



Quality Management System  
for Continuing Vocational Training  
in Training Centers and Enterprises

**WP02**  
**Contrast study on Continuing Training in  
Europe**

**Disclaimer:**

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## **Introduction**

The comparative analysis has been carried out using as a starting point the documentation provided by the different partners referring to their own countries: Bulgaria, Germany, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain.

All countries focussed on the idea that training is a key instrument in the attainment of the strategic objective of strengthening productivity and competitiveness in business as well as attaining by 2010 the goal of making the EU the most competitive economy with the best jobs in the world.

Although Germany and Spain have been members of the EU for longer and the evolution in their legislation is not as evident, the other countries have brought their legislation in line with that of the EU and with changes in their own internal political structures, generally due to decentralisation and devolution. This strikes a common chord with the situation in Spain and Germany where decentralisation means that certain requirements for the certification of competencies may vary from one region to another.

The partner countries' legislation shares common characteristics, given that it is based upon the right to education proclaimed in the Constitution, to be developed in the corresponding legal framework.

It should also be pointed out that all partner countries also have also instituted bodies responsible for the administration of training. These institutions are generally part of the Public Sector (covering Central,

Regional and Local Authorities). However other non-governmental organisations are also involved in the countries included in the analysis. These include:

- Vocational schools
- Vocational secondary schools
- Vocational colleges
- Centres for Vocational Training (CVET)
- Centres for adult education
- Associations
- NGOs
- Trade unions
- Business organisations

In some countries such as Lithuania, continuous training providers require a special license in order to perform training.

The way Continuous Vocational Training relates to the employment market is of vital importance, given that its objective is the creation of more and better jobs, one of the EU objectives for 2010. It is also important that any weaknesses should be pointed out.

### **Main findings**

The findings of the research in the different countries taking part in the study is set out below.

**Bulgaria:** Employment Offices bear the greatest responsibility for Continuous Vocational Training.

Employment Offices organise vocational training for unemployed people in the following cases:

- when an employer submits a written request stating his/her intention to hire an unemployed person under an employment contract for at least 9 months after a successfully completed training course;
- when training is performed for jobs or fields proposed by the Cooperation Councils and the Employment Commissions at the Regional Development Councils, according to any prospective needs agreed to with the social partners; the courses are not linked to any particular vacancies;
- when the training is related to a stated intention of setting up a business in compliance with Bulgarian law.

The main difficulties or weaknesses, however, are:

- Insufficiency of accessible means for informing the public of the opportunities of CVET for employment and social inclusion;
- Low motivation of employers to finance training of employees;
- Inadequate territorial distribution of the institutions offering CVET.
- Non-optimum use of the potential for CVET – ex. community centres;
- Insufficient coordination between suppliers of CVET, the employment market and businesses;

- Inadequate distribution of CVET suppliers
- Discrepancy between training contents and the actual needs for competences in the employment market;
- Lack of a modern technical and material base for training;
- Insufficient qualification of trainers – e.g. for adult training;
- Lack of a system for validating the quality of CVET;
- Lack of motivation of employers for assuring conditions for practical training;
- Lack of a system for continuous validation of employees' competences and analysis of their needs
- Lack of a system for validation of results from informal training;
- Insufficient participation of the public in CVET;
- Limited private investments in CVET and lack of motivation for CVET in businesses.

In connection with the realization of the strategic goal and with a view of the prospects for development during the period 2005-2010, the following basic priorities are determined:

- Improvement of the conditions for access to continuing vocational training.
- Achievement of efficiency in the interaction between institutions involved in the
- continuing vocational training.
- Assurance the high quality of the continuing vocational training.
- Increasing the investments in the continuing vocational training.
- Scientific assurance of the continuing vocational training.

## **Germany:**

The main characteristics to the German system of CVT are:

- It is largely separated from the IVET system, and
- It is extremely heterogeneous – also called “pluralistic”.
- In addition to public sector providers (central, regional and local authorities), there are also providers from relevant social groupings (such as churches, political parties, trade unions, associations etc.) and from the private sector (the number of which has increased since the legal initiation of the “Arbeitsförderungsgesetz” in 1969 and, interestingly enough, after German reunification in 1990)

Therefore, the dominant feature is the belief in “*the market*” as a regulatory factor in supply and demand, quality matters etc.

- The CVT system has been accepted as an independent educational system since 1970, but it has never been organised systematically.

According to the European CVTS2-1999-study Germany takes position no. 4 as far as “conventional” private sector CVET supply is concerned and position no.25 in “modern” workplace-based CVET supply.

## **Slovakia:**

CVET is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

- The lack of ability and experience in the early identification of skills needs as well as the pending restructuring of regional economies in particular in Central and Eastern Slovakia make the efficiency of specific professional training questionable. With the high unemployment rate and the slowly reviving rate of job creation, there are however no signals expected for specific professions related to education and retraining in regions lacking foreign investment. Specific training in the support of self-employment and the programme of loans for unemployed persons wishing to start businesses should make self-employment more attractive.
- There is still insufficient information on the training needs of small and small and medium-sized enterprises. With increasing stability and the continued high rate of growth of the national economy, a new market could soon emerge. National and regional authorities therefore face the urgent need to reinforce efforts to adopt efficient know how for identifying skill needs and for the adoption of quality assurance systems for education and training.
- Validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning is still only addressed by particular activities, e.g. within Leonardo da Vinci projects, ESF projects; and/or it is a subject to academic discussions. At a national level, this discussion was opened by the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning and the subsequent consultation process.

- Despite the positive approach towards the Copenhagen process and the recognition of the importance of this topic, no policy has been implemented so far.
- There is no nationally valid mechanism to accredit non-formal/informal learning, backed up by legislation. Last year (April 2007) a strategy proposal for the validation of non-formal and informal learning was adopted but no complementary action plan is in progress.

### **Slovenia:**

The main features of the Slovenian system are:

- The first priority is focused on non formal general education for adults. It determines the responsibility of the state to enhance the interest and participation of targeted groups in all kinds of educational activities in order to gain knowledge, skills and competences for the improvement of the quality of life, and higher levels of information and heightened awareness of cultural matters and the responsibilities of awareness and the citizenship
- The second global goal determines the responsibility of the state in the development of suitable circumstances for raising the levels of educational attainment in different ways and the opportunities for education and training at all levels. Priority should be put on less educated groups with a dynamic by which

the percentages of adults with no, inadequate or unsuitable education will be reduced considerably.

- The third goal is to raise the employability and competences of both employed and unemployed persons.

### **Spain:**

The principles that inspire the CVET in Spain are:

- Transparency, quality, effectiveness and efficiency.
- Unity in instalments for vocational training.
- Labour market unity and free circulation of workers in the development of training actions.
- Collaboration and coordination between the competent public administrations.
- Connection between the sectorial collective negotiations and the social dialogue.
- Participation of the social agents.
- Connections between the Vocational Training for Employment and the national Qualifications System and Vocational Training
- The right to participate in Vocational Training, the free character and the equal opportunities access for enterprises and the employed and unemployed

The Sub-system of Vocational Training consists of the following training initiatives:

- a) Training on demand.
- b) Training offer.
- c) Dual training.
- d) Supporting actions for training.

### Targeted and priority collectives:

1) Vocational training will be provided for all the employed and the unemployed, including those who don't pay taxes to the Social Security System for Vocational Training, in this way:

-Training on demand includes: all salaried employees working at enterprises or public institutions, discontinuous workers, the unemployed in formative period, employees in redundancy in dismissal periods.

-Training offer includes: employees and the unemployed in the proportions established by the competence administrations.

-Dual training includes: the employed with contracts for apprentices and the unemployed in those terms established in the specific rules of the formative contracts and the public programs for training-employment, respectively.

2) Training for employees working at public administrations will be developed through specific plans in accordance to the agreements signed for that purpose.

3) In accordance with the necessity to guarantee the training access for the employed with difficulties in their job placement, the following groups will be priority:

a) The unemployed in the following collectives: women, young people, victims of terrorism or gender violence, the long-time unemployed, elders than 45 years, and people in social exclusion.

b) Salaried employees from these categories: workers in small and medium enterprises, women, young people, victims of terrorism or

gender violence, the long-time unemployed, elders than 45 years, workers with very low qualification and handicap people.

Therefore, this study will focus on training on demand and training offer in their two modalities.

Finally we will attend to dual training, from the point of view of its financing, since it's financed by those taxes paid to the Social Security System; this way, enterprises experience the return of those payments through further discounts.

Training on demand: Formative actions for enterprises and individuals training leaves.

Training on demand responds to specific training necessities for enterprises and employees, and it consists on formative actions for enterprises and individual training leaves.

The enterprises will plan and manage the training of their employees and workers will be entitled to take the initiative applying for the training leaves, and besides legal worker's representatives will have to practise the rights of participation and information foreseen in the law.

This type of training will be finance through discounts in the quotes that the employers pay to the Social Security System.

Training actions for enterprises will keep connection with the business activity and these actions can be general or specific.

-General training actions include training in qualifications that employees can use in other companies or in a different work environment.

-Specific training actions include practical and theoretical training related only with the present job or the future job in the beneficiary company, and these qualifications are not transferrable to another enterprises or work environments.

-Individual training leaves are permissions the enterprise gives the employee in order to develop a training action recognized with an official accreditation (professional certifications of the National Catalogue of Professionals Qualifications) to improve the personal and professional development.

Enterprises will have a credit to training their employees; the amount of this credit is the result of applying a percentage to the taxes the company has paid for vocational training. This percentage depends on the size of the company: for instance, if the company is small the percentage will be higher.

The law guarantees a minimum credit for all the enterprises.

The National Employment Service will promote initiatives in order to permit the access to training for small and medium enterprises, because of the fact that this type of companies assumes the major rate of contracting.

### Training offer. Objectives of training offer for employment.

The aim of the training offer is provided to all workers (employed and unemployed) training well suited to the market necessities and also in connection with the request of productivity and competitiveness of

the enterprises and with the personal request about professional development.

A modular training offer will be established in order to allow a partial accumulated accreditation for the training received. This measure will give an incentive to participate in the training offer to obtain professional certifications.

The management and planning of the training offer will be developed in 2 different levels, according to the nature of the training actions:

\*The training offer at a national level includes:

- a) Training plans for the employed –mainly-.
- b) Specific programmes established for the National Employment Service for people with special training needs and/or people with difficulties in their job placement.
- c) Vocational training for people with deprivation of liberty and militaries with a temporary contracting relation with the armed forces.
- d) The planning of training actions, including contracting commitments for the unemployed and immigrant workers in their countries according to the legal framework.

Training plans specified in a) and b) sections will be financed with public grants with the previous announcement of the National Employment Service in accordance with the regulations from the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs.

Training plans specified in c) and d) sections will be financed with public grants directly awarded from the National Employment Service.

\*Training offer at a regional level:

In the regional sphere the training offer will cover the employed and the unemployed in the proportions that the autonomous region sets depending on objective circumstances and also in the number of employed people in each situation.

Training offer at the regional level includes:

- a) Training plans for the employed-mainly.
- b) Training plans for the unemployed- mainly.
- c) Specific programmes established by the autonomous regions for people with special training needs or difficulties in their job placement.
- d) Training actions programs including commitments to contracting led -mainly- to the unemployed, through direct grants awarded from the respective autonomous regions.

Training plans and programmes specified in a) and c) sections will be financed with public grants with the previous announcement of the competent organ in the autonomous region.

Training plans specified in section b) will be financed through grants, in accordance to the previous paragraph, or with others ways of financing established by the autonomous region.

Training plans specified in section d) will be financed with public grants directly awarded from the competent organ of the autonomous region

### **CVET in Enterprises in the partner countries**

CVET in partner countries reveals that employers perform non-formal continuous vocational training of their own employees. The percentage is different from one country to another but the training tends to be in the form of courses for vocational qualification, on-the-job training, participation in seminars, conferences, etc.

In the case of Bulgaria, according to the People's Health Act, employers can also perform vocational training of unemployed persons, but only under certain conditions.

### **Certification**

Some countries wished to emphasize the relation between CVET and potential certification.

The certification system is a network of institutions and bodies which enables individuals to obtain formal recognition or certification for the knowledge and skills they have acquired. To obtain the certificate, individuals must prove what they have learnt and what they can do, instead of providing formal evidence of how they have acquired the knowledge. The certificate is a means for recording the results of

lifelong learning, but it also serves as a formal recognition of non-formal or uncertified knowledge, and as an equal alternative to the knowledge and skills acquired in the formal school system.

Thus, in **Bulgaria** certificates must comply with the State Educational Requirement for documents in the public education.

System. There are two types of exams:

- 1) for the acquisition of vocational qualification;
- 2) for the acquisition of a degree in a vocational subject.

The problem is that there is no working mechanism in the CVET system for the validation of acquired competences. This means that the consequence is training in fields topics that have already been acquired informally or in prior training.

Neither is there a working mechanism for the validation of competences acquired informally.

The award of adult vocational qualifications in **Lithuania** varies depending on the level of the qualification.. Nationally recognised vocational qualification certificates include a qualification certificate and a diploma. The content, form and procedure for issuing such certificates are determined by: 1) the Ministry of Education and Science for basic vocational training and 2) by the Ministry of Social Security and Employment for employment market vocational training. All persons who have completed their studies according to the first stage of basic vocational education and training programme are issued qualification certificates and those who have completed their studies according to programmes of the second, third and fourth stages are awarded diplomas.

Employment market vocational training programmes lead to an initial qualification in a simple trade. On completion of such a programme, a person is awarded a level 1 qualification certificate. Persons who acquire a qualification (primary or as a result of retraining) by following a level 2 vocational education and training programme are issued with a state-recognised qualification certificate. A person who wishes to obtain a qualification certificate or qualified worker's diploma has a right to take external examinations and obtain the qualification provided he/she has at least one year's work experience and is at least 18 years of age.

Upon completion of the employment market vocational training programmes included in the Register of Studies and Training Programmes learners are awarded a nationally recognised certificate attesting a qualification obtained or ability to perform a certain type of work. Persons who have completed programmes or modules of non-formal training receive a certificate of non-formal training.

After passing the necessary examinations at the institutions of formal education, learners engaged in non-formal education have a right to obtain assessment of the knowledge obtained in the system of non-formal adult education and be awarded a state-recognised certification of their education, a discrete stage thereof or a certain part of the approved programme (module).

Persons who have successfully completed non-formal vocational training are awarded standard certificates issued by the Lithuanian Employment Market Training Authority testifying to the completion of a module or upgrading of a qualification. Persons who have not accomplished practical tasks defined in the programme or have not accounted for the theoretical part of the programme are issued a special kind of certificate attesting to their learning achievements. A

certificate testifying to the completion of non-formal education serves as a basis for employees to recognise the professional competence of the holder of the respective certificate

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At the same time, in **Slovenia**, a competence-based so-called 'certification' system has been designed specifically for adults, as a system of assessment and accreditation of national vocational qualifications (2000), prepared by the Ministry for Employment, the Family and Social Affairs in cooperation with social partners. Adults may verify their vocational skills and gain a qualification on the basis of a nationally defined set of required standards. For achieving NVQ

a special procedure of assessment and accreditation through a personal portfolio is required.

In **Spain**, they are a reference that allows to certify, uniformly, the professional competences that have been gathered through professional experience, occupational and continuing vocational training, formal professional training and training workshops as well as contracts for apprentices. As such, they are a reference for certifying employees in specific professional competencies that have been gathered from experience to training, passing by a wide range of intermediate modalities of learning.

In this sense, a Professional Certificate has 2 main aspects: description of the position (Professional Reference) and description of the training action in order to qualify for the suitable performance in the specific position (Training Reference).

The Professional Reference specifies the Professional Family where the position is embedded and the Position as such, organized in terms of its General Competence, the Units of Competence and the Professional Executions.

The Training Reference specifies the Training Itinerary and the Training Modules, organized in terms of its General Objective, Specific Objectives and Theoretical-Practical Contents. The Training Itinerary refers to the training modules that form the Training Reference and qualify for all the competences required for the correct performance at the specific position. The Training Modules are equivalent to the Units of Competence though sometimes it can be required to develop

different modules for reaching the goal of one unit. The General Objective describes the specific task a trainee will be able to develop once a module has been concluded. The Specific Objectives refer to Professional Executions. The Theoretical-Practical Contents specify the knowledge and skills a trainee will gather through the training action.

### **National System of Professional Qualifications:**

The National Institute of Qualifications (INCUAL) was created by Royal Decree 375/1999 of 5 March 1999. It is the technical instrument, endowed with capacity and independence, which supports the Spanish General Council of Vocational Education and Training in order to attain the objectives of the National System for Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training (known in Spanish as SNCFP).

The Organic Act 5/2002 of 19 June 2002 on Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training confers on the INCUAL the responsibility for defining, creating and updating the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications and the corresponding Modular Catalogue of Vocational Education and Training.

The governing body of the INCUAL is the General Council of Vocational Education and Training though the INCUAL is placed under the control of the Secretary General of Education (Ministry of Education and Science), as laid down in Royal Decree 1553/2004 of 20 June 2004.

Its objectives are:

- To observe qualifications and their evolution.
- To determine qualifications.
- To accredit qualifications.
- To develop the integration of professional qualifications.
- Follow-up and assessment of the National Program on Vocational Training.

The National System for Qualifications and Vocational Educational and Training (SNCFP) consists of instruments and actions which are necessary to promote and develop the integration of vocational education and training through the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications. Besides, it aims at promoting and developing the assessment and accreditation of professional competences in order to encourage the professional and social development of the people and to meet the needs of the productive system.

Its basic principles are:

- The personal development when exercising the right to work and to choose freely a work or job.
- To meet the needs of the productive system and of employment on a lifelong basis.
- The equal access of all citizens to the different modalities of vocational education and training.
- The participation and cooperation of social agents with public authorities.
- To adapt the training and qualifications to European Union standards.

- The participation and cooperation among the different Public Administrations.
- The promotion of the economic development taking into account the regional needs regarding the productive system.

The development of the National System for Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training promotes the collaboration of Social Agents with Public Administrations, universities, chambers of commerce and educative entities.

Procedures of collaboration and consultation with the different productive sectors and the social partners have been established in order to identify and update the needs for qualifications, as well as their definition and the definition of the associated learning.

The National System for Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training is aimed to:

- Empower workers for the labour market.
- Promote a quality vocational education and training.
- Provide information and guidance about vocational education and training, and qualifications for employment.
- Encourage entrepreneurship through the introduction of actions in the vocational education and training to develop business initiatives and self-employment.
- Assess and accredit officially a professional qualification no matter how they were acquired.
- Encourage public and private investments on more qualified workers and to optimise the resources allocated to vocational education and training.

The Organic Act 5/2002 of 19 June 2002 on Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training devotes its Title IV to the quality and assessment of the system. The assessment of the National System for Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training (SNCFP) shall aim to guarantee the effectiveness of its actions and its adaptation to the needs of the labour market.

The Government is responsible for the establishment of the SNCFP and the coordination of the assessment processes, with previous consultation to the General Council of Vocational Education and Training without prejudice to the Autonomous Communities competences.

The recognition, assessment and accreditation of qualification refers to a set of procedures to recognize, assess and accredit the professional competences acquired through work experience or any other type of non-formal learning. This assessment and accreditation of professional competences will be developed following principles that guarantee its reliability, objectiveness and technical rigour. The National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications serves as an objective reference in this procedure.

When the professional competences of an employee are assessed and they are not sufficient to complete the qualifications included in a diploma of vocational education and training or an Occupational Aptitude Certificate, a partial cumulative accreditation is awarded. Thus, if the employee wishes to do so, he/she will be able to complete the training in order to obtain the relevant diploma or certificate.

In Spain, over sixty per cent of working population does not hold a recognized accreditation of their professional qualification. Besides, there is a great amount of non-formal learning whose lack of recognition, especially for population groups like women, immigrants and unemployed, can cause situations of inappropriate mobility in the labour market with the resulting exclusion risk.

## **Finance**

All partners countries financial systems are the same, with the majority of revenue coming from Public Budgets, either from the EU Europe – ESF, PHARE, or Central, Regional or Local Authorities.

However, there CVET also receives other means of financial support in the countries covered in the research:

- Associations
- Chambers of Commerce
- Employers
- Participant's fees
- Employers' own revenue
- Sponsorships, donations etc..