

**Institute
of the Republic of Slovenia
for Vocational Education
and Training**



Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training

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INTRODUCTION

The Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (hereinafter: the CPI) is the central national institution in the field of vocational education and training. It is responsible for linking social partners, and provides support in developmental, research, implementing and systemic processes that contribute to the quality of vocational education and training for the citizens of Slovenia in the context of lifelong learning. The CPI thus contributes to the development of individuals and society as a whole.

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The CPI was established in 1995 by the Slovenian government (by the Ministry of Education and Sport and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs), the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia and the Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia. Since its establishment, the CPI has worked with various ministries, employers, chambers, schools, associations and other organisations. The Institute prepares technical bases and evaluations, and monitors and guides the development of vocational education and training. It develops occupational standards as the basis for the development of national curricula and

course catalogues. The CPI introduces the latest developments to the education system, and is responsible for training educators. It develops the necessary infrastructure and social partnerships as the basis for quality vocational education and training. The CPI's experience and activities are confirmed at the national and international levels through its inclusion in networks that develop and introduce tools across the European Union. The CPI is hosting the National Europass centre, Slovenian centre for assuring VET quality SIQA-VET and the National reference point, which provides information on the VET system. The CPI prepares reports for CEDEFOP network REFER-NET; it is the national coordinator of the European network TT-net and a national representative for EUROSILLS. Since 2009, the CPI is also a national coordination point for EQF and leads the project for developing the Slovenian Qualifications Framework. The CPI's experts are respected at home and abroad, and work with other domestic and foreign experts in various national and international projects. In this way, they enhance their knowledge and gain experiences that contribute to the professional and broader development of the CPI.

The CPI's activities are financed from the Slovenian government's budget and by the European Social Fund¹. The international projects in which the CPI participates represent another source of financing.

The aim of the publication before you is to present and inform you about the CPI activities. It includes certain key information and indicators that bear witness to the success of our activities to date, while guiding and binding us to continuing our work. The publication was translated in order to present our activities abroad and make it applicable internationally.

The activities not included herein may be found on our website, which you are kindly invited to visit. Let us know if you find a useful idea for your work; we would be more than happy to work with you.

For more information, visit www.cpi.si

Elido Bandelj
Director

¹ Operations for the modernisation and expansion of occupational standards and catalogues, and the Slovenian Qualifications Framework. The operations are being implemented in the scope of the Operational Programme for Human Resource Development for the Period 2007-2013, 1st development priority (Promoting entrepreneurship and adaptability) and priority guidelines 1.2 Training and education for competitiveness and employability and 1.4 Stimulating the development of new employment opportunities. Operation for Effective Implementation of Education and Training Programmes and Quality Assurance, 2010-2012. The operation is being carried out in the scope of the Operational Programme for Human Resource Development for the period 2007-2013, development priority. Development of human resources and lifelong learning; priority guideline: Improving the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems.



**Development
of tools for
improved
cooperation at
the European
level**

SLOVENIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Systemic discussions over the last 20 years in the area of education in Europe have focused on the question of how to combine various forms of learning and develop a tool that will facilitate the recognition and validation of knowledge, practical experiences and competences. The drafters of European education policy have responded to that question by shaping the initiative known as the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF), which will link the qualification systems of various countries, thereby making the qualifications of EU Member States clearer and more comparable. By the end of 2012, 26 European countries, including Slovenia, will have established a national qualifications framework (NQF), and thus introduced national levels of qualifications in the European framework.



The first important activity in Slovenia in establishing the NQF was a national debate regarding the EQF at the end of 2005. The debate indicated the need to establish a Slovenian Qualifications Framework (SQF), as the levels and descriptions set out in the EQF are too broad and do not meet the specifics of the Slovenian education and qualification system. The result was an agreement in 2006 between the Ministry of Education and Sport, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and social partners on the establishment of the SQF in Slovenia.

To that end, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs ordered the implementation of a project financed by the European Social Fund to establish the Slovenian Qualifications Framework for the period 2009 - 2013. The project is managed operationally by the CPI. In January 2010, the Slovenian government appointed a steering committee to begin preparations for the national qualifications

framework. The aforementioned committee represents the highest decision-making body in the development of the SQF.

Following expert consultations with social partners in February and March 2011, the steering committee unanimously adopted the proposed Slovenian Qualifications Framework, and presented it to the general public in April 2011 at a national consultation on the SQF. The proposal attempts to take into account the national characteristics of the Slovenian education system and labour market. In accordance with EQF guidelines, the SQF strives to ensure the transparency of qualification systems in Slovenia, taking into account the national context and the Education and Training Classification System (KLASIUS). It comprises 10 levels and relies on the concept of educational activities and learning outcomes, in line with its central philosophy, i.e. the communicative nature of the qualifications framework. The SQF also includes national vocational qualifications that supplement formalised forms of educa-

tion and training. Thus, the SQF links the vocational education system with the national vocational qualification system and the recognition of non-formally and informally acquired knowledge.

The CPI was named national coordination point for the EQF in Slovenia, and is thus linked in its work to the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. The tasks of the EQF coordination point include ensuring accessibility to information, the preparation of materials and the coordination of the work of parties included in the SQF and EQF. The coordination point also links the national coordination points of other countries in accordance with the recommendations of the European Parliament and the Council of the EU.

In the scope of the SQF project, the CPI and social partners are also planning the development of sectoral qualifications frameworks that will assist in the more detailed organisation of qualifications by level.

CREDIT TRANSFER SYSTEM

The creation of a single European framework in the field of education assumes the development of tools to increase the »transparency, comparability, transferability and recognition of competences and/or qualifications between different countries and at different levels«.

Playing an important role among these tools is the ECVET European credit transfer system, which is planned for implementation in individual Member States. The aim of the ECVET is to harmonise the recognition of knowledge gained by individuals, whose learning achievements are attained by selecting different learning paths in varying learning environments.

The ECVET is a decentralised European system characterised by the voluntary participation of Member States and other stakeholders from the field of vocational education and training. The ECVET also requires and promotes the transparency of qualifications and learning outcomes, various types of learning paths, procedures (e.g. quality assurance, and assessment and recognition), learning processes (e.g. formal and non-formal learning processes) and structures (e.g. organisational structure of and responsibilities in the vocational education and training system). Specifically, ECVET represents a description of qualifications with the help of knowledge, skills and competences. Qualifications are expected to comprise

units that are assessed using credits, and in fact represent the units that are transferred and collected. The appropriate methodologies, instruments and tools must be added in order for the system to be used in practice and to actually serve the individual on his or her learning path.

During the last reform of vocational education and training curriculum in Slovenia, all education programmes were assessed using credits in accordance with the Vocational Education Act. The CPI has joined the European network of reference points, and participates in development activities and projects at the European level. Our aim, in accordance with the solutions that will arise as the result of our evaluation and work with other countries, is to develop the credit-based assessment of education programmes and all vocational qualifications. The second set of activities includes the development of tools for the recognition and transfer of credits for international mobility.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

One of the priorities with regard to cooperation between European countries in the field of vocational education and training is European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET).

The primary aim of EQAVET is to improve the promotion of the quality of vocational education and training and, at a specific level, to offer countries and educators a common quality assurance tool.

The systematic approach to ensuring quality recommended by the EQAVET is based on the linking of important stakeholders from the field of vocational education and training. It sets out the methods for monitoring and improving quality by combining internal and external assessments to be defined by an individual Member State. At the level of educators (e.g. schools and others, in particular employers), the European framework recommends the introduction of a comprehensive quality management system in which one of the key elements is self-evaluation. The recommendations also include a so-called quality cycle model (PDCA cycle), and associated criteria and framework descriptors at the system and educator level. A set of 10 reference indicators has been proposed to support the assessment of the education system.

As a reference centre, the CPI is included in the activities of the European EQAVET network. It participates in working groups that create tools for improving quality assurance systems in Member States and developing indicators, and in other initiatives coordinated by the aforementioned network.

The aim of developing a Slovenian reference point for quality assurance in the field of vocational education and training is to contribute to the promotion of vocational education and training in Slovenia, and to provide schools and other educators a useful tool for developing a systematic approach to quality management. The CPI drafts an annual report on the quality of vocational education and training on the basis of quality indicators adopted by the Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training.

RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMALLY AND INFORMALLY ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE

The recognition of non-formally and informally acquired knowledge in formal education is a topic that has taken on a great deal of importance recently, and is treated by the EU as a priority in the scope of education. The recognition of non-formally and informally acquired knowledge in formal education is becoming an increasingly well-known opportunity and right of candidates in Slovenia as well. Schools take into account the fact that individuals learn in various ways, and are recognising knowledge, skills and competences obtained outside the scope of formal education, either in the workplace, at courses, in training programmes or in everyday life.



Based on European recommendations, the task of professional institutions that operate in the field of adult vocational education and training is to develop a quality system for recognising non-formal learning that will provide individuals the opportunity to apply previously obtained knowledge and ease their entry into the education system, while facilitating the systematic and transparent introduction of procedures by educators.

Therefore, special attention was given by the CPI during the introduction of new or recast vocational education and training programmes to the implementation of a system for recognising non-formal learning. Three technical publications, *Recognition and Validation of Non-Formally and Informally Acquired Knowledge*, *Sample Model for Identifying and Recognising Non-Formally and Informally Acquired Knowledge at Schools*, and *Recommendations for Developing a Model to Assess and Recognise Non-Formally and Informally Acquired*

Knowledge, Skills and Competences were drafted in 2008 and 2009 to assist and support educators. The aforementioned publications may be used by schools to establish internal recognition models.

The CPI also coordinates the activities of working groups in the scope of consortia of secondary vocational schools looking for specific solutions to introduce a system to recognise non-formally acquired knowledge, as this is a field in which other countries likewise have not yet developed all the relevant technical solutions.

In 2010, the CPI carried out an extensive evaluation that provides insight into the current situation with respect to introducing the recognition of non-formal knowledge in the education of students and adults in VET. The evaluation indicated that the processes of recognising non-formally acquired knowledge are not widespread, although they are known to and used by educators,

and to a lesser extent by participants, particularly in adult education and in post-secondary vocational education.

As a response to the needs of educators for procedures for recognising non-formally acquired knowledge at schools, the CPI is implementing a European Social Fund project that is linked to the drafting of technical materials regarding the use of various methods and criteria for identifying previously acquired knowledge. In 2010, an inter-institutional working group was established, and is managed by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. The working group harmonises the methodologies for recognising non-formally acquired knowledge in education. It is responsible for the exchange of results from various projects in this field, and is drafting the guidelines for the systematic organisation of the recognition of non-formally acquired knowledge.

EUROPASS DOCUMENTS

The Europass initiative, through which the European Commission attempts to promote the importance of assessing competences in the scope of lifelong learning, celebrated its fifth anniversary in 2011. The five documents used to present an individual to an employer have been received to varying degrees in Slovenia. By far the most well-received is the Europass CV, as the number of users rises sharply every year.



The *Europass CV* and the *Europass Language Passport* are sample forms for self-assessment that are freely accessible on the Europass website. Their usefulness is based on a formalised, systematic and well thought out structure that facilitates a transparent presentation of acquired knowledge and experiences. Also worthy of note is the European dimension of the sample forms, which are available in all European languages. Both the CV and Language Passport also place a great deal of emphasis on non-formally acquired knowledge. From his or her life experiences (e.g. learning, work and leisure time), an individual attempts to extract those competences required for a specific job. Both documents are thus opening a large field for self-reflection, which should help an individual project his or her knowledge into a desired job, and assist the employer in recognising that knowledge. The National Europass Cen-

tre, which is located at the CPI, is responsible for informing the general public and drafting materials. It also organises workshops on how to complete these two Europass documents and how to present competences in all their complexity.

Slovenia is among those countries that has been most successful in the implementation of the *Europass Certificate Supplement*, a document with a transparent and accurate record of the formal knowledge acquired at the secondary vocational education and training level. The National Europass Centre, in collaboration with the CPI and other social partners, drafts background documents and helps schools to issue these certificates.

The *Europass Diploma Supplement* also plays a similar role in enhancing transparency in European education. The issuance of this document is mandatory

since 2000, and is the exclusive responsibility of higher education institutions.

The last of the documents, *Europass Mobility* is a certificate that serves as a letter of recommendation. It is issued for work or learning experiences acquired abroad. The National Europass Centre keeps records of certificates issued and advises the issuing organizations in completing the document.

All Europass documents were created to strengthen confidence between countries and to facilitate integration into the labour markets of other European countries. They are also very useful for the job seekers in their own country.



Linking education and the labour market

OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

Slovenia began developing occupational standards 10 years ago as a link between the labour market and education. The increasingly rapid development of the economy, in particular the development of technologies and services, dictates the development of new vocational qualifications. Occupations, in the traditional sense, no longer follow the dynamics of the labour market, but reflect the complexity of tasks that constantly change in the workplace. Occupational standards must therefore become an instrument that will respond rapidly to the labour market and the contemporary methods of organising work employed by companies.



The development of occupational standards is carried out according to the principle of social dialogue, as all key partners at the national level are systematically included in the process of defining the content of occupations and qualifications, and their level of complexity, as well as the future needs of the labour market. Of particular importance is the participation of the most-advanced companies from industry, crafts and the service sector in the early identification of needs for new qualifications and development trends.

The CPI introduced a comprehensive approach to the development of occupational standards back in 2004, which entails the drafting of a qualifications structure and the development of occupational standards for an entire professional field in line with the development strategy of the associated activity. The CPI developed 512 occupational standards from 2001 to 2010 for the majority of existing occupations. All VET programmes, as well as catalogues for national vocational qualifications (NVQ) that set out procedures for assessment and recognition of non-formally acquired knowledge, were developed on the basis of occupational standards.

In the coming years, we will review occupational standards by professional field to ensure that their content is up to date, and to take into account the development trends of a particular activity and the needs of the labour market. We have begun reviewing the following fields: security, engineering, computer engineering, beauty care, chemical technology and the food industry. Of course, we will also develop qualifications for new fields, such as environmental management.

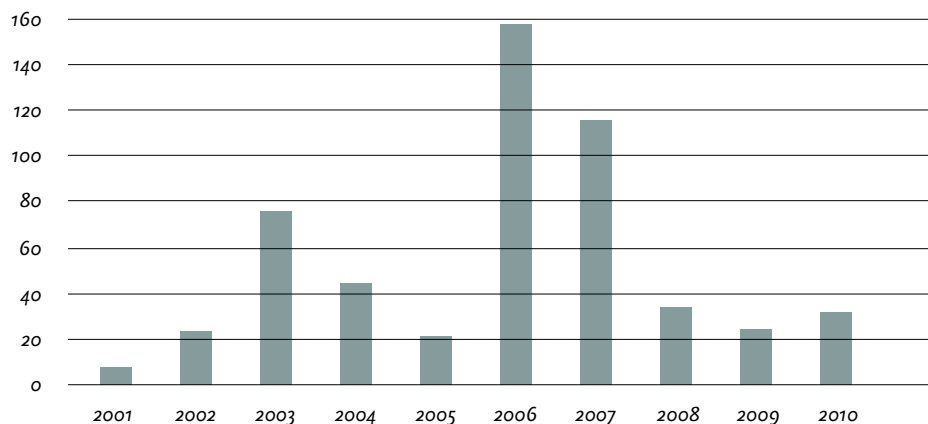
We must shift from the detailed description of work and tasks in reviewing existing occupational standards and in the development of new vocational standards that form the basis for various paths to acquiring national vocational qualifications. Instead, it is necessary to describe work and business processes as the foundation for developing the competences required to master a broader range of tasks in various contexts.

Key competences, which contribute to an individual's professional growth, as well as the performance of various roles within a company, have already established a place in contemporary qualifications.

Key competences are indispensable, not only in career terms, but also in terms of personal growth, social inclusion and lifelong learning. The CPI therefore prepared an analysis of key competences and drafted a proposal to update the set of key competences, taking into account the needs of the labour market and European recommendations in this area.

Thought must be given in the future to introducing new, more flexible occupational standards that will facilitate the more rapid adaptation to new requirements in working environments. In terms of the transparency, comparability, transferability and recognition of learning outcomes, an occupational standard must define the knowledge, skills and competences that will form the basis for defining national qualifications within a professional field.

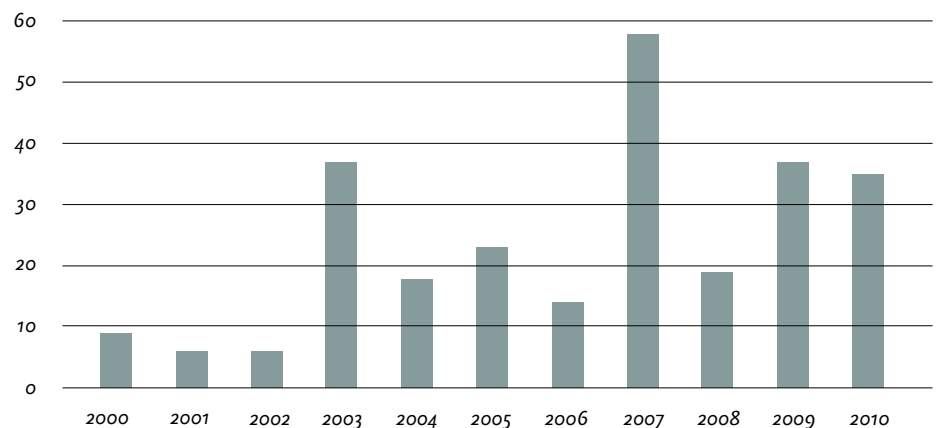
Number of occupational standards developed from 2001 to 2010



NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM

Ten years ago, Slovenia introduced a national vocational qualifications (NVQ) system with the adoption of the National Vocational Qualifications Act. The system facilitates the identification and certification of non-formally and informally acquired knowledge for all persons, irrespective of how such knowledge and skills were obtained. The system represents a flexible approach to acquiring NVQs, taking into account the needs of the labour market, and facilitates the demonstration of skills in a public manner, which increases employability and career development opportunities. The CPI is the central institution in this system, responsible for preparing NVQs at the national level and in cooperation with social partners.

Number of NVQ catalogues prepared from 2000 to 2010 (source: CPI)



A non-linear, but rising trend in the number of NVQ catalogues prepared can be seen between 2000 and 2010. Values deviated from the norm in 2007, when primarily catalogues for the needs of the Slovenian army were prepared. Nearly 70 NVQ catalogues were prepared in 2009 and 2010, primarily in the fields of audio-visual technology and media production, operations and administration, and in the field of art and handicrafts.

A great deal was accomplished in Slovenia in this area during the aforementioned period, including the issue of more than 60,000 certificates. According to data from the National Examinations Centre for the period 2001 to 2009, the most NVQs were awarded in the field of road transport, where »road transport drivers« stand out, and in the field of security, where »security guard« is the central vocation. Both fields are regulated, meaning that NVQs are prescribed by a law as a precondition to practice the profession. Only the field of security is still regulated by law. Ranking third in terms of the number of NVQs issued is the field of construction, where the most numerous vocation in terms of the number of NVQs issued is »masonry and plastering worker«. The reason for this is that an NVQ was a precondition for a work permit in the Slovenian construction sector until recently. More than 39,000 NVQs were issued in the three aforementioned activities.

The graph on the right illustrates the number of NVQs issued for other selected qualifications. Many NVQs were issued in the fields of cosmetics and tourism (masseur – 1846, croupier – 656), agriculture (beekeeper – 751), and social care and natural healing (social caretaker – 640, reflexotherapist – 392).

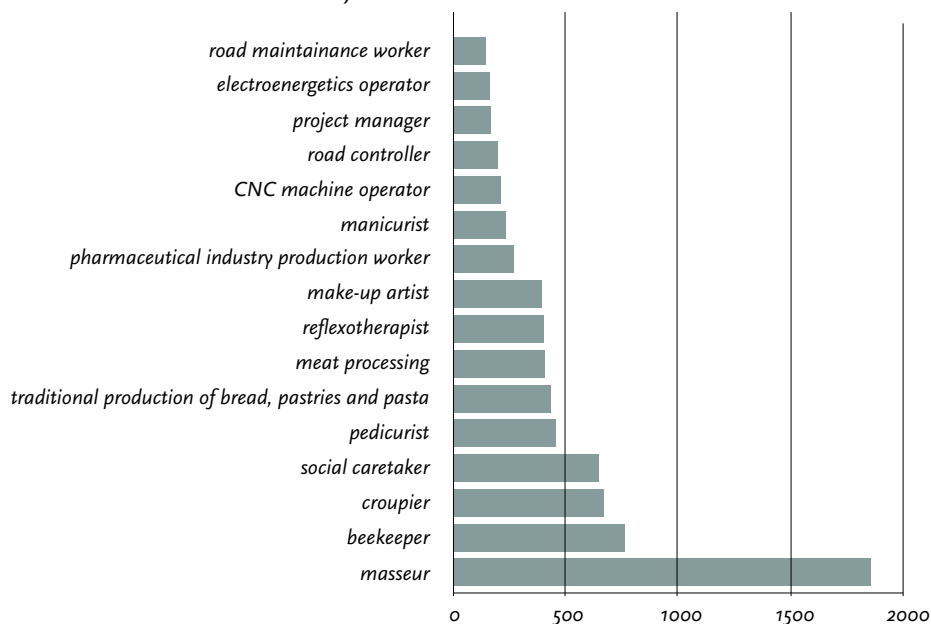
A larger number of NVQs awarded does not necessarily mean that awareness of the benefits of the NVQ system is sufficient. It is therefore important that we take additional steps forward. One of those steps includes the promotion of the NVQ system, the aim of which is to disseminate information to those for whom the NVQ system is intended. To that end, the CPI drafted a communication plan in 2010 and 2011 with the help of ESF funding. With the assistance of various forms of media, the aforementioned plan serves as the basis for implementing various forms of communication adapted to specific NVQ target groups (e.g. NVQ candidates and companies). To achieve that goal and with the help of ESF funding until 2014, the CPI will rent selected media space for the continuous promotion of NVQs.

The CPI plays other key roles in the national vocational qualifications system. One of those roles is the training of advisors in the process of verifying and certifying NVQs. In order to ensure that work is performed professionally, an institu-

tion entered in the register to provide NVQ verification and certification services must have a trained advisor for that purpose. To date, the CPI has trained 425 advisors in the process of verifying and certifying NVQs, who assist and guide candidates in their pursuit of NVQs.

Since 2000, when the National Vocational Qualifications Act was passed, we have successfully established systematic bases, developed implementing documentation, established a network of NVQ verification and certification service providers, and trained committee members and advisors. After implementing the NVQ system for 10 years, we find that it is the most established method for evaluating the effects of non-formal learning, and represents the framework for further activities aimed at increasing the general public's confidence in the NVQ system. Our core activity to that end is improving the quality of the NVQ system. The CPI has therefore focused on one more important task: monitoring of the NVQ system, which represents one instrument for improving the quality of the system in the future.

Number of NVQs issued for the qualifications in highest demand between 2001 to 2009 (source: National Examinations Centre).



EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES, AND ADVISORY SERVICES FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS

Occupational standards that reflect the needs of the economy, social partners and employers form the basis for drafting accredited vocational education and training programmes. Education and training programmes facilitate the acquisition of vocational education at a specific level of complexity for several occupations or vocational qualifications.

Significant developments in the development of education and training programmes in VET include:

- the opening of the curriculum,
- module-based programmes,
- the linking of general, vocational and practical education,
- the credit-based assessment of programmes,
- the direct linking to employers through on-the-job training, and
- a competency-based approach to the planning and implementation of the learning process, and the competency-based assessment of knowledge.

The core objective of every education programme derives from vocational competences, which are transferable between programmes within a professional field, and from key competences. Generic competences are common to similar occupations or work tasks within a professional field. Specific vocational competences are developed by students in an education programme. The individual develops a comprehensive and systematic view of the key traits of a specific occupation as the bases for his or her employment and mobility.

Modularly structured education and training programmes facilitate the linking of general and professional knowledge, technical theory and practices, and the development of general and specific vocational competences for a broader professional field, through which we surpassed subject fragmentation.

An important element of competency-based education and training programmes is the assessment of the competences that students develop and achieve in an

education programme, and demonstrate at the conclusion of a broader didactic unit: at the conclusion of education in the second and fourth subjects of the vocational matura or during final examination. At the conclusion of their education, candidates, through authentic and competency-based tasks designed to verify and assess knowledge, demonstrate their learning outcomes relating to the competences that were set as objectives of the education programme.

Following the reform of VET, the CPI focuses on the organisation of learning process and on the further development of the credit system, in particular on the process of implementing competency-based education and training programmes, and on the development of criteria for assessing and measuring competences.

As a public institute, we serve in an advisory role for content areas: introduction of the latest developments in the planning and implementation of implementing curricula at schools, management of the learning process, assessment of knowledge, and work with students with special needs. We also introduce new developments in professional fields. We provide advisory services for target groups in the vocational education and training system, such as school collectives, headteachers, teachers, other professionals, employers and social partners through a network of study groups in the form of seminars, workshops, consultations and individual advisory services for small groups and individuals.

Current advisory topics include:

- the continuing introduction of new and recast education and training programmes at schools, advisory

services in the drafting of implementing and open curriculum, the integration of key competences and the credit-based assessment of programmes, etc.;

- advisory services for consortia of schools in line with system solutions, expert work guidance in line with methodologies and other technical bases, and ensuring the coherence of the system;
- the use of new approaches for planning, teaching and the assessment of knowledge, the measurement of competences at the conclusion of an education programme, advisory services for headteachers, including the introduction of learning situations and competency-based tasks for verifying and assessing knowledge, etc.;
- guidance and career management in education;
- the education and training of teachers and other professionals;
- promoting the development and implementation of learning achievement portfolios, and the drafting of personal education plans for students;
- the introduction of new technologies in the learning process;
- the inclusion of students with special needs in regular departments (a model for offering assistance to teachers in their work with students with special needs, who have been integrated into regular departments, and the training of mentors);
- the development of key and vocational competences during on-the-job training, and the development of mutual cooperation between teachers and employers;
- advisory services during the organisation and execution of national vocational competitions based on the Euroskills competition;

- recognition of non-formally and informally acquired knowledge;
- the organisation, implementation and monitoring of the vocational matura and final examinations, including the drafting of examination materials for the vocational matura and monitoring and advisory services during final examinations, and the training of teachers, secretaries and chairpersons of examination commissions;
- craftsman's, foreman's and manager's examinations;
- the review of VET education and training programmes;
- the monitoring and implementation of the latest developments in specific professional fields; and
- advisory services during the development of learning materials.

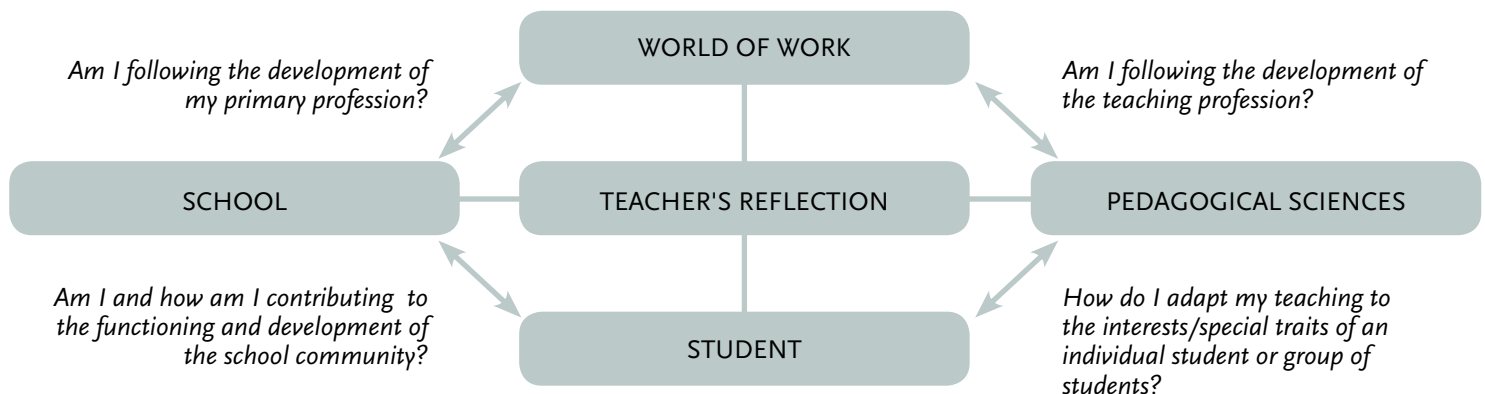
The content of advisory services is planned on the basis of initiatives from schools and professionals, on the basis of the results of evaluations, when the latter indicate specific gaps, and as the results of concluded development projects.

We will continue to focus particular attention on the learning process and the assessment of knowledge. In particular, we will further enhance the upgrading of knowledge in specific professional fields.

DEVELOPMENT AND PROVISION OF CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

The CPI develops and offers continuing education and training for teachers. The development of the range of training programmes derives from the question, what competences does today's teacher working in vocational schools require. The teacher in VET, in some respects, plays a specific role on account of his or her partnership with the workforce and due to the preparation of students to successfully cope with the challenges of the labour market.

The professionalisation of the teaching profession and vocational education in training is carried out in relation to four factors from the work environment (adapted by Seppo Helakorpi, 2005)



More precisely, we are interested in what competences are required from a teacher for the realisation of objectives relating to the reform of vocational education and training. In the context of old expectations, new expectations with regard to teachers have sprung from society. The new roles and competences expected from today's teacher include: teamwork, managing and participating in development projects, providing counselling, constant reflection on his or her own practice, contributing to the quality assurance of the school, responsibility for the promotion of the school and its education programmes, a high level of flexibility in organising the learning process, mobility, autonomy in the development of learning materials, tracking rapid technological development, monitoring the needs of the labour market, etc.

The CPI is one provider of professional development for teachers in VET. Training programmes are currently being developed in the following areas: curriculum planning, competency-based criteria assessment, creating a stimulating learning environment with regard to the specific traits of an individual student or group of students, the organisation of teamwork at a school, counseling role and the support of students with learning difficulties, the resolution of disciplinary problems, the development of learning materials, and the refreshing of knowledge from the teacher's primary professional field.

In order to provide a focused response to the educational needs of teachers, training programmes are developed on the basis of findings from the monitoring of various processes at schools. We offer abbreviated and extended training programmes. Abbreviated, typically one-day training programmes are intended to

refresh teachers' knowledge from their primary profession. Extended, multi-day programmes are aimed at strengthening the collectives of teachers from individual schools for the introduction of deep-rooted changes in the work method in order to adapt it to contemporary demands.

Abbreviated training programmes are set out in a catalogue of continuous professional development, published by the Ministry of Education and Sport and supported by national funds. European funds are earmarked for the development and implementation of training programmes, through which we attempt to provide teachers support in coping with new roles.

The quality of training programmes will be ensured in the long-term through research, the development of quality study materials, highly qualified lecturers and the implementation of training programmes in a way that envisages a high level of teacher participation.

GUIDANCE FOR CAREER MANAGEMENT

In Slovenia, guidance for youth is carried out primarily by: (1) primary school advisors, (2) secondary school advisors and (3) Vocational Information and Counselling Centres (VICCs). The CPI works with all three groups of advisors. Emphasis is placed on technical content relating to guidance and communication skills. We also focus on directly guiding youth prior to the selection of a secondary school.



With regard to professional training for guiding youth, we have found that there is no systematic training for guidance practitioners at primary and secondary schools, and VICCs. The aim of the training programme *New Trends in Guiding Youth Prior to the Selection of a Secondary School* is to close that gap. The training programme includes the presentation of new developments in the area of guiding youth in Europe and a briefing on the latest laws and measures in the EU and Slovenia. It offers current views with a theoretical background of advisory practices. The training programme also includes a workshop, which trains participants in the planned implementation of tasks and the planning of improvements in career orientation.

In addition to counseling, informing is another integral part of guidance services. In every communication, which is what informing actually is, a whole range of factors must be taken into account, which requires some knowledge of the communications profession. School advisors and advisors at VICCs typically do not possess such knowledge, while there is also no appropriate system of continuing training in this area. The CPI has therefore prepared: (1) *A workshop on writing for the internet*, intended primarily for teaching the skills for attractive and effective presentations on the internet and (2) a *communications workshop* at which participants learn how to prepare attractive and informative print materials, effective presentations, etc. The *Short Manual on the Effective Promotion of Vocational Education and Training* is also intended for teaching communication skills. The manual contains specific instructions and recommendations that should be taken into account in effective communications.

In addition to the aforementioned educational content, information for students, parents, adults and advisors (school advisors, career advisors and lifelong learning advisors) is provided directly on the website www.mojaizbira.si. Its main objective is to offer all target groups simple and effective access to information in one place that will assist them in decisions on a future career and education, and thus regarding their chosen path in life, or in carrying out their role as a good advisor. Informing over the internet is also supplemented by the *mojaizbira* page on the Facebook social network, which is extremely popular with young persons.

Despite all of the efforts, Slovenia, like the majority of EU Member States, is still facing a continuous decline in interest from young persons for vocational education and training programmes. Accompanying these trends is the marginalisation and stigmatisation of vocational education and training. In accordance with European Commission guidelines and recommendations, the CPI is also addressing these issues.

The folder *Vocational Guide* represents the contextual framework of materials intended to de-stigmatise vocational education and training. The folder contains the following: (1) a pamphlet with advice that should be considered before deciding on continuing education; (2) a pamphlet with information on general and vocational education and training programmes aimed at the entertaining familiarisation with all types of education and training programmes; and (3) an insurance/security policy that focuses in part on breaking negative stereotypes concerning vocational education and training.

As a measure to de-stigmatise vocational education and training, the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training also organises national competitions in a vocational Olympiad of professions aimed at ensuring the participation of Slovenian teams at the EuroSkills competition. The European Commission itself recognises skills competitions as one of the most important ways to improve the attractiveness of vocational education and training, and thus one of the most important ways to solve the issue of lack of workers with this level of education in the European Union.

Guidance for career management thus assists individuals prior to the selecting of continuing education and a career path, and is a means for de-stigmatising certain forms of education. However, even such intensive efforts will not help us achieve our objective if the rules of communication are not taken into account.

EVALUATION OF PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

Since their inception, evaluation activities at the CPI have been closely linked to the objectives of developing and providing a quality vocational education and training system in Slovenia. The underlying purpose of evaluations is to perceive the realisation of development objectives, to identify examples of best practices at schools, and to identify the problems that hinder schools in their efforts to improve the quality of the education process. In the context of the most recent reform, evaluations of programme developments and schools were enhanced both in terms of content and breadth.



Since 2005, when monitoring was supported by the European Social Fund (ESF), the CPI has made a participative approach its centrepiece, with the aim of improving the quality of evaluations. We have included school representatives and other external experts from specific educational fields in the evaluation process, which previously emphasised a snapshot of the situation regarding the implementation of education and training programmes at individual schools. Together, we plan and evaluate areas that are considered new developments in line with objectives to reform the vocational education and training system. A significant shift is the linking of evaluation and development activities at individual schools and the drafting of guidelines for continued development, which we present to the competent councils of experts. The results of cooperation with school representatives and external experts from faculties and companies include the drafting of guidelines for individual areas of the educational process, established examples of best practices and supplementary reports on monitoring that are published regularly on the website, some of which are also published in print.

The evaluation of the recasting and introduction of new programmes is supplemented by two reports on the pilot introduction of education programmes: *Final Report on the Pilot Introduction of the Car Mechatronic Education Programme (2007)* and the *Final Report on the Pilot Introduction of the Mechatronics Technician and the Design Technician Education Programmes (2011)*. Through the systematic evaluation of the aforementioned education programmes over the course of several years, we obtained a set of reports that provide an analysis of developments at individual schools and an update of the theoretical concepts of introducing specific programme elements. The topics cover a wide range of developments: a school's implementing curricu-

lum, open curriculum, key competences, the collaboration of teachers and teamwork, on-the-job training, individualisation of the learning process, the assessment of knowledge, final examinations, the assessment of education programme objectives, etc. The results of evaluations are taken into account in the preparation of manuals, in the education and training of teachers and headteachers, and in advising individual school collectives.

In 2008, we carried out extensive research on moral education and discipline aspects in vocational schools. The result of the research is the scientific monograph, *Do Vocational Schools Need a Concept of Moral Education and Discipline?* We invited the schools that participated in the research to actively participate in the planning and introduction of moral education and discipline aspects in the education process. We discussed various themes at the schools, including the introduction of moral education and discipline aspects in the curriculum (e.g. in project week), responsiveness to breaches of school rules and conflicts between students, an inductive approach to resolving disciplinary problems, etc. Cooperation with the schools takes the form of regular monthly meetings that are held throughout the school year.

The development of appropriate learning assistance and support networks for students with learning difficulties represents the next set of activities, which are based on an extensive evaluation study (*Learning Problems of Students in Vocational Education and Training: Definition, Recognition, Forms and Assistance Networks*, 2010) The goal was to develop a comprehensive concept of work with students with learning difficulties, as it was determined in the study that students are not left without assistance; rather assistance is simply insufficient for students with learning difficulties to advance and

to successfully and creatively be included in education and the school community.

The development of the participative approach in evaluation studies led us not only to the more intensive use of results, but also to the increasingly intensive inclusion of schools in all phases of the evaluation process. In developing a peer review method, we built on our own evaluation experiences with established European methods so that the schools participating in an evaluation could take full responsibility for the process and be the beneficiaries of evaluation results. The purpose of peer review is to develop the quality of a school with the help of external experts that are first and foremost colleagues from related schools and secondary experts from developmental research institutes that primarily offer methodological support. Peer review supplements the self-assessment of a school. Thus, the school can expect the greater objectivity of results that derive from an assessment and proposals for improvement. This consequently means the increased likelihood of actual improvement in the quality of selected work areas at a school.

Through various topics and evaluation approaches, we aim to contribute a taking step forward in terms of development at the level of the entire vocational education and training system. Above all, our aim is to offer schools an objective overview of their work and support them in their development efforts through our own activities.

CONCLUSIONS

We hope that we have succeeded, and that you have derived enough information and knowledge about us by reading this publication. Our activities are varied. Notwithstanding all the burdens we face, we can say that we achieve our established objectives. That is not always simple, but nevertheless worth the effort. Each day, through our work, we prove that we are capable of creating something new, of working as a team or independently, and of offering products that are professionally enhanced by their authors and that contribute significantly to the development of the broader sphere of education.

30 Technological changes, continuing globalisation, the increasing mobility of knowledge and individuals, and preserving nature and health are topics that will continue to have a profound impact on learning in the decades to come. This is particularly true for vocational education and training. The belief that there is only one standard set of knowledge and competences to function successfully in society is misguided. The ever presence of information, the linking of sectors and priorities that are not generated at the national level but on the global or local level will affect the needs of the labour market, and consequently learning via a formal and non-formal system. There will always be challenges in vocational education and training. Employers, decision makers, workers, families and students who will be flexible and open to change will face those challenges more easily.

Ultimately, only people and governments capable of adopting and managing changes will be able to take advantage of our changing future.