an easy task. Nevertheless through the certification system an important step towards opening up of the formal education system has been made. The recognition of knowledge and skills obtained on the job, on short training courses or on the basis of self-education is made possible. An agreement has been made between social partners to publicly acknowledge all the qualifications that were awarded by The Chamber of Economy and by The Chamber of Crafts before the comprehensive public system has been put into practice. In return the two chambers have accepted the nationally set rules.

65. Constraints upon reforms and innovations

3.29 The main constraint to the reforms and innovation is tradition. Since one can speak about the change of paradigm it takes time to launch new ideas, which even on the general level are not easily accepted by the majority of the involved people. The ideas about lifelong learning, about the certification of knowledge and skills acquired outside schools, about more competence oriented education and training oppose the views and experiences of people although they feel the pressures of changing life and work environments and of increasing labour market flexibility.

3.30 It takes even more time to rearrange the system, i.e. the bodies and procedures of making occupational profiles, vocational standards and programmes, of financing and flow of students into the system, through it and between its segments. Among several issues let us mention just three, which are of a particular importance for lifelong learning. First, should public resources be provided for the education and training of adults or should this burden be left to individuals and their employers? How to build a well functioning partnership that will consider not just the form and content of education and training but also its financing? Second, there is a question of prolongation of initial education, which involves increasing numbers of youth. This trend perhaps makes less and less sense from the perspective of increasing speed of knowledge change and dying out. Third, the expansion of lifelong learning does not depend only on the school system and on the employers turning their organisations into learning ones. In the European context it depends highly also on the welfare arrangements. It seems that people are balancing between the insecurity stemming out of 'not learning' and the one of 'not working'. There are few, who quit their jobs in order to go back

to school if there is neither money support for education and training nor guarantee for another job after.

3.31 The longest time is needed to change the behaviour starting from state officials to teachers and students. Therefore the change could be stepwise only. A lot should be invested in raising public awareness and in training of teachers. Otherwise they may raise their unions against the change. The aim is to make the whole system flexible in order not to jump from one reform to the other but to adjust to the change fluently.

3.32 There are specific constraints upon the reform as mentioned in the point 63, to which two more could be added. First, it has to be pointed out that not only representatives of the formal educational system but also the social partners are rather suspicious about the quality of qualifications achieved on the basis of assessment of prior learning and work experience. This reflects the long tradition of formal education and the importance attributed to educational diplomas. In addition, there is some concern that recognition of non-formal and informal learning might undermine the status and quality of formal education, especially when it comes to young people. Therefore provisions of the certification system, which should guarantee the quality of certificates, make the procedures of certification more time consuming and expensive and youth has limited access to certification.

3.33 Second, Slovenia has rather scattered network of VET schools. It was developed to serve the needs of low mobile local population and very small local communities. However, because of the falling birth rate schools are not getting enough students and are not able to maintain and even less able to raise the level of equipment and training and to maintain a critical number of well qualified teachers. To open up for the adults represents a particular challenge for them. It is perhaps more likely to successfully cope with it if they join into better integrated and co-ordinated networks and regional centres.

66. Major debates

3.34 There is one major debate on the changes that are being introduced in the VET system. The opponents come from among the intellectuals of the field of humanities. Their arguments against the change are mainly the following:

- The level of general education in the VET schools will fall due to decreasing number of hours for the so-called general subjects, such as languages, mathematics, science, humanities and arts in the teaching programmes. They believe that this knowledge should be conveyed to students in the form of separate subjects and not integrated with the vocational subjects and training. Teachers in schools are not trained to teach according to the planned curricula.
- They do not trust social partners at the regional and branch levels to round up the missing 20% of the programmes responsibly.
- Since the reform of the VET system and curricula reform were introduced in the second half of the 1990ies there is not yet need for further change. More evaluation and impacts of the previous change are to be seen before.
- With respect to the implementation of the certification system, occasionally the debate occurs on whether this system would diminish the interest of youth for entering and staying in vocational schools and would increase the interest for certification system.

Therefore several proposals have been made not to allow access to certification system to those who have been covered by the regular educational training programmes.

3.35 The opposition to the change is partially inspired by the insecurity stemming out of the accession to the EU, where it is felt that the language and culture will be endangered. The other motive is related to the change of the economic system. They claim that industry would like to turn people rather into obeying workers than intellectuals. The third motive is more practical, namely they are afraid that teachers of general subjects would lose jobs or would have to be retrained.

3.36 The proponents of the change argue that:

- The number of hours for general subjects, although reduced, is comparable to the highest in the EU countries. They believe that a great deal of general, reflective knowledge could be better conveyed to youth and adults if integrated with more vocational oriented subjects and if teaching is rather problem than subjects structured. The present situation, according to which many students drop out because the curricula and teaching are not adjusted to their needs is problematic. Drop-outs do not receive neither formal general education nor qualifications. In addition, the standard of general knowledge should change in order to include new elements focused on core competencies. Teachers should be retrained for the new approach to teaching. The evaluation also shows that more than half of students, who finished education in the dual system continue with their education.
- A significant raise of the quality of teaching and responsiveness of schools to the needs of individuals and employers is possible only if schools and teachers get more autonomy and responsibilities and if they co-operate with social partners. Therefore the system of financing and curricula planning should decentralise.
- There is a need for an open system that would adjust to the environment permanently, especially with respect to the content of curricula.
- The change itself will not jeopardise teachers and schools since the time of teaching will not be reduced. Schools may attract new groups of adult students, especially adults. However, teachers are expected to follow the change by their being retrained, and schools are to become learning organisations themselves.

Component 4: Qualifications and learning at the level of practice and users

69. Learning programmes

Project learning for young adults

4.1 Special training programmes for young adults in the age group 15 – 25 (PUM) are intended for those young adults who have no basic vocational qualifications and no work experience, who dropped out from schools, are poorly motivated for education and training and have unreal views concerning work, career planning and employment. The main goal of the programme is to motivate these young people to develop work habits, discover their talents and abilities learn how to co-operate, and define their vocational goals. While attending the programme, participants learn how to co-operate and support each other, how to overcome learning difficulties and articulate explicit vocational aspirations and goals.

4.2 The project work method is being used in PUM, i.e. qualified mentors help participants to carry out projects, seek for jobs, study, and continue their education. Anybody can become PLYA mentor provided that one has attained a university degree, completed the PLYA training programme at SIAE, and enjoys working with young adults. The programme was approved by the Professional Council for Adult Education and provides publicly valid certificate and is ranged among programmes provided to the unemployed among the active employment policy measures. Since the programme is directed to the local level co-financing at the local level is required. At the time being, PUM projects are active in eight Slovenian cities (Ajdovščina, Celje, Koper, Ljubljana, Maribor, Murska Sobota, Radovljica, Slovenj Gradec) but it is expected that they will gradually be introduced to all larger cities in the country.

4.3 There are significant differences between this programme and others, which provide public certificates:

- the curriculum is to a certain extent negotiable, expectations of participants are considered
- active methods of work with participants are applied, strong emphasis is on practical activities;
- the timing is flexible: participants come and leave by will,
- not traditional teachers/trainers but mentors carry out the programme,
- special criteria for selection of mentors apply in additions, they have to undertake specially designed training which is updated and upgraded on regular basis,

4.4 All together 327 young people participated in the programme. As shown by results of the evaluation study, the programme fulfils its role. Among the participants who finished the programme 41% returned to education and 27% found employment. (Istenič Starčič, A. i.dr., 2002). The study found out that the programme has long-term effects on social integration of the participants. Majority of the participants belongs to the groups at risk – families do not have support role for them (friend is mainly first reference person in case of troubles) as well

as school do not offer security due to poor performance in it⁴². PUM programme reduces that risk and offers second chance for improving the performance by introducing project oriented content presented by mentors. The content is proposed to some extent by participants and sometimes mentors have difficulty finding some of that content particularly important as a part of the curriculum. Most important skills related to the participants' expectations acquiring skills in the PUM programme are counting, literacy (writing applications, memos, letters) and computing skills.

4.5 Since groups of participants are small the delivery of programme is accused to be too costly. The issue of costs is a matter constantly discussed with financiers (Ministry of education, Ministry of labour and social affairs, National Employment Office). Financial problems every now and then threaten the delivery of the programme.

Distance and Online Learning

4.6 Quick changes in the society are enabling education and training providers to offer new ways of transferring the knowledge to the people. Introduction and application of the ICT changes the organization and modes of realization of the educational process as well as the role and work patterns of the teachers and students. One of those new ways recently introduced in Slovenia is distance learning. Currently there are two educational programmes that are using distance-learning mode.

4.7 In Ljubljana, as a part of the Faculty of Economics there is a Slovene National Contact Point for Distance Education (NCP: <http://www.ef.uni-lj.si/ncp/english/contents.html>) which was established by the act of the Slovene Ministry of Education and Sport in October 1994 as national coordinator for Slovenia within Phare Multi-country Programme in Distance Education (DE). The mission of the NCP is to assure the conditions at national level for development of DE as modern and efficient mode of education. After the successful start of DE 3 - year programme as a part of the professionally oriented higher education in October 1995 the number of DE students was increasing in the following years and now in DE programme Business School there are more than 1,200 students enrolled. DE programme is now being implemented in six study centres (Kranj, Nova Gorica, Ptuj, Trebnje, Trbovlje, Slovenske konjice).

4.8 In Maribor a company DOBA (<http://www.doba.si/daljava.htm>) provides currently the only Online Learning (via Internet) programme called Poslovni sekretar – (assistant manager) in Slovenia, which provides the qualification for the occupation with the same name. This is a 2-year (for online learning 3-years) post-secondary vocational programme started in 2000/2001. In the first year there were 35 students using online method of learning, while in the next year 2001/2002 the total number of students in both years rose to 204. Entrance condition is any finished 4-year secondary programme of education or 3-year vocational secondary school with 3 year of work experiences. For regular students the programme is free of charge (financed by MOESS), but not for irregular students. Great majority (98%) of the students have their own computer at home and use it regularly. They entered and prefer this kind of studies mainly due to lack of time⁴³, due to curiosity to probe

⁴² 63,2% of the participants responded that they left the school because of troubles related to the school – this could be interpreted as troubles in learning or troubles with teachers or/and classmates.

⁴³ Majority of students are women (80%), already employed (79.5%) and with children (59.2%). (Sulčič, 2002)

new educational forms and due to quicker access to the diploma or certificate. For this programme DOBA developed tutorial system of studies – specialised tutors motivate, overlook and control the process of learning and studying of the student.

Innovation

Master craftsmen, foremen and managerial examinations

4.9 Another innovation in the VET system is the master craftsmen, foremen and managerial preparatory courses and examinations. These programmes provide a vertical progression route within the dual system. The examinations are the responsibility of the chambers (Chamber of Crafts for master craftsmen examinations and Chamber of Commerce and Industry for foremen and managerial examinations). According to the legislation on crafts, any person who wants to run own craft business must pass the master craftsmen examination. Also the tutors of apprentices will have to pass these exams. As a condition for applying for master craftsmen and foremen examinations, one first has to complete a three-year vocational school and must have a minimum of three-year work experience or a degree of post-secondary vocational college with at least one year of work experience.

4.10 Through these types of examination adults with completed vocational training do not just acquire the evidence that they possess business and managerial skills as well as the capacity to act as tutors to apprentices but also improve their educational level. Certificates obtained via master craftsmen, foremen and managerial examinations are equivalent to certificates attesting completion of 4-year technical programmes. If their holders pass additional exams in general subjects they qualify for enrolment in post-secondary (non-university) vocational colleges.

4.11 Furthermore, it is characteristic that this type of examination is not based on predetermined training programmes. The pedagogic-andragogic module makes an exception since participation in 70-hours preparatory course is required. However, preparatory courses can be organised.

4.12 Master craftsman examinations started in 2000. Since then 228 diplomas have been awarded; 34% of those registered successfully passed the examination.

4.13 Given the Slovenian tradition master craftsman certificate is more than just a precondition for acquiring licence to establish one's own craft, it confers social status.

Component 5: Conclusions

77.a The overall dimensions and outcomes of qualifications

5.1 The White Paper on education in the Republic of Slovenia written in 1995 traced the route for the new reform of the education system. This reform is based on the main principles: (1) accessibility and transparency of the public education system, (2) legal neutrality, (3) choice at all levels, (4) democracy, autonomy and equal opportunities, and (5) quality of learning to take precedence over the accumulation of facts.

5.2 After the almost a decade of transforming the educational system (national qualifications system as well) it is still quite centralised one, with the same main authorities: MOESS and MOLFS. On the other hand, there are proposals to decentralise it to some extent (to give more responsibilities to the Slovenian regions) and to give more autonomy to the education providers.

5.3 Relatively free horizontal and vertical pathways are formally enabled. One of the main features of the new reform is the establishment of the certification system as a most direct way of acquiring the occupational qualifications. The introduction of the certificate system gives the opportunity to relatively large number of drop-outs from the formal education system, without any kind of qualifications, to finally get some kind of occupational qualification and to improve their position on the labour market. This opportunity is given, through the recognition of the prior learning, also to those with the previous working experiences and knowledge acquired on the working place.

5.4 The ultimate goal of the reform is improving the educational level of the Slovene population through updating old educational programmes and introducing new ones. These updated and new qualifications should be controlled for quality and transparency on the national and international level.

77.b Evidence of the impact of the qualifications system and of the benefits of the recognition of learning

5.5 Since we have just started with the reform and it is still ongoing, it is hard to find any practical evidence of the impact of the new qualification system and the benefits that it brings to the society yet. Beside that, the research on the impact of the qualifications system is still almost non-existent.

77.c The major pressures for change in the qualifications system over the past decade

5.6 After the shift to the market economy and experience of the growing unemployment there was a great need to modernise the educational system and national qualification system as well. The main goal was to bring the outcome of the educational system – national occupational qualifications closer to the needs of the labour market.

5.7 Ongoing and expected demographic trends also contributed to the need of changing current educational system.

5.8 Accession to the EU in the near future was the next important reason for the started reform in the qualification system.

77.d The key initiatives in qualifications and qualifications systems

5.9 Key initiatives are:

- Adoption of the crucial acts related to the national qualification system development
- Introduction of new forms of education and training in the educational system in the upper secondary and post secondary level and enabling (for the moment at least formally) the easier vertical and horizontal transfer from one educational level to another
- Reintroduction of the dual system of education and training into the educational system
- Promotion of the greater involvement of the social partners in the process of vocational education
- Establishment of the new bodies, such as National Council of Experts, Centre for Vocational Education and Training, and the Institute for Adult Education.
- Starting the curricular reform
- Introduction of the certification system
- Modularisation of the education programmes

5.10 The impact of those initiatives is rather long-term than short-term, thus the consequences of them are not visible yet. Once the rest of the planned initiatives will be actuated more visible impact on the status of the national qualification system could be expected.

77.e The experience of practitioners and learners of the role of qualifications system in facilitating learning

5.11 In the past decade the role of the educational providers changed. In the formal education the old role of educational providers was establishing educational programmes that were not closely related to the needs of the labour market. The new role is more flexible since the initiative for the new programmes should come from the chambers and the education providers must adapt to the labour market needs.

5.12 Some enterprises have developed their own educational programmes and established their own educational facilities for firm-specific qualifications. The majority of these qualifications are not nationally recognised. Some of those enterprises with their own education programmes are interested in promoting their “specific” qualifications and getting them recognised on the national level, while the others are comfortable with the “exclusivity” of their qualifications. Nevertheless, most of them are complaining that such educational programmes are too expensive and that they need some financial, material and technical help from the state. Since modularisation of the educational programmes is not started yet, there are still questions how to help people with some work experience to get qualification without going through the formal system.

78. Conclusions of the role of qualifications system in promoting lifelong learning

5.13 In spite of the fact that the majority of the acts and methodologies needed for the development of the modern system of national occupational qualifications are now in place (acts more than methodologies), the current system is still at the very beginning of the changing process and as such still does not support the realisation of lifelong learning principles. One of the key elements of the lifelong learning process – modularisation of the educational programmes, that would enable recognising of the prior learning, work based knowledge and experience on one hand and easier horizontal transfer from one educational programme to another – is still missing from the qualification system. National qualifications can be still obtained only as a whole. The structure of training programmes is still quite rigid, organised by subjects and does not enable easy adjustment to new concepts and requirements. The step-by-step approach that was chosen as most suitable for the rebuilding of the educational system as well as for national qualifications enables major actors of the reform to adapt the pace and course of the reform to the current and future needs of the labour market and the society. But at the same time, one can not escape from the fact that some of the steps are still missing from the whole picture or, in another words, we are sure that we want reform, but we do not know exactly how to achieve it yet and what will be the outcome.

79. Conclusions or lessons

5.14 In the past years it can be outlined growing demand for the general secondary education (gymnasiums) and some currently “promising” educational programmes like: economist, medical technician (zdravstveni tehnik), computer technician, hairdresser, salesman. There is also a growing demand for entering in vocational-technical programmes (3+2) after completing the 3 year vocational education programme due to opportunity to get higher education and qualification and to continue education even further.

5.15 Demographic effect will definitely influence the future demand since the young population is continuously falling. Some influence on the demand will have also the accession to the EU and increased mobility of students and workers in and out of the country.

5.16 One of the key elements which would and should influence and promote lifelong learning is introduction and stabilization of the certification system in the Slovenian education system. The programmes of continuing vocational education and training and the certificate system should enable the population that is growing older to get new qualifications and to

verify the prior learning and experiences. That would enable them to be more competitive on the labour market.

5.17 The adequacy of the qualifications is still questionable since we are at the beginning of the very long reform process, the same goes for the assessment, quality assurance – new and consistent methodology is needed, trained evaluators too. On the other hand, there isn't much to assess for the moment.

5.18 National qualification system in Slovenia has been in the process of almost permanent change and upgrading for the past 30-40 years. Recent reform is based on monitoring, evaluation and comparisons to the developments in other countries. One of the major goals is adjusting the national qualification system and occupational standards to the EU standards. From the participation in this activity we hope to get to know better the experiences from the most developed countries and to introduce some of them as a good practice into the Slovenian national qualification system. Of course, there is also matter of transparency of the occupational qualifications on the national as well as on the international level. This could not be done without closer cooperation between national qualification systems on the European and OECD level.

5.19 One of the priorities for the near future should be building the institutional and methodological capacities for the labour market analysis, which is at the moment inadequate. For this reason the building of the occupational standards as well as of the knowledge and skill standards are based more on the expert opinions and experiences of the currently available experts appointed by the Chambers, and not so much on the real job analysis. Another field that is lacking expertise is the forecasting the future needs – on the labour market as well as in the education.

80. The main opportunities and challenges in the future

5.20 The already mentioned step-by-step approach to the reform enables us to be more cautious about different challenges that could be met on the way. At the same time it gives more time to the major actors for planning the more concrete steps based on the overall strategy. On the other side, however, waiting too much could mean losing more potential from the current Slovenian working population and bringing another generations of youth into inferior position comparing the generations in other EU countries. Every new step thus brings new challenges and new demands. Some of the most visible challenges are:

a) Opening of the Curricula and Decentralisation of the Slovenian educational system. As already mentioned Slovenian educational system has been highly centralised and all the important decisions are made on the national level. In order to make the system more responsive to the regional and labour market needs it should be left some room for regions and branches to take greater responsibility in preparing new curricula. To achieve this goal National VET council accepted the model in which 20 percent of the curricula making was left to be defined by the schools in co-operation with regional partners and representatives of economic branches. Although the qualification standards to be achieved remain fully determined on the national level it is hoped that the quality of their achievement in terms of relevant knowledge, skills and competencies will improve.

b) Reorganisation of the School Network is directly connected to the previous challenge. In order to meet the challenge of the greater responsibility for the curricula determination on the regional level schools of the particular region must work closer and on the other hand they should involve more the employers representatives of the region in order to better meet their needs – to make the educational system more responsive to the needs of the regional labour market. The recent demographic trends - declining youth population make this effort even more important in the sense that schools from different regions must cooperate closer in order to make their work more efficient (in terms of human resources and finances) and their capacities full. In addition, if they want to attract adults they must supply new courses for which a development function is needed. This situation calls for bringing small local schools together into bigger networks, where they can organise better utilisation of resources and develop new functions. This change could be painful since it demands higher inter-organisational mobility of personnel and students and could lead even to some redundancies. Leaders of rather small local communities may not be enthusiastic about this change since they would prefer having ‘independent schools’ in their towns. It should be stressed that the schools should not be closed down but rather better integrated into regional networks.

c) Modularization of VET Programmes is probably one of the most important challenges yet to be tackled. It is closely connected to the first two challenges. It would need major intellectual and financial effort in order to reconstruct current monolith VET programmes that are less and less adequate for the contemporary needs. Modularization could help solve the problems related to the dropping out from the school without any kind of qualification, to the growing needs of recognizing previous learning, work based experience and knowledge, and to the growing demands of adult population for educational system more suitable to their needs and capabilities.

d) In order to achieve modularization Strengthening of Research and Development capabilities of the major actors involved in the process of reforming the educational system is needed. That goes for identifying problems and finding appropriate general solutions, as well as for making general solutions operational and making them work. There seems to be a lack of knowledge and experience needed for the implementation of any change discussed above. High quality development expertise is missing, especially on the side of the social partners. Such expertise is missing in the job analysis, the analysis of occupational and qualification structure, identification of the appearing occupations, initiation of their explicit formulation, making of occupational profiles, their transformation into qualification standards etc. Making of new teaching programmes to be based on qualification standards, opened to the regions and economic branches, modularised, and offering knowledge, skills and competencies in an integrated way is another bulk of tasks. It seems that the existing research and development institutions in this area are too much oriented towards basic research. On the other hand it is clear that more development work is needed and the major actors on the national level are aware of that. They increasingly cooperate with international institutions (such as ETF, CEDEFOP, OECD,...) and with some foreign national expert institutions from different countries in order to acquire knowledge and expertise needed. This does not include only specialised national research and development institutions but also the establishment of the development function in big regional school centres.

e) Another “stream” of challenges is related to the mechanisms and contents of teaching. There are issues such as: integrated approach to teaching; equalisation of teaching standards and education; training of teachers. All that issues need our attention too.

81. The most powerful influences upon lifelong learning

5.21 All these developments that should be envisaged and implemented in the near future give us a possibility to establish the lifelong learning concept in Slovene society. It is hoped that closer connection between the qualification standards and education and training as well as more integrated approach to teaching will make courses more relevant for both employees and employers. Modularised programmes enabling stepwise education should become available for the employees and employers from the perspective of time and money needed. Alternative (non-school) ways to knowledge, skills and competencies, such as on the job training, short courses and self-learning, particularly appropriate for the adults, would get their full legitimacy via direct certification of qualifications. National qualifications will be respected as part of already acquired knowledge when one decides to come back to school. Teaching programmes not fully finished in the school will enable certification of qualifications.

5.22 Special influence on this development towards the society that promote lifelong learning have two factors:

5.23 The first – external - factor is related to the accession process to the EU. Involvement of the Slovene institutions and experts from different fields in the variety of programmes (PHARE, Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates,...), that are sponsored by the international institutions such as European Training Foundation, CEDEFOP, OECD helps in bringing the Slovenian standards and methodologies closer to the international. That is already influencing the changes in the structure of the both - education and labour market - systems to the systems that would be comparable to the European ones. At the same time these systems are becoming more transparent and responsive to the needs of each other as well as to the needs of the Slovene population. On the other hand, to the promotion of the lifelong learning contribute different directives and memorandums from EU, especially the Memorandum on the Lifelong Learning.

5.24 The second – internal – factor are the activities of the MOLFSA and Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS). Both institutions are responsible for the implementation of the passive and active employment policy measures that are helping in reducing the structural unemployment in Slovenia and in reinsertion of the unemployed to the labour market. Different activities in education and training (Programmes of assistance in planning a professional career and in job-seeking; Personal development programmes; Job clubs; Additional training and education programmes; Work trials; Introduction to work programme; Programme 5000) that are directed towards mobilization and activation of the unemployed can be perceived also as the activities towards the promotion of the lifelong learning. Education and training programmes are carried out as part of measure to prepare unemployed people for employment, which is one of the most important active employment policy programmes. The objectives follow EU employment policy directives and the Employment Action Programme for 2000 and 2001, adopted by the Slovenian government in November 1999. By executing such programmes, the ESS is following its key objectives:

- to reduce unemployment, especially among young people;
- to prevent longterm unemployment;
- to ease transition from school to work;

- to ensure the return of people to the labour market;
- to ensure the social integration of unemployed people.

5.25 The ESS paid special attention to the implementation of education and training programmes aimed at the following target groups: young unemployed people under 26 for whom there was the possibility of joining the unemployment register within the first six months of applying; unemployed people with no professional qualifications or unsuitable skills for the demands of the labour market; long-term unemployed people; and other categories of people who find it difficult to obtain employment.

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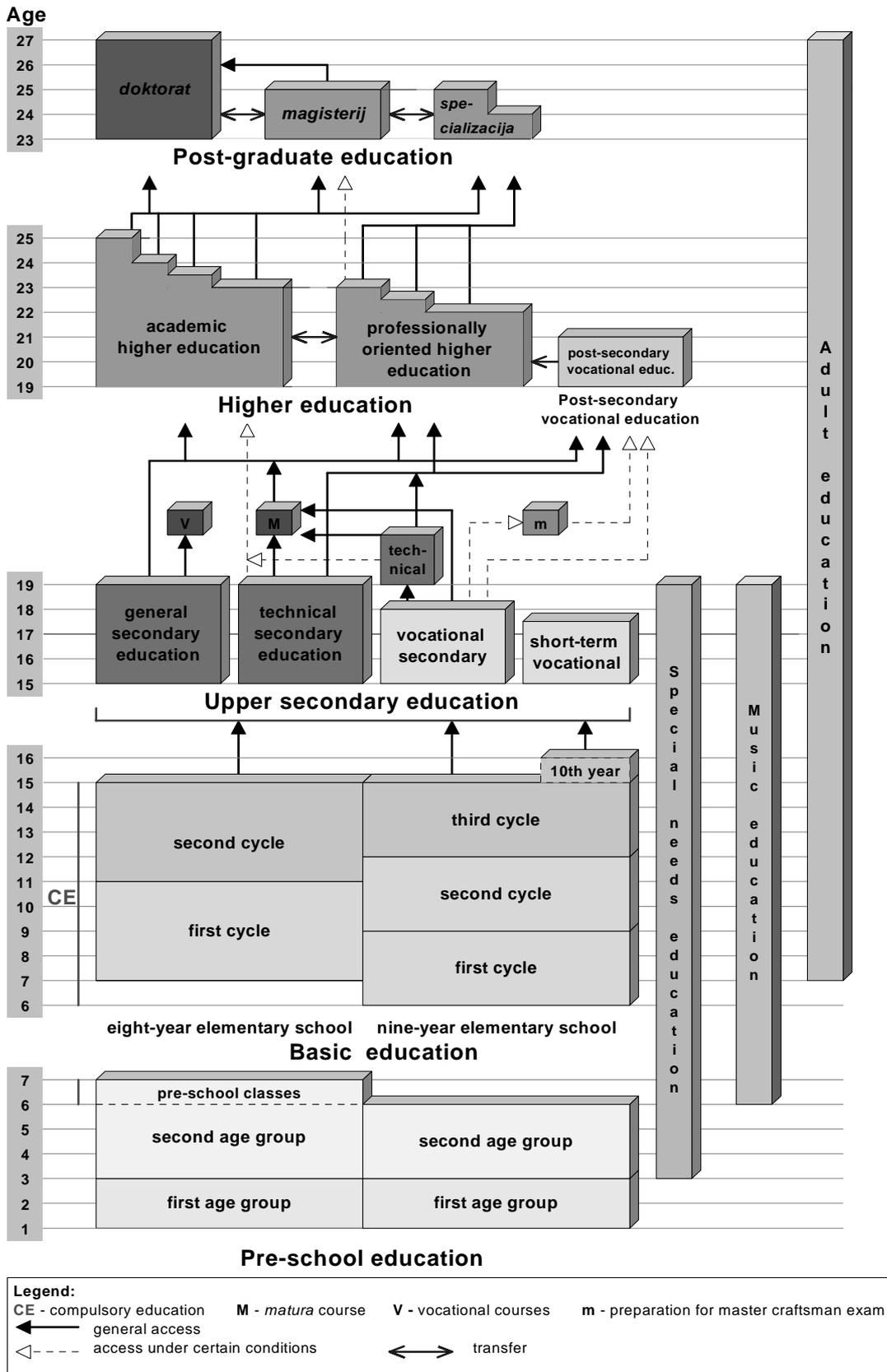
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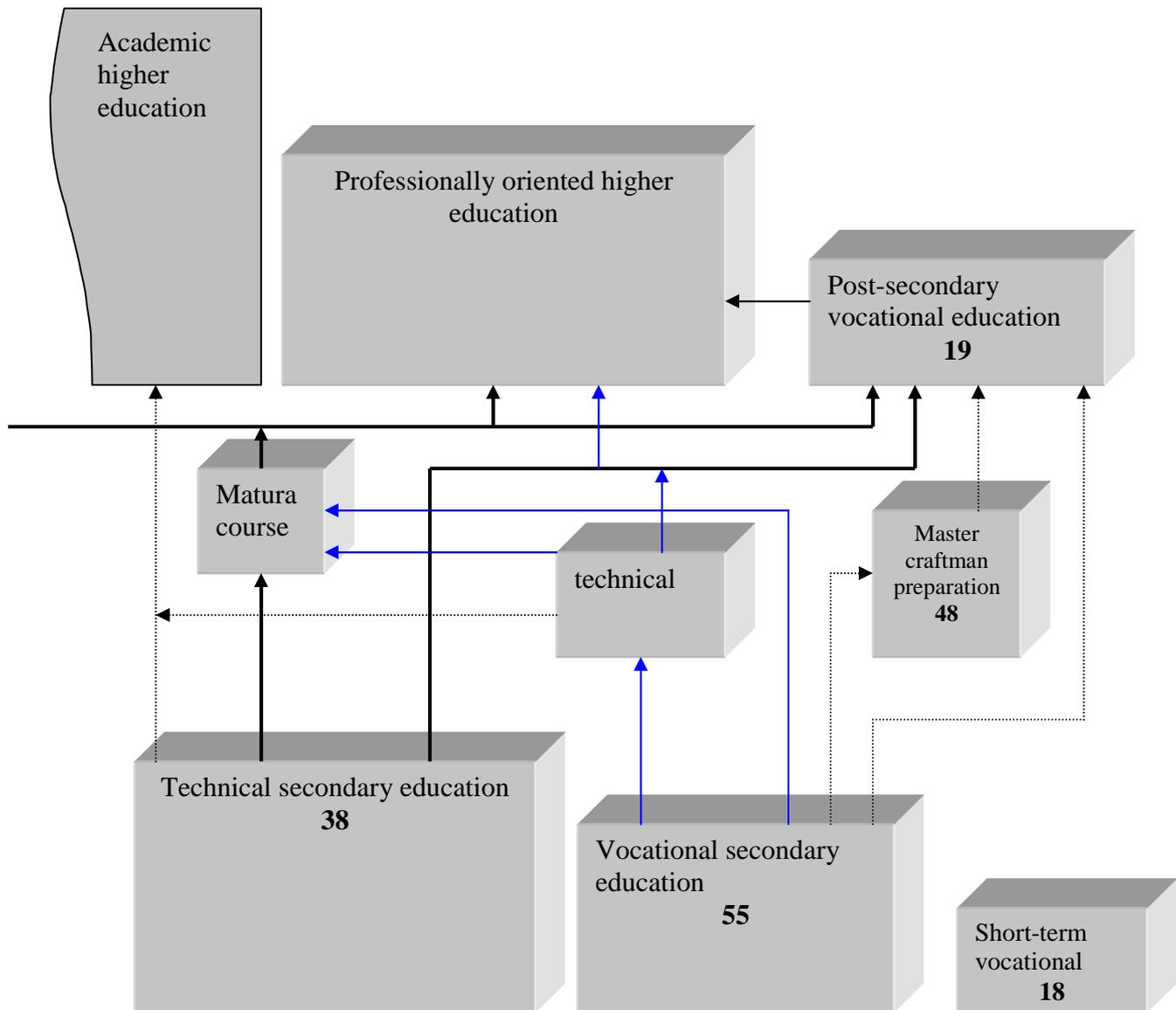
Annexes:

Annex 1: The structure of the education system in Slovenia

The structure of the education system in Slovenia, 2000



Annex 2: Schematic review of the number of occupational standards by educational level



Annex 3: Adults who have obtained national qualifications by level and type of education

Level and type of education programme	Number					Growth index			
	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	3 : 2	4 : 3	5 : 4	6 : 5
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Lower vocational programme	131	72	10	n.a.	n.a.	55,0	13,9	n.a.	n.a.
Secondary vocational programme	1661	2268	2497	n.a.	n.a.	136,5	110,1	n.a.	n.a.
Secondary professional programme	1026	1129	1929	n.a.	n.a.	110,0	170,9	n.a.	n.a.
Secondary general programme	384	214	132	n.a.	n.a.	55,7	61,7	n.a.	n.a.
Secondary vocational technical	578	957	1218	n.a.	n.a.	165,6	127,3	n.a.	n.a.
Postsecondary continuing programmes	490	703	-	n.a.	n.a.	143,5	-	n.a.	n.a.
Vocational course	25	33	74	n.a.	n.a.	132,0	224,2	n.a.	n.a.
Tertiary non-higher programmes	-	70	49	94	232	-	70,0	191,8	246,8
Higher education programmes*									

*data not shown since the category "non-regular" (part-time) students includes young and adults who are not enrolled as "regular" students; also distribution by age does not give a reliable information.

Source :Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia: Yearly statistical information.

Annex 4: Adults in secondary education by types of programmes and fields of education in school years 2000/2001 in 1999/2000 (%)

Fields of education	Total		Lower vocational programmes		Secondary vocational programmes		Secondary technical and general programmes		2-year vocational-technical programme		Vocational course Maturity course	
	2000/01	1999/00	2000/01	1999/00	2000/01	1999/00	2000/01	1999/00	2000/01	1999/00	2000/01	1999/00
Agriculture	4,3	4,6	-	-	7,9	9,0	0,9	2,6	3,9	-	-	-
Forestry	-	-	-	-	-	0,0	-	0,0	-	-	-	-
Leather processing	0,1	0,2	-	-	0,3	0,6	0,0	-	-	-	-	-
Textiles	0,5	0,9	-	-	1,0	2,0	0,3	0,4	0,2	-	-	-
Chemistry, pharmacy, rubber processing and nonmetals	0,4	1,3	-	-	0,6	1,7	0,5	1,1	-	-	-	-
Wood processing	1,6	2,2	-	-	1,1	1,9	1,2	2,4	2,7	0,0	-	-
Construction	2,5	2,1	-	-	4,0	2,5	0,2	2,0	3,5	-	-	-
Catering and tourism	7,5	8,5	-	-	13,7	14,4	6,8	4,2	-	92,9	-	-
Economics	50,0	37,7	-	-	46,2	38,2	48,7	38,1	57,5	7,1	23,2	-
Paper and printing	0,5	2,2	-	-	0,6	2,0	0,8	2,4	-	-	-	-
Electrotechnics and computer science	4,7	5,6	-	37,5	2,2	3,1	3,4	6,8	9,9	-	-	-
Metallurgy and mechanical engineering	9,3	11,6	27,3	-	7,2	9,8	3,0	12,7	20,1	-	-	-
Transport and communication	5,6	1,7	-	-	7,0	1,5	8,6	1,7	-	-	-	-
Mining	0,0	0,3	-	-	-	0,3	-	0,3	-	-	-	-
Health care	4,7	7,5	-	-	4,9	7,9	8,3	7,5	-	-	-	-
Teacher training	1,3	2,3	-	-	-	-	2,5	3,4	-	-	76,8	-
Social sciences	2,9	5,1	-	-	-	0,0	6,6	7,6	2,3	-	-	-
Culture	0,6	0,9	-	-	-	0,0	1,6	1,4	-	-	-	-
Grammar schools	2,2	3,5	-	-	-	0,0	6,3	5,3	-	-	-	-
Osebne storitve	1,4	1,7	72,7	62,5	3,3	5,3	0,3	-	-	-	-	-
Internal affairs	-	-	-	-	-	0,0	-	0,0	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	19449	11420	11	8	7231	3604	6750	7664	5358	141	99	-

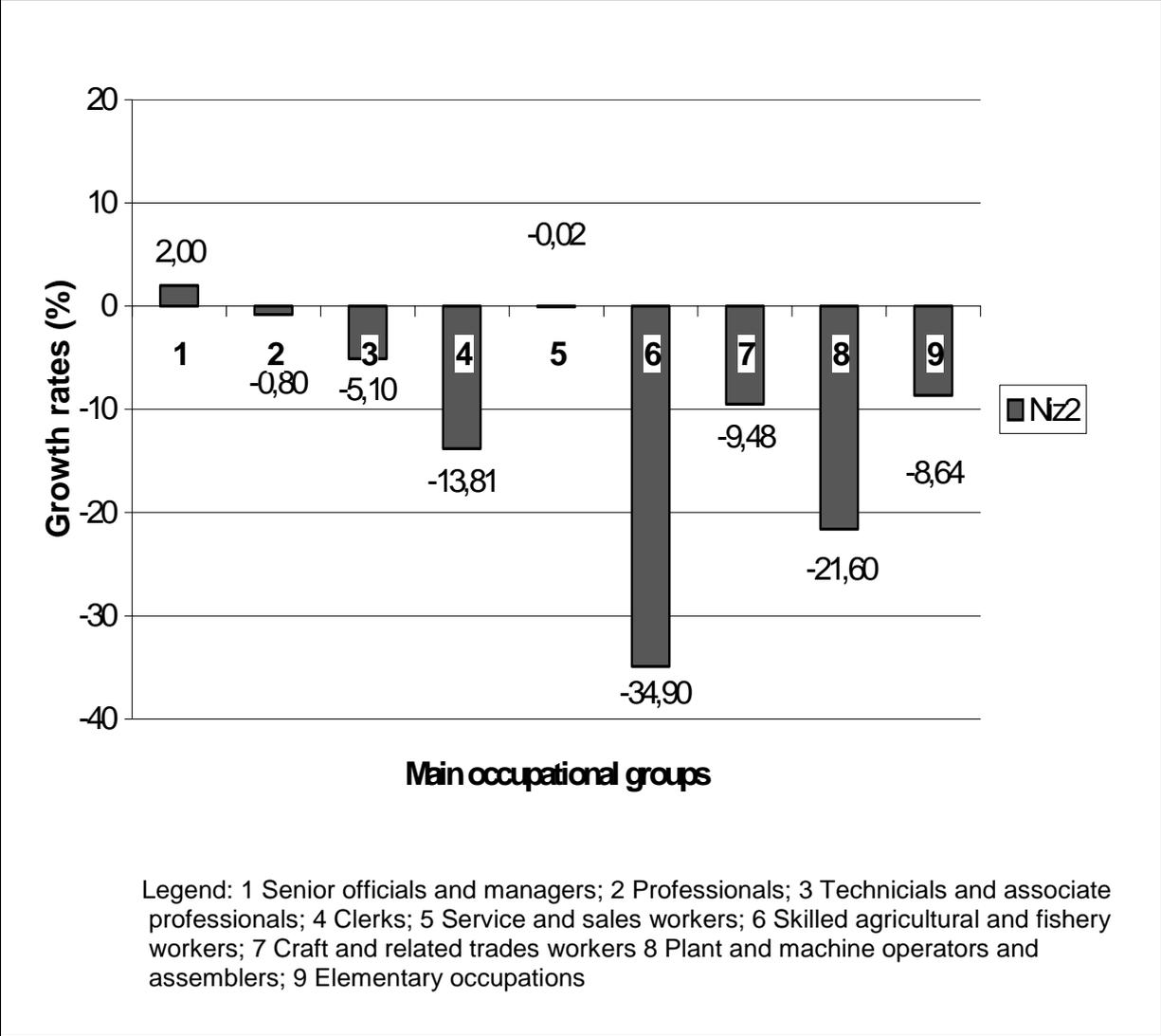
Sources: Statistical information (Rapid report) 9 Education. Secondary education, Slovenia, end of the school year 1998/99 and beginning of the school year 1999/2000, No. 311, 8 November 2001, table 2.3; Statistical information (Rapid report) 9 Education. Secondary education, Slovenia, end of the school year 1999/2000 and beginning of the school year 2000/2001, No. 270, 15 October, 2002, table 1.5.

Anex 5: Adults in vocational and profesional colleges by study fields; school years 2002/2003, 2000/2001, 1999/2000 (%)

Fields of study	2002/2003	2000/2001	1999/2000
Catering and tourism	3,9	10.8	20.3
Commercialist	32,4	14.0	-
Construction	5.3	12.3	18.3
Mechanical Engineering	12.9	19.7	16.9
Business Secretary	22.5	18.9	6.9
Electrical Engineering	1.1	5.0	11.7
Electronics	6.8	5.8	8.9
Postal services	2.3	4.0	5.0
Telecommunications	3.6	5.2	5.5
Sanitation	3.5	-	-
Food Technology	1.1	2.9	4.3
Wood Technology	1.3	-	-
Transport Services	1.1	-	-
Agriculture	1.3	-	-
Mining and Geotechnology	1.0	1.5	2.2
Total	6636	3029	1422

Sources: Statistical Information (Rapid reports), 9 Education, Student enrolment in vocational colleges, Universities and independent higher education institutions, Slovenia, 2002/2003, No. 318, 27 November 2002, table 2; Slovenia 2000/2001, No. 290, 21 November 2000, table 2; Slovenia 1999/2000, No. 335, 24 November 1999, table 2. (Provisional data).

Annex 6: Rates of growth for workers by main occupational groupings from NSCO between 2000 and 2001



Annex 7: Supply of non-formal training by fields of training, 1998/1999 and 1999/2000 (numbers)

	Total		Certified training		Uncertified training	
	1999/2000	1998/1999	1999/2000	1998/1999	1999/2000	1998/1999
Number of courses						
Total	17,213	18,446	4,078	4,148	13,135	14,298
General programmes	1,049	1,380	4	5	1,045	1,375
Education	358	322	15	12	343	310
Humanities and the arts	326	174	7	6	319	168
Social science, business and law	2,110	2,653	37	102	2,073	2,551
Science, mathematics, computing	2,895	4,837	5		2,890	4,837
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	1,324	470	19	19	1,305	451
Agriculture and veterinary	41	27	1	6	40	21
Health and welfare	462	411	7	35	455	376
Services	4,336	4,039	2,403	2,199	1,933	1,840
Languages	4,312	4,133	1,580	1,764	2,732	2,369
Number of participants						
Total	250,751	249,913	49,380	52,756	201,371	197,157
General programmes	16,929	19,338	129	73	16,800	19,265
Education	6,279	6,104	324	353	5,955	5,751
Humanities and the arts	4,999	2,989	104	81	4,895	2,908
Social science, business and law	43,119	53,613	711	2,260	42,408	51,353
Science, mathematics, computing	35,072	38,409	54		35,018	38,409
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	14,800	9,872	363	366	14,437	9,506
Agriculture and veterinary	790	1,010	14	134	776	876
Health and welfare	16,663	4,468	130	358	16,533	4,110
Services	79,653	76,945	34,273	32,815	45,380	44,130
Languages	32,447	37,165	13,278	16,316	19,169	20,849

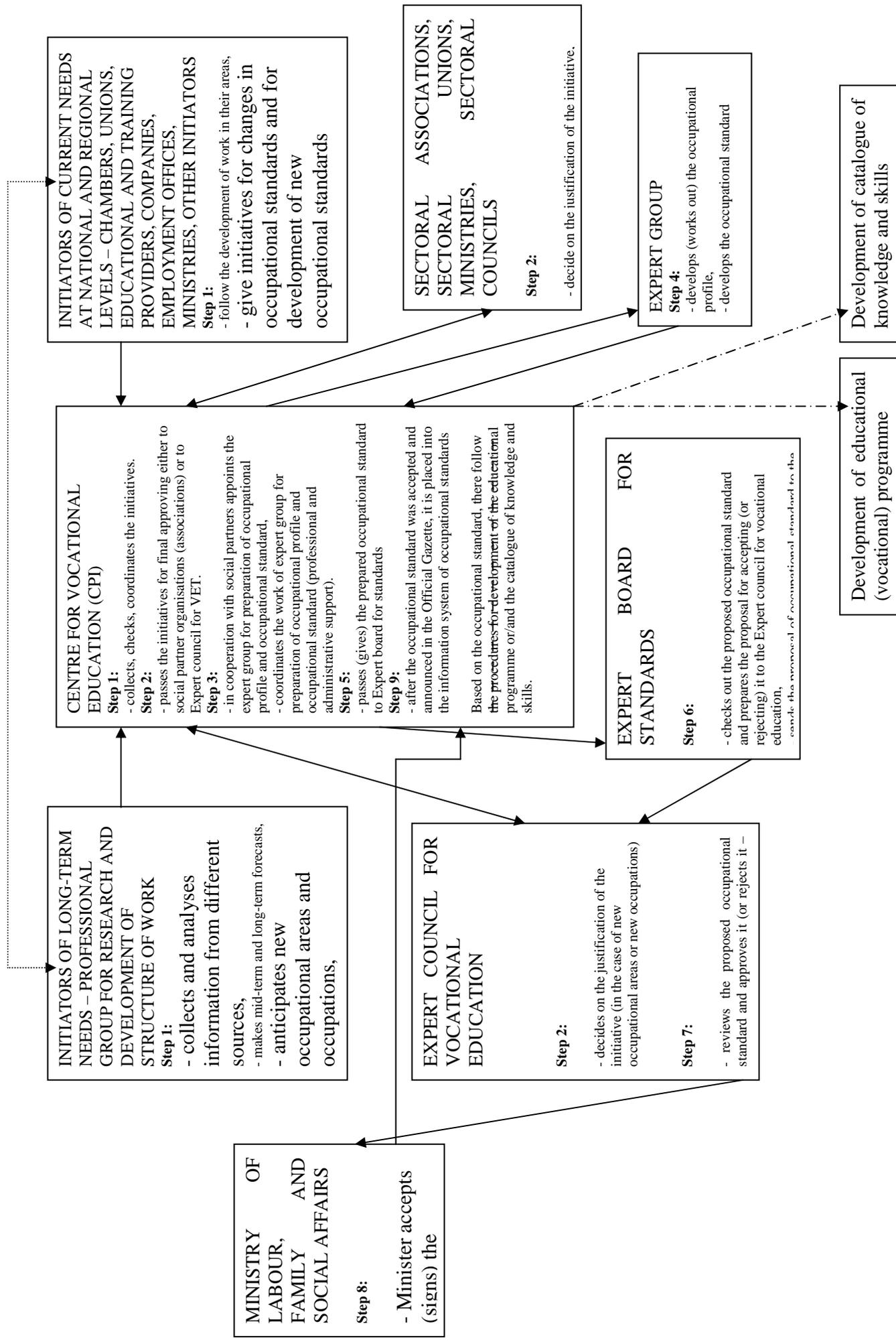
Source: Cek, (2003: 33)

Annex 8: Providers of non-formal education and training in 1998/1999, 1999/2000

Providers	1999/2000		1998/1999		% of growth
	Number	%	Number	%	
People's high schools	45	18.9	45	20.1	100.0
Specialised adult education organisations	117	49.2	113	50.4	103.5
Adult education units at secondary schools	15	6.3	19	8.5	78.9
Training units in enterprises and other organisations	44	18.5	36	16.1	122.2
Other providers	17	7.1	11	4.9	154.5
Total	238	100	224	100	106.3

Source: Cek (2003:31)

Annex 9: A PROPOSAL: Revised system of occupational standards – the case of development of new standards (new initiatives/proposals and initiatives/proposals for changes of existing occupational standards): the procedure (9 steps), actors and their roles



Annex 10: A PROPOSAL: Revised system of occupational standards – the case of systematic, regular review of the existing occupational standards: the procedure, actors and their roles

Regular review of the occupational standards should be done every 5 years, the review should be done for the occupational area (all occupations within the area).

