



Vocational education and training

Policy briefs 2023

SLOVAKIA



This VET policy brief was produced by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), Department for VET [vocational education and training] and Qualifications under the supervision of [Loukas Zahilas](#), Head of Department.

The report was drafted by [Veronika Leiner](#), Cedefop expert, under the guidance of VET policies and systems team coordinator [George Kostakis](#).

This report is part of Cedefop's monitoring of vocational education and training policies and systems. It is based on detailed information on VET policy implementation submitted by Cedefop's European network of expertise on VET (ReferNet) and other sources. For additional information please visit Cedefop's online tool [Timeline of VET policies in Europe](#).

Please cite this publication as:

Cedefop (2024). *Vocational education and training policy briefs 2023 – Slovakia*. Cedefop monitoring and analysis of vocational education and training policies. <http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/91551>

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the internet.

It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu>).

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2024



© Cedefop, 2024.

The reuse policy of the European Commission is implemented by the Commission Decision 2011/833/EU of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39). Except otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence. (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). This means that reuse is allowed provided appropriate credit is given and any changes are indicated. For any use or reproduction of photos or other material that is not owned by the EU, permission must be sought directly from the copyright holders.



PDF ISBN 978-92-896-3747-3 doi: [10.2801/91551](https://doi.org/10.2801/91551) TI-05-24-302-EN-N

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	4
2.	National VET context and challenges	4
2.1	National VET context.....	4
2.2	Challenges	5
3.	National VET policy priorities.....	6
4.	Main policy developments and progress 2020-23.....	6
4.1	Strengthening the labour market relevance of VET.....	6
4.2	Improving the education of vulnerable groups and reducing early school leaving.....	8
4.3	Facilitating labour market reintegration of adults.....	9
5.	Statistical information in relation to EU targets.....	11
6.	Conclusion.....	12
	References.....	14

1. Introduction

This VET policy brief produced by Cedefop presents a snapshot of vocational education and training policy developments in Slovakia between 2020 and the beginning of 2023. It presents the context and the challenges the country faces, a selection of the latest VET-related statistics, as well as the national priorities until 2030 identified in Slovakia's national implementation plan. This VET policy brief provides information from Cedefop monitoring and analysis on the implementation of the [Council Recommendation on VET](#) and [Osnabrück Declaration](#). It offers stakeholders a regular source of information on VET policy developments that could be used for future policy making.

2. National VET context and challenges

2.1 National VET context

Initial vocational education and training (IVET) remains a strong pillar of the education system in Slovakia, despite a growing preference for general education. In 2022, 68% of upper secondary school students graduated from VET programmes, with 77.4% of them from programmes enabling progression to higher education. Slovakia's IVET system is attractive, offering a combination of school-based and in-company training, while also actively involving stakeholders from the labour market in the development of vocational education and training initiatives.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport has overall responsibility for IVET. Coordination and policy implementation are managed by the State Institute of Vocational Education (ŠIOV). The governance structure extends to both national and regional levels and includes bodies such as the National VET Council and Regional VET councils. Sectoral (skills) councils, composed of diverse stakeholders including employer representatives ('sectoral assignees'), provide a sectoral approach in IVET. Employers have a growing influence on the VET system, and their involvement is central to aligning VET with labour market needs (Cedefop, ŠIOV/SNO, forthcoming).

Upper secondary VET in Slovakia offers diverse work-based learning structures, including practical training in school workshops, apprenticeship programmes and dual VET. Specialised legislation, in effect since 2015, facilitates company engagement by providing direct financing from the State budget. Since the 2018/19 school year, both school-based and dual VET adhere to the same national curricula, allowing all secondary programmes to be offered in either format. Dual VET's overall share remains relatively low at 7.4% compared to the 19% participation rate in apprenticeship programmes (Cedefop, ŠIOV/SNO, forthcoming).

Continuing VET (CVET) is semi-regulated. Under the Lifelong Learning Act (568/2009), programmes for adults wishing to work in businesses regulated by the Trade Licensing Act (455/1991) must be accredited by the education ministry. Specific qualifications are regulated by sectoral authorities. Many training programmes offered by

companies, as well as adult education providers in general, have no formal regulation. Regulation of labour market training is the responsibility of the labour ministry through the central and district labour offices. (Cedefop, ŠIOV/SNO, forthcoming).

2.2 Challenges

Strengthening the labour market relevance of VET is a significant challenge in Slovakia. Student performances are declining, as indicated by the PISA results, in all the three assessed fields of reading comprehension, mathematics, and science. PISA 2022, in particular, indicates the lowest-ever scores in mathematics and among the lowest in reading and science. The proportion of low achievers is considerably higher than the OECD average, with rates of 35% against 26% in reading, 31% against 24% in science, and 33% against 31% in mathematics, as reported by the [PISA 2022 findings](#). Deteriorating learning outcomes have adverse effects on enrolment rates especially in mechanical and electrical engineering VET programmes, contributing to a shortage of technically skilled graduates within the national economy and indicating the need to reform the VET system. (Slovakia, 2022; OECD, 2020).

The share of early leavers from education and training has increased from 4.7% in 2010 to 7.4% in 2022. Although this is below the EU 2030 target of below 9%, it is higher than the national target of 6.0%. Data on early school leavers in Slovakia show a deterioration not only over time but also geographically from west to east. Educational performance is uneven among different groups of the young, and early school leaving is particularly common among the Roma. This is a significant issue as it can lead to unemployment and social exclusion (Table 1; Cedefop, ŠIOV/SNO, forthcoming; European Commission, 2022; OECD, 2020).

A high level of skills mismatch in the economy highlights the need to strengthen adult learning policies, especially concerning the twin transition. Low-qualified Slovaks face the highest unemployment rate in the EU, reaching 38.7% in the age group 25 to 64 in 2022. Additionally, Slovakia struggles with a shortage of graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. Persistent gaps in both basic and specialised digital skills are a barrier for the digital transition and call for additional measures. While 55% of Slovaks possess basic digital skills, slightly surpassing the EU average of 54%, only 21% of the population has advanced digital skills, falling below the EU average of 26%. The pandemic also confirmed insufficient provision of digital educational content at all levels of education, particularly in VET. (Table 1; Cedefop, ŠIOV/SNO, forthcoming; European Commission, 2022).

Slovakia needs to secure up-to-date equipment in VET schools to improve training quality, aligned with digital and green transition goals. Retraining teachers to navigate the digital transformation of schools and cater to the increasingly diverse needs of individual learners poses a significant challenge. Despite progressive salary increases until 2020, the teaching profession remains unattractive and faces increasing shortages. The quality and

relevance of initial training and opportunities for professional development of teachers are limited (Council of the European Union, 2019; Slovakia, 2022).

3. National VET policy priorities

Slovakia has prepared a comprehensive national implementation plan in response to the 2020 Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück Declaration. This plan describes the flagship measures that address the European priorities and achieve the national targets in VET and lifelong learning in the upcoming years (Slovakia, 2022). The high-level priorities that Slovakia is working on can be categorised as:

- a) strengthening the labour market relevance of VET;
- b) improving the education of vulnerable groups and reducing early school leaving;
- c) facilitating labour market reintegration of adults.

Slovakia's [Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 \(LLCS 2030\)](#), adopted by the government on 24 November 2021, addresses all the priority areas outlined in the NIP. It includes comprehensive measures for urgent intervention, such as second-chance education programmes, VET and national skills improvement, and validation systems. It also focuses on increasing flexibility in the qualifications system, introducing short-cycle tertiary programmes, creating a graduate tracking system, supporting sector council management, and promoting adult civic education. The LLCS 2030 includes an estimated cost annex totalling EUR 140 million. The [Lifelong learning and counselling strategy action plan 2022-24](#) was approved in April 2022, outlining activities, output indicators, implementing institutions, and estimated costs from national and EU sources.

4. Main policy developments and progress 2020-23

4.1 Strengthening the labour market relevance of VET

Several policy initiatives were introduced between 2020 and early 2023 to strengthen the relevance of education and training to the labour market.

In 2021, the [amendment to the Act on VET](#) (61/2015) aimed to align VET with labour market needs, strengthening employer involvement and provide flexible conditions for dual VET. The amendment expanded the Employer Council for Dual VET's responsibilities to cover the broader VET system, leading to its renaming as the Employer Council for VET. It also granted sectoral assignees, representing employers in sectoral matters, the authority to verify new VET programmes for alignment with labour market needs, a task previously handled by the secondary VET schools. To promote dual VET, the amendment reduced administrative burdens for participating companies by simplifying the verification of their capacity to provide practical training. Additionally, the amended Act eased the acceptance of training abroad from Erasmus+ mobility or intra-company agreements, within prescribed training hours. It introduced higher flexibility for hiring professionals as (head) instructors in

dual VET, provided they pass exams verifying professional competence according to the Lifelong Learning Act, addressing the emerging staffing challenges in VET schools.

In 2022, a pilot initiative was launched to transform existing Centres of VET (CeVETs) into [Centres of excellence in VET](#) (CeEVETs) jointly funded through European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF). Dissatisfaction with the performance of existing CeVETs prompted the evolution of the VET centre concept. Current discussions in 2022 focus on the details of centre equipment, with plans to establish the first 12 CeEVETs showcasing state-of-the-art technology within the 4-year project framework. This transformation is further driven by the need to align with the European initiative on establishing Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs). CeEVET objectives include providing both IVET and CVET, retraining educators, offering work-based learning, validating and recognising non-formal and informal learning, and acting as an interface between education levels. These centres should support regional development, embodying research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3). This development aligns with the Lifelong Learning and Counselling Strategy for 2021-30, with a dedicated EUR 27 million allocated for development between 2022-24 per the strategy's action plan.

In 2022, the Employer Council for VET implemented assessment criteria for [certifying supra-company training centres](#). This new form of in-company training centre (ICTC) was introduced by the 2021 amendment to the VET Act, and by 2022 the first two ICTCs had obtained their certification. To address the limited training capacity of small companies, the legislation aims to promote the expansion of work-based learning. The designation 'supra-company training centre' can be granted to companies operating ICTCs that meet specific requirements. [Supra-company training centres broaden the dual concept](#) by providing practical training space for learners who sign a learning contract with another small or medium-sized enterprise or a self-employed person. Without these centres, small companies would be unable to provide dual training placements for learners. Aspiring ICTCs must comply with legal requirements and criteria established by the relevant sectoral assignee, including the development of a VET quality strategy and alignment with labour market needs. (ReferNet Slovakia, Cedefop, 2021; Slovakia, 2022).

In February 2020, a new website was launched, presenting [VET graduate tracking results](#) from previous years by interlinking administrative data and surveys. The data revealed a notable number of graduates working outside their fields of study, prompting the need for improved decision-making tools. In 2021, the government adopted the [Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30](#), proposing a renewed graduate tracking system. The 2022-24 action plan outlined three elements for the system: embedding obligations for annual data collection and evaluation in the new Lifelong Learning Act; developing surveys for university and secondary school graduates (2022-2024); and piloting the tracking scheme in selected schools (2023-2024). The estimated costs for items two and three are EUR 4 million. The goal is to improve the existing system, aiding educational decision-making and policy formulation, ultimately reducing supply-demand mismatch and improving school performance.

The 2021 amendment to the Education Act (245/2008) envisions [transforming the guidance and counselling system](#) into five levels of support services. These levels, ranging from individual specialists in schools to specialized counselling centres, aim to provide tailored services. To overcome institutional fragmentation, plans include the establishment of a regional network of counselling institutions. In alignment with these goals, the ESF project Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET has initiated activities such as creating regional units for career guidance. Additionally, dual points, aiming to facilitate the alignment of supply and demand in VET have been established within regional branches of the Methodological-Pedagogical Centre. A talent centre in Trnava has been established as a hub offering career guidance for students, parents, teachers, and counsellors. The project encompasses the retraining of school directors and staff, with 311 VET teachers and trainers completing in-service training focused on career guidance for students in 2021. Further, 256 lower secondary teachers have been retrained to understand and promote dual VET, reinforcing the first two levels of the support services (individual specialists and support teams in schools).

4.2 Improving the education of vulnerable groups and reducing early school leaving

Slovakia has implemented key measures to make VET inclusive and reduce early school leaving (ESL).

Amendments to Slovakia's Education Act (245/2008), effective as of 1 January 2022, aim to reduce early school leavers. Two previously distinct programmes are now merged, enabling students to obtain lower secondary (general) education during a VET programme. This integrated programme allows them to advance to higher school years in related fields of study. For example, completing the new EQF 2 programme in construction production allows students to enter the second school year in the EQF 3 bricklayer programme. These so called [Integrated F-type programmes](#) last 2 or 3 years depending on the initial skills assessment of individual learners. Simultaneously, the amendment introduces [alternatives for obtaining a lower secondary general education](#) (ISCED 2) certificate and accessing mainstream education through entry exams without participation in formal education. The programme is modular and inclusive, with an option to skip directly to the completion exam based on satisfactory entry exam results (Slovakia, 2022).

In April 2021, the Slovak government approved a [Strategy for equality, inclusion and participation of Roma until 2030](#). Subsequently, in June, 2022, the government adopted five action plans in accordance with the strategy, focusing on crucial areas including education, employment, housing, health, and the fight against racism. The education action plan concentrates on children and young learners, while adult skill enhancement is addressed in the employment priority area. The plan aims to equip adult Roma with skills for self-employment, incorporating financial and entrepreneurial literacy through experiential activities and non-formal education. Pilot activities, involving up to 200 Roma

annually, are scheduled between 2022 and 2024, with an estimated annual cost of EUR 5 000 from the State budget.

In December 2021, the government adopted the [Strategy for an inclusive approach in education and training](#), prioritising the training of pedagogical and professional staff. Some measures outlined in the subsequent action plan are general, such as desegregation plans, a catalogue of support measures, the establishment of inclusive teams, and a revised counselling model. There are also targeted measures for VET, assisting health-impaired and socially disadvantaged learners in entering the labour market through dual VET programmes. These initiatives are financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). Simultaneously, the second phase of the project for financing assisting professions, [Assisting professions in the education of children and pupils II](#), significantly increased positions within inclusive teams. These teams are assigned across all education levels, including VET schools. The EUR 82 million project anticipates approximately 3 300 employees in crucial roles such as assisting teachers, pedagogical assistants, school psychologists, special pedagogues, and social pedagogues during the 2022/23 school year.

Between 2020-21, the national project [Community services in towns and municipalities with the presence of marginalised Roma communities – II](#) continued focusing on increasing financial literacy, employability and employment of marginalised communities, especially the Roma. By 2021, it had conducted 350 programmes with 3 252 activities benefiting 12 628 individuals, despite the COVID-19 pandemic leading to interruptions in educational activities. The project was launched in November 2019 with a total budget of EUR 21 350 000.

Since its 2019 launch in the Prešov region, the [Catching-up regions initiative \(CURI\)](#) expanded to the Banská Bystrica region in 2021, with a EUR 46.6 million investment in the first year. Initial steps have also been taken in the Košice region, where five VET schools are developing projects to improve training innovation, with an estimated budget of EUR 18.3 million. CURI, a programme by the European Commission and World Bank, collaborates with local authorities in regions lagging economically. In Slovakia, CURI emphasises adapting VET programmes to current labour market needs, aiming to improve graduates' employability. The initiative offers financial support for region-specific projects, including funding for SMEs partnering with VET schools and improving training facilities. In-service training for pedagogical staff within VET schools is also part of the initiative across Banská Bystrica, Košice, and Prešov regions. In September 2022, a letter of intent was signed to continue CURI in Banská Bystrica, Košice, and Prešov, increasing EU fund efficiency, aligning with growth and jobs action plans in the regions.

4.3 Facilitating labour market reintegration of adults

Slovakia has implemented key measures to enhance lifelong learning.

As of the end of 2022, 56 projects within the [Don't BE disQUALIFIED!](#) initiative were completed, with 95 projects in progress. The initiative, first launched in 2016, aimed at

increasing the quality and effectiveness of lifelong learning, focusing on the development of key competences and related upskilling among adults. Eligible activities include programmes for the development of competences that align with labour market needs, e.g. ICT and financial literacy, supporting second chance education, inclusive education for individuals with special needs, aiding young people facing employment difficulties, and validating adults' learning acquired from working experience. Secondary schools, including VET schools, businesses, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are eligible applicants.

The [Don't lose your job - educate yourself](#) initiative, first launched in 2021, has undergone significant changes. Initially targeting the unemployed, it has expanded to include those at risk of job loss due to technological and social changes, the self-employed, SME workers, and individuals on maternity or parental leave. The scope of eligible courses has widened to cover various professions like beauticians, masseurs, care workers, project managers and accountants, going beyond those facing shortages. Highly skilled professionals now have access to training, including courses in digital management and green professions. In an effort to empower individuals to assess their labour market prospects independently, a [voucher scheme was introduced](#) suggesting a potential replacement of individual learning accounts (though individual learning accounts are foreseen by the LLCS 2030, they have not been implemented yet). In 2022, over EUR 1.2 million funded courses for 4 015 employed individuals, with over 80% falling within the 25 to 49 age group. ESF funding is available up to the end of 2023 for approximately 25 000 people participating in the upskilling initiative to increase their skills and employability.

To improve digital skills, the most important activities launched in 2022 targeted the senior population. The [Improving digital skills for seniors and distribution of senior-tablets](#) project aimed to address the digital skills gap of seniors aged 65 and above, initially targeting 173 thousand individuals. However, due to post-pandemic and war-related challenges, the government reduced the target to 102 000 in April 2023, with an adjusted investment of EUR 39 million. Over 1 000 seniors and disabled persons underwent a 5-week training programme during the pilot phase, covering technology basics, internet information searching, online communication, and cybersecurity, while also receiving free tablets and data packages. Additionally, the national project [Improving the digital skills of seniors and disadvantaged groups in public administration](#), funded by the Operational programme integrated infrastructure (2014-21), with a budget of nearly EUR 1 million, aimed to enhance seniors' online communication with public administration. In September 2022, a 20-hour beginner training, complemented by e-testing, gathered feedback on skills and identified needs for new or revised e-Government services. Increased utilisation of public services by digital seniors, replacing physical interactions with e-services between elderly clients and authorities, is anticipated (ReferNet Slovakia; Cedefop, 2023).

By the end of 2022, the pilot project [System of verifying qualifications](#), led by the State Institute of Vocational Education, awarded the first qualifications through validation of non-formal and informal learning (NFIL). The automotive industry attracted the highest number of applicants seeking validation. Initiated in 2019, the project aims to improve the National

System of Qualifications (NSQ) standards by incorporating assessment manuals and piloting the validation of non-formal and informal learning for 330 preselected qualifications. As of 2022, assessment manuals for 178 qualifications have been created and 51 institutions are authorised for validation. Two registers were established: one for national guarantors overseeing quality assurance in the 24 sectors, and another for authorised persons assessing evidence portfolios and participating in validation examination committees. The project has a budget of approximately EUR 12 million. The new system for the validation of NFIL has been reviewed in an EQAVET peer review activity hosted by Slovakia in November 2022. Peer reviewers from seven countries provided suggestions to strengthen relationships with labour market actors, develop quality standards, and increase support for candidates throughout the validation process. The host and peers also exchanged ideas on the challenges related to the transition between the pilot project and the implementation of the system (EQAVET, 2022)

In November 2022, a new Erasmus+ project Digital individual learning accounts (D-ILA), run by ŠIOV in cooperation with the V4 (Visegrád partner countries Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia) was launched. The project aims to develop a framework for individual learning accounts (ILAs) utilizing new technologies, aiming to increase adult learning engagement. It also aims to develop and test a data model capable of leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to provide personalised training recommendations for soft skills and ensure efficient budget allocation within the ILA delivery mode.

5. Statistical information in relation to EU targets

Slovakia's statistics indicate a mixed performance concerning VET targets.

In 2022, 49.5 % of the 25 to 64-year-old adults in Slovakia had a learning experience in the last 12 months, which was 10 % above the EU average, and 2.5 pp above the 47% target set by 2025 by the Council Resolution on the European Education Area.

The employment rate for recent IVET graduates (age 20 to 34) was only 1 pp below the EU average of 79.7% in 2022, and not far from the 82% EU target for 2025.

In 2022, the share of recent IVET graduates (20 to 34-year-olds) with a work-based learning experience as part of their vocational education and training was 56.5%, a 3.5 percentage point gap from the EU target of 60% by 2025.

Table 1. **European vocational education and training policy dashboard: Slovakia**

Type of indicator ¹⁽¹⁾	Indicator	Last available year	SK	EU-27	Policy Document	EU target (year)
VET for developing a lifelong learning culture						
Progress	Adults (25 to 64-year-olds) with a learning experience in the last 12 months (%)*	2022	49.5 ^u	39.5	Skills Agenda	50% (2025)
					Council Resolution on EEA	47% (2025)

¹ [Definitions](#) on the type of indicators are available.

					ESPR Action Plan	60% (2030)
Progress	Low-qualified adults with a learning experience in the last 12 months (%)	2022	18.6 ^u	18.4	Skills Agenda	30% (2025)
Progress	Unemployed adults with a learning experience in the last 4 weeks (%)	2022	. ^{bu}	13.2	Skills Agenda	20% (2025)
Context	Employment rate for 20 to 64-year-olds (%)	2022	76.7	74.6	ESPR Action Plan	78% (2030)
Context	Early leavers from education and training (%)	2022	7.4	9.6	Council Resolution on EEA	<9% (2030)
Context	NEET rate for 15 to 29-year-olds (%)	2022	12.3	11.7	ESPR Action Plan	9% (2030)
VET for Resilience, transitions, sustainability and excellence						
Progress	Adults (16 to 74-year-olds) with at least basic digital skills (%)	2021	55.2	53.9	Skills Agenda ESPR Action Plan	70% (2025) 80% (2030)
Progress	Employment rate for recent IVET graduates (20 to 34-year-olds) (%)	2022	78.7	79.7	Council Rec on VET	82% (2025)
Progress	Recent IVET graduates (20 to 34-year-olds) with a work-based learning experience as part of their vocational education and training (%)	2022	56.5	60.1	Council Rec on VET Council Resolution on EEA	60% (2025)
Context	25 to 34-year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	2022	39.1	42	Council Resolution on EEA	45% (2025)
Context	Gender employment gap (%)	2022	8.1	10.7	ESPR Action Plan	To be halved (2030)
Context	People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (1000s)	2022	888	95 284	ESPR Action Plan	15 million reduction (2030)
Context	Employed ICT specialists (1000s)	2022	111.5	9 370.2 ^e	2030 Digital Compass	20 million, with convergence between men and women (2030)
VET for the European Education Area						
Progress	Learners in IVET who benefitted from learning mobility abroad (%) **	2021	4.2	2.1 ^{dv}	Council Rec on VET Skills Agenda	8% (2025)
Context	Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET	2021	1.3	1.2		

Available flags: b – break in time series, d – definition differs, e – estimated, u – low reliability, V – Cedefop estimate.

Special value: - not available

* Eurostat data (Adult education survey, special calculation excluding guided on-the-job training)

** Provisional estimates affected by the COVID-19 pandemic

Source: Cedefop. [European VET policy dashboard](#)

6. Conclusion

Slovakia's priorities for VET, defined in its national implementation plan in line with EU priorities, are marked by significant developments between 2020 and early 2023. These priorities include strengthening the labour market relevance of VET, improving the education of vulnerable groups and promoting adult workforce reintegration through lifelong learning programmes.

In 2022, Slovakia launched a pilot programme to transform existing centres of VET into centres of excellence in VET. The roadmap for the coming years includes equipping these centres with state-of-the-art technology and promoting close partnerships with universities and dual partners, to put CeEVETs at the forefront of innovation and help better match VET with labour market needs. Supra-company training centres are expected to become fully operational by 2025, extending the dual system to SMEs and entrepreneurs. The implementation of quality assurance measures and training for in-company trainers, as set in the country's NIP, will further increase the effectiveness of in-company training centres and contribute to the relevance of qualifications. Additionally, Slovakia is implementing a renewed graduate tracking system and a comprehensive guidance system to make the VET system more responsive. Legal provisions on quality assurance for the labour market-driven fourth sub-framework of professional qualifications are also envisaged, which would contribute to the full functioning of the Slovak qualification framework (SKKR).

Inclusive measures in education between 2020 and 2023 involve the adaptation of strategic documents, the training of pedagogical staff, and support for health-impaired and socially disadvantaged learners in VET. Amendments to the VET Act have also been introduced to create alternative VET programmes tailored for at-risk students, facilitating the acquisition of lower secondary education within the VET framework, and enabling progression to higher school years. Initiatives such as the Catching-up regions initiative (CURI) and projects aimed at supporting marginalised communities play a crucial role in fostering inclusivity in practice. The establishment of an ESL monitoring system and the promotion of cross-sectoral and interdepartmental cooperation in the coming years would contribute to addressing the challenge of reducing early school leaving.

Slovakia strengthened lifelong learning by implementing comprehensive measures as part of its Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30. The Don't lose your job - educate yourself initiative includes a voucher scheme enabling individuals to assess their labour market prospects independently and access training in various professions. Individual learning accounts are piloted within the Erasmus+ project Digital individual learning accounts (D-ILA). Implementing a comprehensive scheme, either voucher or ILA, will encourage a greater proportion of the population to participate in continuous educational and skills development activities. Significant achievements have been made in digital skills development for seniors. However, additional measures are crucial for a broader age range and will contribute to fostering digital skills among the younger population, ensuring a more digitally literate society. Continued development and piloting of the validation system and the introduction of SKKR 0 (addressing low-skilled groups) and 5 level (short-cycle tertiary programs) into the fourth sub-framework (labour market qualifications) of SKKR, based on learning outcomes, will further enrich the lifelong learning system.

References

[accessed 31.01.2024]

- Cedefop and ReferNet (2023). [Timeline of VET policies in Europe](#) [online tool].
- Cedefop; ŠIOV/SNO - State Institute of Vocational Education/Slovak National Observatory of VET (forthcoming). [Vocational education and training in Europe - Slovakia: system description](#) [From Cedefop; ReferNet. Vocational education and training in Europe database].
- Cedefop (2023). [European Inventory of National Qualifications Frameworks 2022–Slovakia](#).
- Cedefop (2022). [European VET policy dashboard indicators and groups](#) [online tool].
- Council of the European Union (2019). [Council Recommendation of 9 July 2019 on the 2019 National Reform Programme of Slovakia and delivering a Council opinion on the 2019 Stability Programme of Slovakia](#). Official Journal of the European Union, C 301/148. 5.9.2019.
- European Commission (2022). [Digital Economy and Society Index 2022 Slovakia](#)
- European Commission (2021). [Education and Training Monitor 2021: Slovakia](#). Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- EQAVET (2022). [Peer Review on 'The new system for validation of results of non-formal education and informal learning in Slovakia and its quality assurance processes' - Flash Report](#)
- OECD (2020). [OECD Skills Strategy Slovak Republic: Assessment and Recommendations](#), OECD Publishing, Paris.
- OECD (2023). [PISA 2022 results: Factsheets – Slovak Republic](#)
- Slovakia (2022) *National Implementation Plan of the Council recommendation on VET: Slovakia*.
- ReferNet Slovakia; Cedefop (2021). [Slovakia: reform legislation package for better VET](#). National news on VET.
- ReferNet Slovakia; Cedefop (2023). [Slovakia: digital seniors – a game-changer?](#) National news on VET.
- ReferNet Slovakia; Cedefop (2023). [Slovakia: Upskilling initiative for adult learners](#). National news on VET.