

**Intellectual output****O4 – Recommendations summary for  
authorities in countries of partnership**

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## Obsah

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## 04 - Recommendations summary for authorities in countries of partnership

The recommendations summary for authorities in countries of partnership has been completed from outcomes O2 and O3. The goal of this outcome is to provide a comprehensive analysis, affecting not only the comparison of the results of initial and further vocational training for selected occupations in the countries of the partnership, but also employers opinion on these results and their willingness to recognise the qualifications obtained in the employment of people in the neighbouring country.

The document is structured in recommendations to the selected occupations with summary of the feedback received from the respective employers, and recommendations also the proposal of possible measures for countries of partnership.

### I. RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE FIELD OF QUALIFICATIONS LEADING TO SELECTED OCCUPATIONS

#### Conclusion

The biggest differences result from different VET policies and VET models used in Austria on one side, and in the Czech Republic and Slovakia on the other side (dual system in Slovakia was not taken into account due to its recent establishment). The qualifications significantly differ in the share of praxis, the role of the employers and the employers' instructors, role of the chambers etc. The overall amount of work-based learning is doubled or even tripled in Austria compared to the same qualifications in Slovakia or the Czech Republic.

The share of the work-based learning (or "praxis") and the quality of the skills gained during WBS have the biggest impact on the professional readiness of the graduates. There is a comparison of WBL hours in studied qualifications provided in the table below.

**Table 1: Hours of work-based learning in qualifications relating to selected crossborder occupations**

OCCUPATION	HOURS OF WORK-BASED LEARNING IN RELATING QUALIFICATIONS		
	SK	CZ	AT
1. BEAUTICIAN	1 350	MIN. 1 088	2 960
2. SHOP ASSISTANT	1 520	MIN. 1 312	4 218
3. WAITER	1 520	MIN. 1 312	4 440
4. COOK	1 520	MIN. 1 312	4 440
5. GARDENER	1 520	MIN. 1 440	4 095
6. CARER	445	MIN. 1 600	800
7. MECHANICS & REPAIRERS OF AGRICULTURAL	1 520	MIN. 1 440	5 050

MACHINERY			
8. MECHANICAL MACHINERY ASSEMBLER	1 520	MIN. 1 600	4 984
9. MECHATRONIC	832	MIN. 372	5 180
10. ELECTRICIAN	1 520	MIN. 1 120	5 180
11. CNC SETTER	1 520	MIN. 1 120	4 440
12. TOOLMAKER AND RELATED WORKERS	1 520	MIN. 1 120	5 180
13. WELDER	1 520	MIN. 1 120	5 180
14. HEAVY TRUCK AND LORRY DRIVER	N.A.	N.A.	4 440
15. WAREHOUSE OPERATOR	N.A.	MIN. 1 120	4 272
16. TILE SETTER	1 520	MIN. 1 120	4 440

The data show that the amount of praxis in Austria is much bigger than in the Czech Republic or Slovakia. This applies even if the length of the VET program is shorter in Austria than in other two countries.

#### Example: Beautician

In Slovak and Czech republic, 4 years study duration is defined. This makes studies longer than in Austria for more than 2 years (program Beautician is the shortest study program offered in AT).

While the number of praxis hours are slightly above 1 000 hours in SK and CZ, it is 2 960 hours in Austria.

There are other examples of different length of training programs. For Austria, the apprenticeships schemes that lasts for 3.5 years are typical, while in the Czech republic and Slovakia, the most typical duration of the apprenticeship schemes is 3 years. So the apprenticeships in Austria last longer and provide significantly more work-based learning (which means company-based learning model of WBL).

#### Example: 3.5 years' schemes

The training regulation "Metalltechnik" lasts for 3.5 years. Also the apprenticeship scheme for Electrician has duration of 3.5 years. The other example is the training regulation "*Land- und Baumaschinentechnik-Ausbildungsordnung*" (relates to the occupation Mechanics and repairers of agricultural machinery).

The differences between teaching foreign languages were also noticed. The requirements differ both in the amount of hours dedicated to teaching foreign languages and in the number of foreign languages that are taught.

#### Example: Waiter

While just one foreign language is taught in Slovakia (teaching first foreign language is realised at least three times in a week, second foreign language is optional), two foreign languages are taught in the Czech republic and Austria.

Some of the analysed qualifications have different levels of education that must be achieved. There are some examples of training (apprenticeships) programs in Austria leading to occupations for which the maturity is required in the Czech Republic or Slovakia.

**Example: Beautician, Mechatronic**

The Beautician is a maturity program scheme in CZ and SK (4 years, ISCED 354), while in Austria, the Beautician is apprenticeship scheme that lasts for 2 years (ISCED 353).

In Austria, the most relevant qualifications leading to the occupation of mechatronic, is apprenticeship VET scheme of 3,5 (4) years (ISCED 353). In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the relevant qualification is maturity program (4 years, ISCED 354).

One of the important findings is a big difference in the concept/structure of qualifications and the depth of detail in which the training standards are described.

It seems that while Slovak and Austrian standards clearly determine the share of work-based learning in the training, the Czech frameworks set up just the minimum requirements for the practice, which may be increased by VET schools in school training standards. This is caused by freedom which is given to schools in order to define the parameters of vocational training.

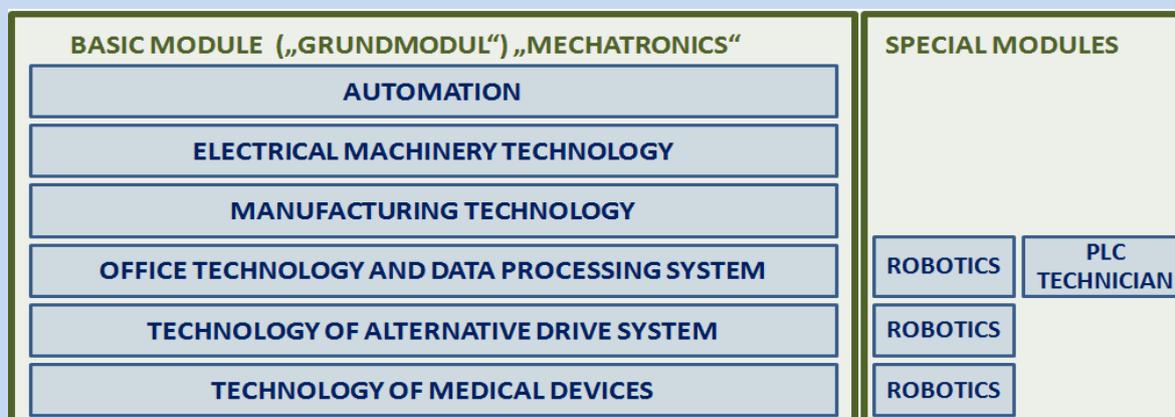
Furthermore, another important difference is the different concept of the structure of the national VET programs standards as well as the diversity of details given in their descriptions. Much more attention should be given to systems (structure) of VET programs in individual countries and approaches to describe the training standards than is currently the case.

The following table represents an example of a different approach to qualification of mechatronics in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Austria.

**Austria**

Existing regulative 120: Mechatronic

- Apprenticeship VET program
- Modularly designed program (6 main modules)
- Basic module „mechatronics“ is common for all 6 mail modules
- Duration of the program 3.5 year + continuing special modules 0.5 year



**Slovakia**

- Existing national educ. standard for maturity program “Mechatronics” (under the VET programs’ category 23,24 – engineering and other metalworking production)
- Described performance and content standards for theoretical and practical training
- Existing national educational standard „Mechatronics“ for continuing post-maturity study

**The Czech Republic**

No separate VET program for mechatronics, no performance and content standards for theoretical and practical training for mechatronics described.

There are 2 national standards (“Electrotechnics” and “Mechanic-Fitter”) in which the expression “Mechatronics” is mentioned (3x altogether).

There are 9 school training programs based on the two national programs mentioned above.

There are other 7 school training programs based on other two national programs without mentioning the expression of “mechatronics” in the programs’ content.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Table 2: Overview of recommendations in the field of qualifications leading to selected occupations**

<p><b>BEAUTICIAN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duration of the program should be reviewed in all countries of the partnership (4 years in the Czech Republic and Slovakia on one side, 2 years in Austria on the other)</li> <li>• The share of praxis should be significantly increased in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (school-centered VET pathway)</li> <li>• The need of teaching two foreign languages in the Czech Republic should be discussed</li> <li>• The question of different duration of relevant CVET courses in the countries of partnership should be opened</li> <li>• The knowledge of anamneses and skin analyses should be increased in training in Slovakia and the Czech Republic (employers feed-back)</li> <li>• Some practical skills are missing and should be strengthened (product selling, dealing with clients) in training in Slovakia and the Czech Republic</li> </ul>
<p><b>SHOP ASSISTANT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The share of praxis should be significantly increased in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (school-centered VET pathway)</li> </ul>
<p><b>WAITER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The possibility of „Cook“ and „Waiter“ qualifications separation from the common national VET standard should be considered in the Czech Republic</li> </ul>

- The practical use and achievement of so called „health, food card” should be discussed in the Czech Republic and Slovakia respectively
- The share of praxis should be significantly increased in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (school-centered VET pathway) – also Austrian employers’ feed-back regarding Czech and Slovak workers
- The need of teaching the second foreign language should be considered in Slovakia
- There are significant differences in the duration of CVET courses in the countries of partnership – the different parameters of relevant courses should be taken into account when revised

#### **COOK**

- The possibility of „Cook“ and „Waiter“ qualifications separation from the common national VET standard should be considered in the Czech Republic
- The practical use and achievement of so called „health, food card” should be discussed in the Czech Republic and Slovakia respectively
- The share of praxis should be significantly increased in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (school-centered VET pathway)
- The need of teaching the second foreign language should be considered in Slovakia

#### **GARDENER**

- The share of praxis should be significantly increased in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (school-centered VET pathway)
- The situation in relevant CVET in the countries of partnership is completely different and the examples of good practice should be used when setting up new ways in CVET.

#### **CARER**

- Different attitudes towards VET standards in the relevant field were identified in the countries of partnership. Specifically, Slovakia is missing the national VET standard for Carers and its setting up would be welcomed
- The share of praxis should be significantly increased in Slovakia
- Regarding specifics of this occupation, special attention should be paid to the quality and the content of CVET
- Further improvement of practical skills recommended also by interviewed employers

#### **MECHANICS AND REPAIRERS OF AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY**

- The share of praxis should be significantly increased in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (school-centered VET pathway)

#### **MECHANICAL MACHINERY ASSEMBLERS**

- There is no separate national VET standard for Mechanical machinery assembler in Austria

as available in the Czech Republic and Slovakia

- The share of praxis should be significantly increased in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (school-centered VET pathway)
- The foreign language as mandatory part of VET should be considered in the Czech Republic
- Opening relevant CVET courses should be considered in Slovakia.
- Significant differences of relevant CVET courses in the Czech Republic and Austria should be discussed and possibly adjusted
- The employers recommend to use up-to-date machinery in VET schools

#### **MECHATRONIC**

- The separate national VET standard for Mechatronics should be set up in the Czech Republic
- The good example of modularisation used in Austria, specifically in the case of Mechatronics, should be promoted in the Czech Republic and Slovakia
- The share of praxis should be significantly increased in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (school-centered VET pathway)
- VET systems should be enhanced with training workshops in bigger companies for better practical and theoretical training (employers' feed-back)
- The duration of relevant CVET is meaningly shorter in the Czech Republic then in Slovakia and Austria and should be revised.

#### **ELECTRICIAN**

- Different approaches towards relevant VET standards were identified in the countries of partnership; used nomenclature should be compared and, if possible, adjusted by revisions
- There are differences in case of IVET programs duration in countries of partnership, which should be taken into account in the process of future revisions
- The share of praxis should be significantly increased in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (school-centered VET pathway) – also based on employers' feed-back)
- The duration of relevant CVET is meaningly shorter in the Czech Republic then in Slovakia and Austria. Prolongation should be considered.

#### **CNC SETTER**

- There are differences in case of IVET programs duration in countries of partnership, which should be taken into account in the process of future revisions
- The share of praxis should be significantly increased in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (school-centered VET pathway)

#### **TOOLMAKER AND RELATED WORKERS**

- There are differences in case of IVET programs duration in countries of partnership, which

should be taken into account in the process of future revisions

- The share of praxis should be significantly increased in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (school-centered VET pathway)
- VET systems should be enhanced with training workshops in bigger companies for better practical and theoretical training (employers' feed-back)
- Amount of foreign language lessons in Austria are 4x less than in the Czech Republic and Slovakia; the adjustment should be considered

#### **WELDER**

- Although there are no separate IVET programs for welders, there are some relevant other programs; nevertheless, the terminology used in the countries of partnership differs
- The duration of relevant program is different (longer) in Austria than in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, especially when additional module applied
- The good example of modularisation should be taken into account in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (in this case: 2 years base module of metal technology and 1,5 year main module of welding + additional special module possible)
- The pathways towards welding qualifications differ in the countries of partnership and the good practice examples should be considered when designing new CVET models

#### **HEAVY TRUCK AND LORRY DRIVER**

- In Austria only, there is specific study program for heavy truck and lorry driver. The needs of employers should resonate in VET systems in the Czech Republic and Slovakia and IVET programs for drivers should be set up

#### **WAREHOUSE OPERATOR**

- Currently there is no VET program for warehouse operators available in Slovakia (now experimentally verified, starting in school year 2016/2017)
- The share of praxis should be significantly increased in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (school-centered VET pathway)
- The duration of relevant CVET is significantly shorter in the Czech Republic and Austria than in Slovakia. The reasons for such differences should be depicted.

#### **TILE SETTER .....**

- The national VET program for tile setters is available in Austria only. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the training plan is part of Bricklayer's VET program (VET standard). The need of separate VET standards for tile setters should be opened in both countries.
- The share of praxis should be significantly increased in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (school-centered VET pathway).

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS IN 5 THEMATIC AREAS

The outcomes of "CrossVETcompar" project allow to define several areas in which opportunities to changes of different scope and different nature can be formulated. These topics are commented below and structured into five thematic areas:

- WORK-BASED LEARNING IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
- STRUCTURE OF VET AND TRAINING STANDARDS
- LEGISLATION
- AWARENESS IN THE CROSS-BORDER CONTEXT
- INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

### 1. Work-based learning in Vocational Education

#### Conclusion

Comparative analysis of selected qualifications and study of the systems of vocational education in Austria, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic have proved utterly different proportions of work-based learning (especially in terms of company-based training) in the overall scope of training. It repeatedly shows that work-based learning, ideally taking place in enterprises is the best possible way to gain the professional competencies and eases the transition from education to work. Work-based learning helps to know better the business environment (including social environment) and provides a better connection between the world of education and work. These benefits of WBL are repeatedly highlighted by other studies (compiled by the European Commission, CEDEFOP etc.). In partnership countries, however, the proportion of practice in the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic in VET programs is significantly lower than in Austria. The Austrian employers warn that the quality of professional skills of workers from the Czech Republic and Slovakia, when they come to the company, is lower when compared with their Austrian co-workers. The Czech Republic and Slovakia reacted differently on this deficit. While Slovakia introduced a dual vocational training system since 2015, in the Czech Republic, there have been several initiatives and projects to promote better cooperation between businesses and vocational schools and to increase the proportion of WBL in training process (e.g. project *Pospolu/Together*), the qualification model of the Chamber of Commerce the Czech Republic, 2015: The Year of industry). Nevertheless, system recommendations that emerged from these activities, has not yet been implemented.

#### Recommendations

- ✓ **Maintaining the dual system in the changing Word of work (AT, SK)**
- ✓ **Increasing the number of enterprises and learners in dual system (SK)**
- ✓ **Strengthening of work-based learning (company-based learning) in school-based VET pathways (SK, CZ)**
- ✓ **Promotion of good examples of dual system (SK, AT) and of cooperation of businesses and VET education providers (CZ)**
- ✓ **In short term: the implementation of "Pospolu" project recommendation and the principles**

of ,qualification model' (Chambers of Commerce of the CR) in practice.

- ✓ **In long term: considering the introduction of dual system of VET in the Czech Republic, monitoring experience with dual system implementation in Slovakia (CZ)**

## 2. Structure of VET and training standards

### Conclusion

At European level, surprisingly little attention is paid, what VET programs across EU countries exist and what methods of training standards description in the Member countries are used. Even a comparison of the relatively small sample of qualifications in the three countries, which was made in CrossVETcompair project has shown considerable differences. States considering major reforms of vocational education (such as revision of the structure of VET programs and descriptions of training standards), should start with a thorough analysis of foreign approaches to this issue and draw inspiration from examples of best practice.

Regarding the system of VET programs, even the small sample of qualifications proves some significant differences. For example, the Slovaks do not have the opportunity to educate themselves in 'Warehouse operator' apprenticeship, while in the Czech Republic and in Austria, the program is provided. Similarly, the Czech Republic lacks the own standard for the field of mechatronics, which is created in Slovakia and Austria. A separate issue is also quite detailed VET programs modularization in Austria, which develops individual fields deeper into specializations according to the needs of the economy. Even among the partner countries of the project CrossVETcompair, there are very interesting methods of qualifications description (e.g. the so-called 'pyramidal model' and the German model of 'learning fields').

An important role in this process must be played by social partners, especially employers, to ensure that the structure of VET programs and their contents match the requirements of the labour market and stimulate the employment of graduates.

### Recommendations

- ✓ **Analysis of foreign best practices of the VET programs structure (what programs, modularisation etc.)**
- ✓ **Convergence of parameters and structure of VET in common cross-border region**
- ✓ **Analysis of foreign best practices (methods) of VET training frameworks description (structure of standards: pyramidal model of competencies, model of learning fields etc.) as the inputs for national reforms of VET**
- ✓ **Review of the national VET training standards, in cooperation with the social partners**

## 3. Legislation

### Conclusion

Adequate legislative environment on the national level is a key requirement for the functionality of the national VET systems in a whole. The best solution is the existence of laws on vocational

education – even for those countries which apply the school-based VET models and create a lot of space for VET schools at the local level (as in the Czech Republic). European Commission and CEDEFOP studies dealing with VET quality parameters consider quality management system (including the involvement of social partners and the management of system at the national and regional levels) and ensuring evaluation (including external) as the key aspects of successful VET. Dealing with these aspects through the Vocational Education Act seems only logical solution. Vocational Education Act clearly defines the terms, the role of key stakeholders, the requirements for quality assurance, rights and obligations of stakeholders and other topics such as formulating the parameters of optimization of the VET programs structure.

#### **Recommendations**

- ✓ **Evaluation of experience with the introduction of the dual system, revising the legislation as necessary (SK)**
- ✓ **Implementation of the project ,Pospolu‘ recommendations, and the ,qualification model‘ (Chambers of commerce Czech Rep.) into the legislation (CZ)**
- ✓ **Considering the implementation of dual system of VET (CZ)**
- ✓ **Evaluating the requirements of the social partners, of changes in the labour market and in education and adjust the relevant laws if necessary (AT, SK, CZ)**

#### **4. Awareness in the cross-border context**

Mutual awareness of vocational education and training across the border in common cross-border region should be strengthened. In the case of already existing cooperation the awareness should be maintained and updated. It turns out that the potential for the development of border regions is not fully utilized among others because of the lack of mutual cooperation, exchange of information and resources. Interviews with employers of foreign workers have shown that the entrepreneurs almost do not know the education systems in other countries of cross-border region. Consequently, they aren't fully involved in VET cooperation across the border region, although it could contribute to the solution of eventual shortages of skilled labour (albeit indirectly and more in the long run).

This collaboration could be more complex and focus on mutual awareness of the requirements of cross-border labour markets (local employers' requirements in the frame of cross-border region), the possibilities of VET training in the region and the possibilities for career development in the region. Cooperation should address an element of continuous VET and adult education.

Vocational schools can work together, for example, on analyzing the contents of specific VET programs and the exchange of information during the process of the school curricula review. This is the type of operation in which the project CrossVETcompair partners see the greatest potential use of comparative analysis of selected qualifications (or VET schools' own analysis, according to the specializations).

#### **Recommendations**

- ✓ **Increase employers awareness among VET systems in cross-border regions**
- ✓ **Transfer of experience and good practice between employers and VET education providers in cross-border regions**
- ✓ **Increase common cross-border regions' awareness of the cross-border labour markets requirements, of the possibilities of VET education and employment opportunities (AT, SK, CZ)**

## 5. International cooperation

There are many platforms and initiatives within international cooperation can be realized – including cross-border cooperation described in the previous point. One of the successful examples is European Alliance for Apprenticeships, in which, with their activities in VET, can be applied both governments of EU countries and other stakeholders (e.g. employers' organisations, trade unions or individual businesses) with their reform programs or concrete promises of VET development (e.g. promises to create certain number of apprentice places).

Countries, which plan more significant reforms of VET (e.g. to strengthen work-based learning, including dual system) have more space to initiate bilateral or multilateral agreements of cooperation on transnational level with states, in which intended system is already successfully working. From recent past there can be mentioned for instance: cooperation between Germany and Spain, Italy and other countries.

Other potential topic of this cooperation is, e.g. exchange of experiences with lately implemented reforms of VET with countries, which are just planning this reform or would like to be inspired from positive experience, or want to avoid blind alleys. The example of countries, which have recently made significant VET reforms (in this case it means dual system implementation in VET) is Spain (since 2012) or Slovakia (since 2015).

Great space for international cooperation between individual schools, employers, their organizations and other partners is offered by EU program Erasmus+. Potential possibilities, which program offers, should be used fully either it concerns mobility projects or strategic partnership development. Particular example of suitable topic of cooperation, which emerged from consultations with employers, is exchange of good practices focused on internal company VET trainers.

Programs of type INTERREG V A are ideal to strengthen cross-border cooperation. They enable practical international cooperation in common cross-border region, e.g. creation of common educational programs. For instance, program INTERREG V A SK-CZ enables to realize projects focused on increasing relevance of education for labour market needs with the aim to improve employability on the labour market.

### **Recommendations:**

- ✓ **Intensive involvement of government bodies and other stakeholders to European Alliance for Apprenticeships**

- ✓ **Bilateral cooperation on level of ministries of education and expert institutions (twinning, adoption of functional solutions)**
- ✓ **Maximum usage of possibilities that Erasmus+ program offers: mobility or strategic partnership in VET**
- ✓ **Full usage of opportunities offered by programs such as INTERREG V A, e.g. program of international cooperation in cross-border regions (AT, SK, CZ)**