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Report on National Adaptations – Slovenia

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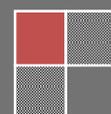
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Introduction: This section introduces the main sections of the report as well as the primary people involved in conducting the analysis and producing the report. It provides any information that might be needed by the reader to understand the background to the analysis, e.g. who initiated it and why.

Aims and objectives: This section describes the purpose(s) of the analysis.

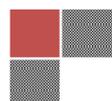
Methodology: This section describes the analysis techniques used and provides step-by-step descriptions of the work carried out.

Results: This section presents the findings of the analysis.

Recommendations: This section puts forward recommendations, based upon the findings reported in the previous section.

References: This last section lists the sources reviewed or consulted during the analysis.

Please note that the report is based on a common template and therefore, the reader may encounter repetitions in content.



PREAMBLE

Acquired brain injuries (ABI) are an epidemic of modern society and one of the biggest medico-social problems in the western countries. High quality care is usually available in the domains of acute medicine and surgery. In the later stages as difficulties arise, all too often little is done for the long-term, often permanent problems victims and their families are facing after an ABI. The consequences of ABI are often extensive and wide ranging and can cause distress and concern for staff working directly with persons with ABI, especially new employed, low experienced staff and staff in pre-existing community service models (for persons with developmental disabilities, mental illnesses, nursing homes..) . Long-term care poses different questions and problems than acute care. The growing number of people with ABI in the community, the increased interest in ABI, the growing number of people working in the field, and the belief that ABI present problems that are not well understood or treated, have created a genuine need for specialized, formalized " how to do". A questionnaire survey report of staff working directly with persons with ABI in different institutions and organizations in Slovenia in 2008 concluded that 95% of staff needed specialized training, 80% agreed that the training curriculum should include some specific topics like cognitive, psychological and social consequences of ABI, and behavioral approach for managing challenging behaviors and promoting positive skills.

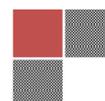
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the process undertaken within the Consortium of the "ABI" project (Development of a common training programme for ABI caregivers), started in October 2009 and being scheduled for 25 months.

The aim of the ABI project is, by introducing knowledge and experience from different countries, to develop a common training programme for long-term ABI caregivers/providers as a uniform formal approach in staff training at a European level. The ABI project will ensure them the acquisition of necessary knowledge, skills and attitude needed to provide quality services. It will also provide recognition of competency level and potential and improve the appeal of working in services for long-term care and support for ABI.

The ABI project partnership includes the following 8 partners:

- Zavod Zarja / Slovenia (applicant organisation, coordinator),
- Zavod Korak / Slovenia,
- Zavod Naprej /Slovenia,
- VDC Nova Gorica / Slovenia,



- Regionalis Szolialis Forraskozpont Kht. / Hungary,
- Mutualite Francaise Anjou-Moyenne-Arceau-Anjou / France,
- Berufsforderungsinstitut Oberosterreich / Austria,
- European Association of Service providers for persons with disabilities (EASPD) /
- Belgium.

As part of workpackage 5 of this project (on the integration of the training programme), the partners have conducted an analysis within their country on the requirements and standards in the legislation, concerning the implementation and the certification of the training programme developed during the project's lifetime. Also the necessary adjustments of the training programme, needed to meet these requirements at national level, will be included in this report.

2. INTRODUCTION

In this report we introduce the main findings that are based on a desk review of relevant documents relating specifically to Adult Learning, Education and Training in Slovenia as well as 2 selected interviews with relevant stakeholders on the matter, one "face-to-face" with an expert from The Center for Vocational Education (CPI – *Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje*) and one phone interview with Mr. Bojan Regvar, secretary general of the Social Chamber of Slovenia. Both interviews were made in June 2010.

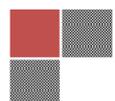
3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of workpackage 5, is to bring the training programme in line with national and European standards and regulations.

As a first step, this analysis wants to give a clear overview of the legislation and standards in Slovenia concerning this topic and the implementation and accreditation processes needed at national/regional level.

More in detail, this analysis will provide:

- General information on the implementation of the European Qualification framework (EQF) / National Qualification Framework (NQF) in Slovenia.
- A description of the education and training system in the country.
- An overview of the bodies, responsible for accreditation of training and education programmes.
- An overview of the steps to be taken to implement the ABI training programme in Slovenia and the possible barriers and challenges to be faced.



4. METHODOLOGY

Desktop research

In order to get an overview of the standards with regard to education and training in the different partner countries and the requirements for accreditation at national/regional level, a set of guidelines was conducted by EASPD, giving the project partners the opportunity to start a desktop research. All partners were asked to use these guidelines as a basis for their national report, which would help EASPD compiling the synthesis report on the differences between the partner countries in a later stage of the project.

The guidelines consist of a series of questions, which serve only as a basis for the research to be done and should not be seen as an exhaustive list of topics. Each of the partners was given to opportunity to add freely important information specific to their country or region.

The questions to be answered by the project partners in the national report, were:

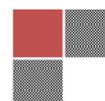
EQF/NQF:

1. How is the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the National Qualification Framework (NQF) implemented in your country/region?
2. What is the planned timetable for the introduction of the EQF and the NQF in your country?
3. Who is/will be in control of the EQF and the NQF when it is properly established?
4. How are social care and medical trainings included in these frameworks?

The organisation of the education and training system:

5. How is the education and training system organised in your country/region?
 - How is the formal vocational training system organised? Which training programmes do exist? How are they awarded?
 - How is the broader Lifelong Learning policy implemented in your country/region? Is it awarded and how?
6. How are these training types connected to each other?

Accreditation of training and education programmes:



7. Which bodies are responsible for the accreditation of training and education programmes of the formal vocational training system in your country/region? Who is responsible in your country for setting up and approving awards? Is this done at national or regional level?
8. Which bodies are responsible for the accreditation of the broader lifelong learning programmes in your country? Can these programmes be formally recognised? How?

How to move on:

9. Which steps need to be taken to implement the ABI training programme into the education system of your country/region and into your NQF?
10. What more would we have to do to get it an EQF reference?

Apart from the desktop research, also 2 interviews took place in June 2010 :

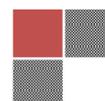
- Face-to-face interview with Mrs. Barbara Velkov, expert from The Center for Vocational Education (CPI – *Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje*) which is responsible for advisory and expert work in the development of NVQ standards and in the formation of catalogues of professional knowledge and skills .
- Telephone interview and e-mail exchange of information with Mr. Bojan Regvar, secretary general of the Social Chamber of Slovenia .

The interviews contained the following questions:

1. what would we have to do to get the ABI training programme implemented in your country (and on the NQF)?
2. What chances of success in this do you think we have?
3. What are the obstacles which we would need to overcome?
4. Which national/regional adaptations of the ABI training programme are needed in order to get it implemented?
5. How long do you estimate such an implementation process will take?
6. Is there anything which the ABI project partners could do at a European level which might improve the chances of success?
7. If you do think we could get the ABI training programme on your NQF, what more would we have to do to get it an EQF reference?
8. How long would this take and who would actually do it? – would it be us or is it done automatically at a local level?

The aim of these interviews was to collate the judgments of experts directly working in the field, on the chances of success in getting the ABI training programme accredited in Slovenia.

The results of these interviews, together with the results of the desktop research, were brought together in the next section of this national report.



1. The organisation of the VET system in Slovenia

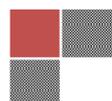
Adult education comprises of formal education to gain higher levels of qualification (general, vocational, technical, professional, academic), formal specialized training, and non-formal learning of adults, who have passed the compulsory education age but do not have the status of pupil or student. Formal education gives opportunity to adults to gain publicly recognised qualifications (certified education); non-formal education is intended for those who just wish to acquire new knowledge and skills, or who wish to refresh, expand, modernise or deepen their skills (non-certified education).

1.1 Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET)

The structure of the Slovenian vocational education system in 2009/10:

- Pre-primary education (ages 1-5) provided by autonomous public pre-school institutions, organisational units of pre-school units at basic schools or private pre-school institutions;
- Basic education; single structure of primary and lower secondary education (ages 6-14) provided by basic schools;
- Upper secondary education (ages 15-18) consisting of:
 - short vocational education (120 ECTS) provided by upper secondary vocational schools (*poklicne šole*),
 - vocational education provided by upper secondary vocational and technical schools (*poklicne šole* and *srednje strokovne in tehniške šole*),
 - technical education provided by upper secondary technical schools (*srednje strokovne in tehniške šole*),
 - vocational and technical education provided by upper secondary vocational and technical schools (*poklicne šole* and *srednje strokovne in tehniške šole*),
 - general education (four years) provided by general upper secondary schools *Gimnazije*;
- Short tertiary (higher vocational) education (120 ECTS) provided by higher vocational colleges;
- Higher education provided by public and private universities, faculties, art academies and professional colleges. It consists of three cycles:
 - First-cycle professional or academic (180-240 ECTS),
 - Second-cycle masters studies (60-120 ECTS),
 - Third-cycle doctoral studies (180 ECTS).

1.2 Continuous Vocational Education and Training (CVET)



The field of CVET is strongly established in the national professional document as a completely equal field in the education system, having been identified as a key element of lifelong learning in the Adult Education Master Plan by the Slovenian Parliament in 2004. With this document, as well as enabling more resources to be allocated to CVET, four major aims were established:

- Improving access to education and learning;
- Improving the quality of education and training by modernising programmes, curricula and catalogues of knowledge from the lifelong learning ‘strategic cores’;
- The development of the education levels of the elderly; and
- The accreditation of prior learning by adults, allowing them to gain national vocational qualifications (National Vocational Qualifications Act of 2006).

They are implemented by annual adult education plans, adopted by the government.

Continuing vocational education in Slovenia is a wide ranging and diverse form of education and training which includes formal specialised education and non-formal education and training. It includes:

- the traditional/formal school system,
- the certification system for the assessment and award of national vocational qualifications, and
- non-formal education and training.

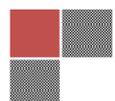
1.2.1 Formal education

Qualifications in school system define the level of education (primary, upper secondary and tertiary level), contents of a vocational qualification and the type of general, professional and vocational knowledge, skills and competences. The levels, their role and main characteristics are the same as in IVET.

Adult participants who successfully complete primary, general upper secondary programme (*gimnazija*), 4 year technical secondary programme, 3+2 vocational-technical secondary programme (two years after completion of the 3 years vocational secondary programme) and 3 year vocational secondary education (two and a half or three years) and lower VET programmes (shorter than 2 years), are awarded the same school-leaving certificate as participants in initial education.

Matura courses (*maturitetni tečaj*) are designed for adults who did not finish *gimnazija* and wish to enter university – academic study.

Vocational courses (*poklicni tečaj*) are designed for adults who did not pass the *matura* examination or wish to obtain the vocational qualification and qualification for employment.



Adults can also sit the master craftsmen/foremen/managerial examination which is listed among nationally recognized examinations within the education system leading to successful completion of a secondary professional education program. Master craftsmen exams (*mojstrski izpit*) are designed for adults who completed a 3 year of vocational secondary programme and acquired a minimum of three years' work experience. By passing such an exam plus a short bridging exam from general education subjects, master craftsmen obtain professional upper secondary qualification and can enrol into higher vocational programmes.

Tertiary education comprises two year higher vocational college education (*višje strokovno izobraževanje*); short cycle and higher academic and professional education.

Participants of tertiary and post tertiary programmes leave the program with diploma and attached diploma supplement. From academic year 2009/2010 only the Bologna-compliant programmes are offered.

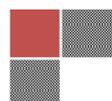
1.2.2 *Certification system for the assessment and award of national vocational qualifications*

The system of Certification of National Vocational Qualifications(NVQ) has been designed for youth and adults who wish to assess competences that were acquired informally or through their work, outside the formal school system. The certification system, as regulated by the National Vocational Qualifications Act of 200 (amendments in 2003, 2006, 2007), is seen as an additional option alongside the traditional VET. A national vocational qualification (NVQ) is a formally recognised work-related, competence-based qualification, which reflects the skills and knowledge needed to do a job effectively and shows that a candidate is competent in an area of work, or individual segments of work, within an area at a certain level of achievement, and as such, part of the national qualification framework.

An NVQ is shown by a public document – a certificate whose form and content are defined by the Minister of Labour.

The certificate system consists of many cooperating institutions: the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training with its National Reference Point for Vocational Qualifications, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education Centre, the National Examinations Centre, the Employment Office, other ministries, chambers and trade unions.

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. In obtaining the certificate, the candidates acquire a vocational qualification



which proves their competences. They can use the certified vocational qualification when seeking work and for further education, because it proves that they have the same knowledge and skills they would have acquired in a certain period of formal education programme. The aims of the certification system are: to provide a quicker and more flexible response to needs of the labour market, to increase economic effectiveness, to improve the adaptability of the economy, and to address social inclusion and reduce the unemployment rate.

The objectives of the system of certification:

- gives public validity to non-formal and informal education, training and learning;
- substitutes for low adaptability in the formal system of education;
- enhances lifelong learning through the public recognition of knowledge;
- enables swifter response to the demands of the labour market for individuals who have acquired a certificate.

It can be obtained by achieving:

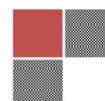
- vocational or professional education, or
- completing parts of educational programmes, or
- completing vocational training and advanced training programmes, or
- meeting the standards of professional knowledge and skills.

The basis for NVQ is the elaboration of occupational profiles and meeting relevant occupational standards.

The national vocational qualification is a publicly recognised qualification which is necessary to pursue a specific part of an occupation, and therefore is based on the appropriate vocational standard. The occupational standard represents a connecting link between the vocational education system and the certification system of national occupational qualifications. Occupational standards are drafted following the initiative put forward by the interested legal entities. The initiative for the new occupational standard may be given by anybody to the CPI (Center for Vocational Education), starting the preparation of the proposal. They must meet the following requirements: stability, longlasting, widespread, appearance in different work situations, employability of significant number of people, comparability with occupations on foreign labour markets.

The occupational standard is a document containing the following elements:

- occupation name and code,
- complexity level,
- occupational competences and the description of the occupational standard, including working area, core tasks, knowledge and skills.



Qualification standards are prepared for the following levels: Lower vocational qualification/education (ISCED level 3C) / Middle vocational qualification/education (ISCED level 3C) / Middle technical qualification/education (ISCED level 3B) / Higher non-university technical qualification/education (ISCED level 5B).

Development and update of occupational standards in respective fields is the main task of nominated “vocational field commission” by the Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, composed of the representatives of chambers, ministries and trade unions. After the positive opinion on the proposal by the expert board, the National Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Trainings submits it to the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs for approval.

The knowledge and skills required for acquiring NVQ are determined by a catalogue of standards for professional knowledge and skills. These catalogues, are needed for certification of NVQ, and are developed on the basis of the occupational standard. The proposal for a catalogue is developed by the responsible chamber (or ministry for activities for which the chambers are not organised) or by Center for Vocational Education and Training in close cooperation with professional and vocational associations and trade unions. The initiative for the adaptation of catalogue of professional knowledge and skills may be proposed by anyone to the Center for Vocational Education and Training, who decides on the relevance of the initiative. Expert board, nominated by the National Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Trainings, is responsible for coordination of the proposed catalogue in line with the established needs for vocational qualification, international comparability and compliance with the Slovene legal system and EU regulations. The proposed catalogue is then determined and published by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs.

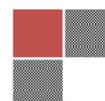
Research, development, counselling and technical support is provided by the Centre for Vocational Education and Training, the Adult Education Centre and the National Examinations Centre.

Assessors:

Assessment and certification of national vocational qualifications (NVQ) are carried out by a three-member panel appointed by the National Examinations Centre. The panel consists of a chairperson and two members who must hold a licence issued by the National Examinations Centre.

A licence for a member of a panel for assessment and certification of NVQs can be obtained by anyone:

- having acquired a qualification which will be assessed as determined by the Catalogue of Standards of Professional Knowledge and Skills;
- having work experience within the profession during the last five years;



- having performed a training programme determined by a proposal of the relevant Council of Experts by the Minister.

Candidates for panel members can also obtain proof of qualification through direct assessment based on the Catalogue of Standards of Professional Knowledge and Skills determined by the Minister.

Based on public invitation for tenders at the National Examinations Centre, the Minister of Labour (or the Minister of Defence for military professions) appoints a list of panel members for each catalogue of standards of professional knowledge and skills separately. Members are appointed for a period of four years.

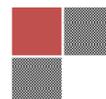
A candidate for a member of a panel for assessment and certification of a NVQ answers to public invitation for tenders and submits to the National Examinations Centre the following documents:

- an application for acquisition of a licence;
- documents of proof, as determined by the Catalogue of Standards of Professional Knowledge and Skills, for a vocational qualification in question;
- a statement declaring a panel member would step down if a clash of interest occurred;
- a receipt showing administrative fees have been paid (€47.54).

The National Examinations Centre:

- checks whether staff conditions, as determined by the Catalogue of Standards of Professional Knowledge and Skills, are met and whether documents of proof of work experience in the profession during the last five years have been submitted;
- refers candidates for a three-day training at the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (after having completed the training, candidates pass an exam and send the certificate to the National Examinations Centre).

If all these criteria are met, the National Examinations Centre issues a licence for a panel member which is valid for four years, after which time it must be renewed. A licence for a member of a panel for assessment and certification of NVQ has to be renewed every four years. A member of a panel for assessment and certification of



NVQs has to attend, or perform, one of the following activities at least once in the period before the licence expires:

- work in the profession;
- attend education and training in the profession;
- attend or give a lecture at a conference at home or a similar event at home and/or abroad;
- publish an article in a peer review, publication, book or monograph; make a study visit abroad;
- be given an award by relevant institutions for achievement directly linked to standards of knowledge and skills from the area of vocational qualification for which he/she is a panel member.

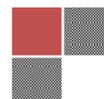
As the Act defines that candidates for panel members have to have at least five years of work experience in the profession, it is necessary to attach to the application for the renewal of the licence, a document of proof confirming work experience of the past five years.

Assessing bodies:

The register of providers for assessment and certification of NVQs can only include inter-company training centres, schools, organisations for adult education and chambers carrying out training programmes which meet material and staff criteria as determined by the Catalogue of Standards of Professional Knowledge and Skills, as well as other acts, if thus determined by special regulations.

Accredited Assessing Bodies:

- propose the date and place of assessment and certification procedure for an NVQ to the National Examinations Centre;
- inform candidates of possibility and conditions for acquisition of an NVQ;
- offer advice to candidates (on how to prepare a portfolio);
- submit requests for members of panels to the National Examinations Centre;
- agree with members of panel about the date and place of portfolio assessment;
- inform candidates about the date, place and contents of their practical performance assessment;
- inform candidates about the results of their practical performance assessment;
- issue the certificate, if candidates fulfil all conditions from the Catalogue of Standards of Professional Knowledge and Skills;
- issue a written statement, if candidates do not fulfil all conditions from Catalogue of Standards of Professional Knowledge and Skills;
- keep records of candidates and issued certificates;
- report yearly to the National Examinations Centre.



The number of national qualifications in the certification system has increased from 4 258 in 2005 to 9.338 in 2007, most of them accredited in the field of transport, safety and personal services

1.2.3 *Non-formal education and training*

Non-formal education and training is intended for those who simply wish to acquire new skills, or who wish to refresh, expand, update or broaden their skills. Such skills are not certified, nevertheless, the legislation on vocational education and tertiary education does include principles and mechanisms to facilitate recognition, certification and accreditation of knowledge and skills acquired in non-formal education. In addition, the legislation requires that schools and higher education institutions provide programmes of non-formal education (supplementary training) as part of their regular activities. The non-formal section of education is an important part of the adult education strategy and lifelong learning policy in Slovenia.

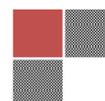
The largest share of adult and continuing vocational education and training is provided in non-formal programmes or courses and training and learning activities. More than 80% of non formal CVET cover work related training and the rest of learning is in line with personal interests and needs. They do not lead to higher qualifications; neither do they open access to formal school programmes.

All these providers together implemented training for 268,745 participants in school year 2006/2007. Training units at enterprises included 34% of all participants, followed by private providers (30%), folk high schools (9%) and AE units at secondary schools (5.5%).

Most of the non formal education is implemented in non accredited education and training programmes (76% of all participants in non formal education) designed by providers as a response to individual and labour market demand.

Providers of non-formal education are:

- Institutions specially organised for delivering Adult learning and education. Examples of such institutions are Peoples' and Workers' universities (ljudske univerze). They are carrying out the education of adults as their basic activity. This comprises basic adult education, foreign language courses, ICT courses, courses for the improvement of knowledge and skills of employees in legal, financial and managerial fields. Some ljudske univerze provide also public programmes, which give nationally recognised secondary vocational or technical qualifications. In co-operation with the higher vocational colleges and higher education institutions they also provide a learning environment for part-time tertiary education.
Educational centres developed within companies or established by various chambers (for example, school for flight controllers, centre for training military



staff, and so on) nowadays operate more or less independently. Their mission is to deliver highly professional and specialized education and training;

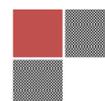
- schools and higher education institutions which provide supplementary education programmes, refresher courses and the like;
- private schools specialised in a certain field of training which operate on a commercial basis, for example, foreign language schools, riding schools, and schools of rhetoric;
- other institutions and organisations, whose main activity is not education and training (examples of these associations and societies include the Association of Accountants and Financial Workers of Slovenia, municipal, regional and national societies of human resource managers; Firemen Association of Slovenia, , Association of Engineers and Technicians of Slovenia, professional organisations; social welfare organisations; organisations for the disabled; organisations for helping families, parents and consorts;).
- In-service training : in-service training is organised by companies and provided in accordance with the requirements of the work of the organisation. Large companies organise training for their employees within their own premises and using their own staff for teaching purposes. Often companies within the same industry jointly establish training centres for their own training needs, which are then broadly recognized for their quality and as such they can apply for registration as educational institutions.

The data for Slovenia show that also in non formal learning, like in formal education, the most privileged group – employed with ISCED 5-6 can best take advantage of educational and training provision. The share of their participation in non formal learning is the highest, 5 times higher than the one with ISCED 0-2, while the gap is much lower when it comes to the employed with ISCED 3-4.

2. Classification of national VET programmes

In 2006, the government adopted a Decree establishing a classification system of education and training (KLASIUS, Official Gazette 46/2006), which represents one of the formal foundations for creating Slovenia's framework of qualifications. KLASIUS is an obligatory national statistical standard, used in administrative databases, as well as in statistical research and registers. This classification is based on teaching activities, learning outcomes, entry conditions and duration of courses. All qualifications are included in these levels, from primary to doctoral qualifications.

KLASIUS consists of two subsystems, the first one is the classification of kinds of activities/outcomes of education and training (KLASIUS-SRV) and it classifies activities and outcomes in accordance with eight levels. The second subsystem is the classification of fields of activities/outcomes of education (KLASIUS-P) and it classifies activities and attainments in accordance with their contents.



KLASIUS-SRV is based upon the international classification of education ISCED-1997 (concept of educational activities – input concept) and upon the concept of latest Qualifications Framework (concept of learning outcomes – output concept). KLASIUS-SRV categories are not directly comparable with the ISCED-1997 level categories since KLASIUS-SRV contains an 8 level scale, with descriptors who define an individual level. The structure of levels, including the number of levels, is derived from the national practice, but upgraded with the latest developmental directions.

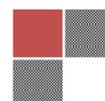
3. Policy and legislative framework

The National Assembly passes laws concerning adult education and training, and adopts the National Programme on Adult Education on an annual basis (2004 - 2010). These annual plans are adopted by the Government. The minister of the sector concerned issues orders and rules specifying laws, selects education and training providers and makes decisions about co-financing arrangements.

The Slovenian adult education strategy has been prepared on the basis of more than 15 European and over 17 national analyses, reports, strategies and action plans and has been developed within the lifelong learning policy document, adopted by the National Assembly (2007). The strategy emphasises the 'strategic cores':

- a comprehensive overall structure and the cohesiveness of all learning;
- the range of opportunities and purposes of learning, and the diversity and flexibility of its provision;
- access to learning based on the needs of the individual;
- key competences for learning and personal growth;
- learning to improve work practice and professional career development;
- learning as a source and driving force for the development of the community;
- to develop the possibilities of testing and certificating all existing knowledge;
- counselling and providing information.

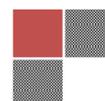
The Strategy is an important document in accomplishing the concept of lifelong learning as learning for everyone in different forms and settings and with a content enriching individual intellectual, emotional, spiritual, aesthetic and physical abilities. The main policy measures in the strategy are: improving the quality of education and training by modernizing programmes, curricula and catalogues of knowledge from the point of view of the elements of lifelong learning, with the development of educational and teaching strategies and with quality training of professional staff; developing various forms, methods and pathways of learning and suitable systems for recognizing obtained knowledge; improving access to education and learning; creating a suitable normativem environment; strengthening research and development supported by non-governmental institutions and the social partners as well as creating a suitable infrastructure, obtaining financial resources and preparing operational programmes for realizing measures and promotion of the strategy.



Adult education is regulated in more detail in the Adult Education Act, in some articles of the school and labour legislation and in other regulations of various fields of economic and public sector. The Adult Education Act (2006) determines the fundamental principles of Adult Education in Slovenia. They are lifelong learning, accessibility of education under the same conditions for all; freedom and autonomy in choosing learning paths, content, forms, means and methods of education, secularity of adult education which is carried out as a public service, professional and ethic responsibility of adult educators, the respect of the personality and dignity of each participant, and in the education of adults which gives state-approved level of education, obtaining the same standards as in the education of young people. The Act regulates the system; it defines the participants in adult education, educational programmes, adult students' basic requirements, organisation of the educational work, keeping records; management of the field, e.g. planning, division of responsibilities, governing bodies, financing from the public funds, developmental and counselling organisations, testing centres, public funds earmarked for the promotion of adult education and control. Concerning the educational process itself it deals only with questions, important for the protection of the rights of the participants and for ensuring the quality of educational work, that part of adult education which has the nature of public service and is in the public interest. It regulates the system of public verification of knowledge gained by self-education, or through on-the-job learning, or in out-of-school non-formal education, through which adult learners can obtain a public certificate.

The public verification of knowledge acquired by independent learning and through work and life experiences is regulated in the National Vocational Qualifications Act (2003) (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, Nos 81/2000, 55/2003, 118/2006, 1/2007). The National Vocational Qualifications Act emphasizes learning outcomes and not the methods of acquiring knowledge, skills and competencies. NVQ assessment and recognition (certification) is designed for adults only and consists of either direct demonstration of knowledge, skills and competencies, or of documents and other proof collected in the applicant's portfolio. The Act specifies the procedures and the institutions bearing responsibility for the preparation of standards and catalogues of knowledge and skills, the conditions and procedures of assessment and the award of qualifications. In obtaining the certificate, the candidates acquire a qualification which proves their competences. They can use the certified qualification when seeking a particular job.

The non-formal education sector is governed mainly by the following policy documents, strategies and legislation: the *Resolution on the Master Plan for Adult Education in the Republic of Slovenia until 2010* and the yearly adopted *Programmes of Adult Education*; the *National Strategy of Lifelong Learning*, issued by the Minister of Education (2007); the *Adult Education Act* (1996; last revised 2006); and the legislation of other sectors of the economy and society.

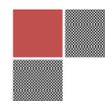


4. Stakeholders responsible for managing and co-ordinating Adult Learning and Education

The highest decision-making body in the field of adult education and lifelong learning is the Parliament.

The responsible organisations for VET in Slovenia are state bodies:

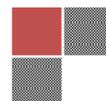
- The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport is responsible for the pre-university education and higher vocational colleges, including the development of concepts, strategies, legislation and regulation for the education system; The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (MoLFSA) is responsible for the vocational and technical education and training, systems for certification of national vocational qualifications (it prepares relevant legislation, methodologies, approves occupational standards, nominates the commissions for certification of NVQs, etc.) and the agreement of education policies with social partners;
- The National Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (*Strokovni svet RS za poklicno izobraževanje* - SSPIU) is mainly responsible for proposing the catalogues of standards for professional knowledge and skills to the MoLFSA, adopting the methodology of these catalogues, offering expert assistance and proposing training programmes for obtaining licence for assessors.
- The 2 Chambers (Chamber of Commerce and Industry / Chamber of Craft) and responsible ministries (for activities for which chambers are not organised) are responsible for drafting the proposals for catalogues of standards for professional knowledge and skills, proposing the members of assessment and certification commissions, providing the conditions for the assessment and certification, and proposing necessary changes to the catalogues.
- The Center for Vocational Education (CPI – *Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje*) is responsible for advisory and expert work in the development of NVQ standards and in the formation of catalogues of professional knowledge and skills. It has established the National Information Centre for Vocational Qualifications, which offers information on vocational and professional education, certification system, education programmes, occupational standards, catalogues of professional knowledge and skills, etc. It operates in close cooperation with the Employment Service of Slovenia, Statistical Office of Slovenia, Slovenian Adult Education Centre and other expert national and international organisations.



- The National Examination Centre (*Državni izpitni center*) is responsible for developing methodologies for assessment and certification of standards for professional knowledge and skills, organising the training for assessors and members of certification commissions, awarding licences and monitoring the work of members of assessment and certification commissions.
- The organisation of assessment and certification of NVQ is carried out by registered institutions as chambers, schools, enterprise education centres, and other types of organisation, determined by the catalogue of knowledge and skills.
- The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (Andragoški Center Republike Slovenije) and the Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for VET (Center Republike Slovenije za poklicno izobraževanje) have been set up by the government to provide expertise for decisions taken by the National Councils (respectively National Council of Experts for VET and for Adult Education), monitor pilot projects, offer consulting services, organise the in-service training of teachers and design methodologies for writing books.
- For the time being, the Slovene Labour Unions have not been much involved in the certification process, which has been presented as one of the most important weaknesses of the system. Aware of this gap, the government aims at improving the situation in the future, while at the same time, the labour unions will also increase their expertise in the field, so as to be able to express their right of opinion and orientation in this specific field.
- Most employer organisations are in favour of the certification system, which is seen as a benefit for both the employers (evaluation of the skills of their work force) and of the employees (improvement in employability and self-esteem through validation of knowledge). In some sectors (for example pharmaceuticals), employers organisations have been leaders in implementing the certification system, which they see as a new important tool to manage human resources through increased employability, adaptability and flexibility of the work force.

5. Quality Assurance

To improve the conditions and quality of adult learning the state introduced some changes in the field of adult education through key documents (like the White Paper) set-out basic principles for redesigning the complete educational legislation. The most important proposals of those documents include: improved organization of educational activities, introduction of more flexible methods and forms of learning, the improvement of the counselling activities, the preparation of educational plans of



learners, financing some key programmes etc. It is, therefore, more and more important to assure high-quality Adult Learning, Education and Training (ALET) services. To this end the monitoring and the assessment of the quality have to be organised in the way which will provide valid and reliable information and at the same time encourage providers of ALET to invest in development and innovations in this field.

There are significant differences in the quality assurance systems between formal education and training (which results in a national certificate or diploma), publicly accredited non-formal training courses and non-formal training without public accreditation.

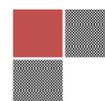
Quality assurance mechanism in formal CVET does not differ from those in IVET. Quality assurance mechanisms and responsible bodies in upper secondary and tertiary education are determined by laws and EU principles for quality assurance. The National quality indicators in VET are adopted by the Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education.

Adult education providers of formal programmes must be accredited and enlisted in the national register that is managed by the Ministry of Education and Sport. To be accredited, they need to prove their capacity (teachers, premises) to implement the programmes.

It has to be emphasized that most formal education programmes are developed for youth. When it comes to participation of adults in these programmes the legislation requires their adjustment to the needs and particularities of adults at the stage of their execution. Education minister adopts methodological guidelines which represent the professional basis for adjustment. According to the Vocational Education Act structural elements of curricula such as ways of execution of a curriculum; organisational forms; hours of organised work with students; teaching and learning methods; learning and teaching material; ways and timing of assessment and the grading of achievements have to be adjusted to adults. In addition, prior learning has to be assessed and recognised at the beginning of the execution of the programme.

The evaluation of not accredited non-formal training programmes is the matter of providers of such training on one hand and the sponsors of the training on the other hand. As a rule training providers carry out internal evaluation based on the so called “smiling sheets” (Kirckpatrick, 1998). At the end of the programme learners are asked to fill in a form where they express their impressions about individual structural elements of the delivered programme.

Since the majority of ALET is represented by not accredited non-formal and informal education and learning, in 2000 the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education started a project on developing an integral model of quality assurance in adult education adapted to the demands and conditions of the Slovenian adult education which is intended to cover the entire adult education sector. The work has been supported by some explorations of existing theories and quality models as well as developments in selected European countries (see Možina, 2003). At the first step towards a



systematic quality assurance a model called Offering Quality Education to Adults (OQEA) was developed which enables self-assessment of ALET providers. A system of indicators was set up for monitoring the quality of work in adult education. It includes six areas which try to fully encompass the various entry, process, outcomes and contextual factors. Part of the model structure is the quality indicators which determine basic activities, procedures and processes. Among the methods employed in the model are: questionnaires, benchmarking and focus groups.

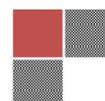
6. Certification and national awards

The formal system of education and training constitutes an essential contextual element. Indeed it is often taken as a reference point – most notably in terms of its standards or assessment methods – in organising a system for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. The recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes is also often described as part of the lifelong learning system.

1. Formal education and training of adults in Slovenia leads to publicly verified certificates, which are recognized at the national level. The certificate supplement is also added to a school leaving certificate in order to facilitate understanding of a qualification in terms of skills and competencies acquired. The certificate supplement gives information on the level of qualification, skills and competencies acquired, learning contents, occupations the holder is qualified for, progression to the next level of education and the awarding institution which issued the certificate. It is the systematic document and it does not refer to an individual but to all who have the same certificate or have undergone the same educational programme.. In Slovenia diploma supplement was declared mandatory element of the diploma in 1999 and first supplements were issued in 2000.

2. One of the representative examples of certification of Adult Learning and Education outside the education system is the certification system (NVQ) which enables the assessment and certification of knowledge, skills and competencies obtained outside formal education and training. The assessment takes place against nationally agreed standards of knowledge and skill requirements for performing certain jobs existing in the labour market. All candidates who meet the requirements for obtaining vocational qualifications can apply for the certificate at the National Examinations Centre, which publishes calls for applications at least twice a year. They can also submit the application beyond the published deadlines.

Assessment and certification are carried out by a panel of three national vocational qualification (NVQ) assessors appointed by the National Examinations Centre on the accredited assessing body's request. The manner in which direct assessment and certification of NVQs are carried out is determined by the Catalogue of Standards of Professional Knowledge and Skills.



NVQ can be directly assessed in one of the following manners:

- written assessment and interview;
- practical performance assessment and interview;
- written and practical performance assessment and interview;
- on-the-job observation and interview;
- role play and interview.

Assessment and certification of NVQ contain:

- portfolio assessment;
- practical performance assessment.

By portfolio assessment, NVQ assessor assesses the value of the portfolio and the proof of competences on the basis of several criteria: authenticity, topicality, relevance etc.

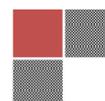
If the candidate for NVQ does not meet all conditions of the Catalogue of Standards of Professional Knowledge and Skills, the panel of NVQ assessors defines practical performance determined in the Catalogue (knowledge and skills not covered by the portfolio).

After successfully accomplishing the assessment, the candidates are awarded a certificate. The obtained certificates are nationally valid and recognised on the labour market.

3. The majority of participation of adults in Adult Learning and Education goes to non-formal and informal not accredited training where market conditions apply. Whether the end of a particular learning activity is followed by assessment of achievements and the way of assessment is determined by providers.

7. Funding

Adult education is financed via three main financial sources: employers, individuals themselves and public finances. No reliable evidence on the contribution from each source is available. Regarding the data from IALS (1998) and research of Slovenian Institute for Adult Education in 2004 employers (nearly 70% in 1998 and 2004) and individuals (25% in 1998 and 20% in 2004) themselves bear the largest shares of the costs of education and training, whereas public funds are the third most important source though it decreased from 19% in 1998 to 11% in 2004. The same data for 2004 show big difference in sources for formal and non formal education, 66% of individuals participating in formal education and training bear the costs for education, and about 27% participants in non formal training. (Mohorčič Špolar et al. 2001, 2006). Employers are obliged by collective agreements to cover direct costs (tuition fee, learning materials, travelling costs and costs of subsistence) as well as indirect costs (remuneration of wages and salaries for the time of absence from work due to



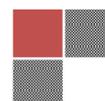
training) of the training that they initiate. Individuals themselves finance education and training mainly when it is not in the interest of their employer. Sometimes, they are also forced to co-finance training needed at work, mostly in the form of investment of their spare time.

The main document which determines the budget and financial distribution of adult education from public funds is the Annual Plan of Adult Education (APAE). The plan is prepared by the Ministry of Education and Sport and the Ministry of Labour, Social and Family Affairs, verified by the CEAE and approved by the Government. According to the Adult Education Act, this programme is based on the National Programme of Adult Education 2004-2010 (NPAE), adopted by the Parliament in 2004.

There are three major mechanisms in place to regulate the distribution of public finance to adult education:

- Regular public financing of the networks of adult education institutions, across Slovenia, such as
 - Peoples' and workers' universities, providing general education,
 - Regional guidance centres for adult education,
 - Study circles mentors' network,
 - University of the Third age etc.
- The most important source of public funding of adult education is public official invitation for tenders for the provision of educational and vocational programmes, which are annually announced by both ministries (education, labour). The invitations are open to all institutions or organisations registered for performing educational services.
- There are five institutes set up and financed by the Government that play an important role in the system of adult education and lifelong learning in general: *Andragoški center Slovenije* (Slovenian Institute for Adult Education - SIAE), *Center za poklicno izobraževanje* (National Institute for Vocational Education and Training), *Zavod za šolstvo* (The National Education Institute), *Šola za ravnateljce* (National School for Leadership in Education - NSLE) and *Državni izpitni center* (National Examination Centre). The role of these institutes are three fold: (i) research and development of programmes, methods, approaches, instruments and knowledge in their respective fields, (ii) training of trainers, and (iii) testing, evaluating, acknowledgment and certification of programmes, skills and knowledge.

Apart from these, there are substantial financial means earmarked for different target groups of adults, provided by other public institutions or other ministries, e.g. Ministry for Health for promoting health care awareness, or Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning for rising knowledge on environment protection or special educational programmes for different disadvantaged groups. The major part of sources aimed at job related training is provided by employers themselves, although



some additional sources are provided also by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs as an instrument of active employment policy.

8. Human resources

All teachers and trainers who teach in state-verified educational or vocational programmes for adults must have proper andragogical knowledge and competences, which can be acquired either at the Department for Pedagogy and Andragogy at the Faculty of Arts (University of Ljubljana), or by attending special corresponding training, after which it is necessary to pass an exam and to receive the certificate of andragogical competences. These are provided and issued by the Pedagogical faculties and Faculty of Arts while Slovenian Institute for Adult Education delivers programmes of continuing education and training for teachers in adult education. Teachers are mostly required an appropriate tertiary degree, equivalent to Bachelor or Master.

9. The NQF and the EQF

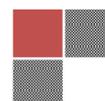
The Slovenian overarching National Qualifications Framework is currently being developed. The development takes into account outcomes of several conferences organised in 2005 and 2006 on the implementation of EU Qualification framework and a broad support of all relevant stakeholder.

In 2006, the Slovenian government adopted the Decree on introduction and use of Classifications System of Education and Training (Klasius), which provides the formal basis for building Slovenian qualifications framework and introduces 8 levels and 2 sublevels. It is as a key national standard to collect, process, analyze and demonstrate the statistical and analytical data which are important to illustrate the developments in social, economical and demographical situation in Slovenia.

In contrary to other countries, Slovenia considers that the existence of practices for recognising non-formal and informal learning outcomes is going to encourage the establishment of a national qualifications framework rather than *vice versa*.

The main objectives to be achieved by the NQF in Slovenia are:

- Improving the transnational understanding of Slovenian qualifications as well as the possibilities of transfer;
- Supporting coherent approaches to LLL by providing access, progression, recognition of learning, coherency and better use of qualifications;
- Improving transparency of qualifications for individuals and employers;
- Necessity for the education and training system to be better responsive to employers needs and their involvement in assessment and certification;



- Ensuring capacity to certify knowledge, skills and competence that have not yet been incorporated in formal education and training programmes and provide better
- link and transferability between education and training and certification system;
- Improving efficiency of the process of achieving qualifications focused on the needs of the labour market (e.g. re-qualification);
- Enabling individualized pathways mainly for adults and drop-outs;
- Integration of the different qualifications sub-systems (education and training); and
- Improving the access to qualifications issues by the tertiary system and thus
- increasing the percentage of people with post-secondary VET and higher education qualifications.

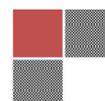
The work on NQF in Slovenia is coordinated by the Steering group, composed of representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Sport and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training, and social partners. Administrative support will be provided by the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training. Financially the project will be supported by national budget and ESF. There are studies performed to support the further development.

The barriers in the development of the NQF are of several kinds, including the lack of visibility of certificates, the fact that these learning outcomes are not really built into the formal education and training system, trade union apathy, and no strong connection between job remuneration and the qualifications obtained through recognising the outcomes. In short, Slovenia lacks any consensus about the equivalence required between qualifications obtainable in the formal system and those awarded through the recognition of such outcomes

The main development challenges in Slovenia have been connected with EU membership that has transformed the background and modes of the national development. As a member of EU, Slovenia has had to find ways to achieve its national objectives in a suitable way and in line with the common European rules, policies and strategies. The social partners and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (MDDSZ), the Ministry of Education and Sport (MŠŠ), the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology backed the idea of Slovenia supporting the implementation of the European Qualification Framework in accordance with the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning.

Slovenia and other member states have been recommended to:

- Use an approach based on learning outcomes when defining and describing qualifications



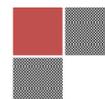
- Promote the validation of non formal and informal learning
- Promote and apply principles of quality assurance in education and training
- Set up The National Coordination Points – implementation bodies at national level
- Finalise and launch a national referencing report for each country explaining the referencing process (referencing means to decide which EQF level is the closest to a given national level) and its results, addressing the agreed criteria. Slovenia will finalise the report by 2011.

10. Mutual recognition of qualifications

The system of mutual recognition of qualifications only refers to regulated professions and professional activities. Regulated professions and regulated professional activities are those professions and activities that an EU Member State defines as regulated professions for which a person who wishes to pursue a certain profession has to fulfil other conditions determined by law or another legal act. Professions or professional activities regulated in Slovenia are published in the Record of regulated professions and regulated professional activities in the Republic of Slovenia. The Record also lists the ministries regulating each profession. The Record is published in the Official Journal of the Republic of Slovenia No. 44/04 and on the Internet pages of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. For these professions, the system of recognition is almost automatic and allows those people already practicing (or qualified to practice) any of these professions in an EU Member State to move to another EU Member State and obtain in a simplified procedure the authorisation to practice the same profession there. For each of these professions EU Member States have unified and transposed to their national legislation the minimum training requirements and have standardised the training programmes. In this way, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food and the Ministry of the Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy have transposed to the sectoral legislation the provisions of the Directives referring to the regulation of each profession.

11. Health care/«medical» and welfare professional training in Slovenia

When discussing professional qualifications of the most typical health care /medical and welfare/social care professions, such as doctors, qualified nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, social pedagogues, special educators, social workers... etc., it has to be said that qualifications pertaining to these professions in Slovenia are closely linked to formal higher education educational programmes. We cannot even begin to talk about recognition of non- and in-formal learning in these programmes. It can be established that professional qualifications in Slovenia are mostly always founded on a prior completion of a higher education programme, while it is impossible to obtain education on the basis of practical experience. Entry to such regulated professions depends on possession of a certified (formal) qualification.



The recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes in health and social care is specifically intended for workers to be placed and promoted in employment

Some professional chambers thus require constant participation in various forms of non- and in-formal learning in order to obtain and keep a licence for practicing the profession.

An example is the Social Chamber of Slovenia, which organises, plans and promotes continuous professional training for professional workers and associates in the sector of welfare/social care. It executes the verification procedure for social welfare training programmes and awarding of credit points for continuous postgraduate training. The organiser of a professional education and training programme aimed for professionals and staff in social welfare care can apply for programme verification independently or in conjunction with awarding of credit points. The verification process includes assessment of the compliance with the rules on verification of:

- The content of the training programme,
- The objectives of the training and possible examination,
- The duration of training,
- The expected theoretical and/or practical benefits to the participants,
- The references of the organizational and professional personnel that will implement the professional training.

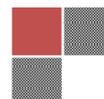
The rules for granting a licence to the organizer of a professional training and awarding credit points in other professional chambers, such as the Medical Chamber for doctors, the Nurses and Midwives Association of Slovenia, etc are similar than mentioned above. The organiser is however expected to pay the costs of the process of awarding credit points.

2 standards of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ), i.e. certification of non-formal and informal learning valid at the national level have been developed and implemented so far in the welfare/social care sector:

- Social home carer (socialni oskrbovalec na domu/socialna oskrbovalka na domu) – the initiation started in 2000. The first certificates were issued in 2003 after a 2-years preparation phase.
- Work instructor (delovni inštruktor/delovna inštruktorica).

In the medical/health care sector 5 standards of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) have been implemented:

- orthopedic technologist (ortopedski tehnolog/ortopedska tehnologinja),
- lifeguard (zdravstveni reševalec/ zdravstvena reševalka),
- dental assistant (zobozdravstveni asistent/zobozdravstvena asistenka),
- chiropodist (pediker/pedikerka),
- masseur/masseuse (maser/maserka).



12. Implementation of ABI training programme

The ABI Basic Learning Outcomes are the basis for obtaining an entry certificate providing evidence that the holder has the basic knowledge and understanding of daily work with persons with Acquired brain injuries. The awarded ABI certificate is not planned to be a qualification in itself.

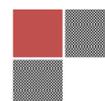
It seems hardly possible at the moment to implement the ABI certificate in the NVQ in Slovenia.

Since the ABI certificate relates both to health care and social care, it is intended to provide basic knowledge to work with persons with ABI in both sectors. In Slovenia there is a big difference between the health sector and the welfare/social care sector. Each is represented by its respective ministry: the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social affairs for the social sector and the Ministry of Health for the health sector.

Furthermore the ABI certificate is linked to a wide range of professions from both the health and welfare/social sector. The development of an occupational standard would in this case represent a very demanding and expensive project, which would call for the cooperation of numerous partners: employers and employees in organizations for rehabilitation, care and support for persons with ABI, different professional chambers, competent ministries, trade unions One needs to bear in mind national and sectorial development documents, the data collected by the Employment Service of Slovenia and the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, as well as examples from the EU countries, because the initiative would have to meet the following requirements: stability, longlasting, widespread, appearance in different work situations, employability of significant number of people, comparability with occupations on foreign labour markets. Each initiative has to be based on anticipation of labour market needs according to long-term economic development at regional or national levels.

A common level of complexity of the occupational standard would be very difficult to determine. The ABI Basic Learning Outcomes would have to be further developed of additional commonly agreed definitions of knowledge, skills and competences beyond the current basic entry level, for staff/professionals with higher qualifications whose job demands more experience and responsibility. The occupational standard would have to have different complexity levels depending on the formal education level of the candidat and his job demands. An individualized manner of assessment of candidates would also have to be determined in the Catalogue of Standards of Professional Knowledge and Skills.

Furthermore long-term rehabilitation, care and support is quite new for Slovenia, and very specific, and therefore only a limited number of people have acquired knowledge in that field through non-formal and informal learning enabling them to carry out assessment and certification of national vocational qualifications (NVQ).



The number of appropriate providers (assessment bodies) of assessment and certification is limited too.

A suggestion by Mrs. Barbara Velkov was to include the ABI specific part of the ABI Basic Learning Outcomes in an occupational standard that has already been initiated to be developed: “The Social Assistant “. Slovenian projects ABI partners believe that the ABI Basic Learning Outcome would lose their primary aim by doing so.

The ABI training programme could at the moment be »officially« recognised in Slovenia only as further and supplementary training, by which an individual deepens knowledge and develops competences for life, work, career promotion and licence keeping and by which she or he obtains valid certification which **may be** a condition for working with persons with ABI. However the certificate can not be a substitute for any formal qualification or training requirements which already exist for performing a job in health or social care.

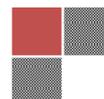
The organiser of the training programme would have to apply for the verification and awarding of credit points for continuous postgraduate training to different professional chambers from the health and the social sector with regard to their specific requirements. There is no automatic validation and no official regulation. It means that a professional chamber could also refuse to validate the training programme and award credit points..

For the moment the methodological, technical and professional support capacities for effective integration of formal, non-formal and informal systems are still to be developed. Systemic changes that would have to be introduced for this to happen (such as financing and the decentralisation of curriculum responsibilities) have been recognised but also need practical implementation. It should be reminded that in the Slovene VET system a large share of responsibilities for the realisation of the system is assigned to the employers (and their Chambers)

5. FINDINGS / RESULTS

1. EQF / NQF

In Slovenia, no national qualifications framework has yet been drawn up. In addition, its promoters are anticipating barriers if it is developed. However a few foundations have been laid and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes is considered to be among them. It is interesting to note that, contrary to other countries, Slovenia considers that the existence of practices for recognising non-formal and informal learning outcomes is going to encourage the establishment of a national qualifications framework rather than *vice versa*. The barriers are of several kinds, including the lack of visibility of certificates, the fact that these learning



outcomes are not really built into the formal education and training system, trade union apathy, and no strong connection between job remuneration and the qualifications obtained through recognising the outcomes. In short, Slovenia lacks any consensus about the equivalence required between qualifications obtainable in the formal system and those awarded through the recognition of such outcomes. That said, one hears the usual arguments for establishing a national qualifications framework, including faster access to qualifications, the possibility of recognising non-formal and informal learning outcomes and of returning to the formal system, especially in the case of groups targeted by public action.

The social partners and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (MDDSZ), the Ministry of Education and Sport (MŠŠ), the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology backed the idea of Slovenia supporting the implementation of the European Qualification Framework in accordance with the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning. Slovenia will finalise and launch a national referencing report for each country explaining the referencing process (referencing means to decide which EQF level is the closest to a given national level) and its results, addressing the agreed criteria by 2011.

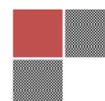
2. The VET system in Slovenia

The Slovenian adult education strategy is developed within the lifelong learning policy document, adopted by the National Assembly (2007). Adult education is regulated in more detail in the Adult Education Act, in some articles of the school and labour legislation and in other regulations of various fields of economic and public sector.

Adult vocational education and training includes forms of formal education to obtain a higher level of qualification (upper secondary and higher vocational education for adults), retraining, and training for less demanding work, and also shorter forms of education, including continuing vocational education and training. These forms represent only one element of education and learning. The other forms include self-education and informal learning, not covered by official statistics.

Formal upper secondary and higher vocational education and training of adults are governed by the same legislation as for young people. It has the same curricular structure, objectives, and general admission criteria, options for the continuation of education, levels of vocational standards for the specific profession and levels of qualifications.

Beside upper secondary schools, higher vocational colleges, people's universities and educational centres, in-company centres are the largest providers of job-related training. There is also widespread education and training organised by human resource management departments or personnel departments of companies.



Adults can acquire vocational qualifications also through alternative means outside the formal school system, by participating in the certified national vocational qualification scheme. A national vocational qualification (NVQ) is a formally recognised work-related, competence-based qualification, which reflects the skills and knowledge needed to do a job effectively and shows that a candidate is competent in an area of work, or individual segments of work, within an area at a certain level of achievement, and as such, part of the national qualification framework.

An NVQ is shown by a public document – a certificate whose form and content are defined by the Minister of Labour, Family and Social affairs.

The system of assessment and certification of NVQs in Slovenia is regulated by the National Professional Qualifications Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, Nos 81/2000, 55/2003, 118/2006, 1/2007) adopted by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. This Act regulates the procedure and the competent bodies, agencies and organisations for adopting catalogues of standards of professional knowledge and skills, and the conditions and procedures for obtaining NVQs.

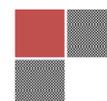
The certificate system consists of many cooperating institutions:

- Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs;
- Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational and Professional Education;
- National Examinations Centre;
- National Institute for Vocational Education and Training;
- Slovenian Institute for Adult Education;
- providers of procedure for NVQ assessment and certification/accredited assessing bodies;
- Employment Service of Slovenia;
- Chambers and responsible ministries.

The objectives of the system of certification:

- gives public validity to non-formal and informal education, training and learning;
- substitutes for low adaptability in the formal system of education;
- enhances lifelong learning through the public recognition of knowledge;
- enables swifter response to the demands of the labour market for individuals who have acquired a certificate.

The national vocational qualification is a publicly recognised qualification which is necessary to pursue a specific part of an occupation, and therefore is based on the appropriate vocational standard. For the preparation of occupational standards the Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs appoints vocational field commissions,



which consist of established experts from Chambers, Ministers and trade unions. Besides ensuring the development and update of occupational standards, field commissions develop the qualification structure in professional fields. Initiatives for occupational standards are normally launched by employers' organisations or schools, otherwise they can be launched

In Slovenia, an NVQ can be acquired:

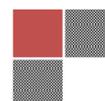
- by completing vocational or professional educational programmes or by completing modules as part of educational programmes;
- by assessment and accreditation of prior learning.

The procedures of assessing and certifying vocational qualifications are performed by registered assessing bodies : e.g. inter-company educational centres, schools, adult education organisations and chambers. They must meet the prescribed conditions. The registration of assessing bodies is regulated by the National Examinations Centre. The registered assessing bodies establish commissions for the assessment and certification of vocational qualifications, whose members should hold a license from the National Examinations Centre.

The applications of the candidates are dealt with by a relevant commission, which examines the submitted documents and other evidence or the candidate's portfolio and determines whether the candidate meets all the requirements defined by the catalogue of professional knowledge and skills. If the candidates meet the prescribed requirements, the commission certifies their vocational qualification and awards them a certificate. If the candidates do not meet the requirements defined by the catalogue, they undergo an assessment of their knowledge, skills and competences. In this procedure the candidates prove the knowledge that is not evident from their documents. The methods and measures of assessment of knowledge and skills are defined in the catalogues.

Members of the commission should hold an appropriate degree of education according to the field of vocational qualifications, and a license of the National Examinations Centre, which should be renewed every 5 years. The degree of education appropriate is defined by the catalogue of standards of knowledge and skills. The catalogues are approved by the Minister of Education on the proposal of the Expert Council of Vocational and Professional Education.

2 standards of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ), i.e. certification of non-formal and informal learning valid at the national level have been developed and implemented so far in the welfare/social care sector:



- Social home carer (socialni oskrbovalec na domu/socialna oskrbovalka na domu) – the initiation started in 2000. The first certificates were issued in 2003 after a 2-years preparation phase.
- Work instructor (delovni inštruktor/delovna inštruktorica).

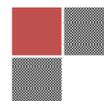
In the medical/health care sector 5 standards of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) have been implemented:

- orthopedic technologist (ortopedski tehnolog/ortopedska tehnologinja),
- lifeguard (zdravstveni reševalec/ zdravstvena reševalka),
- dental assistant (zobozdravstveni asistent/zobozdravstvena asistenka),
- chiropodist (pediker/pedikerka),
- masseur/masseuse (maser/maserka).

3. Accreditation of training and education programmes

Formal education and training of adults in Slovenia leads to publicly verified certificates, which are recognized at the national level. Adult education providers are obliged to adopt the rules specifying the procedures, bodies and tools for recognition and accreditation for the participants of their programmes.

The National Vocational Qualifications Act implemented a new way for the acquisition of national vocational qualifications and publicly valid documents (certificates) in accordance with European processes and measures adopted for the assessment and recognition procedures for non-formal and informal knowledge and skills. The primary purpose of this kind of formal verification is a complete review of an individual's knowledge, skills and experience confirmed in accordance with prescribed procedures (including counseling and assistance). In this way, the quality and fairness of the system, the participation of all relevant partners, and the transparency and comparability of an individual's knowledge and skills are ensured. Another advantage of the certification system is flexibility, which enables immediate reactions to the needs of the labour market. It enables adults to formalize their knowledge, skills and competences, acquired with experiences and with non formal and informal learning and acquire NVQ. The assessment takes place against nationally agreed standards of knowledge and skills requirements for performing a job or part of it. However NVQ does not give national school leaving certificate. The possibility to verify previously acquired knowledge and to form shorter training programmes to compensate the lacking knowledge and skills, which eventually leads to the formal acquisition of a profession, helps diminishing the differences between supply and demand on the labour market. Initiatives for the preparation of vocational standards and catalogues proposed by the employers are a valuable contribution to the development and the applicability of the qualifications system and structures.



In non-formal and informal not accredited training market conditions apply. Whether the end of a particular learning activity is followed by assessment of achievements and the way of assessment is determined by providers.

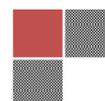
4. How to move on?

It seems hardly possible at the moment to implement the ABI certificate in the NVQ in Slovenia.

Since the ABI certificate relates both to health care and social care, it is intended to provide basic knowledge to work with persons with ABI in both sectors. In Slovenia there is a big difference between the health sector and the welfare/social care sector. Each is represented by its respective ministry: the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social affairs for the social sector and the Ministry of Health for the health sector.

Furthermore the ABI certificate is linked to a wide range of professions with different education background from both the health and welfare/social sector. Professional qualifications in Slovenia are mostly always founded on a prior completion of a higher education programme. The development of an occupational standard would represent a long-lasting, very demanding and expensive project, which would call for the cooperation of numerous partners: employers and employees in organizations for rehabilitation, care and support for persons with ABI, different professional chambers, competent ministries, trade unions During the procedure for the preparation of the vocational standard, all key partners would be systematically included on the national level in defining the contents of the profession and qualification, the levels of requirements as well as the needs of the labour market during the next few years. One needs to bear in mind national and sectorial development documents, the data collected by the Employment Service of Slovenia and the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, as well as examples from the EU countries, because the initiative would have to meet the following requirements: stability, longlasting, widespread, appearance in different work situations, employability of significant number of people, comparability with occupations on foreign labour markets. Each initiative has to be based on anticipation of labour market needs according to long-term economic development at regional or national levels.

A common level of complexity of the occupational standard would be very difficult to determine. The ABI Basic Learning Outcomes would have to be further developed of additional commonly agreed definitions of knowledge, skills and competences beyond the current basic entry level, for staff/professionals with higher academic qualifications whose job demands more experience and responsibility. The occupational standard would have to have different complexity levels depending on the formal education /academic level of the candidat and his job demands. An individualized manner of assessment of candidates would also have to be



determined in the Catalogue of Standards of Professional Knowledge and Skills.

Furthermore long-term rehabilitation, care and support is quite new for Slovenia, and very specific, and therefore only a limited number of people have acquired knowledge in that field through non-formal and informal learning enabling them to carry out assessment and certification of national vocational qualifications (NVQ). The number of appropriate providers of assessment and certification is limited too.

A suggestion by Mrs. Barbara Velkov was to include the ABI specific part of the ABI Basic Learning Outcomes in an occupational standard that has already been initiated to be developed: “The Social Assistant “. Slovenian projects ABI partners believe that the ABI Basic Learning Outcome would loose their primary and most important aim by doing so.

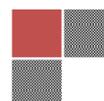
Some professional chambers do however require constant participation in various forms of non- and in-formal learning in order to obtain and keep a licence for practicing the profession. Thus the ABI training programme could at the moment be »officially« recognised in Slovenia as further and supplementary training, by which an individual deepens knowledge and develops competences for life, work, career promotion and licence keeping and by which she or he obtains valid certification which **may be** a condition for working with persons with ABI. However the certificate can not be a substitute for any formal qualification or training requirements which already exist for performing a job in health or social care.

The rules for granting a licence to the organizer of a professional training and awarding credit points are specific for each chamber. Mostly the validation process and the awarding of credit points includes assessment of the compliance with the rules of:

- The content of the training programme,
- The objectives of the training and possible examination,
- The duration of training,
- The expected theoretical and/or practical benefits to the participants,
- The references of the organizational and professional personnel that will implement the professional training.

There is no automatic validation and no official regulation. It means that a professional chamber could also refuse to validate the training programme and award credit points..

For the moment the methodological, technical and professional support capacities for effective integration of formal, non-formal and informal systems are still to be developed. Systemic changes that would have to be introduced for this to happen (such as financing and the decentralisation of curriculum responsibilities) have been recognised but also need practical implementation. It should be reminded that in the



Slovene VET system a large share of responsibilities for the realisation of the system is assigned to the employers (and their Chambers)

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Non-formal and informal learning doesn't have the same currency as learning in a formal context in the health and social care sector in Slovenia. Entry to a profession from both sectors depends on possession of a certified (formal) qualification. The recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes in health and social care is specifically intended for workers to be promoted in employment.

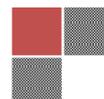
It seems hardly possible at the moment to implement the ABI certificate in the NVQ in Slovenia. The procedure would be too longlasting, demanding and expensive.

The ABI training programme could at the moment be »officially« recognised in Slovenia as further and supplementary training, by which an individual deepens knowledge and develops competences for life, work, career promotion and licence keeping and by which she or he obtains valid certification by a professional chamber which **may be** a condition for working with persons with ABI. The organiser of a professional training has to apply for validation and awarding of credit points with regard to the specific requirements of each professional chamber. The procedure is quick.

2. Since the ABI Basic Learning Outcomes are very specific, they could not be included in already existing training programmes but they would have to be delivered as a specific training course, offered by experienced providers involved in long-term rehabilitation, care and support for persons with ABI.

Such training course wouldn't be financed by public funds but by the employers or the individuals themselves. Due to the crises, the employers have reduced the number of employee trainings considerably. Some measures of finding additional financial sources would have to be taken by the ABI project partners in Slovenia to stimulate the participation of employees in the course

3. Later ABI partners in Slovenia hope to build on this first step with the further development of additional, more specialised, commonly agreed definitions of knowledge for staff whose job demands more experience and responsibility (Specific ABI Learning Outcomes). This will take the ABI Basic Learning Outcomes beyond the current entry level.
4. The ABI partners from Slovenia recommend the constitution of an ABI advisory Board, which would be constituted of 1 member of each ABI project partner. The



aims of this Board would be to ensure the further development and spreading of the ABI Competences in current and new countries, the maintenance of quality assurance procedures to protect the ABI reputation, the quality and efficient course delivering, the recognition of the qualification across Europe, the further exploring of possible links to NQF and EQF. It would also keep a register of official ABI delivers in current and new countries and issue the ABI certificates.

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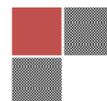
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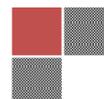
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