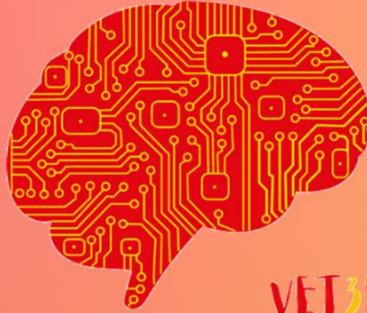




Erasmus+ Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training KA220-VET-64F6E49F

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VET3D

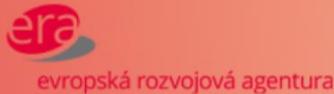
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

DIGICOMP 3D

PARTNERSHIP
REPORT
VET3D

Research on the key competences and soft skills model in
Vocational Education and Training for VET students

Findings in Czech Republic, Italy, Latvia and Greece



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Introduction

Over recent years, soft-skills have become a much more important topic in the VET environment and business. Although VET education institutions are putting great efforts to develop soft-skills in the education curricula, the business leaders still believe the workforce is experiencing a soft-skills gap. The most recent EU recommendation on eight key competences for lifelong learning states back to 2018 and revises the 2006 recommendation also taking into consideration the preconditions of today's world. The recommendation not only describes the competences but also gives guidance and examples of good practices (European Union 2019, 3.).

The Copenhagen declaration (Council of the European Union; European Commission, 2002), as part of the Lisbon strategy, defined the contribution of VET to achieving the goal of Europe becoming the world's most dynamic knowledge-based economy (European Commission, 2004). It has initiated a process of closer cooperation in VET in Europe (Council of the European Union; European Commission, 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010) and a shift to competence-based education and training, through the development of common frameworks and tools facilitating transparency, quality of qualifications and mobility.

Talking about the definition, soft skills are largely defined as personality traits, interpersonal skills, social skills, emotional intelligence, and more that drive people to operate. They typically complement hard skills to help people accomplish goals and/or objectives. Putting soft-skills in other terms, they are non-technical, often hard to visualize skills. They are also called intangible or social skills at times.

This report collects and summarizes the existing material and needs analysis concerning the framework model and transferable competences and practices that will strengthen and improve cross sectoral cooperation in the VET field in the four VET3D project partner countries. (Czech Republic, Italy, Latvia and Greece).

Questions to be answered are:

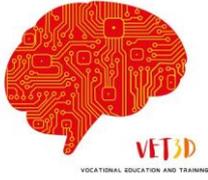
Which key competences and soft skills are used in the partner countries' VET schools?

What are the official guidelines?

- How are they included and built into the curricula (national and local curricula – if such exist)?
- How are they assessed, identified, and recognized (according to national requirements)?
- How will they be displayed to the employer?

Structure

This report comprises three sections.



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- The first part gives an overview of the concept and the framework as settled by the European Union.
- The second part includes the descriptions from the partner countries (Czech Republic, Greece, Italy and Latvia and describes the ways the Key Competences are embedded in the curricula in VET in these countries.
- The final part draws together general conclusions

Methodology and approach

In order to reach the main aim, the desk research was carried out. The desk research helped to explore the existing labour market situation in every partner's country with regard to the issue of soft-skill mismatch. Particular attention was paid for the identification of soft-skill imbalances between soft-skills supply and demand in the local markets. The main sources for the desk research were national policies, labor market and skills strategies, research articles, statistical databases (OECD, Statista, and local producers of statistics).

The interviews and surveys were executed in March-April of 2022 by the partners of the VET3D project. National, regional and school-specific curricula were inspected to find out how and to which extent the soft skills and key competences for lifelong learning are embedded in them.

The questionnaires filled in by the policy makers, students, teachers and labor market (5 companies) consisted of multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions where respondents could provide more precise comments (see Annexes). The questionnaires were filled in online, and some interviews were made face to face, to improve the response rate and make collecting the results easier.

Czech Rep	Italy	Greece	Latvia
2 Directors of VET schools and 1 Policy Maker (Czech Ministry of Education), students from VET schools	2 Directors of Vet schools and one Vet expert - responsible for the formation of the regional level, students from VET schools	Directors of Vet schools and one Vet expert, students from VET schools	2 Directors of Vet schools and one Vet expert - responsible for the formation, students from VET schools

Table 1. Respondents engaged in the survey

Key competences and soft skills in VET



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Key competences for Vocational Education and Training – definition

Individuals equipped with key competences have lifelong advantages over those who have not mastered literacy, digital skills and languages. These competences, together with other skills, are fundamental assets for every European citizen for employability, wellbeing and lifelong learning. However, acquisition of key competences remains a challenge in Europe. Literacy is crucial for the development of knowledge and understanding across all other subjects. It is also linked to better memory and thinking performance. However, more than one in five 15-year-olds in the EU still have low reading skills, and this has not improved in recent years.

The key competences are combined of knowledge, skills and attitudes and are developed all through life in formal, non-formal and informal settings. Knowledge consists of already settled concepts, facts, figures, ideas and theories that support understanding of a specific area or subject. Skills equal the capacity to accomplish processes and to implement the existing knowledge into action. Attitudes depict the tendency and mentality to act or react to ideas. (European Union 2019, 5.)

The equally important key competences are Literacy competence, Multilingual competence, Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering, Digital competence, Personal, social and learning to learn competence, Citizenship competence, Entrepreneurship competence and Cultural awareness and expression competence (European Union 2019, 5).

Competency

Key Word	(OECD;2018a, p.7)	(EC;2017b, p.20) (EC; 2008, p.4)	(EC;2018a, p.4)	(EC;2006, p.13)	(OECD; 2003a, p.4)
Competence / Competency	“Competence” is not merely a specific skill but is a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values successfully applied to face-to-face, virtual or mediated encounters with people who are perceived to	Competence’ means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the	Competences include more than knowledge and understanding and take into account the ability to apply that when Performing a task (skill) as well as how – with what mind- set – the learner	Competences are defined here as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context.	A competency is more than just knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilizing psychosocial resources (including



	<p>be from a different cultural background, and to individuals' experiences of global issues (i.e. situations that require an individual to reflect upon and engage with global problems that have deep implications for current and future generations).</p>	<p>European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.</p>	<p>approaches that task (attitude).</p>		<p>skills and attitudes) in a particular context.</p>
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Table 2: Competency definition

Key Competences

	<p>RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. (2006/962/EC) p. 4</p>	<p>Recommendation 2006/962/EC on key competences for lifelong learning.</p>	<p>(EC;2017a, p.6)</p>	<p>(EC; 2006, p. 13)</p>
<p>Key Competences</p>	<p>The Reference Framework sets out eight key competences: 1) Communication in the mother tongue. 2) Communication in foreign languages. 3) Mathematical competence and basic competences in</p>	<p>This rule states that: 'Knowledge and skills required to achieve compulsory education are referred to four cultural axes, which form the basis to develop learning pathways oriented to</p>	<p>Key competences are those competences all individuals need for personal fulfilment and developmen</p>	<p>Key Competences are defined here as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context.</p>



	<p>science and technology;</p> <p>4) Digital competence;</p> <p>5) Learning to learn;</p> <p>6) Social and civic competences;</p> <p>7) Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and</p> <p>8) Cultural awareness and expression.</p> <p>The key competences are all considered equally important, because each of them can contribute to a successful life in a knowledge society.</p>	<p>the acquisition of eight key citizenship competences’.</p> <p>The eight key citizenship competences are:</p> <p>(a) learning to learn;</p> <p>(b) planning;</p> <p>(c) communication;</p> <p>(d) collaborating and participating;</p> <p>(e) acting independently and responsibly;</p> <p>(f) problem solving;</p> <p>(g) identifying connections and relationships;</p> <p>(h) acquiring and interpreting information.</p>	<p>t, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment . The Recommendation defines competence s as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes</p>	<p>Key competences are those which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment.</p>
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Table 3: Key competencies

Assessment, identification and recognition of key competences

Many Member States have reformed their school curricula and vocational programmes in recent years, to introduce part or all of the approach set out in the Key Competences Recommendation. This involves a major paradigm change, from transmitting a static body of pre-defined knowledge to a more dynamic and holistic development of competences. Yet, the key challenge for education systems in many Member States is the assessment of these competences. Assessment is one of the most powerful influences on teaching and learning, but it tends to put too much emphasis on subject knowledge, and less on skills and attitudes, and to neglect altogether the increasingly important cross-curricular competences, such as learning to learn or entrepreneurship. Progress has to be made on assessment approaches to take into account all competences needed for the 21st century. Many promising developments in Member States can be used as best practice examples to support efforts to improve assessment in European countries. These include broadening the scope of assessment of traditional school subjects (mother tongue, foreign languages, mathematics and science) and introducing assessment for those key competences that are less familiar and present a new challenge (digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression).

([European commission - Strasbourg, 20.11.2012 SWD\(2012\) 371 final](#))



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Learning, teaching, and assessment are closely connected and any approach that affects one of these elements will also affect the others. This implies that decisions made about assessment have a major significance on how the key competences are taught and on what individuals learn. (European Union 2019, 16.).

According to Cedefop's skill forecasts and its European skills and jobs survey, in the next decade more jobs are expected to require more digital competences. However, a striking 43% of Europeans do not have basic digital competence and around a third of employees, who need digital competences, are at risk of skill gaps.

VET plays an important role in addressing these challenges and supporting the acquisition of key competences.

This comparative study provides insights into the extent that the three selected key competences – digital, multilingual and literacy – are embedded and promoted in initial upper secondary VET in Europe. The analysis is provided at three levels:

- 1) national policies, qualifications and curricula, including main areas of policy intervention;
- 2) reference documents, programme delivery and assessment standards; and
- 3) teacher/trainer competences.

Soft Skills Framework/ What are soft skills

In literature it is possible to find many approaches to how soft skills can be defined and into which subcategories it is possible to classify them. This was a challenge to the VET3D partnership.

Overall, Soft Skills are understood as a set of critical competences, life-oriented and in strict relation with individuals. This means that soft skills differ from Hard Skills, commonly seen as “more technical, highly specific in nature and particular to an occupation, and that can be (generally) taught more easily than soft skills (IBE (2013). Glossary of Curriculum Terminology, IBE- UNESCO).

As mentioned, soft skills include all the qualities, skills and qualifications that enable both professional and personal success in addition to hard skills. They relate to personal competences, social skills and methodological competencies necessary at the workplace.

Soft skills



	(ESCO; 2017)	IBE (2013). Glossary of Curriculum Terminology, IBE- UNESCO,	Skills Panorama Glossary, CEDEFOP, EU	IBE- UNESCO (2013)
Soft skills	<p>Transversal knowledge, skills and competences are relevant to a broad range of occupations and sectors. They are often referred to as core skills, basic skills or soft skills, the cornerstone for the personal development of a person. Transversal knowledge, skills and competences are the building blocks for the development of the "hard" skills and competences required to succeed on the labour market</p>	<p>Overall, Soft Skills are understood as a set of critical competences, life-oriented and in strict relation with individuals. This means that soft skills differ from Hard Skills, commonly seen as "more technical, highly specific in nature and particular to an occupation, and that can be (generally) taught more easily than soft skills</p>	<p>Soft Skills are "the skills that are cross-cutting across jobs and sectors and relate to personal competences (confidence, discipline, self-management) and social competences (teamwork, communication, emotional intelligence)</p>	<p>A set of intangible personal qualities, traits, attributes, habits and attitudes that can be used in many different types of jobs. Examples of soft skills include: empathy, leadership, sense of responsibility, integrity, self-esteem, self-management, motivation, flexibility, sociability, time management and making decisions"</p>

Table 4: Soft skills

How to integrate Soft Skills on VET offer

More than ever, companies recognize the relevance of the soft skills for the integration and success of young, qualified workers on the labour market. VET providers and professionals are also aware of the need of promoting trainees' soft skills, as a success factor, not only for the integration in the labor market but also to succeed in VET path and qualification. Despite this awareness, there is a lack of know-how and expertise, from both parties, concerning the integration of the soft skills development in VET offer.



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The two pillars for the integration of the soft skills in VET offer:

- Skills matching is one of the most critical aspects when planning and providing initial training to young people, aiming at preparing them for life and the labour market.
- VET-Business cooperation. A study by the KOF Swiss Economic Institute concludes that the main features of VET in top performing countries include the fact that employers are involved in: setting qualification standards, deciding when an update is needed, and setting the examination form. In these systems, students spend most of their time in the workplace instead of the classroom. (KOF Swiss Economic Institute (2016). Feasibility Study for a Curriculum Comparison in Vocational Education and Training Intermediary Report II: Education-Employment Linkage Index (DRAFT). Available:

<http://e-collection.library.ethz.ch/eserv/eth:49542/eth-49542-01.pdf>)

The Relations between key competences, soft skills and transversal competences

There is a special connection between the Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Competence, which outlines the future-oriented competences, making it possible to cope with complexity, uncertainty and change in global contexts. These competences have been increasingly debated in research resulting in varied definitions, such as soft skills or transversal competences among others. (Caena 2019, 13-14.)

As defined by the European Classification of Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) “Transversal skills and competences (TSCs) are learned and proven abilities, which are commonly seen as necessary or valuable for effective action in virtually any kind of work, learning or life activity. They are ‘transversal’, because they are not exclusively related to any particular context (job, occupation, academic discipline, civic or community engagement, occupational sector, group of occupational sectors, etc.).”

Soft skills are considered to be broadly applicable qualities, habits and attitudes. Examples of soft skills cover many elements of the aforementioned key competence, mostly in the personal and social development areas, including self-esteem and self-management, motivation, sense of responsibility, flexibility (personal development); making decisions, empathy, leadership, sociability (social development), and time management (learning to learn). (Caena 2019, 14.)

Labor Market key competences (existing studies, interviews, surveys to business)

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is a key element of lifelong learning system that aims to equip people with the technical knowledge, expertise, skills and competences required on the labor market and, at the same time, with the personal skills for their future lives in society. It is the tool to pave the way towards high-quality jobs and increased employability.



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Skills are vital for competitiveness and employability, as structural changes, such as globalization and technological progress call for even higher and more labor market relevant skills for productivity growth and to secure good jobs.

In the context of a globalized world and rapid technological change, employers not only look for technical knowledge, so-called hard skills, when selecting candidates, but also prioritize those skills involving personality traits, referred to as soft skills, such as creative thinking, communication, negotiation. As recognized by the Council Recommendation 22/05/2018 on key competences for lifelong learning, transversal (or soft) skills have also become necessary, in order to foster development of those key competences, enabling young students to become active and responsible citizens.

While the role of creativity and non-formal education in helping students to develop soft skills has been widely recognized, more progress has to be made, in order to develop, on the one hand, innovative methodologies targeting transversal skills and to foster, on the other hand, the inclusion of such learning approaches across VET curricula.

Having sufficient levels of basic skills (literacy, numeracy, science and technology) is essential for young people to easily access the labour market and for adults to retain employment in high quality and stable jobs. However, large proportions (between 20% and 25%) of young people in initial education (as evidenced by the 2015 PISA) are lacking in those basic skills, which hinders their capacity to find stable employment and participate in economic and social life in general. For more details, see <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/test/>.

New ways of working and more frequent changes in jobs (by necessity or opportunity) call for a broader set of skills. Transversal skills are those relevant to find jobs and occupations in different fields from the present or past ones.

Sufficient investment in education and structural reforms, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of education and training systems, can improve basic skills. To reduce the incidence of low-performers among the young, inclusive policies also need to be targeted at raising the outcomes of pupils from a disadvantaged socio-economic or a different linguistic background.

Initial Vocational Education and Training is valued for developing job-specific and transversal skills, enabling the transition into employment and maintaining and updating the skills of the workforce. Over 13 million learners attend a vocational programme every year. Yet, labour market forecasts indicate an upcoming shortage of VET graduates in several Member States (European Parliament (2015), Labour market shortages in the European Union (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/home.html>)).

Recent graduates with VET qualifications at upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary level generally experience an easier transition from education to the labour market. They also have higher employment rates than graduates from general education pathway with comparable attainment levels.



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Despite this, for many young people and their parents, VET is still not as attractive as the academic education pathway.

In fact, the attractiveness and labour market relevance of VET programmes could still be substantially improved. An insufficient number of programmes in the Member States fully exploit the potential of work-based learning. Also, opportunities to progress from VET to higher education are still insufficient.

Quality-wise, each VET student should be prepared for living and working in an increasingly globalized society, including learning foreign languages.

Demographic changes and migration are among the greatest challenges in Europe, with an impact on the supply of skilled labour, their diversity, the structure of jobs, intensity of skills shortages and provision of VET. Skills development strategies in a given country will also need to take into account migration and integration policies and employers' human resources and training practices towards young and adults, including foreign / cross-border workers or third-country nationals. The labour market integration of refugees and economic migrants could be part of the EU's approach to tackling skills mismatch. Efforts to identify, assess and validate skills, and recognize foreign qualifications should be stepped up to this effect. ([Opinion of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training](#)).

The global reform agenda defined under the Sustainable Development Goals, including its ethical principles, has an impact on VET systems, provision and content.

The political attention to the importance of investing in people is vital in making sure that modernization efforts are implemented in the required speed and scope. It is necessary to integrate education and training policies into forward looking economic, competitiveness and innovation policies to manage structural changes.

This will need to be well reflected in the structure of public budgets. Indeed, through strengthened cooperation between Member States, social partners and education and training providers, future education and training policies and skills governance systems need to be even more closely linked to other public policies and modernization strategies, backed by adequate levels of public and private investments at different levels. Social partners have a key role in supporting transition and career paths between sectors. The different funding sources and financing mechanisms (e.g. training funds) should be adequately designed and implemented to maximise positive impact.

Vocational education and training need to provide the highest possible level of training for this change, and it definitely needs to provide something different—new elements and new methodology—compared to the current ones. This is how those graduating from such training can provide a higher value-added activity.



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Top 10 skills

in 2020

1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Critical Thinking
3. Creativity
4. People Management
5. Coordinating with Others
6. Emotional Intelligence
7. Judgment and Decision Making
8. Service Orientation
9. Negotiation
10. Cognitive Flexibility

in 2015

1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Coordinating with Others
3. People Management
4. Critical Thinking
5. Negotiation
6. Quality Control
7. Service Orientation
8. Judgment and Decision Making
9. Active Listening
10. Creativity



Source: Future of Jobs Report, World Economic Forum

Figure 1: Expected changes in competence requirements 2015; 2020 Source: Future of Jobs Report, World Economic Forum

The researches carried out by the World Economic Forum clearly show that Industry is changing competence requirements. In 2019, complex problem solving continues to be the most important, just like in 2015. However, the role of critical thinking and especially creativity increases within the Top10. New requirements, such as emotional intelligence and cognitive flexibility, also appear in the Top10.

Based on analysis in Internet job postings: employability skills – infographic (<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/internet-job-postings-preliminary-skills-analysis/internet-job-postings-employability-skills-infographic>), employers across all occupations place a great deal of importance on effective communication. This research found that between 2014-17 the top ten employability skills, in order of employers' emphasis in internet job postings, were communication skills, organizational skills, writing, planning, detail orientation, teamwork/collaboration, problem-solving, time management, research and computer digital skills.

Future skills and training: a practical resource to help identify future skills and training (<https://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv%3A77856>) also uses the internet to identify skills to look forward and consider the skills expected to be required in the future. Based on review of digital and social media sources, as well as traditional literature sources, this work identifies the following employability skills: foundational skills, such as literacy and numeracy, including digital and financial literacy; skills for collaborating, such as communication, teamwork, relationship management; skills for learning and adapting; entrepreneurial skills; analytical skills; skills for adding



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value, such as creativity; non-automatable skills, such as empathy, sociability, teamwork, social cultural awareness; and social platform skills.

Key competences and soft skills in VET in the four VET3D partner countries

CZECH REPUBLIC

National Flag:



Officially adopted on January 1, 1993, the National Flag of the Czech Republic is characterized by two equal horizontal bands of white (top) and red (down) with a blue isosceles triangle on the left side.

The red color symbolizes courage and hardiness during the war, while the white color represents peace and honesty and the blue-colored isosceles triangle symbolizes justice, truth, and loyalty.

<https://www.worldatlas.com/flags/czech-republic#:~:text=The%20National%20Flag%20of%20Czech,color%20symbolizes%20peace%20and%20honesty.>

Location: map



In the words of the [European Commission](#), the Czech Republic (Česká republika - CZ) can be defined as “a small advanced country”, which is located in the very heart of Europe. More precisely, the Czech Republic, also called Czechia, is a landlocked country of Central Europe that shares its borders with 4 countries: Germany, Poland to the North, and Slovakia and Austria to the South.

Population:

The population of the Czech Republic was **10 682 029** on 30 September 2021 ([Public database CZSO](#)). The capital (Prague) has 1 million 331,5 thousand inhabitants (30 September 2020).



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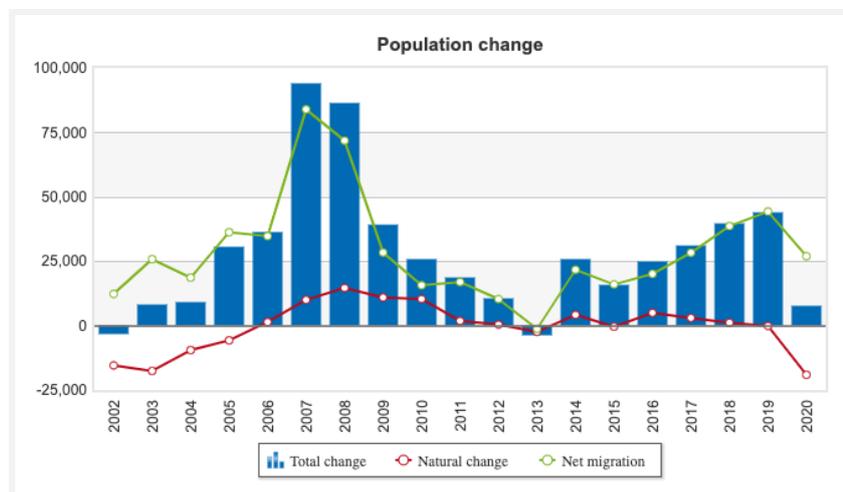


Figure 2: Population change- Czech Republic

The slight growth of the population observed in recent years is mainly thanks to the positive net migration rate (dominantly from Ukraine and Slovakia), alongside with a slight natural population increase. As regards ethnicity in the country, the majority of the 10.682 million inhabitants are Czechs (63,7%), translating to 6.7 million people. As of 2013, fourteen minorities have been officially living in the Czech Republic: Belarusians, Bulgarians, Croatians, Germans, Greeks, Hungarians, Poles, Romani people, Russians, Rusyns, Serbians, Slovaks, Ukrainians, and Vietnamese. Since the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, Slovaks, living in the Czech Republic, have comprised roughly 3% of the population in the country. In fact, since the foundation of the sovereign Czech Republic, the country has undergone substantial development in the field of migration. In the early 1990s, the country has seen a period of a large inflow of applicants for international protection and transiting foreign nationals. In more recent years, the Czech Republic has become a destination country for foreign nationals, migrating for work and business reasons, who want to settle here on a long-term basis or permanently. According to the Czech Ministry of the Interior, nearly 425,000 foreign nationals now live in the Czech Republic¹.

Like most countries in Europe, the low fertility rates and declining population lead to an increasingly ageing population in the Czech Republic. The proportion of the 65+ age group will increase from the current 18.8 % to 27.8 % by 2040, according to the projection realised by the Czech Statistical Office (CZSO), also meaning that the share of young people (aged 0-24) will decrease in the long term from 25.1% of the total population in 2017 to 21.8 % in 2040.

In the medium term, the strong population surge of children born in 2002-08 will increase the demand on the capacity of primary (highest in 2020) and secondary (highest in 2027) education, meaning that the ageing population phenomenon will have consequences for education and training systems.

¹ <https://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/article/migration.aspx>



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Territory:

Traditionally divided into three lands, namely Bohemia (Čechy) in the west, Moravia (Morava) in the east, and Czech Silesia, the hilly country covers a total surface area of 30,450 square miles (78,865 square kilometers)². Since 2000, the Czech Republic has 14 administrative units called regions (kraje) (NUTS 3³).

Official state language: The population is linguistically homogenous. The official language of the country is Czech, which belongs to the western Slavic family of languages. Regional dialects do not possess the status of a language.

VET schools' number: There are 986 secondary VET schools in the academic year 2020/2021, 24 % of them are private. Secondary VET schools are divided into two types:

- The first type are secondary vocational schools (“Střední odborná učiliště”). The study lasts three years. Studies at this time of school end with a final examination and a vocational certificate.
- The second type are secondary technical schools (“Střední odborné školy”). The standard duration of the study is four years and the study ends with the Maturita examination (= school-leaving exams) proving completion of secondary education.

It means the first pass examination is “Maturita” in Czechia. In case students want to continue studying at the university, they usually have to pass an entrance examination (each university has a different level and form of entrance exam).

Number of tertiary vocational institutions (“Vyšší odborné školy”) is 156, 33% of them are private. The study programmes last three or three and a half years. Upon successful passing of the absolutorium, the graduate attains a tertiary professional qualification and the title of a specialist with a diploma (diplomovaný specialista, DiS).

TIn the academic year there are together 1007 VET schools in the Czech Republic.

For comparison in the school year 2015/2016 the number of VET schools was 1 113. Secondary VET schools were 942 and tertiary vocational institutions were 171. In the monitored period, the number of VET schools decreased by 10.5 %.

Source:

² <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/czech-republic-population>

³ NUTS: Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics



<https://statis.msmt.cz/rocenka/rocenka.asp->

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VET educators' number

The Czech Republic has approximately 27 000 secondary VET school educators. The exact number is difficult to get, because the statistics show the numbers of educators together with the grammar school's educators. Tertiary vocational institutions have 3 667 educators. Together work in Czech VET schools is around 30 667 educators. The data are also drawn from the school year 2020/2021.

For comparison in the academic year 2015/2016 Czechia had in total 31 413 VET educators (27 138 secondary VET schools and 4 275 tertiary vocational institutions). Between 2015 and 2020 the number of educators decreased by 2.4%.

Source:

<https://statis.msmt.cz/rocenka/rocenka.asp> cap. D 1.1.17.1, E 3.1.1

VET learners' number (the latest data from 2021 if possible):

The total number of pupils in upper secondary education for the academic year 2020/2021 is 432 906. VET learners are 301 107. It means that 69.5% of the total number of upper secondary level students attend VET programmes.

Tertiary vocational institutions comprise 11 348 learners. All of them are students of VET schools. There are 312 455 VET learners together.

For comparison, in the 2015/2016 academic year, the number of students in upper secondary education reached 405 628. Pupils, who studied at VET secondary schools, were 277 583. This was 68.4% of all learners.

Tertiary vocational institutions had 17 128 pupils.

In total there were 294 711 VET learners. The number of pupils was increased by 5.6% between the academic year 2015/2016 and 2020/2021. One of the reasons for the growth is demographic decline.

Source:

<https://statis.msmt.cz/rocenka/rocenka.asp> cap. D1.1.4, E1

Links to national reports about VET:

https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2019/Vocational_Education_Training_Europe_Czech_Republic_2018_Cedefop_ReferNet.pdf

http://www.nuv.cz/uploads/EQF/National_Referencing_Report_Czech_Republic_en_fin_1.pdf

<https://europa.eu/europass/system/files/2020-06/Czech%20Republic%20Referencing%20Report%20.pdf>



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CZ: Defining and classifying VET

VET system at the national context

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MŠMT) is responsible for the national education system. From pre-primary until post-secondary education. Vocational schools are mostly public, established by the region. Initial vocational training takes place in school and it includes a high proportion of practical training (in schools, workshops, school farms or establishments, vocational training centres and in firms). Secondary vocational schools develop their school curricula in accordance with the RVP (Framework Educational Programme) issued by the Ministry of Education and Science for all fields of secondary vocational education.

The Czech Republic is following a trend, where it has gone from a country primarily focused on industry and manufacturing to a country reoriented towards services and business. The popularity of some educational fields corresponds to this. VET is generally a very strong type of education in the Czech Republic, accounting for more than 3/4 of educational attainment.

National policies regarding VET system

The main strategy prepared and followed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is the [STRATEGY OF EDUCATION POLICY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC TO 2030+](#) (2020) where one of the goals is modernising the vocational education and training system, thus facilitating the transition of graduates to the labour market, and promoting the acquisition of qualifications during studies.

Another currently ongoing plan is [National Tutoring Plan](#) (2020) which responds to the negative impacts of the disruption of full-time teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with secondary schools and conservatories receiving funding for tutoring and support for needy students in their final years.

Support to Regional Action Planning (2016) aims to ensure methodological support in the utilisation of action planning to all regions of the country as well as to secondary and higher professional schools.

VET funding (national & international)

Public regional schools and educational institutions receive funds from the state budget and from the budgets of territorial administrative units - regions and municipalities; **schools receive part of their**



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funds through their own economic activities and participation in international programmes. There are three different systems of regular public funding of VET. The first system is regulated by the Schools Act and finances the upper secondary and tertiary professional schools. The second system finances higher education institutions and is governed by the Higher Education Act. The third system covers the Public Employment Service training and is governed by the Employment Act. The method of financing public kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, conservatories and after-school clubs is regulated by the 2020 amendment to the Education Act, which introduced a new system for distributing public funds to schools. Money is allocated to schools in a normative manner directly from the state budget, with the per-pupil norm applicable under the previous system replaced by a per-teacher norm.

Incentives for VET learners, education providers and enterprises

One good example of the possibilities for pupils is the Curriculum Project. This is a fairly broad project that helps schools to develop school curricula, but has also created a body of good practice in collaboration between schools and companies/practice providers. It was a three-year national project (2009) implemented by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, with the National Institute of Vocational Education as the project manager. The project monitored various forms of cooperation, collected and presented examples of good practice. It monitored how well the schools were cooperating with firms.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Sociální partnerství očima zaměstnavatelů																					
AJETO, s.r.o.	x	x																			
UNITED BAKERIES a. s.	x								x			x		x							
Škoda Auto a. s.	x		x		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
Pegast s. r. o.	x					x			x	x	x										
LINET spol. s r. o.	x	x																			
Kermi s. r. o.	x	x																			
CZ LOKO, a. s. (pobočka Česká Třebová)	x			x							x	x		x							
Bosch a. s.											x	x		x							
ATX, s. r. o.	x			x				x				x		x							
ZEMSPOL České Meziříčí, a. s.	x								x												
Grandhotel Pupp Karlovy Vary, a. s.	x			x																	
Oblastní nemocnice Píbram, a. s.	x																				
Slovácké strojírný, a. s.	x										x										
BorsodChem MCHZ, s. r. o.	x	x	x		x							x		x							
BAYER s. r. o.										x											
Česká pošta, s. p.	x	x			x							x		x		x	x				
WITTE Automotive Nejdek spol. s r. o.	x	x		x	x	x					x	x		x							
TKZ Polná, s. r. o.	x								x			x									
Příklady dobré praxe SOŠ a SOU																					
Střední průmyslová škola a VOŠ technická Brno	x	x			x	x				x	x	x		x							
SŠ hotelnictví a gastronomie SČMSD Praha-Klánovice	x	x				x					x	x		x		x	x				x
VOŠ potravinářská a SPŠ mlékárenská Kroměříž	x				x	x				x		x		x							
SOŠ podnikatelská Trutnov, s.r.o.	x	x																			
Střední zemědělská škola Písek	x		x	x								x	x		x						

Legend

1. The company provides vocational training/apprenticeship to secondary school pupils/students
2. The company organises excursions for pupils/students at its workplaces
3. The company presents its activities at school, informs about the jobs on offer
4. The company offers short-term work opportunities (temporary jobs) to apprentices/students in relevant fields (as a tool for developing their professional competences)
5. The company helps the school financially (donations, grants) and/or materially (provides classroom equipment, machines, software, materials for practical training)



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6. The company organises excursions and/or internships for teachers (teachers of vocational subjects, vocational trainers)
7. Representatives of the company are members of examination committees (final exam, graduation exam)
8. The company provides scholarships for pupils or students
9. The company cooperates in the assignment of topics for final exams/finals
10. The company's employees participate in teaching as practitioners (by attending classes, supervising year-long or other papers)
11. The company participates in the training of teachers: professional lectures, workshops (new technologies, trends in the sector, etc.)
12. Defining the graduate's professional competences (graduate profile)
13. Defining the standard of practical training implemented in the company
14. Collaboration on the development of the content (curriculum) of vocational subjects
15. Defining the role of the practical instructor (company master of vocational training)
16. Proposals for the cancellation or introduction of new courses
17. Determination of teaching hourly quotas
18. Defining the standard of equipment for practical training classrooms
19. Systematic employer involvement in training activities through direct staff representation in regional committees and initiatives to influence vocational training
20. Systematic involvement of employers in educational activities at the regional level indirectly, e.g. through active membership in the Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic, the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic, sectoral associations of employers
21. Systematic involvement of employers in educational activities at the national level (e.g. company representatives in expert teams, commenting on government strategies, etc.)

Table 5: Incentives for VET learners, education providers and enterprises

We can see it is common practice for the Czech VET system to use cooperation between the school and the placement provider for professional practice, which helps students to gain professional experience and broaden their horizons. This method of cooperation is advantageous both for schools, which provide practice for their students, and for companies, which can "educate" potential future employees in this way.

Challenges

The most important challenges facing vocational education in the Czech Republic include:

- Maintaining and improving the quality and attractiveness of secondary vocational education through the promotion of vocational training and apprenticeships in enterprises;
- support for school evaluation - a coherent system of monitoring and evaluation of schools should be developed;
- further development of the National Qualifications Framework to include all levels of education in the future;
- improving the quality, permeability and financing system of tertiary education;
- the development of further education as an integral part of lifelong learning, based on a coherent legislative framework regulating, inter alia, funding, the careers guidance system and quality assurance through further development of the qualifications recognition system;
- improving the level of language skills and increasing the mobility of pupils, students and teachers;
- the introduction of the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), with particular emphasis on promoting international and domestic mobility; promoting social partnership.

List of references / Sources



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https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/national-reforms-school-education-17_cs#14_2_Narodni_plan_doucovani
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<http://www.nuv.cz/our-projects/pkap-1?lang=2>
https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/funding-education-21_cs
<https://www.databaze-strategie.cz/cz/msmt/strategie/dlouhodoby-zamer-vzdelavani-a-rozvoje-vzdelavaci-soustavy-ceske-republiky-na-obdobi-2019-2023?typ=detail>
https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8052_cs.pdf
<http://www.nuov.cz/pocatecni-odborne-vzdelavani>
<http://www.nuv.cz/t/stredni-odborne-skoly>
<https://www.mpo.cz/assets/cz/prumysl/zpracovatelsky-prumysl/2017/2/Priklady-dobre-praxe-v-oblasti-spoluprace-firem-a-skol-v-odbornem-vzdelavani-z-CR-a-zahranici.pdf>
http://www.nuv.cz/uploads/POSPOLU/Studie_dualni_systemy_FIN.pdf

ITALY

INTRODUCTION

Description of the countries profile:



Figure 3: Italy flag



Figure 4: Italy map

Location:

Italy, a country of south-central Europe, occupying a peninsula that juts deep into the Mediterranean Sea. To the north, the Alps separate Italy from France, Switzerland, Austria, and Slovenia. Elsewhere, Italy is surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea, in particular by the Adriatic Sea to the northeast, the Ionian Sea to the southeast, the Tyrrhenian Sea to the southwest, and the Ligurian Sea to the northwest.



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It is a parliamentary republic with Rome as capital. It is a founding and leading member of the European Union and a member of numerous international institutions, including the United Nations, NATO, the OECD, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the World Trade Organization, the Group of Seven, the G20, the Union for the Mediterranean, the Council of Europe, Uniting for Consensus, the Schengen Area and other.

The Italian territory has an area of 301,230 km². (ISTAT, 14/1/22).

Population:

According the last 2021 census, Italy has 59.258.000 inhabitants. The foreigners represent the 8.7% of the total population, and the 1/3 of the total are from Romania, Albania and Morocco.

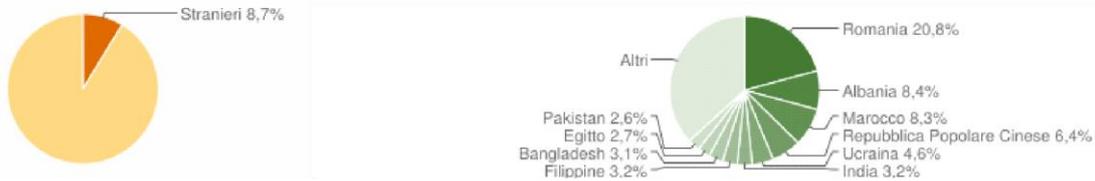


Figure 5: Population structure

Figure 6: Percentage foreigners people in Italy

Official state language: Italian

VET schools' number: 4009 (a report by ISTAT, 2019, "[Scuole: Secondaria II grado – scuole, classi e studenti](#)") □

VET learners' number: 1.630.298 (a report by MIUR, October 2021, "Focus 'Principali dati della scuola – Avvio Anno Scolastico 2021/2022'") <https://tinyurl.com/mamewbvs>

Links to national reports about VET situation:

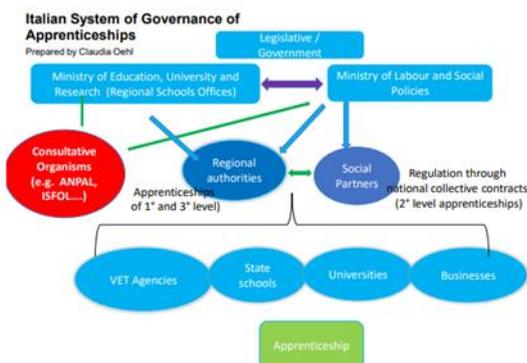
1. "[Principali dati della scuola – Avvio Anno Scolastico 2021/2022](#)"
3. [ISTAT data](#)
5. [APPLICATION OF GAMIFICATION IN VET ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION](#)
6. [Documents](#) published by ISTITUTO NAZIONALE PER L'ANALISI DELLE POLITICHE PUBBLICHE (INAPP)
7. [Skill mismatch](#) – INAPP document
8. [INAPP data](#)



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9. “[Vocational education and training in Italy and the role of trade unions](#)” Report created as part of the project „Unions4VET”



10. Job Orienta- [«Le opportunità di mobilità transnazionale per i giovani: il contributo di Erasmus+ VET»](#) document.

VET mobility strategy of Italy: 3 national agencies for Erasmus+ according the sector

- “Istituto Nazionale di Documentazione, Innovazione e Ricerca Educativa (Indire)”: for school, higher education, adults aducation;
- Istituto Nazionale per l’analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche (Inapp)”: for vocational education and training;
- Agenzia Nazionale per i Giovani (Ang)”: for youth.

11. “[Report on Erasmus+ 2020 monitoring activities](#)” (october 2021)

Defining and describing VET system at the Italian context

VETsystem at the national context

Compulsory education lasts 10 years, up to age 16. At age 14, learners make a choice between general education and VET. They have the ‘right/duty’ (diritto/dovere) to stay in education until the age of 18 and to complete 12 years of education and/or vocational training. Young people complete lower secondary education at age 14. At this age, they pass a state exam to acquire a certificate (EQF level 1) granting admission to the upper secondary level (general or technical and vocational education).



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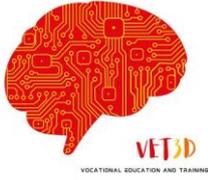
At upper secondary level, young people may opt for: (a) five-year programmes which include the two last years of compulsory education and three years (under the right/duty of education and training) in:

- high schools (licei), that provide general education programmes at upper secondary level,
- technical schools or
- vocational schools.

The following VET programmes are offered: - five-year programmes (EQF level 4) at technical schools (istituti tecnici) leading to technical education diplomas, or at vocational schools (istituti professionali) leading to professional education diplomas. Programmes combine general education and VET, and can also be delivered in the form of alternance training. Graduates have access to higher education; - three-year programmes (Istruzione e Formazione Professionale, IeFP) leading to a vocational qualification (attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale, EQF level 3, ISCED level 353); - four-year programmes leading to a technician professional diploma (diploma professionale di tecnico, EQF level 4, ISCED level 354). All upper secondary education programmes are school based, but could also be delivered as apprenticeships (Type 1). There is permeability across VET programmes and also with the general education system. On completion of a three-year vocational qualification, it is possible to attend one additional year leading to a four-year vocational diploma; this allows candidates access to the fifth year of the state education system and sitting the state exam for a general, technical or professional education diploma. At post-secondary level, VET is 16 offered as higher technical education for graduates of five-year upper secondary, or of four-year IeFP programmes that pass entrance exams:

- higher technical education and training courses (Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore, IFTS): one-year post-secondary non-academic programmes leading to a higher technical specialisation certificate (Certificato di Specializzazione Tecnica Superiore, EQF level 4);
- higher technical institute programmes (Istituti Tecnici Superiori, ITS): two- to three-year post-secondary non-academic programmes that lead to a higher level technical diploma (Diploma di Tecnico Superiore, EQF level 5).

The Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR) defines the VET framework in national school pathways (technical and vocational institutes) for Higher Technical Education and Training pathways (IFTS) in agreement with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (MLPS). It has sole responsibility for Higher Technical Education (ITS) in terms of defining guidance documents and the monitoring and assessment of the training chain. The MIUR also deals with redefining the ITS National Index, with the introduction of new technical figures and the updating of those already on the index itself. The labour ministry defines the VET framework for interventions provided for within the scope of IeFP, (in agreement with the Education Ministry) for training interventions for apprenticeship and continuing training, provided within the scope of the public system. The regions and autonomous provinces are responsible for planning, programming, organisation and implementation of interventions.



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Since 2015, apprenticeship is available at all levels and programmes and is always defined as an open-ended employment contract. Type 1 apprenticeship is offered for all programmes at upper secondary level and IFTS programmes. Type 3 apprenticeship (higher training/education apprenticeship) is offered in ITS programmes and all tertiary education level programmes leading to university degrees, Higher Technical Institutes' (HTI) diplomas and doctoral degrees corresponding to the tertiary level. Type 2 apprenticeship leads to occupational qualifications applicable in the hiring company. VET for adults is offered by a range of different public and private providers. It includes programmes leading to upper secondary VET qualifications provided by Provincial Adult Education Centres (CPIA - Centri Provinciali per l'Istruzione degli Adulti) under the remit of the education ministry. Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET), which mainly addresses the employed, consists of a set of training initiatives managed by the labour and the economic development Ministries, the regions and autonomous provinces and the social partners.

National policies regarding VET system

All young people have the right/duty (diritto/dovere) ([Law 53/2003](#)) to pursue their education and training for at least 12 years before reaching age 18 and should not leave education and training without a qualification. Compulsory education lasts 10 years, up to 16, and includes the first two years of upper secondary general education or VET.

Art.35 of the Italian Constitution: “the State provides for the training and professional enhancement of workers”.

[Article 6 of Law 53 of 2000](#): "The individuals, employed and unemployed, are entitled to follow lifelong learning courses to increase professional knowledge and skills. The State, the regions and local authorities provide an accredited training offer on the territory”.



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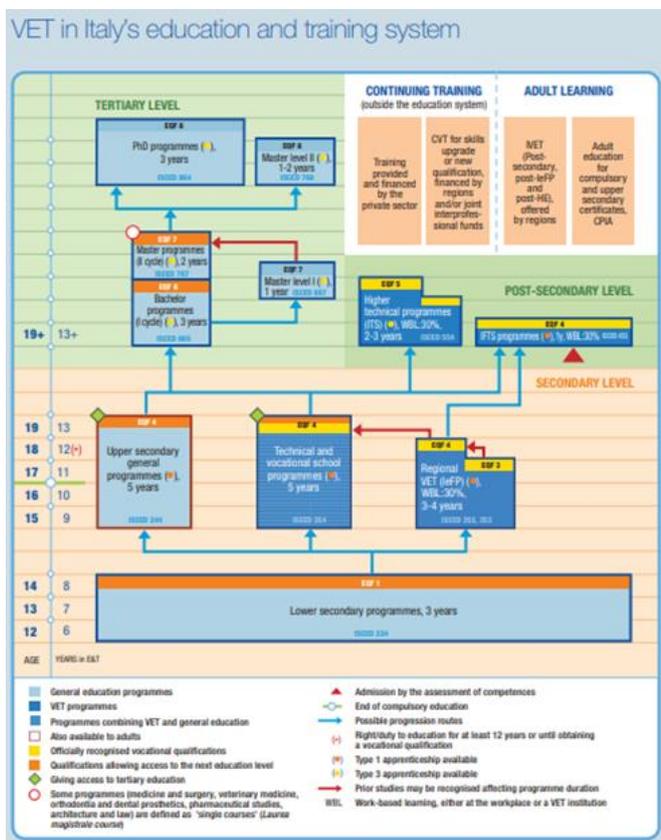


Figure 7: VET in Italy's education and training system

Law 845/1978: the reference for the vocational, initial and continuing training (“[Legge Quadro in materia di formazione professionale](#)”)

- Goals of VET;
- Regions' powers and functions;
- Programming and organization;
- Role of the teachers.

Teachers are mainly defined as “content experts”. The teacher's professional profile comprises disciplinary, psycho-pedagogical, didactic-methodological, organizational-relational, and research/documentation/evaluation competences.

The content of the professional service of the teaching personnel is defined within the frame of the general goals of the National Education System, respecting the education policy plan provided by the school. Teachers are employed by the Ministry of Education and work in State vocational schools and in centers for adult education.

VET MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

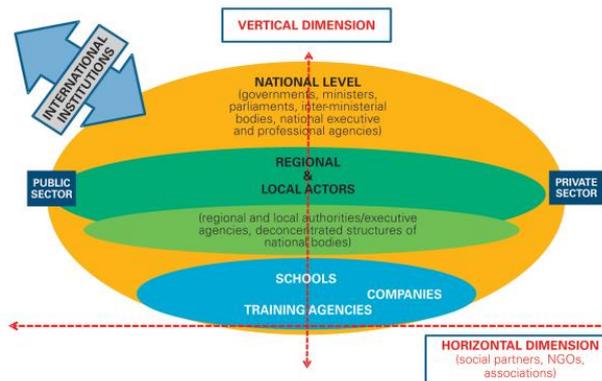


Figure 8: VET governance

VET is characterized by multilevel governance with broad involvement of national, regional and local stakeholders. Ministries of education and labour lay down general rules and common principles for the education and training system. Regions and autonomous provinces are in charge of VET programs and most apprenticeship-type schemes.

Title V art .117 of the Constitution provides for ownership either by the State, the regions or mechanisms for cooperation between the different institutions, in relation to the type of training supply:

- the State establishes general rules and determines the fundamental principles of education
 - ☒ The state has exclusive legislative power in [...] “general provisions on education”;
- the regions have legislative power over VET
 - ☒ “In the subject matters covered by concurring legislation, legislative powers are vested in the Regions”.
- education falls under the scope of concomitant legislation, except for the autonomy of education institutions
 - ☒ Concurring legislation applies to the following subject matters: [...] “education, subject to the autonomy of educational institutions and with the exception of vocational education and training”.

So, starting from the Constitution, responsibilities are shared among the different actors involved in planning and organizing VET as follows:

1. the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) sets the framework for VET in national school programs (technical and vocational schools) for higher technical training;
2. the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (MLPS) sets the framework for Regional Education and Vocational training courses (IeFP), while the regions and autonomous provinces are in charge of planning, organization and provision;
3. regions and autonomous provinces are also in charge of planning, organization and provision of ITS, IFTS, post IeFP, post-higher education, and most of the apprenticeship-type schemes;



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4. goals of Continuing Vocational Training (CVT) under the public system are set by the labour ministry, while CVT activities are managed by either regions and autonomous provinces or social partners;
5. social partners play an important role in promoting company-level training plans (single or group of companies) to be financed by the regions or by the joint interprofessional funds;
6. social partners have a general advisory role in VET policy, from which VET provision is then defined.

Law 388/2000: Inter-professional Funds enhanced their fundamental role in CVET funding:

- foster continuous training practices among Italian enterprises through a structural and established policy;
- subsidize training initiatives, which are closely linked to the real needs of enterprises, through a dialogue with the social partners being part of the Funds;
- make a proper use of the amount paid by enterprises and workers (0.30% of their salary). This contribution is transferred by the enterprises to the Funds (0.30% of the total salaries) and is paid by the worker (one-third), and the enterprises (two-thirds).

RECENT LEGISLATION ON VET:

- 2012: establishment of an “Inter-institutional and National Working Group for Lifelong Guidance” ([Gruppo di lavoro nazionale e interistituzionale per l’orientamento permanente](#)) in the framework of the agreement between the Government, the Regions and local Bodies. It has the purpose of defining minimum standards for guidance services and worker's professional skills, with reference to the guidance services and functions that exist within different Regional VET and working systems.
- [Legislative Decree n. 150/2015](#) (the “Jobs Act”): establishment of the new National Agency for Active Labour Market Policies (ANPAL); its main objective shall be setting out policies for the promotion of employment, in order to foster employment and redeployment of workers by providing services that are currently being offered by the Ministry of Labour.
- September 2015: agreement on ‘Support, Development and Reinforcement of the Dual System within Vocational Education and Training’ ([Azioni di accompagnamento, sviluppo e rafforzamento del sistema duale nell’ambito dell’Istruzione e Formazione Professionale](#)) signed at the State-Regions-Autonomous Provinces Conference; this project was proposed by the Ministry of Labour and subsequently completed and accepted by the Regions and autonomous Provinces; it represents an opportunity to further develop the Italian dual educational system, able to create integration between education/training and the fundamental task of actively combating the strong youth unemployment crisis.
- The “[Rilancio’ Law Decree](#)” of 19 May 2020 (converted into Law 77 of 17 July 2020): it created the ‘New Skills Fund’ (NSF) focused on active labour market policies. The NSF



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combines the need to reduce the consequences on employment of the Covid-19 emergency with training of workers. As for its budget, an initial amount of EUR 230 million by the OP SPAO has been increased by EUR 500 million by the ‘Agosto’ Law Decree, and it will allow companies to be compensated for reduction in working time under condition that the worker attends continuing vocational training.

VET funding (national & international)

Italy’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) has allocated almost 31 billion euros for the ‘Education and research’ target, mentioned as “Mission 4” in the Plan. More than 19 billion euros (around 10% of the total NRRP) will be invested in measures related to strengthening the education and training offer and improving its quality at all levels, while further measures for the reskilling and upskilling of the workforce are planned in other parts of the NRRP. Focusing on vocational education, training and adult learning, Mission 4’s aim tends toward its modernisation. In this sense, since 2020 the Italian apprenticeship system has seen a push for improvement, and the Recovery and Resilience Fund’s 600 million euros are to be invested in strengthening the dual system, in order to better reflect labour market needs. Furthermore, a ‘New Skills Fund’ (NSF) was introduced in the same year: it combines the need to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on employment with the need to train workers. It plans to fund the hours not worked by workers (due for instance to difficulties of the company), provided they use those hours to attend training courses.

The Italian government is also taking steps to expand the tertiary vocational offer and simplify graduates’ access to certain professions. A reform of the Istituti Tecnici Superiori (ITS) was adopted in 2021. The aim is to strengthen the role of business within the ITS foundations and simplify the recruitment of teachers from the business world. In order to do this, the perspective is to double the number of ITS students (currently 18 750) and graduates (currently 5 250) by 2026: on average, 80% of ITS graduates find a job consistent with their training within a year of graduating, with peaks of over 90%. The reform is backed by EUR 48 million in funding for 2021 and EUR 68 million from 2022, in addition to EUR 1.5 billion from the RRF (European Commission’s Education and Training Monitor 2021, <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2021/en/italy.html#A26>).

Incentives for VET learners, education providers and enterprises

LEARNERS’ INCENTIVES

Individual vouchers and other subsidies

Through the funding provided for by [Law 236/1993](#) and regional operational programs promoted by the European social fund, the regions and autonomous provinces fund personalized continuing VET training programs, vouchers for tailored training interventions and other tools, such as ‘endowment’, mainly targeted to employed.

Examples of incentives for the unemployed

1. [Tuscany Region](#): re-employment allowances, training vouchers and recruitment incentives.



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2. [Apulia Region](#): individual vouchers for the unemployed and those in a state of non-employment to be spent on standard regional training offers.

Examples of incentives for employees

1. [Tuscany Region](#): individual training vouchers targeting managers, directors and young professionals (2021).
2. [Piedmont](#) and [Liguria](#) Regions: individual learning activities using standard individual training vouchers for employed workers.

Examples of incentives for enterprises

1. Tuscany Region: “[Industria 4.0](#)” (2022)
2. Lombardy Region: “[Formazione Continua](#)” (2022)
3. Lazio Region: “[Voucher Digitali Impresa 4.0](#)” (2021)

Key challenges and development opportunities regarding SKILLS

(https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/italy_cedefop_changing_nature_of_vet_-_case_study.pdf)

1. The demographic challenge:

- the stagnation in enrollment rates experienced in national vocational education;
- In 2002, the percentage of the population under 14 was 14.2%, while it is 13.7% in 2016; the percentage of the population between 15 and 64 was 67.1% in 2002 but 64.3% in 2016.

2. The technological challenge

- Only in recent years, with the institutionalisation of the post-secondary VET segment, has the issue of actively promoting and supporting technological innovation fully entered the regional VET system (the most recent example is the link between this segment and the so-called Industry 4.0 Programme, established in 2016 by the Italian Government).

3. The macroeconomic environment (the economic cycle)

- In Italy, the main macroeconomic feature, affecting regional initial VET, is youth unemployment. The rate of unemployment for 15-24 years old rose from 21.2% in 2008 to 40.1% at the end of 2016. In addition, 24.3% of Italians aged under 30 years were not in education, employment or training (NEET), thus making Italy the worst performing country after Turkey and Greece.

Among the public training activities, services to individuals/citizens, entrepreneurial, administrative, commercial activities and ICT were the most covered subjects/areas. Some 56.3% of the interviewed training centres considered it important to orient the training context towards the development of innovative digital skills, and 38.2% towards the development of soft skills. Consequently, the planning of the future training supply relates mainly to problem-solving, and personal and citizenship skills. The data demonstrated that training centres invested primarily on analysis, management and problem-solving (51.1% of the training centres), relationships management (50.8%), followed by the planning of activities and the use of resources, and the management of technical aspects, with respectively 46.1% and 35.8%.



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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news/italy-results-third-vocational-training-supply-of-survey#group-links>

The [2010 Excelsior Report](#): Which competencies Italian companies ask to hire young people?

REQUIRED COMPETENCES BY ITALIAN COMPANIES	REGIONS			
	North West	North East	Centre -South	Islands
1. Ability to work in team	56.2	54.9	56.6	51.0
2. Ability to work independently	47.4	44.6	44.1	43.8
3. Ability to manage relationships	44.7	40.1	39.3	35.0
4. Problem-solving	39.2	34.6	37.5	39.0
5. Communication	36.6	32.7	30.9	27.2
6. Manual skills	36.2	41.4	42.6	42.7
7. Management and coordination	17.4	16.9	16.8	22.8
8. Computer	16.4	12.6	13.1	13.0
9. Creativity	13.2	13.2	14.3	16.0
10. Knowledge of foreign languages	11.5	9.5	9.4	6.3

Table 6: Required competencies by Italian companies

“[Linee Guida dei Percorsi delle Competenze Trasversali e per l’Orientamento- ex Alternanza Scuola Lavoro](#)” (L.n.145 del 30.12.2018, art.1,comma 785)

☒ Guidelines for the VET system in Italy, according to the EU provisions

"Transversal skills are currently being discussed at international level and by several authors and research organizations, with different proposals of classification, based sometimes on different assumptions [but] with the [Recommendation of 22 May 2018](#), the European Council was able to summarize the vast literature produced in the field of "key competences for lifelong learning in a single document " by designing a reference framework that outlines in particular 8 key competences [...], which [...] expressed by the Recommendations, have the advantage of summarizing in a single matrix the various skills provided by the classifications developed in the literature until today "(L. Guida pp. 10-11).

8 key competences according to the European Council’s Recommendation of 22 May 2018:

1. Literacy competence;
2. Multilingual competence;



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3. Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, engineering;
4. Digital competence;
5. Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
6. Citizenship competence;
7. Entrepreneurship competence;
8. Cultural awareness and expression competence.

- *List of references (web pages, national reports, VET actors, etc)*

- CEDEFOP- [VET in EUROPE](#)
- CEDEFOP [Reports on VET](#)
- CEDEFOP [VET Case studies](#)
- [CONFINDUSTRIA](#)
- CEDEFOP [NET IT](#)
- EU - [Education and Training Monitor 2019](#)
- [EXCELSIOR](#) Project
- [Empirical Research in Vocational Education and Training](#)
- [RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL](#)
- Fondazione Agnelli [Report](#)
- ISFOL [Documents](#)
- ISTAT [Report](#)
- Italian Government [Report](#)
- MIUR [Documents](#)
- UNIROMATRE – [Overview VTE in Italy](#)
- CEDEFOP- [spotlight on VET Italy](#)
- Open Com [Projects on VET](#)

Questionary1- Key competences in VET education-Results

A questionnaire was submitted within the European project “COOPERATION OF ENTERPRISES WITH VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOLS - ON THE EXAMPLE OF COMPETENCY LABS IN ITALIAN SCHOOLS” funded by the Erasmus + programme.

The survey was addressed to 2 directors of VET schools and one VET expert, in order to investigate the VET system at the country level. In Particular the definition of VET system, specific education and training directions provided by VET systems with strong focus on development of soft skills and selection of key competences depending on VET specific sector.

The people who answered the questionnaire were from Italy.

The questions submitted produced the following results:

Two respondents consider that there is a common curriculum in educational and professional training



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which regards soft skills at national and regional level. One person doesn't know.

Each person thinks differently that there is a common curriculum in educational and professional training which regards key skills at national, regional and Local, or VET specific suppliers.

Two people believe that key skills in the professional qualification of the country of origin are presented in separate modules, while one person thinks that they are written in general subjects.

Two people consider that soft skills in the professional qualification of their country are presented in professional subjects and one person considers them presented in general subjects.

Two people answered that skills or knowledge associated with the key competences are recognized as part of the qualification. One person doesn't know it. The skills or knowledge associated with soft skills are recognized as part of the qualification for one person. Another person believes that they are not recognized as part of the qualification and the last person doesn't know it.

Everyone believes that skills and knowledge associated with the key competences assessed are part of professional competences.

Two people believe that skills and knowledge associated with the soft skills assessed are part of professional competences, while one person believes that they are assessed into tests led or organized by the same VET managers.

Regarding skills and knowledge associated with the key competences accredited, as part of the qualification, two people said that there is no mention in the certificate, while one person said that there is a separate note on the certificate.

Two people believe that skills and knowledge associated with the key competences accredited as part of the qualification, are not mentioned in the certificate, while one person believes that there is a separate school mark on the certificate.

Two people believe that the vet education system gives a high level of priority time to develop professional skills such as key competences, while one person considers a medium level of priority.

The priority level assigned by the vet education system to soft skills, according to the teaching plan, gives high priority to teamwork, reliability and flexibility. Medium priority is given to cultural awareness and communication, while a low priority is given to empathy, respect for diversity and coordination.

A higher priority is given to the following key competences: native language communication, foreign language communication, social and civic competences. Mathematical, scientific and IT skills are considered as medium priority. Digital skills, learning to learn, initiative sense and entrepreneurship and cultural awareness and expression are at the bottom of the priority scale.



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Two people believe that the development of soft skills in the vet education system has a high level of priority as a success factor for the integration of vet students in the labor market, while one person believes that it has a medium level of priority.

Two people consider that the vet providers and the level of competence of the professionals concerning the integration of the development of soft skills in the vet offer a high level of priority, while one person considers them with a medium level of priority.

Everyone gives a high level of priority to investing in vet suppliers and the continuous training of professions on soft skill.

They also believe that soft skills could be better integrated within VET through more internships and through a certification process with clear and shared criteria at a national, not a regional one.

They consider that the vet system could be improved to ensure the growth of employment of vet students in the world of business and industry through a certification, a closer synergy with the production system, in order to activate specific courses required by the market and thanks to a greater relationship with the world of business and the professions.

In order to improve students' soft skills, they suggested the following attempts: PCTO diaries and the final CV of the graduation year, mapping progress in the PCTO systems and enhancing transversal skills in training courses, giving priority to those considered strategic.

They believe that global improvements could be implemented in vet by better listening by companies and activation of courses, in synergy with market demand, increasing of dual system trials school\work, and by training teachers in soft skills to strengthen the alternation system, also with forms of employment contracts, more flexibility in training progra

GREECE

VET SYSTEM IN GREECE

I. Country's Profile



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Figure 9: Greece flag
II.

Figure 10: Greece map

Greece is a country located in Southeastern Europe. Greece is located at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa. It shares land borders with Albania to the northwest, North Macedonia and Bulgaria to the north, and Turkey to the northeast. The Aegean Sea lies to the east of the mainland, the Ionian Sea to the west, the Cretan Sea and the Mediterranean Sea to the south. Greece has the longest coastline on the Mediterranean Basin and the 11th longest coastline in the world at 13,676 km (8,498 mi) in length, featuring many islands, of which 227 are inhabited. The Greek Territory has an area of 131,957 km².

Its population is approximately 10.7 million as of 2021. Athens is its largest and capital city, followed by Thessaloniki. The official language is Greek. Greece is considered the cradle of Western civilization, being the birthplace of democracy, Western philosophy, Western literature, historiography, political science, major scientific and mathematical principles, theater and the Olympic Games.

Greece is a unitary parliamentary republic, and a developed country, with an advanced high-income economy, and a high quality of life, ranking simultaneously very high in the Human Development Index. Its economy is the largest in the Balkans, where it is an important regional investor. A founding member of the United Nations, Greece was the tenth member to join the European Communities (precursor to the European Union) and has been part of the Eurozone since 2001.

III. VET situation in Greece in numbers

According to the corresponding national legislation (3879/2010), vocational education in Greece is divided in two categories; Formal & Non-Formal.



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- a) Formal Vocational Education: Provided within the standard education system. Through the Formal Vocational Education, individuals can acquire certificates that are recognized by public authorities at national level, while it is a part of the graded education's scale.
- b) Non-Formal Vocational Education: Provided in an organized education context (beyond the formal education system's frameworks), and it can lead to the acquisition of nationally recognized certifications. It includes primary vocational training, continuous vocational training and general adult's education. Furthermore, it concerns any organized activities beyond the limits of the formal education system, while it has specific purposes and audience.

According to a survey that has been conducted by CEDEFOP, for the year 2020 in Greece, the percentage of the age group 25 to 64 years old that have been participated in VET (vocational education and training) was 4.1%. (Ministry of Education and Religions, 2021). This percentage corresponds to approximately 245,000 people, taking into account the 2011 census and given that there have not been significant changes in the population of the country (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2014). As a part of the formal vocational training, there are 405 vocational high schools with a total of 104,000 students, but a number that also includes people outside the research age group (Ministry of Education and Religions, 2021).

However, the main objective of this report is the approach of the non-formal vocational training of adults, which is offered by three categories of institutions in Greece. The first category includes Vocational Training Institutes (VTI). They aim to provide primary vocational training services to high school graduates. Today, there are 129 Public VTI (PVTI), that are located in 74 cities. More specifically, during the winter's semester of 2020 more than 34,000 trainees attended them. These include two Public VTI Special Education and three Private VTI in penitentiary establishments. In addition, 84 licenses of Private VTI have been granted, while during the winter's semester of 2020 more than 36,000 trainees attended. In these numerical figures, there are also included individuals that do not belong to the age group 25-64 (Ministry of Education and Religions, 2021).



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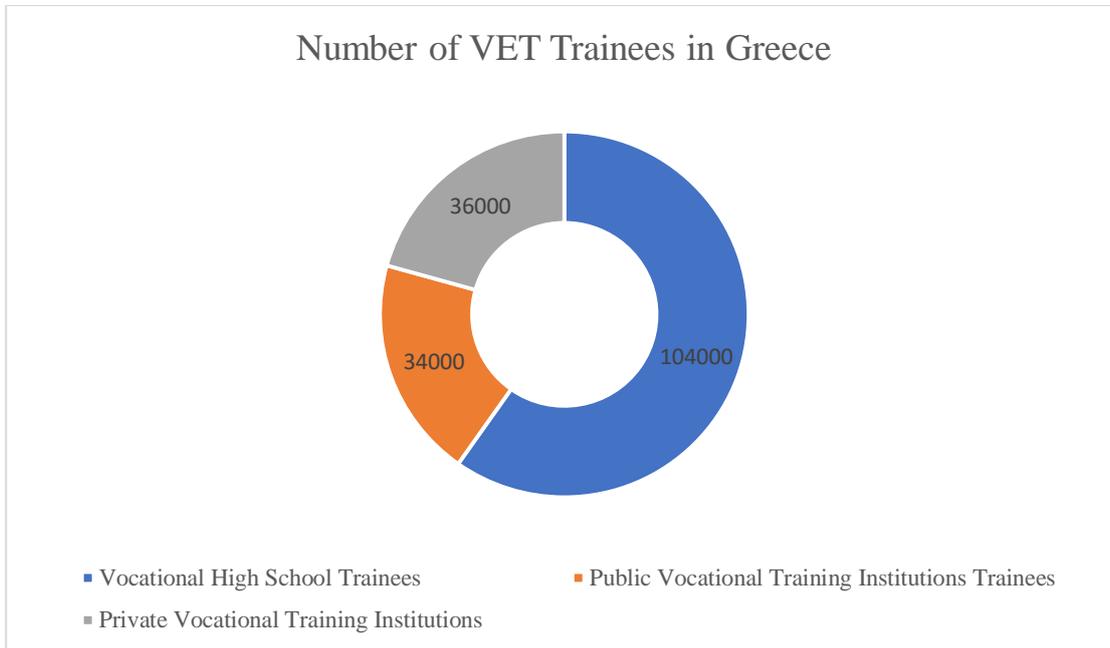


Figure 11: Representation numbers of VET Trainees in Greece

The second category of vocational training institutions includes the Lifelong Learning Centers (LLC). These are continuing vocational training bodies licensed by the General Secretariat for Vocational Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth. According to the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance, there are 373 LLCs in Greece. Moreover, in the context of its registration system 20476 certified trainers, from whom they also draw the PVTI (National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance, 2022). LLCs provide vocational training through programs and seminars that can last from a few hours to many months. LLCs programs can lead to a certification of knowledge and skills. They may also include internships to gain professional experience. It is not possible to accurately calculate the number of trainees in LLCs. The nature of the educational process, the non-existence of a defined duration of studies and a clearly defined academic year are factors that exacerbate the difficulty of calculation. Other factors that make it difficult to calculate are the existence of different sources of funding (programs co-financed by the European Union, programs financed by the state budget, self-financed programs, etc.), the lack of a unified way of recording training outcomes, contracting authorities and intermediaries of program management etc.

The third category are the institutions oriented to general adult education. These are companies that have as their main or secondary activity the provision of educational services. There are 13779 such companies in Greece (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2018). These companies are not certified by the



state and, similarly, the training services, that they usually offer, do not have any official certification. There is no obligation to comply with specific quality standards of the programs, nor to use trainers certified in an official register. The number of trainees cannot be determined as there is no recording of them in any output system. The identification can only be indirect, from polls to the general population.

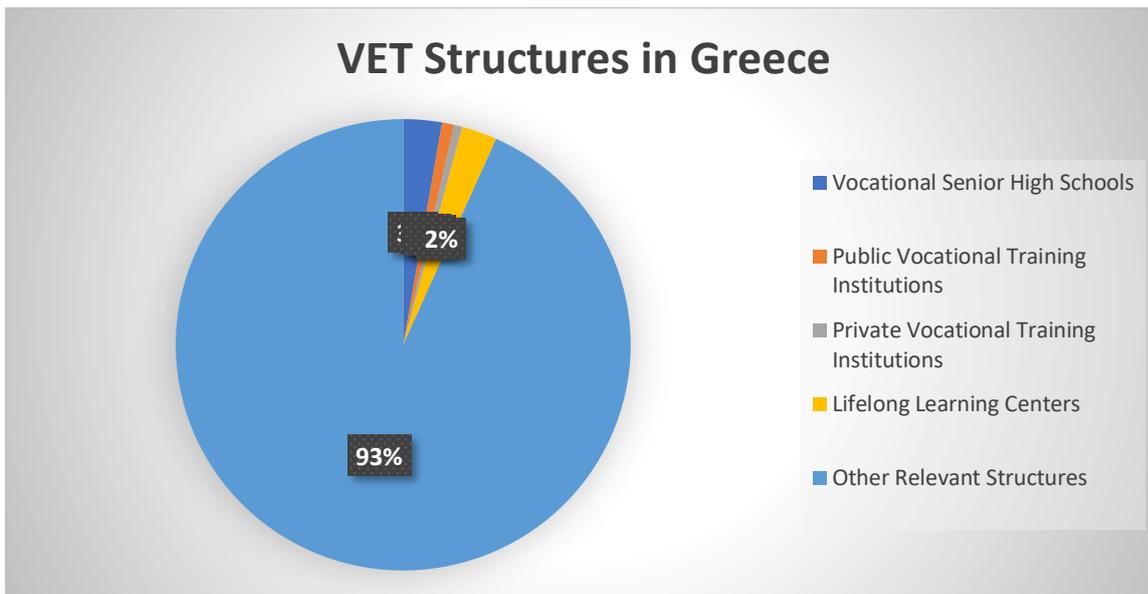


Figure 12: Percentage of several VET structures in Greece



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IV. Links to National Reports

State Scholarships Foundation (IKY), one of the most historic organizations in the country, was founded in 1951 aiming to offer young scientists grants for postgraduate studies, abroad and within Greece, in order to broaden their horizons, utilize their skills and offer better services to the society. From 1951 to date, IKY designs, promotes and implements an amplitude of scholarship programmes, both in Greece and abroad. Through these programmes, Greek citizens, foreigners of Greek origin, people of different nationalities, pupils, students, scientists, researchers and artists receive grants, in order to acquire higher diplomas in Greece or abroad and to stand out scientifically and professionally.

Since 1987, IKY bears the responsibility of administration, coordination, implementation and dissemination of European Union Programmes for Education. Continuing this tradition, in 2014 IKY was appointed as a National Agency for the new European Union Erasmus+ Programme. Moreover, IKY is the Greek NA that is responsible for the Erasmus+ projects in the VET field.

For more information: <https://www.iky.gr/en/>

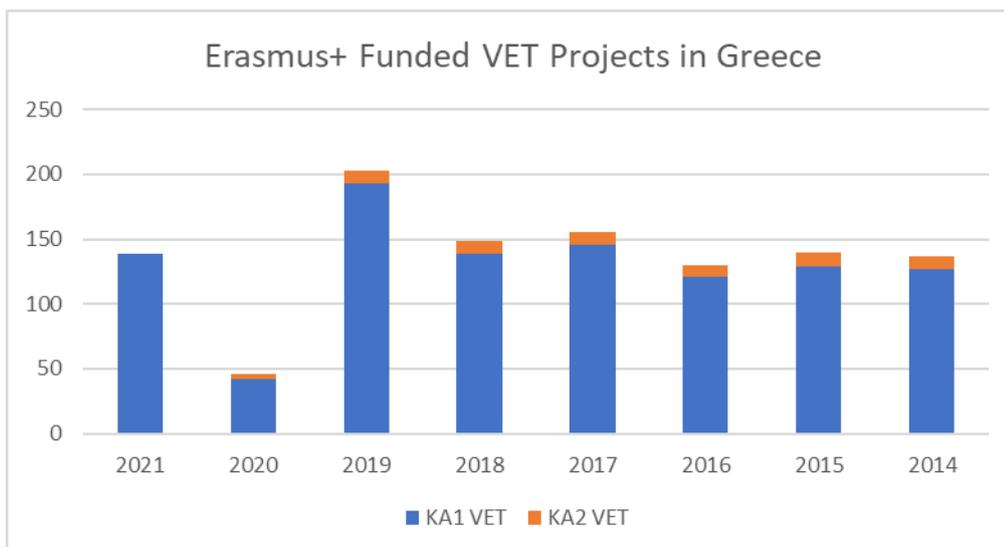


Figure 13: Erasmus funded VET projects in Greece

[2014 Erasmus+ Results in the VET Field](#)

[2015 Erasmus+ Results in the VET Field](#)

[2016 Erasmus+ Results in the VET Field](#)



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[2017 Erasmus+ Results in the VET Field](#)

[2018 Erasmus+ Results in the VET Field](#)

[2019 Erasmus+ Results in the VET Field](#)

[2020 Erasmus+ Results in the VET Field](#)

[2021 Erasmus+ Results in the VET Field](#)

Furthermore, a growth plan for the Greek economy was developed during 2020, while it is known as “Pisaridis Report”, due to the fact that the nobelist Christophoros Pisaridis was the coordinator of the whole initiative. In the context of this plan, indicators, obstacles and suggestions are included, concerning several fields under the perspective of the middle-term growth in Greece (Pisaridis et al., 2020). More specifically, the education field was also taken into consideration, including as well the VET field.

The “Pisaridis Report” is available at:

<https://government.gov.gr/schedio-anaptixis-gia-tin-elliniki-ikonomia/>

In 2021, the Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research has proceeded to a meta-analysis research, regarding the effectiveness and the reciprocity of the VET field in Greece. According to this research, the VET field serves a series of objectives through the interconnection between education with the market needs, while its basic function is to equip young people with the needed knowledge and skills that will enable them to join the labor market. Moreover, this research has led to a number of suggested policies to be followed and are related to the VET Field. In short, the included suggestions are concerning the content, educational methodology, social targeting and accessibility, the VET system and its management.

The research is available at:

http://iobe.gr/docs/research/RES_05_F_27042021_REP_GR.pdf

LATVIA

I. *Country's Profile*

Description of the countries profile:



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Republic of Latvia (Latvian: Latvijas Republika), is a country in the Baltic region of Northern Europe. It is one of the Baltic states; and is bordered by Estonia to the north, Lithuania to the south, Russia to the east, Belarus to the southeast, and shares a maritime border with Sweden to the west. Latvia covers an area of 64,589 km² (24,938 sq mi), with a population of 1.9 million. Its capital and largest city is Riga. Latvians belong to the ethno-linguistic group of the Balts; and speak Latvian, one of the only two surviving Baltic languages.



Flag:

Territory:

Latvia covers an area of 64,589 km² (24,938 sq mi), with a population of 1.9 million.



Official state language: Latvian

II. VET situation in Latvia in numbers

VET situation in the country is affected by external factors such as 1) demographics and 2) economy and labour market indicators and 3) employment policies relevant to VET.

The population has decreased in the past two decades due to a negative natural increase and emigration of people in search of employment abroad. While the share of people of pensionable age slightly increased from 21.1% in 2010 to 22.5% at the beginning of 2018, the working age population has decreased from 64.7% to 61.7%. At the same period the share of the population under working age has slightly increased – (from 14.2% to 15.8%). However, according to Eurostat forecasts, due to aging of population, the old-age-dependency ratio is expected to increase from 29.5% in 2015 to 65.7%.

Demographic changes have an impact on vocational education and have led to rearrangement of vocational education institutions network: the number of State-governed



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vocational education schools has reduced from 58 in 2010 to 21 in 2018. To increase the quality and efficiency of vocational education, many small providers were merged into regional vocational education competence centres offering a wide range of qualifications and other services. Several providers were merged by the local governments in integrated general and vocational education institutions.

During the economic crisis GDP decreased by 25%. Since the end-2009, growth has resumed. From 2011 to 2013, the economy expanded rapidly – on average by 4.4% per year. It was among the fastest growths in the EU. Due to an unfavorable external market environment (low demand in some trading partner countries), GDP growth in 2014-16 was slower, but in 2017 again reached 4.5%. Along with the improvement of the economic situation, positive trends can be also observed in the labour market – decreasing unemployment and growing employment rate. However, the increase has slowed down, because economic growth is primarily based on productivity increase, but less on increase in the number of employees (Ministry of Economics, 2018c).

The unemployment rate depends on educational attainment. The gap has increased during the crisis, as unskilled workers are more vulnerable to unemployment. In 2017, the unemployment rate of people with low- (ISCED levels 1 and 2) and medium-level qualifications (ISCED levels 3 and 4) was still higher than in the pre-crisis years.

According to the public employment service (State Employment Agency, Nodarbinātības valsts aģentūra, NVA), the share of young people (aged 15 to 24) in total numbers of registered unemployed has gradually decreased from 14.3% in 2010 to 6.6% in 2018. The employment rate of recent VET graduates (1) increased from 71.5% in 2014 to 74.8% in 2016 but then decreased to 69.1% in 2017.

Education attainment in Latvia is traditionally high (Figure 7). In 2017, the share of population aged up to 64 with upper secondary education, including vocational education (ISCED levels 3 and 4) was 54.8% and it is the eight highest in the EU, following Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Croatia, Hungary, Romania and Germany. The share of the population with tertiary education (30%) is higher than the EU-28 average (27.9%). The share of those with low or without a qualification (ISCED level 0-2) is 15.2% – the fifth lowest in the EU, following Lithuania, Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia. From 2010



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to 2017, there was a 19% decrease of vocational education students (excluding higher education). It is less than for general education (32% decrease) at upper secondary level (CSB, 2018). The share of adults (aged 25 and above) in vocational education has doubled since 2011/12 and reached 12% of the total vocational education population in 2017/18. This reflects changing needs of the labour market and widening offer of education opportunities for people aged 25+ supported by ESF funds. In past years, the distribution of enrolled vocational education students between fields of study has varied only slightly. The most popular programmes in 2017 were in engineering, manufacturing and construction (35%) services (26%), humanities and arts (12%), social sciences, business and law (11%). Traditionally, a lesser part has been enrolled in programmes of health and welfare (7%), natural sciences, mathematics and information technologies (6%) and agriculture (4%).

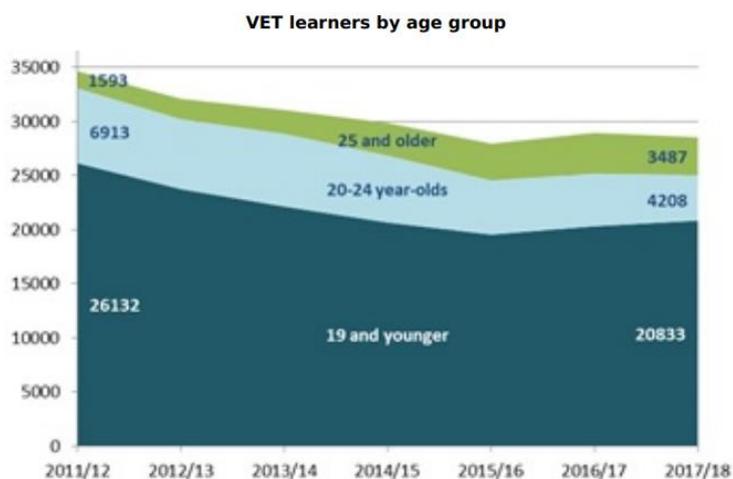
The figure below describes the VET in the education system:



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Most vocational education providers are governed by the State, which is the Ministry of Education and Science in most cases. Others are under responsibility of the ministries of culture, welfare and interior. There are also vocational education schools established (or taken over from the State) by local government and private ones.

The VET learners in figures:



Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Latvia, 2019

Traditionally, there are more males in VET (58.8% in upper-secondary education), except at post-secondary level. The share of early leavers from education and training has decreased from 14.3% in 2009 to 8.3% in 2018. It is below the national objective for 2020, of not more than 10% and the EU-28 average of 10.6%.

The share of adults (aged 25 and above) in vocational education has doubled since 2011/12 and reached 12% of the total VET population in 2017/18. This reflects changing labour market needs and the variety of education opportunities for people aged 25+, supported by ESF funds.

The transition to upper secondary is not mandatory, however, the upper secondary graduation rate for the Latvian population reaches 90%, which is above the OECD average of 87% (OECD, 2018). Upper secondary education starts at age 16 and includes three years of general education, or two to four years in a vocational education track, and ends with a final examination. Successful students in a general education and in a vocational (four-year programme) track are awarded a certificate that allows them to enter tertiary education. Successful vocational education students earn a professional qualification on top of their



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vocational education diploma. Vocational students who have completed a three-year programme can enter tertiary education under the condition that they fulfill a fourth “bridge” year. The government has been monitoring enrolment in general education vs. vocational education and training (VET), as an indicator of the Education Development Guidelines (Image “Enrolment in general and vocational secondary educations in Latvia”), and aims to equalize participation rates between general and vocational programmes by 2020 (Eurydice, 2019).

	Number of students in upper secondary education			Percentage	
	General education (grades 10-12)	VET (grades 10-12)	Total (grades 10-12)	General education (grades 10-12)	VET (grades 10-12)
2015-2016	37 236	23 010	60 246	61.81%	38.19%
2016-2017	37 487 (+251)	23 591 (+581)	61 078 (+832)	61.38%	38.62%
2017-2018	37 179 (-308)	23 646 (+55)	60 825 (-253)	61.12%	38.88%

Image “Enrolment in general and vocational secondary educations in Latvia”

Source: *Source: OECD Skills Strategy report of 2019*

The VET school network consists of 46 VET schools providing VET secondary education (data for the beginning of the 2018/19 school year). Most VET schools are under the authority of the state, including those under the Ministry of Education and Science, and the Ministry of Culture. Few are private and municipal (Image below).

Distribution of vocational education institutions by responsible body or institution, 2018/2019						
	Higher education institution	Professional basic and secondary education institution			General education institution	Total
	College	Vocational school (EQF 3) (<i>Arodizgltibas iestāde</i>)	Vocational education competence centre (VECC)	Vocational secondary school (EQF 4)	General education school	
Ministry of Education and Science	5	1	17	4		27
Ministry of Interior Affairs	1					1
Ministry of Culture			4	6		10
Ministry of Welfare				1		1
Ministry of Health	1					1
Legal or natural person	4			8		12
Municipality			1	5	2	8
Total:	11	1	22	24	2	60

Distribution of VET institutions by responsible body or institution

Source: *Source: OECD Skills Strategy report of 2019*

Since 2011, the vocational education system in Latvia has undergone a major transition, from a highly centralised model to one that is more flexible and that seeks to promote



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collaboration between local employers and schools. Because of a declining student population, provision has been consolidated by significantly reducing the number of VET schools. Since 2009, larger vocational schools – those with more than 500 students outside of Riga and more than 800 students in Riga – that meet specific qualitative and quantitative requirements, can become Vocational Education Competence Centres (VECCs), thus creating regional VET “hubs”. These VECCs provide vocational secondary education programmes, carry out the validation of professional competences acquired outside formal education, and act as regional methodological centres by developing close relationships with employers, identifying skills in demand in the industry, and providing further education (OECD, 2016). A college could also obtain VECC status, if it implements VET secondary education programmes and meets further criteria. As of the 2018/19 school year, 23 vocational education institutions had been granted VECC status

The VET system is governed by the following State institutions:

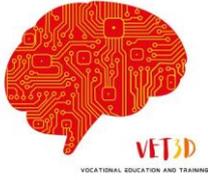
- 1) Cabinet of Ministers (Ministru kabinets) defines policies and strategies for vocational education and sets procedures for: development of occupational standards, organisation of work placements/apprenticeship schemes, and professional qualification exams. It also regulates mandatory documents for VET provision, list of mandatory occupational standards, activities of Sectoral Expert Councils, examination centre quality assurance, sets the criteria for issuing State-recognised qualifications and recognising foreign qualifications, sets price list for validation of informal and non-formal learning;
- 2) The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) develops the framework regulations for vocational education. The ministry proposes allocation of funds from the State budget and finances the vocational education providers it has established;
- 3) Other ministries (culture, welfare and interior) develop proposals for allocation of funds for financing vocational education schools under their responsibility and organise continuing professional development for teachers;



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- 4) National Centre for Education (Valsts izglītības satura centrs, VISC) under the supervision of MoES develops content of basic, secondary and continuing vocational education, professional development and vocationally oriented education;
- 5) State Education Quality Service (Izglītības kvalitātes valsts dienests, IKVD) under the supervision of MoES licenses general and vocational education programmes (EQF level 1)-It also ensures quality assurance of vocational (except professional higher) education, coordinates validation of informal and non-formal learning (EQF level 2-4), and since 2013, coordinates implementation of the common European quality assurance for VET (EQAVET) in Latvia;
- 6) State Education Development Agency (Valsts izglītības attīstības aģentūra, VIAA), under the supervision of MoES, promotes development and implementation of education policy (including continuing education) by acting as the liaison body involved in management and ex post monitoring of EU funds, introducing EU programmes, supporting development of career education policy, arranging national-level professional skills competitions and ensuring participation in international competitions. Since 2014, VIAA coordinates actions of four national experts nominated by MoES to promote the European credit system for VET (ECVET) and ease its implementation in Latvia;
- 7) Ministry of Welfare (Labklājības ministrija, MoW) is responsible for labour market policy development, including training interventions;
- 8) State Employment Agency (Nodarbinātības valsts aģentūra, NVA), under the supervision of MoW, implements labour market policy, including programmes for the unemployed;
- 9) local governments participate in the implementation of vocational education by managing their own schools. They promote business development in their territory, cooperate with employer organisations and help students find work placements.

There are also Social dialogue and strategic cooperation, Employment Council, Twelve Sectoral Expert Councils, Collegial advisory bodies – Conventions – established at each vocational education institution, since 2015, engaged in VET system planning and forecasting.



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Country reports and national policies regarding VET system

Developing the employment policy is a responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare.

In 2015, the government approved the Inclusive Employment Guidelines for 2015-20 (Cabinet of Ministers, 2015) in order to facilitate creation of an inclusive labour market policy; thus, using the full potential of human resources in Latvia, including reducing social consequences of unemployment, supporting the return of the unemployed to the labour market and maximizing the duration of staying in the labour market of people representing groups at the risk of social exclusion, as well as improving the quality of workplaces. These guidelines are aimed at securing the long-term unemployment rate under 15% of the total number of unemployed and 2.5% of all economically active persons by 2020 and in the long run. Guidelines foresee more learning opportunities and activities for helping the unemployed and job-seekers start up their own businesses.

Education policy priorities, formulated by the Ministry of Education and Science in the education development guidelines 2014-20 (Saeima, 2014) **foresee close cooperation with the employment sector. To promote employment, vocational schools are more actively engaged in implementation of respective policies.** According to legislation on supporting unemployed and job-seekers (Saeima, 2002), the Ministry of Welfare in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science provide vocational education, career guidance and requalification and professional development for the unemployed and job-seekers. They also offer non-formal learning and courses for the (self-) employed at risk of unemployment. Both ministries work on improving employment policy and support involvement of unemployed/job-seekers/(self-)employed in learning, through State and EU cofinanced projects.

In line with amendments to the Vocational Education Law (Saeima, 1999a) and to the corresponding regulations (Cabinet of Ministers, 2005a), certificates of vocational education and professional qualification should include the relevant LQF level since 2017.

Initial vocational education is regulated by the State. **The education development guidelines 2014-20** (Saeima, 2014) set the policy priorities – development of occupational standards, modular vocational education programmes and implementation of



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apprenticeship type scheme (nationally called ‘work-based learning’) – which are supported by the ESF projects. **The Vocational Education Law (Saeima, 1999a) provides legal regulations and defines three levels of vocational education:**

- (a) basic vocational education;
- (b) secondary vocational education;
- (c) professional higher education:
- (d) first-level professional higher (college) education;
- (e) second-level professional higher (university) education.

III. VET funding (national & international)

Most vocational education providers are governed by the State, which is the Ministry of Education and Science in most cases. Others are under responsibility of the ministries of culture, welfare and interior. There are also vocational education schools established (or taken over from the State) by local government and private ones.

Procedures for financing vocational education are stipulated by the Education and Vocational Education Laws (Saeima, 1998; 1999a). Education institutions are financed from the State budget, local government budget or private funding, according to their ownership. State budget allocations for vocational education programmes are calculated per student.

According to Eurostat data, the education budget has decreased from 6.7% of GDP in 2009 to 5.5% in 2016 (9) (in EU-28 accordingly from 5.3% in 2009 to 4.7% in 2016). The budget for vocational education institutions, under responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science, increased from EUR 54.07 million in 2011 to EUR 70.36 million in 2018 (Saeima, 2017), In addition, other resources (including EU funds) have been allocated to development of the VET system. For example, in 2009-15, EUR 163.6 million and in 2016-23, EUR 89.07 million has been invested in modernisation of equipment and infrastructure. Schools also use their own revenues to finance their activities.

IV. Incentives for VET learners, education providers and enterprises



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Salaries of teachers in State and local government education institutions (including preschools) are paid from the State budget. Local governments may supplement salaries of teachers. For private schools implementing accredited basic, secondary and higher education programmes, the State can also finance salaries of teachers. There are fixed and non-fixed costs (Cabinet of Ministers, 2007) covered by the government, for example:

- allowances (scholarships);
- student residence maintenance;
- rehabilitation and catering services for students with special needs;
- culture education and sports activities;
- practical training in enterprises;
- accident insurance for practical training in enterprises;
- salary of employees (wages and employer's State social insurance contributions).

In 2014-20, the Operational Programme 'Growth and employment' supports employees' skills development at the request of the companies to promote the introduction of innovations in enterprises. Different sectoral associations implement employees' training projects co-financed by EU funds.

VET learners

Attractiveness of initial vocational education and reduction of early leaving from education are national policy priorities.

Unlike general education students, vocational education students receive a monthly allowance, according to government regulations on scholarships (Cabinet of Ministers, 2004). Students in public vocational education programmes receive State allowance, which amounts to between EUR 10 and 150 per month, depending on performance. Orphans/children without parental care (not in care institutions or foster families), and best performers in studies or school social activities, receive a higher allowance.

From 17 to 29 year-old students of short programmes in the youth guarantee initiative have an opportunity to receive ESF co financed scholarships per month up to EUR 70-115. Tax incentives for individuals are also available and regulated by Law on Personal



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Income Tax (Saeima, 1993). The Law was amended to introduce, as of January 2017, tax exemption of apprenticeship scholarships, not exceeding EUR 280 per month.

Tertiary (including professional) education students can apply for two types of study loans to cover tuition fees and costs of living. Loans are offered by selected banks (or other credit institutions) and are State-guaranteed (Saeima, 1995).

The Employers' Confederation of Latvia started a national level ESF project (2017-23) on vocational education students' involvement in apprenticeship and work placements. Enterprises, vocational schools and students receive financial support, while implementing the project.

Work-based learning (WBL) is a relatively new concept in Latvia. Before the start of the WBL pilot project in 2014/2015, vocational education in Latvia was mainly school-based, with a practical learning period of at least 960 hours in a company at the end of a vocational programme (OECD, 2016). The newly introduced work-based learning approach foresees that a VET student will spend at least 25% of the VET programme in a company, starting from the first study year (where possible), according to the individual learning plan. There will also be an employment contract or stipend agreement between an enterprise and student. A recent employer's survey by the LDDK showed growing support from both employers and students to participate in work-based learning (Cedefop, 2018). To facilitate work-based learning, Latvia created a legal framework for the organisation and implementation of WBL, which determines the rights and responsibilities of the involved parties (mainly WBL providers, VET schools, sectoral expert councils and students). Regulations from the Cabinet of Ministers state that WBL students should receive a stipend or salary, according to the agreement with the company.

Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision

The Employers' Confederation of Latvia started a national level ESF project (2017-23) on vocational education student involvement in apprenticeship and work placements. Enterprises, vocational schools and students receive financial support while part of the project. The main incentives for companies to provide apprenticeships are:



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- opportunity to prepare the employees they need in a timely manner;
- to create a positive image of the company in society;
- to receive financing from the ESF project in this process;
- an opportunity to pay a student motivational apprenticeship scholarship without paying taxes.

The project is a good support tool to provide additional funding for an employee who trains a student. It provides work safety tools, the opportunity to cover student insurance from the project funds, and purchase a mandatory health check; the project has also provided funding to cover travel costs for learners to get to the company where apprenticeship takes place.

NEET programme

Latvia has already initiated several general policy initiatives to reduce drop-out rates, such as the Youth Guarantee Programme, launched in 2014, that targets young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) aged 15-29 years. Taking into account the specific rural context that seemingly leads to higher drop-out rates, local authorities, and initiatives such as the Youth Guarantee Programme, should build on the innovations and specificities of the VET system (modular programmes, work-based learning, etc.) to motivate and re-enrol general and VET students who have dropped out, while monitoring student performance to identify early on the students at risk, and take the appropriate measures.

V. Key challenges and development opportunities regarding SKILLS

Latvia has already reached most of its targets for Europe 2020 Strategy (employment, early school leaving and tertiary education attainment rate). Vocational education policy aims to increase the share of vocational learners by offering them better future work opportunities and updating the curriculum, according to the needs of the labour market.

Vocational education and training (VET) plays an essential role in preparing young people for work and responding to the skill needs of the labour market. Latvia estimates that demand for VET graduates will be higher than supply by 2035 (Ministry of



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Economics, 2018). In recent years, Latvia has undertaken several reforms to strengthen its VET system, including a curriculum reform, the development of educational standards and qualifications, modular VET programmes, teacher training and closer cooperation with employers, and has begun to develop a work-based learning framework based on the results of pilot projects. While these reforms are significant steps in the right direction, there remain important challenges in the VET system, such as the difficulty to attract candidates, and high drop-out rates (Ministry of Economics, 2018).

Figure below reveals the national VET development as stated in OECD Skills Strategy report of 2019.

Opportunity 4: Strengthening vocational education and training (VET)

Boosting vocational education take-up.	Embed career/learning guidance for students and their parents in the education system.
Reducing the drop-out rates of VET students.	Establish a VET graduate tracking system to improve the tracking of drop-outs.
Improving the quality and labour market relevance of VET.	Mainstream the "Effective management for VET schools" (SO 8.5.3.) project that promotes, among other, teacher and school leader training. Continue strengthening work-based learning implementation. Develop a co-funding instrument to fund Sector Expert Councils for the medium term.

Source: OECD Skills Strategy report of 2019

Skills imbalances imply costs for individuals, firms and the economy as a whole. As the skills needed in the labour market continue to undergo changes due to globalisation, digitalisation, and demographic change, reducing skills imbalances remains a pressing policy priority. In Latvia, the emigration of highly-educated workers is a significant challenge and has contributed to skills shortages. Most employers report that skills shortages are a major obstacle to long-term investment decisions (EIB, 2017). These shortages appear particularly acute in STEM fields but also in occupations related to health and social welfare. The share of Latvian workers who are under-skilled for their jobs is high by international standards, and 18% of workers are under-qualified (compared to 12% who are over-qualified). De-population may push employers to hire workers, who do not have the skills or qualifications necessary for the job, because they cannot find workers who do. Addressing skills imbalances has been a key challenge for Latvia in recent years, and has been highlighted in several national policy planning



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documents (Latvia2030, NDP2020, Guidelines on National Industrial Policy for 2014-2010).

Improving VET reputation

Promoting participation in vocational education is one of challenges outlined in the Latvian national reform programme for implementation of EU 2020 strategy. Regardless of past investments in modernisation of vocational schools and reform, basic school graduates prefer general education. This relates with results of recent public opinion survey (17) which shows that general education has a more positive image than VET. Furthermore, the perception of the VET image is narrowed to the widespread opinion that VET is mainly for students of lower academic performance, and does not relate to respondents' own views on the greater benefits of VET than general education in the world of work. VET labour market outcomes in Latvia are perceived controversially. Therefore, feedback loops for VET should be developed and potential of career guidance/education especially at lower secondary education level. should be used to greater extent regarding information on labour market needs and labour market outcomes of education.

The VET curriculum reform

The VET curriculum has been reformed to ensure that vocational education is of high quality and relevant to labour market needs in Latvia. Reforms began in 2010 and included the transformation of the whole VET system, through a transition from subject-based curricula to learning outcomes-based curricula and a VET programme modularisation. Furthermore, Latvia introduced sectoral qualification frameworks in the context of upgrading its curriculum by 2022.

Designing qualifications

Vocational education programmes are designed in line with the State education and occupational standards or qualification requirements (if occupation does not have a standard) and sectoral qualifications frameworks. The new modular approach for



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vocational education programmes (Cedefop, 2013a) includes use of learning outcomes, relevant teaching/learning methods and indicators of achievement.

Anticipating skills needs

According to a report on labour market medium- and long-term forecasts (Ministry of Economics, 2018c), the highest rise of three quarters in labour market force demand until 2025 is expected in the manufacturing industry and transport and storage. Almost two thirds of the increase will be in education, State administration and information and communication services. The demand is expected to decrease in traditional sectors such as agriculture. As a result, demand for highly qualified specialists (with higher and vocational secondary education) will increase rapidly. In the agriculture and forestry sector, similar to the EU average, the number of the employees in the sector will decrease. In the future, the demand for labour in the construction sector will gradually increase. The fastest increase in the number of employees is expected in the commercial services sectors. The growth of the commercial services sector will be driven mainly by the development of other sectors of the economy and the growing demand for outsourcing. In the long-term, the fastest increase in demand is expected in services and manufacturing, as well as in trade and transport.

Quality assurance

The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for policies and strategies to ensure accessibility and quality of education. Quality is assured through:

- elaboration of education policy;
- registration and accreditation of education providers; (c) licensing and accreditation of education programmes;
- supervising the education process.

Only accredited local governments' and private vocational education institutions may apply for State funding for continuing vocational education, professional development and vocationally oriented education programmes. During the licensing or accreditation process, State Education Quality Service hires external experts and representatives of sectoral NGOs and employers to evaluate the programmes' compliance with State



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education standards, occupational standards or professional qualification requirements and other regulations. All experts have specific knowledge of the accreditation process.

Expanding the provision of adult learning

Participation in formal adult education in Latvia is below the average. Improving the provision of adult learning opportunities in formal adult education could raise the overall participation rate. With population ageing and emigration, combining to decrease the size of Latvia's traditional student population, it is in the long-term interest of these institutions to expand their course offering to adult learners. VET schools, in particular the Vocational Education Competence Centres, as well as tertiary institutions could train their staff to accommodate adult students, tailor their course offerings to the specific needs of adults, deliver courses in flexible and modular formats and play a proactive role in reaching out to adult learners (*OECD Skills Strategy report of 2019*).

Opportunity 3: Expanding the provision of adult learning

Expanding the provision of adult learning in VET, especially Vocational Education Competence Centres.	Strengthen the management and pedagogical capacity of the VET schools, in particularly Vocational Education Competence Centres to deal with adult students.
Expanding the provision of adult learning in tertiary education.	Promote a strategic role of tertiary education institutions to engage adult learners.

Career guidance and counseling

One way to improve VET take-up is to set up efficient career guidance and counseling. Young people, their parents, teachers and other intermediaries often demonstrate insufficient information or poor understanding of some options, and in particular those related to VET, and their potential to support young people into ultimate employment. As young people stay in education and training longer, VET opportunities are often overlooked, despite providing tangible employment opportunities (Musset and Mytna Kurekova, 2018)

List of references (web pages, national reports, VET actors, etc)

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- VISC: www.visc.gov.lv
- IKVD: www.ikvd.gov.lv
- VIAA: www.viaa.gov.lv
- Latvian Chamber of Crafts: www.lak.lv
- Employers' Confederation of Latvia: www.lddk.lv
- Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees: www.lizda.lv
- National database on learning opportunities: www.niid.lv



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- Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA): <https://www.aika.lv/en>
- Latvian Qualifications Database: <https://www.latvijaskvalifikacijas.lv/en/>
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Interview 1- Key competences in VET education-Results

ITALY

A questionnaire was submitted within the “3D LEARNING DIMENSIONS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION” (VET3D) funded by the Erasmus + programme.

The survey was addressed to 2 directors of VET schools and one VET expert, in order to investigate the VET system at the country level. In Particular the definition of VET system, specific education and training directions provided by VET systems with strong focus on development of soft skills and selection of key competences depending on VET specific sector.

The questions submitted produced the following results:

Two respondents consider that there is a common curriculum in educational and professional training which regards soft skills at national and regional level. One person doesn't know.

Each person thinks differently that there is a common curriculum in educational and professional training which regards key skills at national, regional and Local or VET specific suppliers.

Two people believe that key skills in the professional qualification of the country of origin are presented in separate modules, while one person thinks that they are written in general subjects.

Two people consider that soft skills in the professional qualification of their country are presented in professional subjects and one person considers them presented in general subjects.

Two people answered that skills or knowledge associated with the key competences are recognized as part of the qualification. One person doesn't know it. The skills or knowledge associated with the soft skills are recognized as part of the qualification for one person. Another person believes that they are not recognized as part of the qualification and the last person doesn't know it.

Everyone believes that skills and knowledge associated with the key competences assessed are part of professional competences.



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Two people believe that skills and knowledge associated with the soft skills assessed are part of professional competences, while one person believes that they are assessed into tests led or organized by the same VET managers.

Regarding skills and knowledge associated with the key competences accredited as part of the qualification, two people said that there is no mention in the certificate, while one person said that there is a separate note on the certificate.

Two people believe that skills and knowledge associated with the key competences accredited as part of the qualification are not mentioned in the certificate, while one person believes that there is a separate school mark on the certificate.

Two people believe that the vet education system gives a high level of priority time to develop professional skills such as key competences, while one person considers a medium level of priority.

The priority level assigned by the vet education system to soft skills, according to the teaching plan, gives high priority to teamwork, reliability and flexibility. Medium priority is given to cultural awareness and communication, while a low priority is given to empathy, respect for diversity and coordination.

A higher priority is given to the following key competences: native language communication, foreign language communication, social and civic competences. Mathematical, scientific and IT skills are considered as medium priority. Digital skills, learning to learn, initiative sense and entrepreneurship and cultural awareness and expression are at the bottom of the priority scale.

Two people believe that the development of soft skills in the vet education system has a high level of priority as a success factor for the integration of vet students in the labor market, while one person believes that it has a medium level of priority.

Two people consider that the vet providers and the level of competence of the professionals concerning the integration of the development of soft skills in the vet offer a high level of priority, while one person considers them with a medium level of priority.

Everyone gives a high level of priority to investing in vet suppliers and the continuous training of professions on soft skill.

They also believe that soft skills could be better integrated within VET through more internships and through a certification process with clear and shared criteria at a national, not a regional one.

They consider that the vet system could be improved to ensure the growth of employment of vet students in the world of business and industry through a certification, a closer synergy with the production system, in order to activate specific courses required by the market, and thanks to a greater relationship with the world of business and the professions.



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In order to improve students' soft skills, they suggested the following attempts: PCTO diaries and the final CV of the graduation year, mapping progress in the PCTO systems and enhancing transversal skills in training courses, giving priority to those considered strategic.

They believe that global improvements could be implemented in vet by better listening by companies and activation of courses in synergy with market demand, increasing of dual system trials school\work, and by training teachers in soft skills to strengthen the alternation system, also with forms of employment contracts, more flexibility in training programs.

GREECE

A questionnaire was submitted within the European project “3D LEARNING DIMENSIONS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION” (VET3D) funded by the Erasmus + programme.

The survey was addressed to 2 directors of VET schools and one VET expert, in order to investigate the VET system at the country level. In Particular the definition of VET system, specific education and training directions provided by VET systems with strong focus on development of soft skills and selection of key competences depending on VET specific sector.

The people who answered the questionnaire came from Greece.

The questions submitted produced the following results:

Both directors and Expert consider that there isn't a common curriculum in educational and professional training which regards soft skills at national and regional level.

Each person thinks that there isn't a common curriculum in educational and professional training which regards key skills at national, regional and Local, or VET specific suppliers.

According to directors and experts, the key competences in their country's vocational qualifications displayed are separate modules.

The two directors consider that soft skills in the professional qualification of their country are not displayed at all and the expert consider that are written in the general subjects.

All of them answered that skills or knowledge associated with the key competences are recognized as part of the qualification. In addition, all of them believe that the skills or knowledge associated with the soft skills are not recognized as part of the qualification.

Three people believe that skills and knowledge associated with the key competences assessed are part of professional competences (through tests and exams).

All of them believe that skills and knowledge associated with the soft skills are not assessed.

Regarding skills and knowledge associated with the key competences accredited as part of the qualification, three people said that there is no mention in the certificate.



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The school directors and experts believe that skills and knowledge associated with the key competences accredited as part of the qualification, are not mentioned in the certificate.

Three respondents believe that the vet education system doesn't give level of priority time to develop professional competencies such as soft skills.

Three people believe that the vet education system gives the basic level of priority time to develop professional skills such as key competences.

Experts consider that the priority level assigned by the vet education system to soft skills, according to the teaching plan, gives basic priority to team work, cultural awareness and coordination. At other skills No level at all was given. 2 school directors claim that the Vet System does not focus on the development of horizontal skills.

A higher priority is given to the following key competences: foreign language communication, social and civic competences, digital competences and sense of initiative and entrepreneurship. Cultural awareness and expression, communication in native language, mathematical competence and learning to learn are considered as medium and basic priority.

All of them believe that the development of soft skills in the vet education system has a high level of priority as a success factor for the integration of vet students in the labor market.

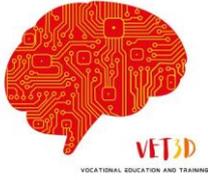
Three people consider that the vet providers and the level of competence of the professionals, concerning the integration of the development of soft skills in the vet offer, have a basic level of priority.

Everyone gives a high level of priority to investing in vet suppliers and the continuous training of professions on soft skill.

They also believe that soft skills and horizontal skills could be better integrated within VET, through more individual training programs and through a certification process with clear and shared criteria at a national and regional one. Curriculum adaptation must be implemented and cooperation between organizations must take place.

They consider that the vet system could be improved to ensure the growth of employment of vet students in the world of business and industry, through strengthening the internship institution and supporting it with specific programs. In addition, VET institutions must acquire further extroversion and links with companies. Finally, horizontal skills must be implemented in the curricula.

In order to improve students' soft skills, they are making the following attempts: Self-funded programs that focus on horizontal skills, participation in Erasmus Plus programs, Mobilities programs between VET institutions, as well as collaborations between them. Finally, Internship is an attempt that institutions make to improve students' soft skills. They believe that global improvements could be implemented in vet by including horizontal skills in curricula, emphasizing on core competencies as well as on internship and must be made changes in legislations so as to help institutions evolve.



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CZECH REPUBLIC

Interviews were conducted with 2 directors of VET schools and 1 Policy Maker, in order to investigate the VET system in the Czech Republic: definition of VET system, specific education and training directions provided by VET systems with a strong focus on the development of soft skills and selection of key competencies depending on VET specific sector.

The questions submitted produced the following results:

The three interviewees declared the existence of a common/overall curriculum in Vocational education and Training, regarding soft skills at local or VET provider-specific levels (within the curriculum of each subject), while for the key competencies, it exists at the national level. All knowledge that the skills or knowledge associated with the key competencies and soft skills are recognized as part of the qualifications and displayed in written form, in the vocational and general subjects. On this matter, the interviewed Policymaker specifies that the skills and knowledge associated with soft skills are assessed as a stand-alone project or similar, in tests at the national level and in tests organized or carried out by VET providers themselves throughout the education period and in the context of the practical exam of the profile part of the school-leaving exam passed by the school leaving thesis with defense.

In the CZ, the skills and knowledge associated with the key competencies and soft skills accredited as part of the qualification are not mentioned in the certificate, as they are part of the grade for each subject. The policy-maker also specifies that the skills and knowledge associated with the key competencies are part of the report card, but not the one associated with the soft skills.

In fact, the attention devoted to the empowerment of professional competencies like soft skills appears to be a basic level of priority for one of the directors interviewed, while the other interviewees consider it to be a medium level of priority. As for the key competencies, the two same interviewees agree on the fact that it is a high priority level.

For VET study fields, a minimum medium level of priority is set for the development of soft skills, but this differs in study fields, with a school-leaving exam where a high level of priority is set for the development of soft skills. This affirmation is taken from the policymaker interviewed and can be confirmed: both directors opted for a medium level of priority for most of the soft skills mentioned in the survey.

On the other hand, it can be said that a high level of priority is set for the development of key competencies, but there are also groups of study fields where the priority for the development of key competencies is set at a medium level. Both directors declared that « Communication in the mother tongue » and « Mathematical competence and basic competencies in science and technology » a high level of priority.



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For all interviewees, empowerment of soft skills in the VET education for the successful integration of VET students in the labor market and investment in VET providers and professionals' continuous training on soft skills are both considered to be of high relevance.

Finally, 1 school director considers VET providers' and professionals' level of know-how and expertise on the integration of the soft skills development in VET to be high level, while the other one, along with the policymaker agrees to be on a medium one.

Conclusions related to the open questions asked:

In order to integrate soft skills into VET, schools implement project-based learning and encourage teamwork, as well as independent work on tasks in cooperation with a selected workplace. Students should be involved in helping with social services. Moreover, familiarization with the school's region so that students have an overview of local suppliers and their products (e.g. farmers) given the focus of the school is also another important activity. Furthermore, pupils are requested to write up the final work, create a presentation and present the work. Therefore, team problem solving, student projects, real workplace learning at employers, and, to a limited extent, education at school workplaces contribute to the acquisition of soft skills.

In the Czech Republic, schools are actively cooperating with employers in the implementation of practical training in real workplaces. Internships with employers and the close association of theory with practice is crucial for the students to be competitive on the labor market. It is important for the pupils to have an overview of new developments in the sector, which teachers often only know in theory. It is, therefore, more beneficial if pupils have the opportunity to see these innovations directly in a real environment. The schools, thus, try to prepare graduates for future jobs directly, according to the requirements of the labor market. In order for the graduates to be well placed in the labor market, it is important in secondary vocational education that they acquire not only a general foundation but also, and above all, vocational competencies at school. The Czech authorities try to support, through so-called EU co-funded "simplified reporting projects", not only the involvement of practitioners in theoretical teaching, but also the internships of teachers of vocational subjects at real workplaces of employers.

Some schools are actively involved in providing soft skills to the students. They emphasize project-based learning in several blocks in which students work as a team to solve a given task. Students are sent to other cities and even countries to participate in different projects and enhance their soft skills. At the national level, schools are provided with methodological and financial support to ensure that students are gaining soft skills effectively. Financial support is mainly implemented, through projects funded by the ESF (simplified reporting projects aimed at developing soft skills), Erasmus+, eTwinning, etc. Among important realized projects, where methodological support was also provided: eg. the project called "Pospolu" - Support for cooperation between schools and companies and Modernisation of vocational education. A new activity is the experimental validation of an



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alternative exam of the profile part of the school-leaving exam taking place in the form of a VET comprehensive graduation thesis.

Lack of connection with practice is a major problem in vocational secondary education. It is important to focus teaching on more necessary and relevant information that students can use in practice. Curricula are not very flexible and often do not allow schools to adapt teaching sufficiently to the needs of pupils from different disciplines. There is a lack of motivation for primary school pupils to follow vocational education, due to the lack of prestige of VET schools. Moreover, there is a need for a generational change of teachers by recruiting more qualified workers from the younger generation. The main objective should be to attract new teachers to vocational schools by comprehensively improving the social prestige of the teaching profession, especially by better presenting the profession. Furthermore, the knowledge of the requirements for acquiring the competencies, that graduates will need when entering the labor market, may be the key to success. For instance, including new topic areas in education, so that students' knowledge and skills reflect the requirements of the labor market after graduation.

LATVIA

A questionnaire was submitted within the European project “3D LEARNING DIMENSIONS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION” (VET3D) funded by the Erasmus + programme.

The survey was addressed to 2 directors of VET schools and one VET expert, in order to investigate the VET system at the country level. In Particular, the definition of VET system, specific education and training directions provided by VET systems with strong focus on development of soft skills and selection of key competences depending on VET specific sector.

The respondents, who answered the questionnaire, were from Latvia.

The questions submitted produced the following results:

Both directors and experts consider that there isn't a common curriculum in educational and professional training which regards soft skills at national and regional level.

Each respondent was not sure about the existence of a common curriculum in educational and professional training which regards key skills at national, regional and Local, or VET specific suppliers. According to directors and experts, the key competences in Latvia's vocational qualifications displayed are separate modules.

The two directors consider that soft skills in the professional qualification of their country are displayed partly with no specific focus on them, nevertheless the curriculum requires the specific description of skills obtained, particularly for a private VET school as one school director is from this sector.



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All respondents replied that skills, associated with the key competences, are recognized as part of the qualification. Respondents agreed that skills and knowledge associated with the key competences assessed are part of professional competences (through tests and exams). Even though skills and knowledge linked with the soft skills are not assessed separately. Respondents admitted an interesting fact that they have never thought about the 3D learning model in VET, as formal and job-based learning is mandatory for VET schools in Latvia, whereas, non-formal part depends on VET school initiative and activity. One respondent even asked to clarify the meaning of non-formal learning. After this clarification, respondent concluded that this part is present but not emphasized on a national level, as this would be helpful to introduce with VET3D holistic approach also VET educators, in order to remind this important triangulation.

Regarding skills and knowledge associated with the key competences accredited as part of the qualification, two respondents replied that there are no specific requirements in the certificate.

All respondents believe that the VET education system provides a basic level of priority time to develop professional skills such as key competences.

A higher priority is given to the following key competences: foreign language communication, digital competences. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, Cultural awareness and expression, communication in native language, mathematical competence and learning to learn are considered as medium priority. Social and civic competences are considered as low priority.

All of them believe that the development of soft skills in the VET education system has a high level of priority as a success factor for the integration of vet students in the labor market.

Everyone admits a high level of priority to investing in VET suppliers and the continuous training of professions on soft skill.

Respondents think that soft skills and horizontal skills could be better integrated within VET, through more individual training programs and through a certification process with clear and shared criteria at a national level. Curriculum adaptation must be explained and adapted on the national level.

They consider that the VET system could be improved to ensure the growth of employment of VET students in business and industry through strengthening the internship institution and supporting it with specific programs. In addition, VET institutions must strengthen links with companies.

In order to improve students' soft skills, VET schools 1) focus on horizontal skills by participation in Erasmus Plus programs, 2) Job placement Mobilities programs.

QUESTIONNAIRES – Results

- *Basic report- Erasmus+ project VET3D Students' anonymous survey*

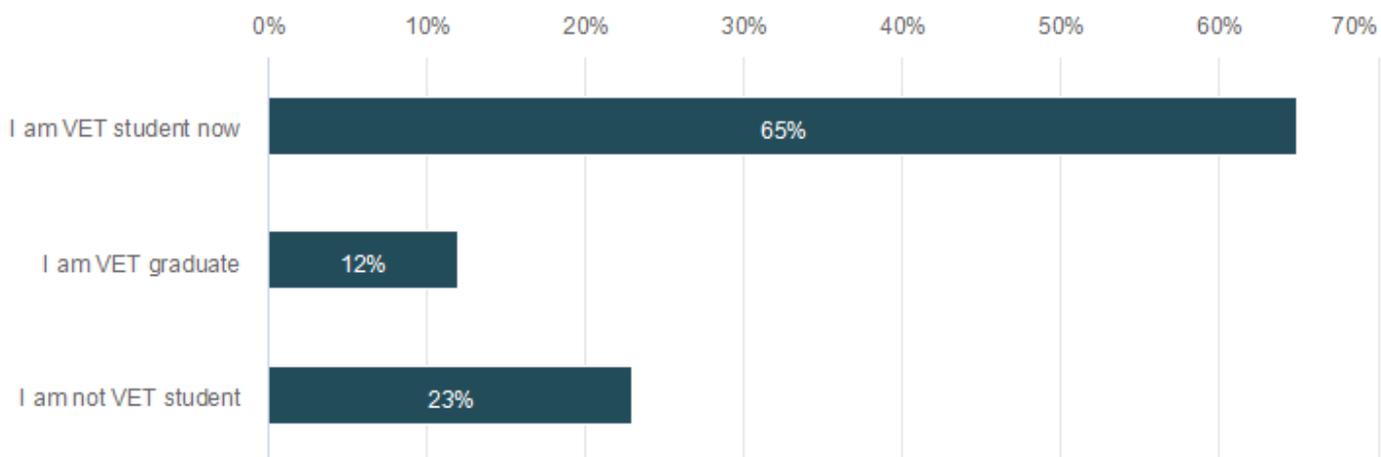


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Total number of respondents: 165

1. Which answer describes you?

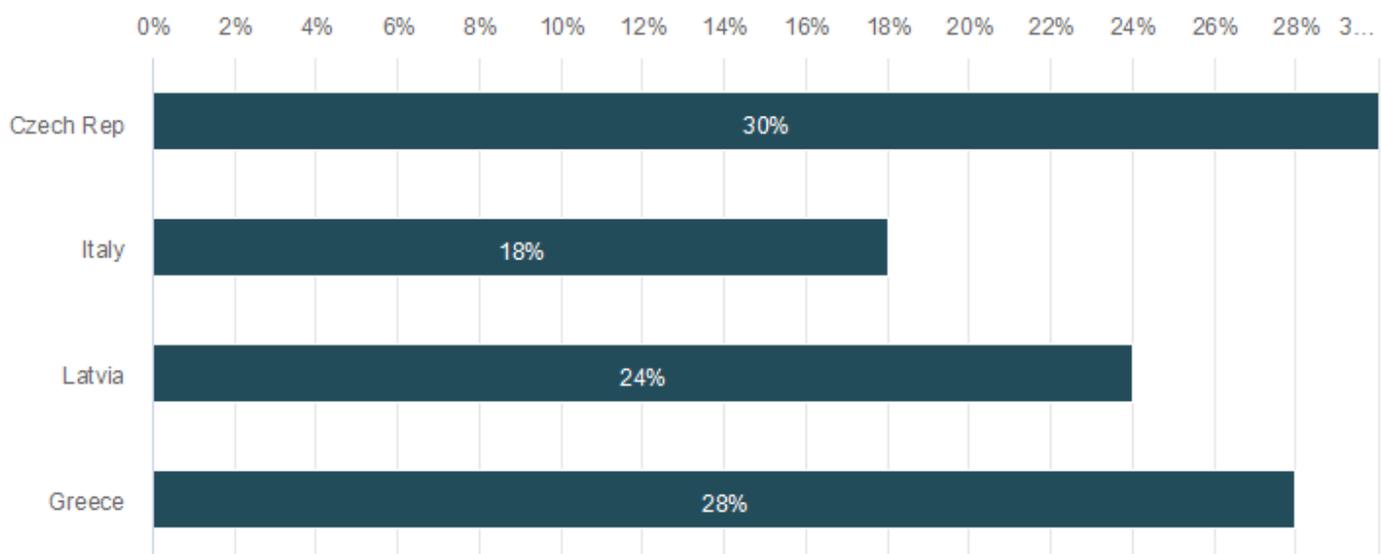
Number of respondents: 165



	n	Percent
I am VET student now	107	64.9%
I am VET graduate	20	12.1%
I am not VET student	38	23.0%

2. Choose your country

Number of respondents: 165



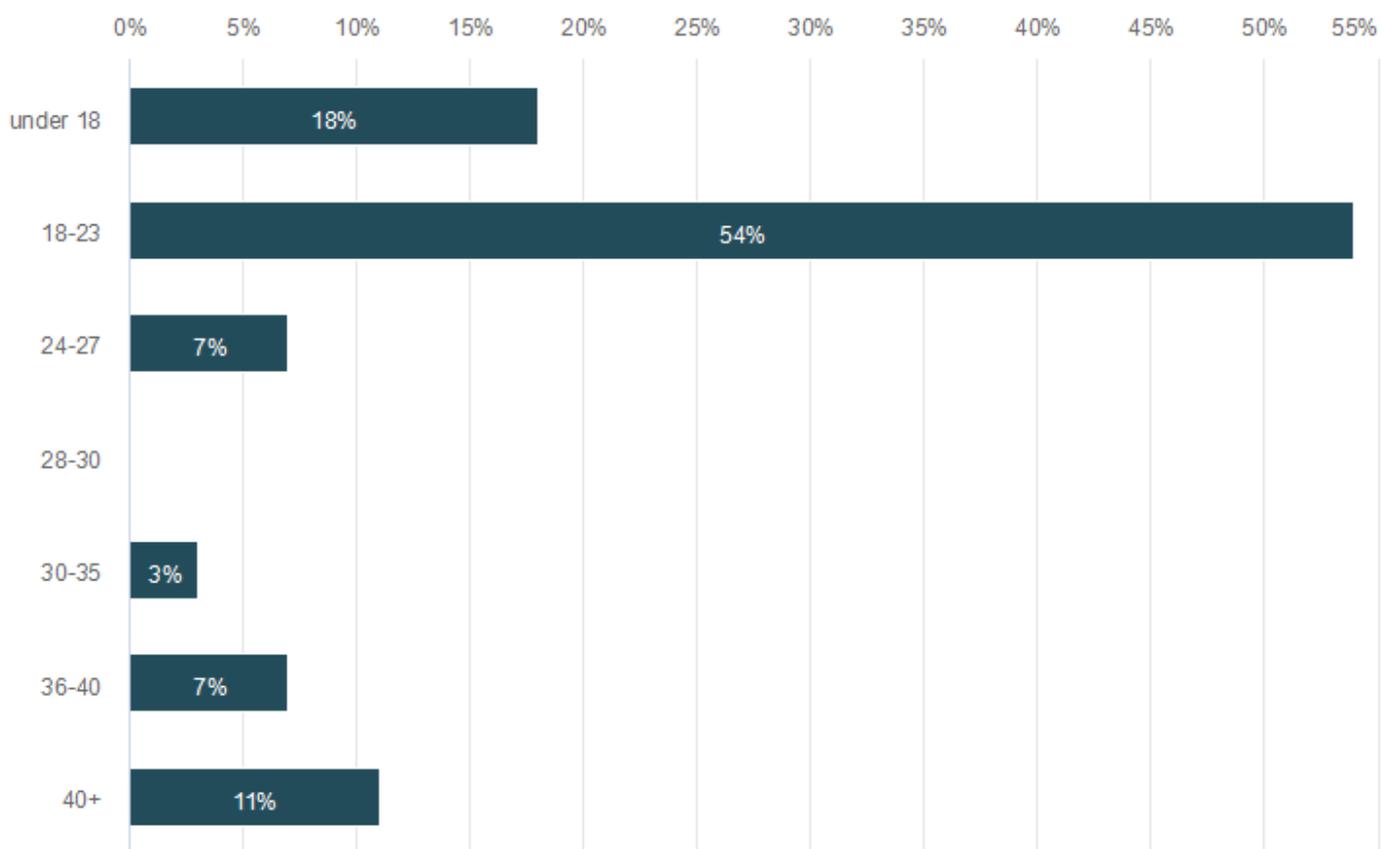


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	n	Percent
Czech Rep	50	30.3%
Italy	30	18.2%
Latvia	39	23.6%
Greece	46	27.9%

3. Which age group describes you?

Number of respondents: 165



	n	Percent
under 18	30	18.2%
18-23	89	53.9%
24-27	11	6.7%
28-30	0	0.0%
30-35	5	3.0%
36-40	11	6.7%

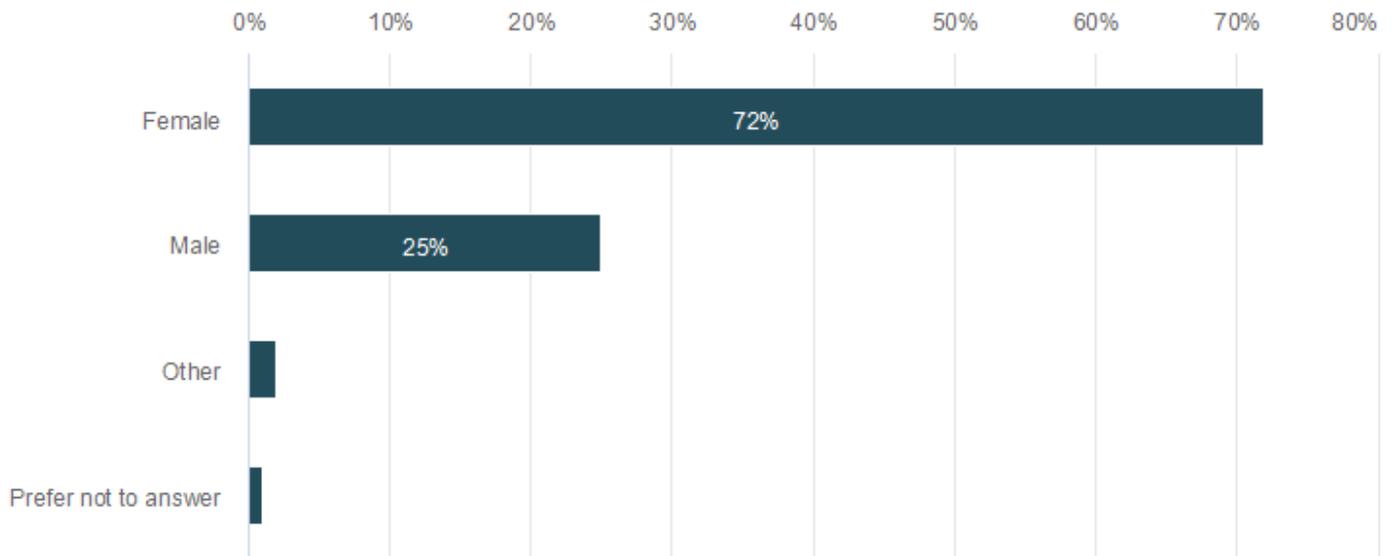


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40+	19	11.5%
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4. Which answer describes you?

Number of respondents: 165



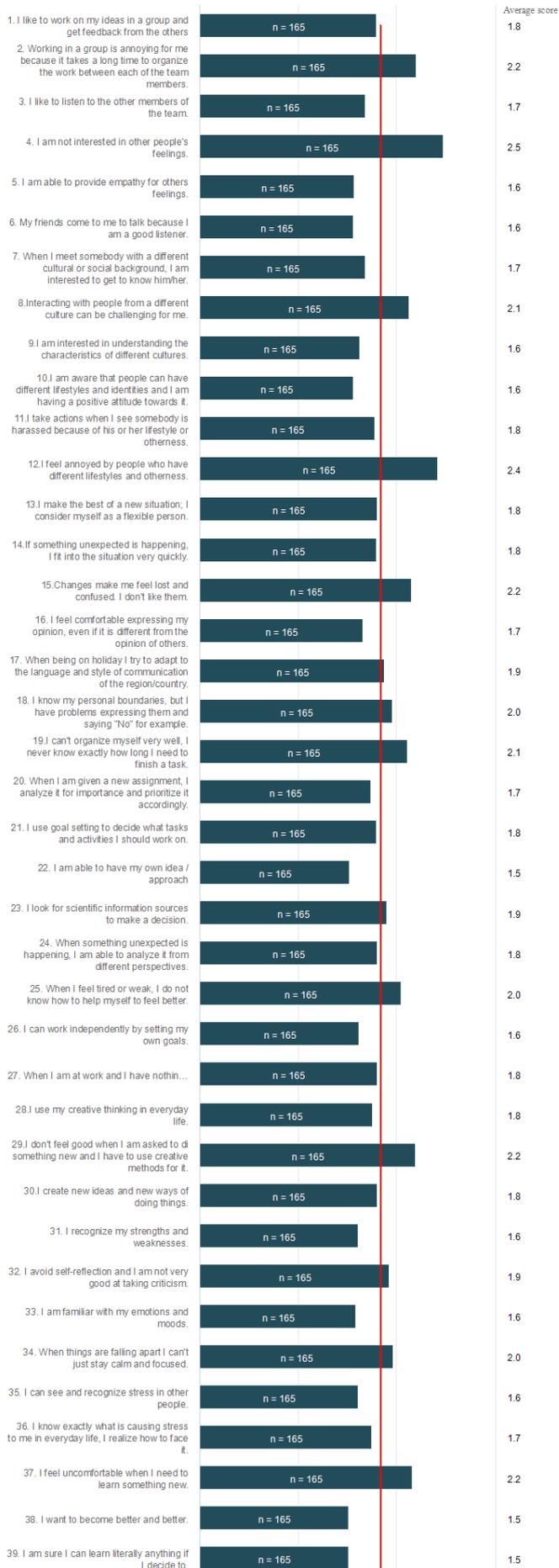
	n	Percent
Female	118	71.5%
Male	42	25.5%
Other	4	2.4%
Prefer not to answer	1	0.6%

5. to which extend do you agree with the following statement, 1 - high level, 2 - intermediate level, 3- low level

Number of respondents: 165



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	1	2	3	Average	Median
1. I like to work on my ideas in a group and get feedback from the others	35.2%	50.3%	14.5%	1.8	2.0
2. Working in a group is annoying for me because it takes a long time to organize the work between each of the team members.	20.6%	38.8%	40.6%	2.2	2.0
3. I like to listen to the other members of the team.	49.1%	33.9%	17.0%	1.7	2.0
4. I am not interested in other people's feelings.	12.7%	27.3%	60.0%	2.5	3.0
5. I am able to provide empathy for others feelings.	50.9%	41.2%	7.9%	1.6	1.0
6. My friends come to me to talk because I am a good listener.	60.6%	22.4%	17.0%	1.6	1.0
7. When I meet somebody with a different cultural or social background, I am interested to get to know him/her.	50.3%	30.9%	18.8%	1.7	1.0
8. Interacting with people from a different culture can be challenging for me.	18.8%	49.7%	31.5%	2.1	2.0
9. I am interested in understanding the characteristics of different cultures.	49.1%	39.4%	11.5%	1.6	2.0
10. I am aware that people can have different lifestyles and identities and I am having a positive attitude towards it.	60.6%	23.0%	16.4%	1.6	1.0
11. I take actions when I see somebody is harassed because of his or her lifestyle or otherness.	34.0%	53.9%	12.1%	1.8	2.0
12. I feel annoyed by people who have different lifestyles and otherness.	18.8%	20.6%	60.6%	2.4	3.0
13. I make the best of a new situation; I consider myself as a flexible person.	34.5%	50.3%	15.2%	1.8	2.0
14. If something unexpected is happening, I fit into the situation very quickly.	36.4%	47.9%	15.7%	1.8	2.0
15. Changes make me feel lost and confused. I don't like them.	17.0%	50.9%	32.1%	2.2	2.0
16. I feel comfortable expressing my opinion, even if it is different from the opinion of others.	43.6%	46.7%	9.7%	1.7	2.0
17. When being on holiday I try to adapt to the language and style of communication of the region/country.	35.2%	41.8%	23.0%	1.9	2.0



18. I know my personal boundaries, but I have problems expressing them and saying "No" for example.	27.3%	49.7%	23.0%	2.0	2.0
19. I can't organize myself very well, I never know exactly how long I need to finish a task.	25.4%	38.2%	36.4%	2.1	2.0
20. When I am given a new assignment, I analyze it for importance and prioritize it accordingly.	40.6%	44.9%	14.5%	1.7	2.0
21. I use goal setting to decide what tasks and activities I should work on.	35.8%	49.1%	15.1%	1.8	2.0
22. I am able to have my own idea / approach	58.2%	31.5%	10.3%	1.5	1.0
23. I look for scientific information sources to make a decision.	27.3%	55.7%	17.0%	1.9	2.0
24. When something unexpected is happening, I am able to analyze it from different perspectives.	35.1%	49.1%	15.8%	1.8	2.0
25. When I feel tired or weak, I do not know how to help myself to feel better.	29.1%	37.6%	33.3%	2.0	2.0
26. I can work independently by setting my own goals.	46.0%	46.1%	7.9%	1.6	2.0
27. When I am at work and I have nothing to do I ask for other tasks because I am the one who wants to be involved in the experience.	33.9%	51.5%	14.6%	1.8	2.0
28. I use my creative thinking in everyday life.	43.0%	38.2%	18.8%	1.8	2.0
29. I don't feel good when I am asked to do something new and I have to use creative methods for it.	20.0%	40.6%	39.4%	2.2	2.0
30. I create new ideas and new ways of doing things.	37.6%	44.2%	18.2%	1.8	2.0
31. I recognize my strengths and weaknesses.	53.3%	32.1%	14.6%	1.6	1.0
32. I avoid self-reflection and I am not very good at taking criticism.	29.7%	48.5%	21.8%	1.9	2.0
33. I am familiar with my emotions and moods.	47.9%	46.0%	6.1%	1.6	2.0
34. When things are falling apart I can't just stay calm and focused.	30.9%	41.8%	27.3%	2.0	2.0
35. I can see and recognize stress in other people.	47.3%	44.2%	8.5%	1.6	2.0
36. I know exactly what is causing stress to me in everyday life, I realize how to face it.	36.4%	52.7%	10.9%	1.7	2.0
37. I feel uncomfortable when I need to learn something new.	20.6%	43.0%	36.4%	2.2	2.0



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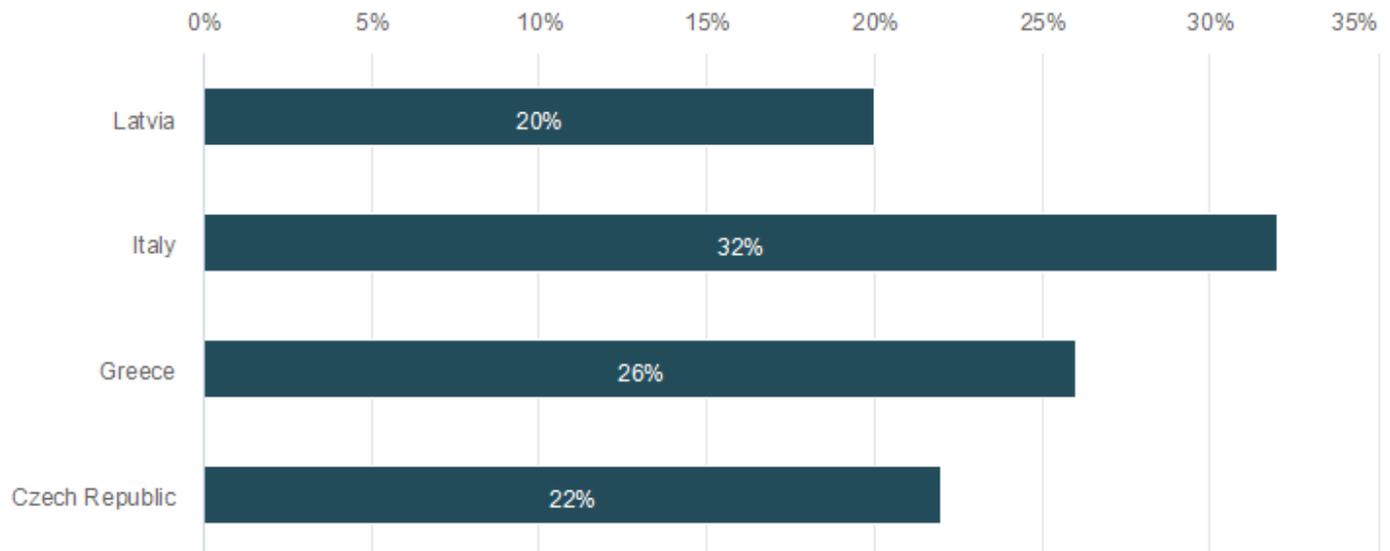
38. I want to become better and better.	62.4%	23.6%	14.0%	1.5	1.0
39. I am sure I can learn literally anything if I decide to.	57.0%	34.5%	8.5%	1.5	1.0
	38.2%	53.3%	8.5%	1.7	2.0

- **Erasmus + project VET3D TEACHER SURVEY**

Total number of respondents: 147

1. Please select your country

Number of respondents: 147



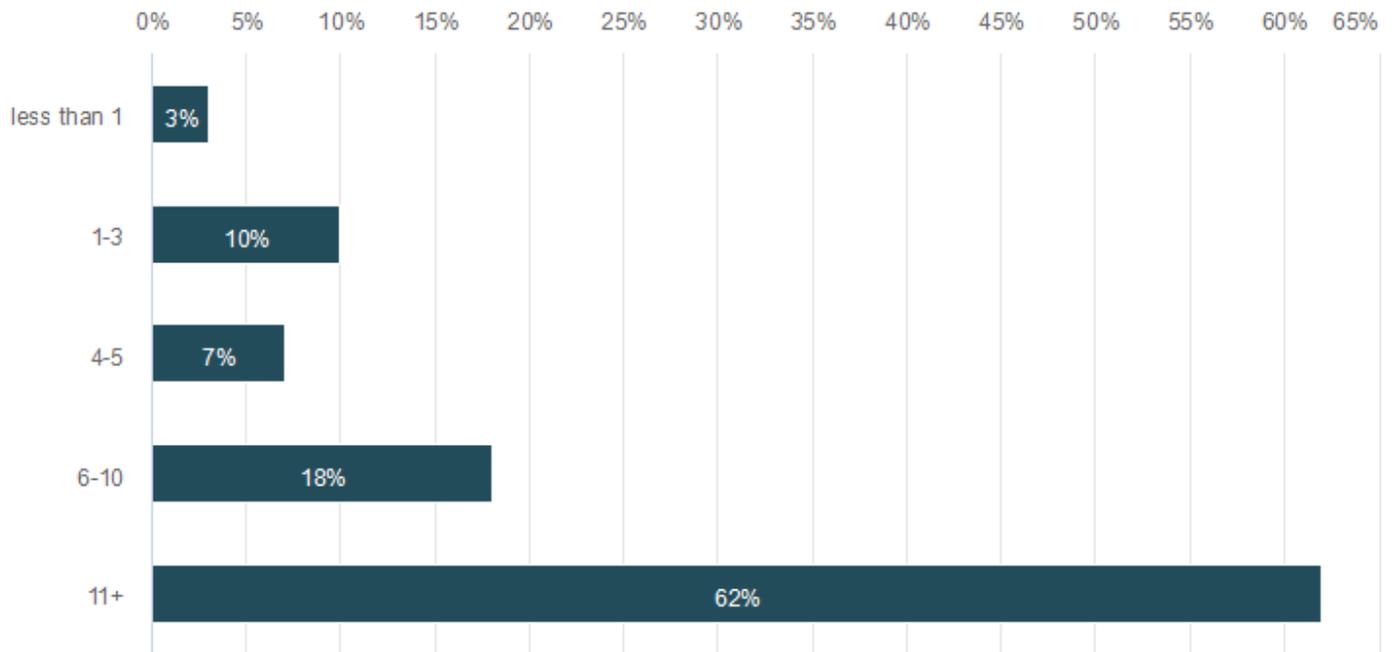
	n	Percent
Latvia	30	20.4%
Italy	47	32.0%
Greece	38	25.8%
Czech Republic	32	21.8%

2. Your teaching experience (in years):

Number of respondents: 147



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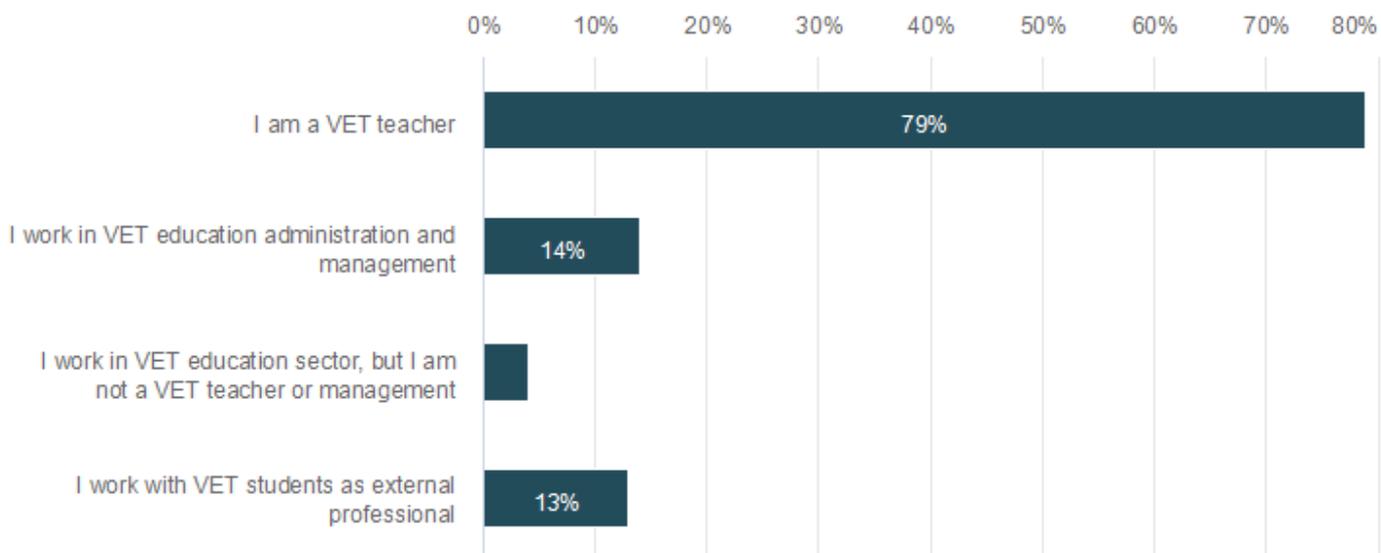
	n	Percent
less than 1	4	2.7%
1-3	15	10.2%
4-5	11	7.5%
6-10	26	17.7%
11+	91	61.9%

3. Please select you current occupation in VET sector (multiple selection available) :

Number of respondents: 132, selected answers: 145



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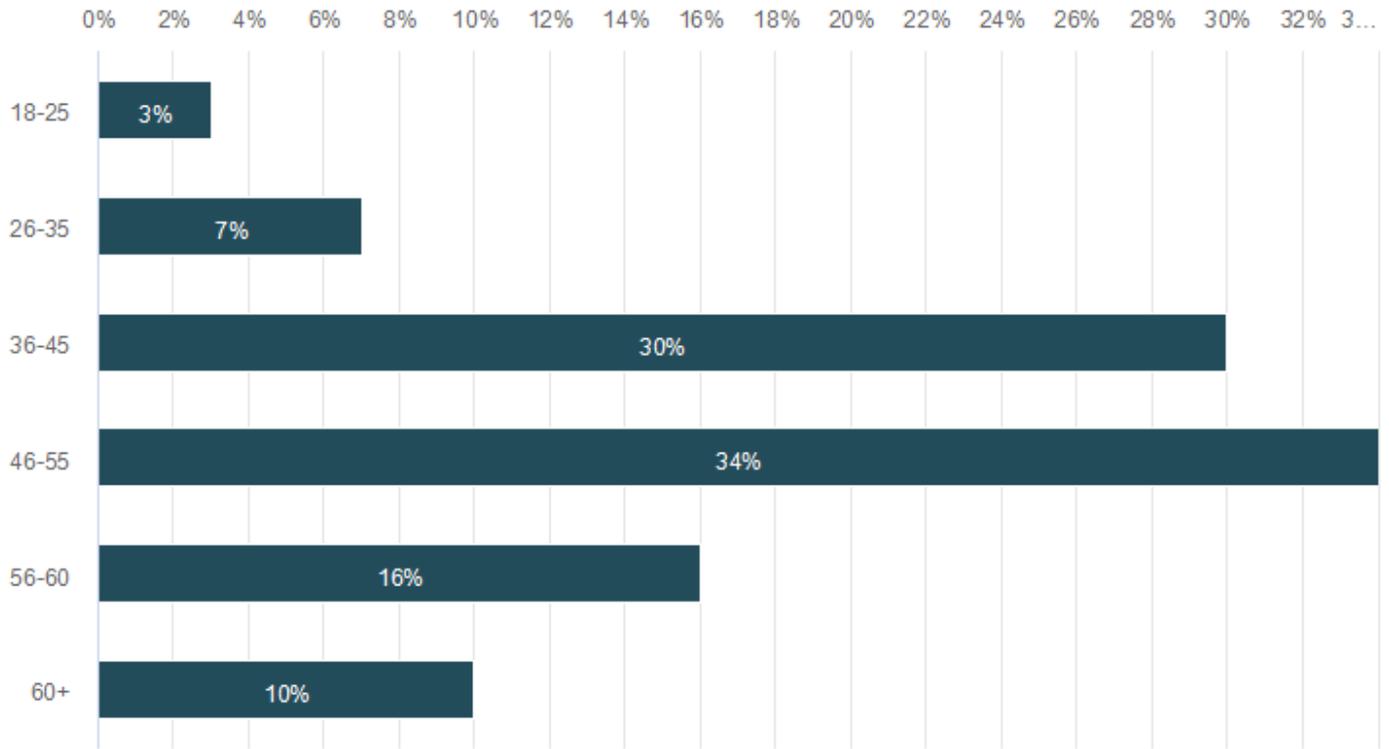
	n	Percent
I am a VET teacher	104	78.8%
I work in VET education administration and management	19	14.4%
I work in VET education sector, but I am not a VET teacher or management	5	3.8%
I work with VET students as external professional	17	12.9%

4. Your age

Number of respondents: 147



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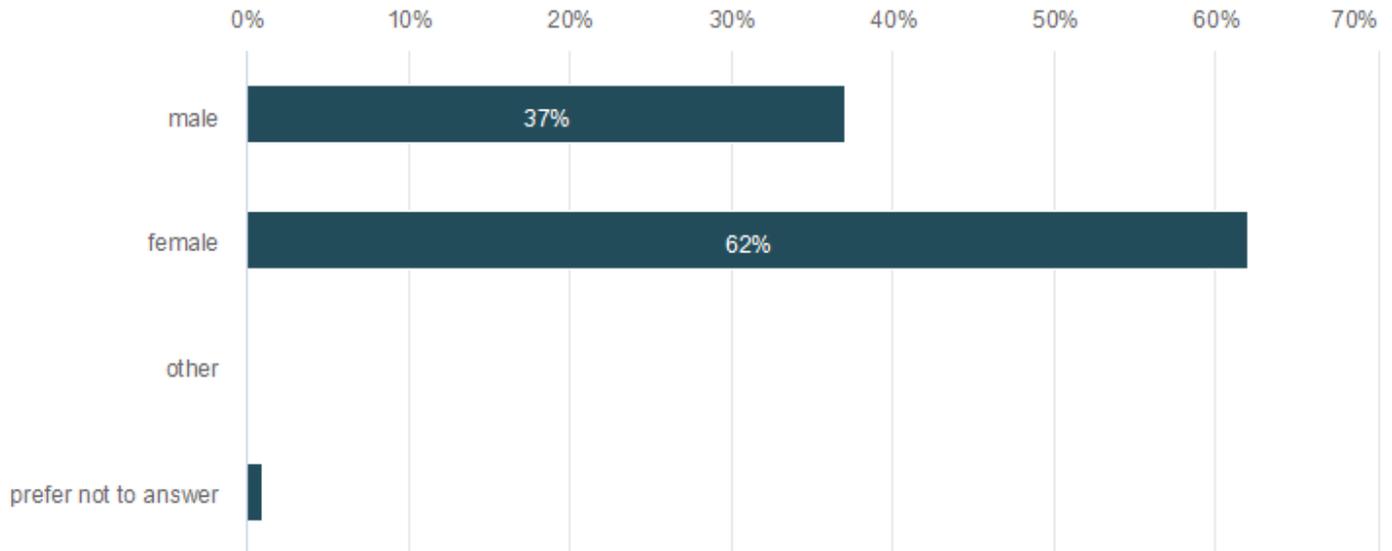
	n	Percent
18-25	5	3.4%
26-35	10	6.8%
36-45	44	30.0%
46-55	50	34.0%
56-60	24	16.3%
60+	14	9.5%

5. Your gender:

Number of respondents: 145



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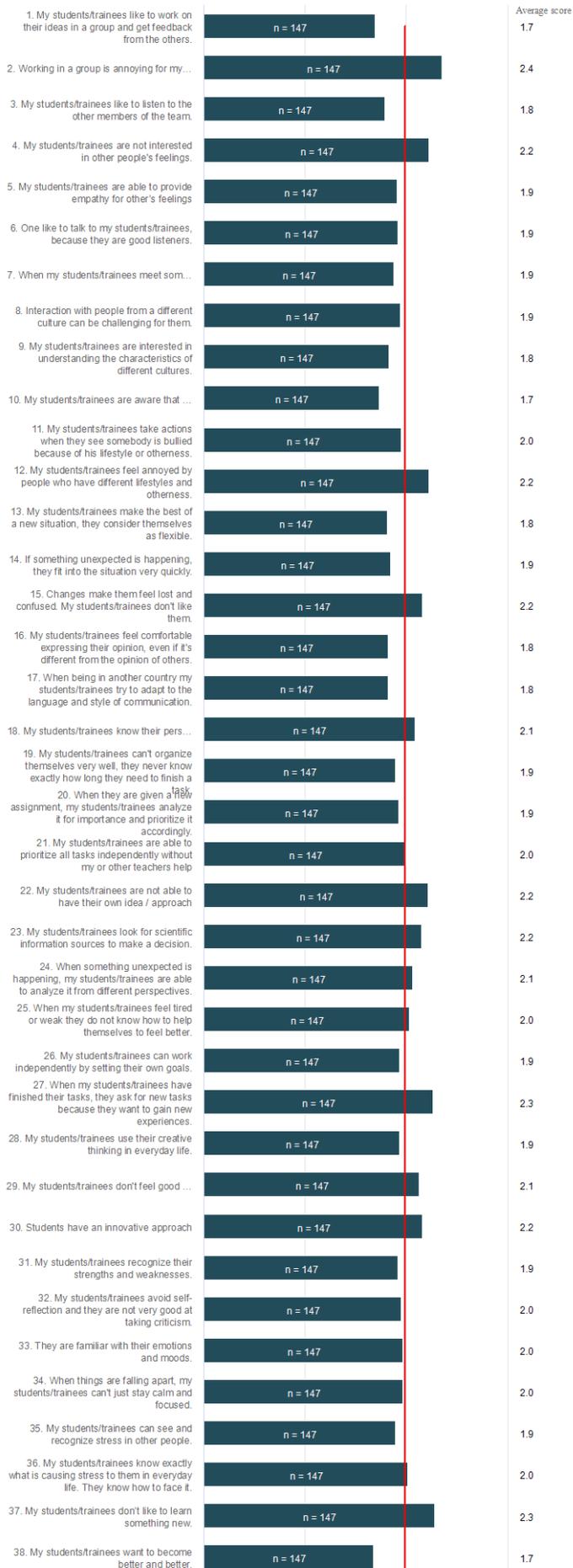
	n	Percent
male	54	37.2%
female	90	62.1%
other	0	0.0%
prefer not to answer	1	0.7%

6. To which extent do you agree with the following statements below, please select 1 -high level, 2- intermediate level, 3- low level

Number of respondents: 147



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	1	2	3	Average	Median
1. My students/trainees like to work on their ideas in a group and get feedback from the others.	41.5%	47.6%	10.9%	1.7	2.0
2. Working in a group is annoying for my students/trainees because it takes a long time to organize the work between each of the team members.	10.2%	44.2%	45.6%	2.4	2.0
3. My students/trainees like to listen to the other members of the team.	33.3%	54.4%	12.3%	1.8	2.0
4. My students/trainees are not interested in other people's feelings.	15.6%	46.3%	38.1%	2.2	2.0
5. My students/trainees are able to provide empathy for other's feelings	24.5%	59.9%	15.6%	1.9	2.0
6. One like to talk to my students/trainees, because they are good listeners.	27.2%	53.7%	19.1%	1.9	2.0
7. When my students/trainees meet somebody with a different cultural or social background, they are interested to get to know him/her.	32.7%	46.9%	20.4%	1.9	2.0
8. Interaction with people from a different culture can be challenging for them.	28.6%	48.3%	23.1%	1.9	2.0
9. My students/trainees are interested in understanding the characteristics of different cultures.	29.9%	57.2%	12.9%	1.8	2.0
10. My students/trainees are aware that people can have different lifestyles and otherness and they are having a positive attitude towards it.	39.5%	47.6%	12.9%	1.7	2.0
11. My students/trainees take actions when they see somebody is bullied because of his lifestyle or otherness.	20.4%	63.9%	15.7%	2.0	2.0
12. My students/trainees feel annoyed by people who have different lifestyles and otherness.	14.3%	49.0%	36.7%	2.2	2.0
13. My students/trainees make the best of a new situation, they consider themselves as flexible.	30.6%	57.1%	12.3%	1.8	2.0
14. If something unexpected is happening, they fit into the situation very quickly.	29.2%	56.5%	14.3%	1.9	2.0



15. Changes make them feel lost and confused. My students/trainees don't like them.	13.6%	56.5%	29.9%	2.2	2.0
16. My students/trainees feel comfortable expressing their opinion, even if it's different from the opinion of others.	31.3%	55.1%	13.6%	1.8	2.0
17. When being in another country, my students/trainees try to adapt to the language and style of communication.	33.3%	51.0%	15.7%	1.8	2.0
18. My students/trainees know their personal boundaries, but they are having problems expressing them to others and saying "No" for example.	15.0%	61.2%	23.8%	2.1	2.0
19. My students/trainees can't organize themselves very well, they never know exactly how long they need to finish a task.	29.9%	51.0%	19.1%	1.9	2.0
20. When they are given a new assignment, my students/trainees analyze it for importance and prioritize it accordingly.	25.8%	55.8%	18.4%	1.9	2.0
21. My students/trainees are able to prioritize all tasks independently without my or other teachers help	22.5%	55.1%	22.4%	2.0	2.0
22. My students/trainees are not able to have their own idea / approach	12.9%	52.4%	34.7%	2.2	2.0
23. My students/trainees look for scientific information sources to make a decision.	17.7%	49.0%	33.3%	2.2	2.0
24. When something unexpected is happening, my students/trainees are able to analyze it from different perspectives.	19.7%	53.8%	26.5%	2.1	2.0
25. When my students/trainees feel tired or weak they do not know how to help themselves to feel better.	19.7%	57.2%	23.1%	2.0	2.0
26. My students/trainees can work independently by setting their own goals.	23.8%	58.5%	17.7%	1.9	2.0
27. When my students/trainees have finished their tasks, they ask for new tasks, because they want to gain new experiences.	12.9%	47.6%	39.5%	2.3	2.0
28. My students/trainees use their creative thinking in everyday life.	24.5%	57.1%	18.4%	1.9	2.0
29. My students/trainees don't feel good when they are asked to do something new,	18.4%	50.3%	31.3%	2.1	2.0



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and when they have to use creative methods for it.					
30. Students have an innovative approach	17.0%	49.7%	33.3%	2.2	2.0
31. My students/trainees recognize their strengths and weaknesses.	26.5%	55.1%	18.4%	1.9	2.0
32. My students/trainees avoid self-reflection and they are not very good at taking criticism.	23.1%	58.5%	18.4%	2.0	2.0
33. They are familiar with their emotions and moods.	21.1%	61.2%	17.7%	2.0	2.0
34. When things are falling apart, my students/trainees can't just stay calm and focused.	17.7%	68.0%	14.3%	2.0	2.0
35. My students/trainees can see and recognize stress in other people.	22.5%	65.3%	12.2%	1.9	2.0
36. My students/trainees know exactly what is causing stress to them in everyday life. They know how to face it.	16.3%	66.0%	17.7%	2.0	2.0
37. My students/trainees don't like to learn something new.	10.2%	51.0%	38.8%	2.3	2.0
38. My students/trainees want to become better and better.	42.2%	47.6%	10.2%	1.7	2.0
39. My students/trainees are sure that they can learn literally anything, if they decide to.	31.3%	51.7%	17.0%	1.9	2.0

- **Basic report - Erasmus+ project VET3D Soft Skills and key competences – Labor Market**

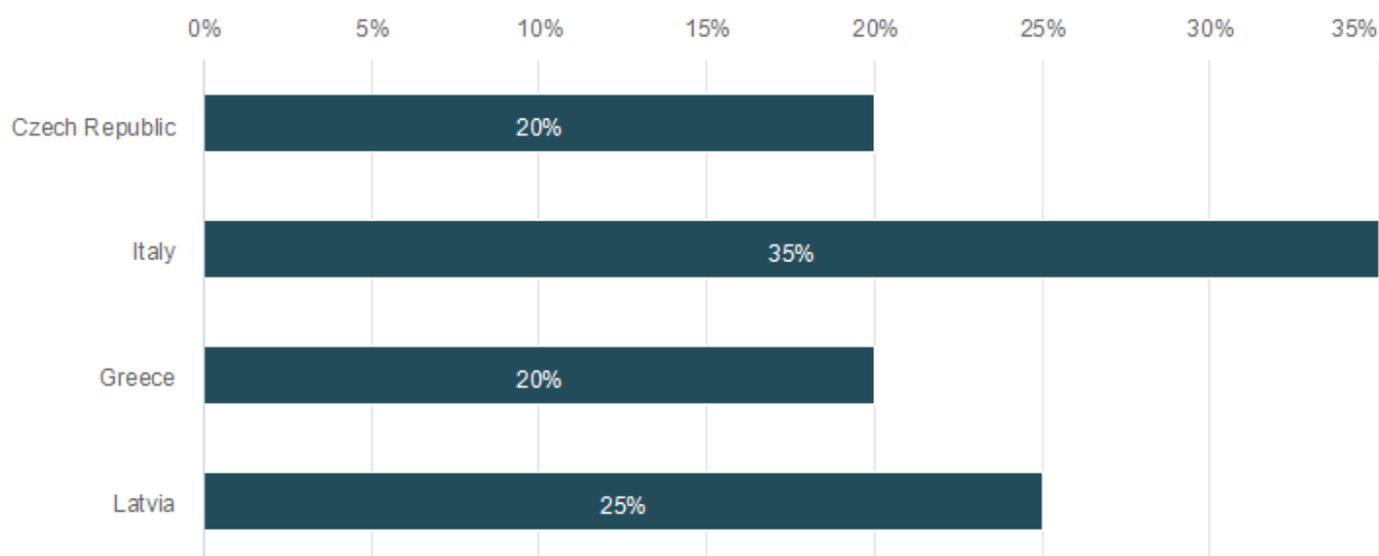
Total number of respondents: 20

1. Country

Number of respondents: 20



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	n	Percent
Czech Republic	4	20.0%
Italy	7	35.0%
Greece	4	20.0%
Latvia	5	25.0%

2. Organization data: sector of activity

Number of respondents: 20

Responses
Logistics and Transport
IT
restaurant - sale of food and beverages for direct consumption
Touristic restaurant bar
Touristic restaurant bar
IT
mechanical laser cutting
automotive design
State Environmental Fund of the Czech Republic: Grants from national budget, EU and Norway Grants
Mechanical engineering
environmental energy research

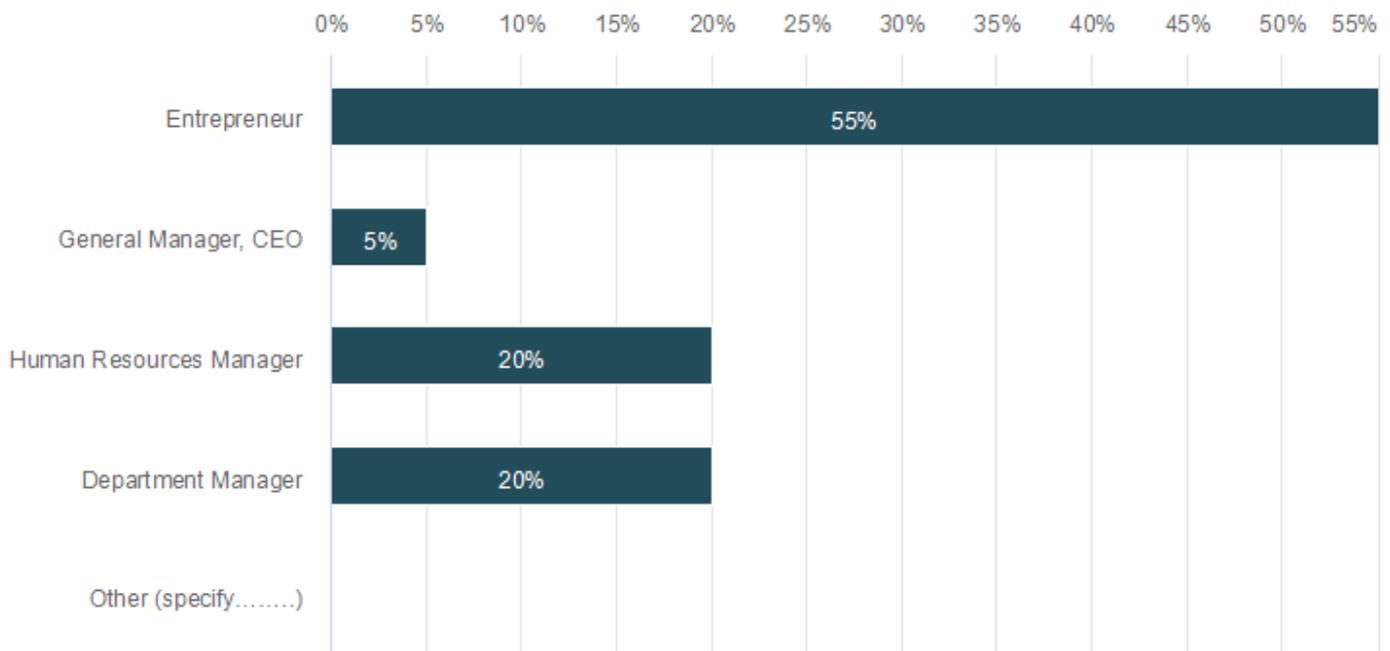


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hotel
Tourism
Education
Tourism
food production
Wood industry
Social business
banking
industry and construction

3. Interviewee data:

Number of respondents: 20, selected answers: 20



	n	Percent
Entrepreneur	11	55.0%
General Manager, CEO	1	5.0%
Human Resources Manager	4	20.0%
Department Manager	4	20.0%
Other (specify.....)	0	0.0%

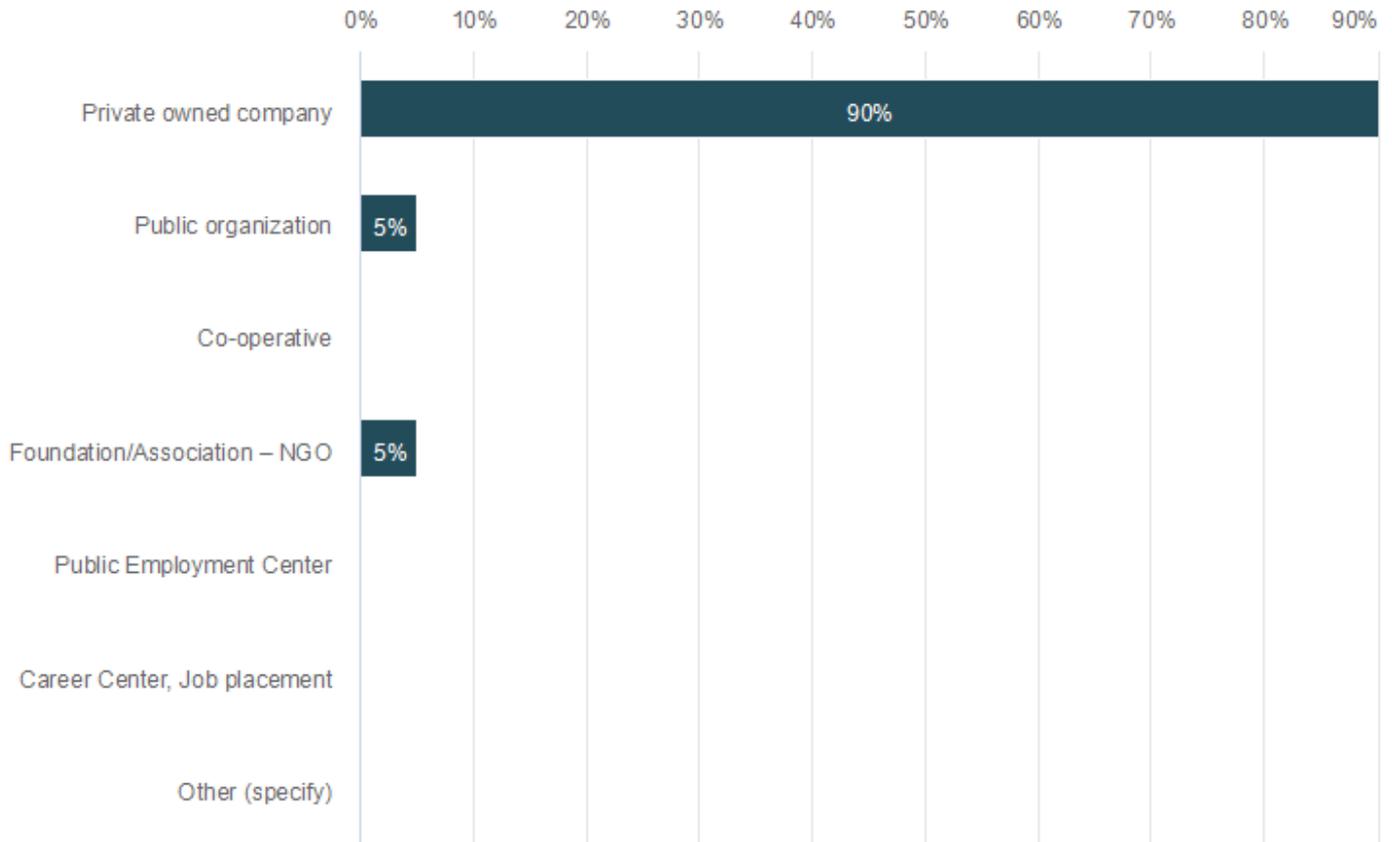


Answers given into textfield

Option names	Text
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4. Type of Organization:

Number of respondents: 20, selected answers: 20



	n	Percent
Private owned company	18	90.0%
Public organization	1	5.0%
Co-operative	0	0.0%
Foundation/Association – NGO	1	5.0%
Public Employment Center	0	0.0%
Career Center, Job placement	0	0.0%
Other (specify)	0	0.0%

Answers given into textfield

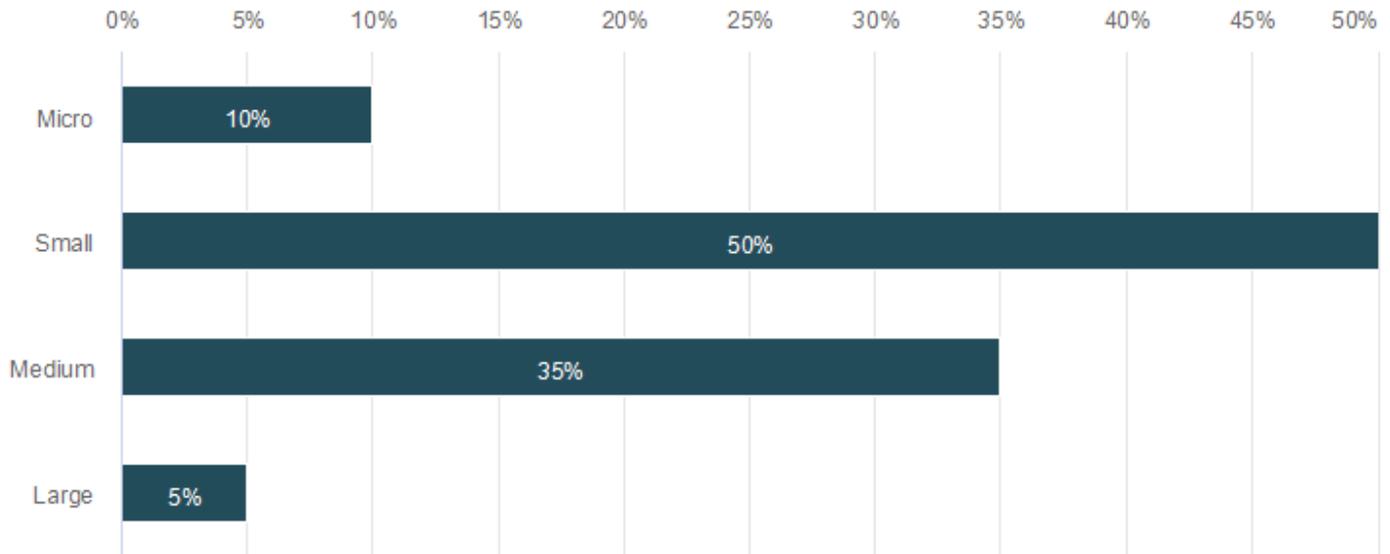
Option names	Text
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5. Organization Size:

Number of respondents: 20



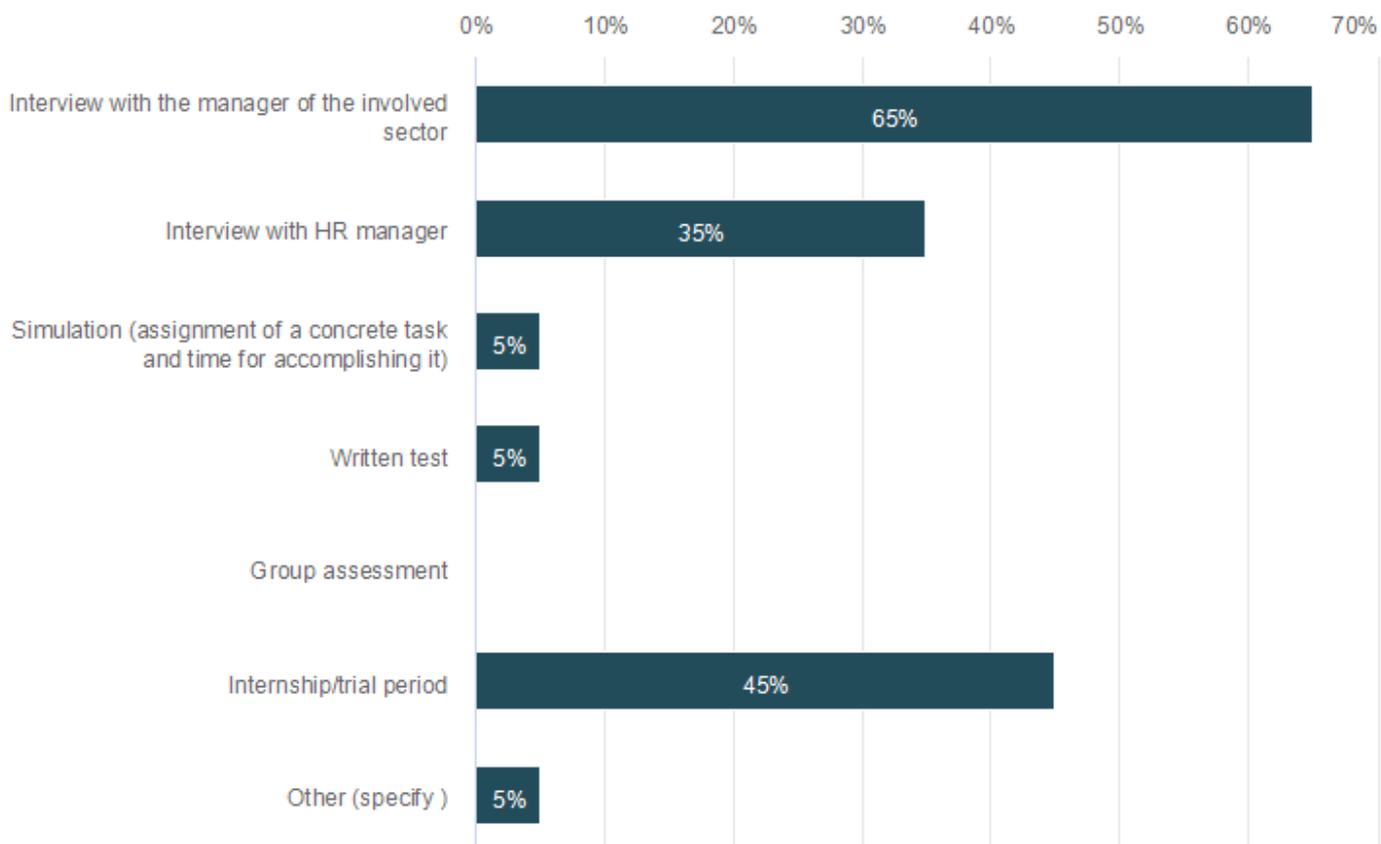
	n	Percent
Micro	2	10.0%
Small	10	50.0%
Medium	7	35.0%
Large	1	5.0%

6. How does your company test candidates' key competencies (knowledge, basic, hard skills)? various option below possible

Number of respondents: 20, selected answers: 32



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	n	Percent
Interview with the manager of the involved sector	13	65.0%
Interview with HR manager	7	35.0%
Simulation (assignment of a concrete task and time for accomplishing it)	1	5.0%
Written test	1	5.0%
Group assessment	0	0.0%
Internship/trial period	9	45.0%
Other (specify)	1	5.0%

Answers given into textfield

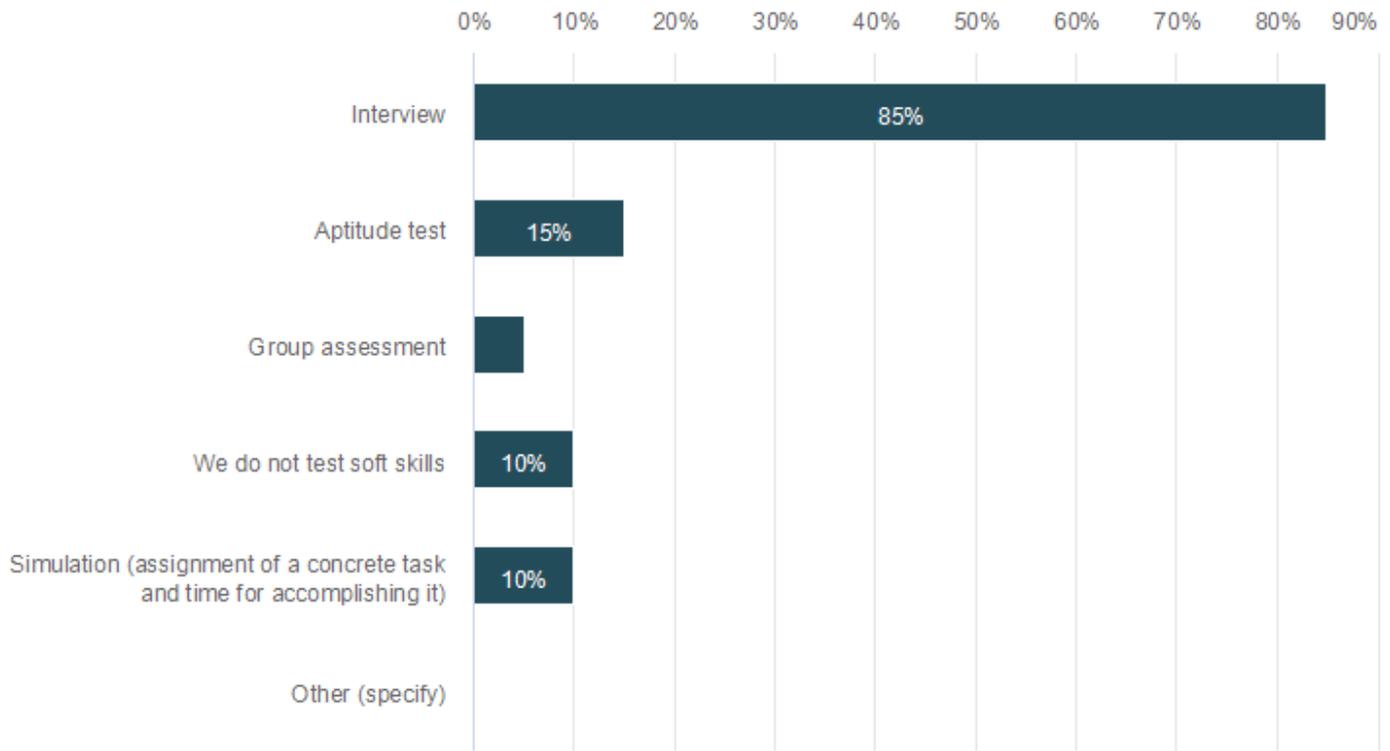
Option names	Text
Other (specify)	Set of oral test questions

7. How does your company test candidates' soft skills?

Number of respondents: 20, selected answers: 25



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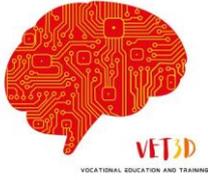
	n	Percent
Interview	17	85.0%
Aptitude test	3	15.0%
Group assessment	1	5.0%
We do not test soft skills	2	10.0%
Simulation (assignment of a concrete task and time for accomplishing it)	2	10.0%
Other (specify)	0	0.0%

Answers given into textfield

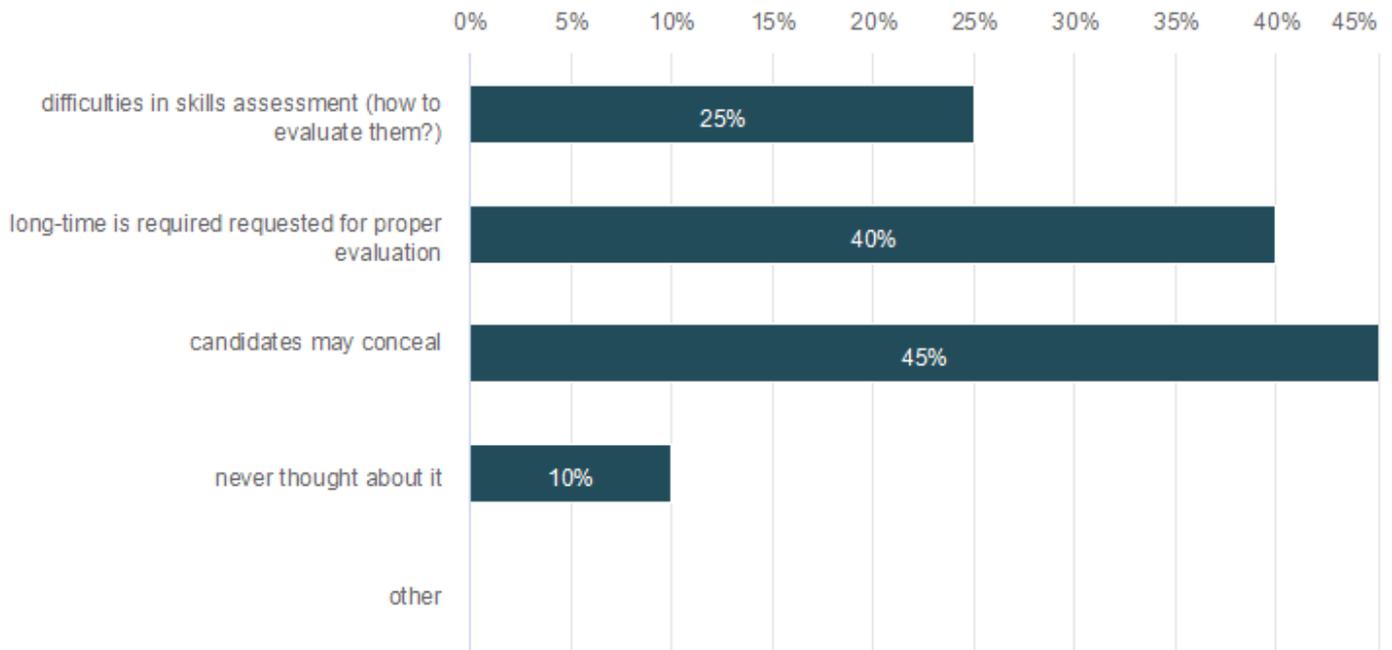
Option names	Text

8. Which difficulties does your company generally encounter in recruiting personnel regarding soft skills?

Number of respondents: 20, selected answers: 24



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	n	Percent
difficulties in skills assessment (how to evaluate them?)	5	25.0%
long-time is required requested for proper evaluation	8	40.0%
candidates may conceal behaviors/manners	9	45.0%
never thought about it	2	10.0%
other	0	0.0%

Answers given into textfield

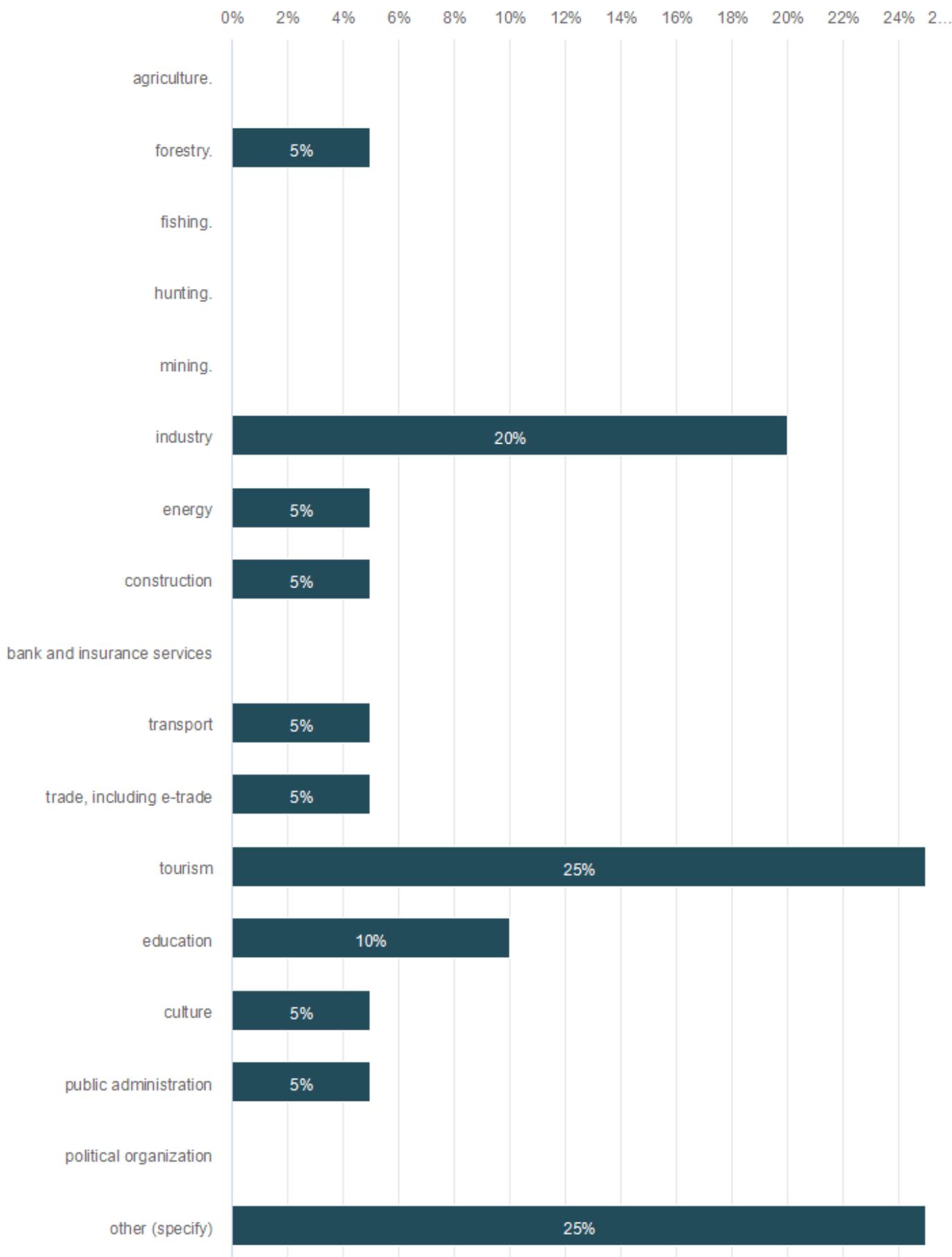
Option names	Text

9. Please tell us in which sector your enterprise is located.

Number of respondents: 20, selected answers: 23



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	n	Percent
agriculture.	0	0.0%
forestry.	1	5.0%
fishing.	0	0.0%
hunting.	0	0.0%
mining.	0	0.0%
industry	4	20.0%
energy	1	5.0%
construction	1	5.0%
bank and insurance services	0	0.0%
transport	1	5.0%
trade, including e-trade	1	5.0%
tourism	5	25.0%
education	2	10.0%
culture	1	5.0%
public administration	1	5.0%
political organization	0	0.0%
other (specify)	5	25.0%

Answers given into textfield

Option names	Text
other (specify)	Logistics
other (specify)	IT
other (specify)	IT services
other (specify)	food production
other (specify)	banking

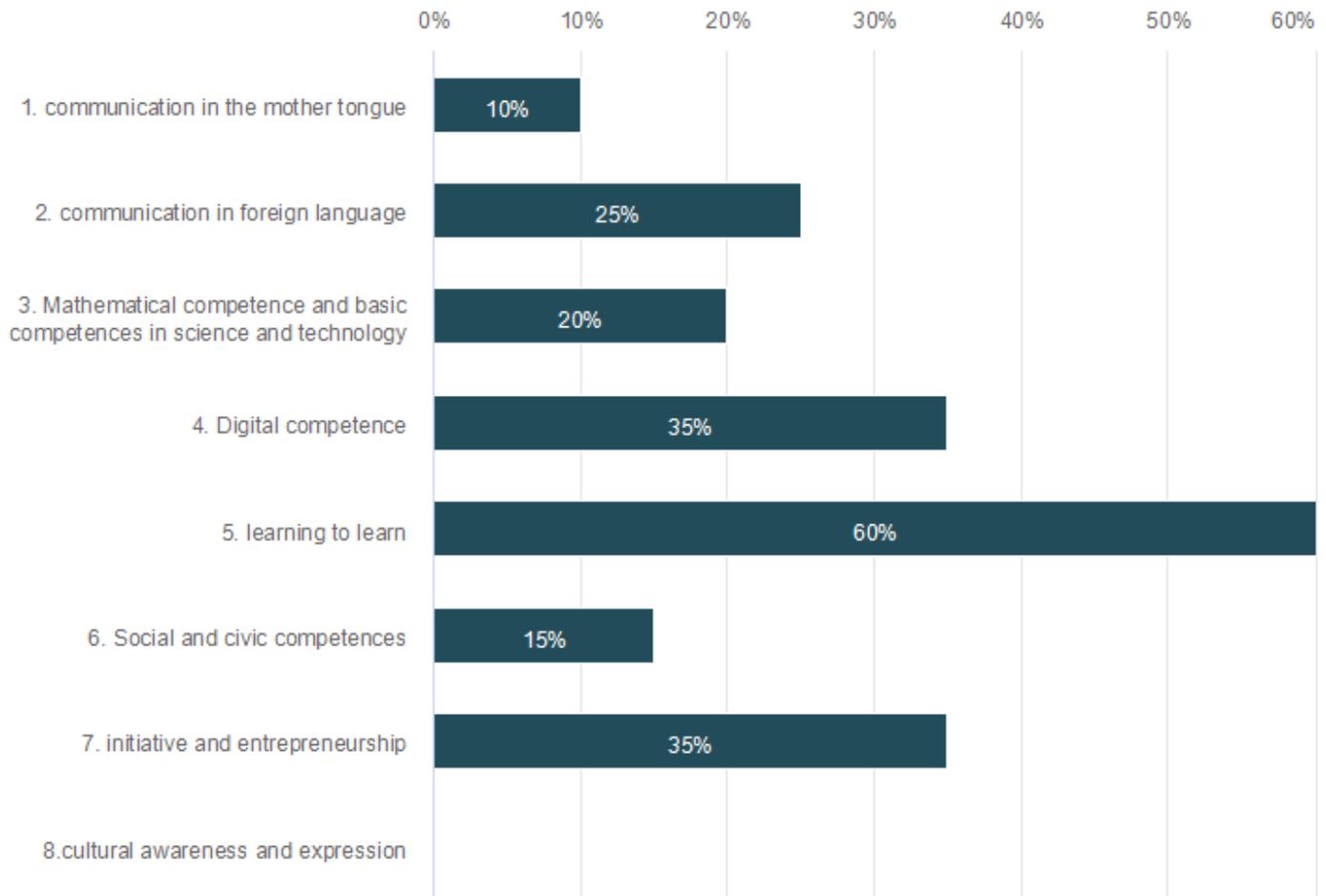
10. Human resources selection criteria – key competences for lifelong learning

Please select the most relevant key competence you look for while selecting a worker (please select only the most relevant competence you consider within the framework of the 8 European keystones competences of lifelong learning)

Number of respondents: 20, selected answers: 40



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	n	Percent
1. communication in the mother tongue	2	10.0%
2. communication in foreign language	5	25.0%
3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology	4	20.0%
4. Digital competence	7	35.0%
5. learning to learn	12	60.0%
6. Social and civic competences	3	15.0%
7. initiative and entrepreneurship	7	35.0%
8. cultural awareness and expression	0	0.0%

11. Human resources selection criteria – soft skills

Please select the most relevant SOFT SKILL you look for, while selecting a worker (please select only the most relevant SOFT SKILL you consider within the following list:



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Number of respondents: 20, selected answers: 68



	n	Percent
Teamwork	12	60.0%
Dependability	9	45.0%
Empathy	3	15.0%
Cultural awareness	1	5.0%
Respect for diversity	0	0.0%
Flexibility	5	25.0%
Communication	5	25.0%
Coordination	4	20.0%



Critical Thinking	5	25.0%
Creativity	2	10.0%
Motivation	7	35.0%
Self-awareness	2	10.0%
Desire to learn	8	40.0%
Dealing with stress	5	25.0%

12. Please leave any comment if applicable, optional

Number of respondents: 1

Responses
<p>Please list at least 3 existing studies/analysis about most requested skills and competences profiles in national labor market (last 6 years)</p> <p>a) national analysis nr 1 (title, author, short description, link for download) Title: What are the qualifications of the employees of the future? Author: Eurolife FFH Short description: The labor market is changing much more often than ever before. And this is responsible for the constant evolution of new technologies and the diversified needs of companies. So, what are the employee qualifications that companies are looking for and you should have? Link: https://tinyurl.com/2p82wedf</p> <p>b) national analysis nr 2 (title, author, short description, link for download) Title: Research: This is the profile of the ideal employee (and where is the innovation related) Author: It's Possible Short description: The set of personal skills that a talent should represent is highlighted by the research "Personal Skills to show Talent at work", conducted for 2016 by ManpowerGroup. Link: https://tinyurl.com/murjat4r</p> <p>c) national analysis nr 3 (title, author, short description, link for download) Title: the 5 digital skills you need in 2021. Author: Randstad Short description: With the digital transformation changing traditional roles and creating new jobs, there is an urgent need for employees to develop and deepen their technical skills to improve the quality of their work, become more creative and attract the interest of employers. Link: https://tinyurl.com/mry6z97j</p>



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CONCLUSIONS

All four partner countries have national curricula in VET. There are however some differences on how the key competences are visible in these curricula.

Even though the European Council has given the recommendation on the Key Competences already in 2018, there is still a great variety of how they are implemented or even understood in different countries. The next step of the VET 3D project will be a collection of good practices for the enhanced integration of the 3D in VET education formal, non- formal, work-based learning and learning mobility.

With regards to the results of this study, there is a need for a guide on how to assess and accredit the key competences and soft skills in VET. This analysis shows the necessity to create a method to showcase the competences an individual has achieved during her/his life whether it is through formal school education or no formal learning. Curricula are not very flexible and often do not allow schools to adapt teaching sufficiently to the needs of pupils from different disciplines. They also believe that soft skills and horizontal skills could be better integrated within VET through more individual training programs and through a certification process with clear and shared criteria at a national and regional level. Curriculum adaptation must be implemented and cooperation between organizations must take place.

Some of the responders suggest that global improvements could be implemented in vet through better listening by companies and the activation of courses in synergy with market demand, increasing the experimentation of the double school / work system, and training the teacher in soft skills to strengthen the alternative system, also with forms of employment contracts, greater flexibility in training programs.

We have asked the students: How can you define soft skills? Here below some of their answers:

- Soft skills have the potential to improve the person's ability to communicate effectively
- Soft skills help us: adapt to changing circumstances, collaborate with the team and find out the right moment of asking for help
- The skills beyond technical skills, dependent on the person's personality.
- Soft skills are the natural skills. for example person's predisposition to towards the individual or group work, it is the personal ability to accept criticism or to bear stress
- Teamwork, critical thinking, problem management and problem solving, adaptability, flexibility, stress management, leadership skills and communication skills
- Skills that are necessary in most professions

We have asked the teachers: How can you define soft skills? Here below some of their answers:



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- Horizontal skills are the skills used with slight variations in all the different tasks, regardless of the exact object of the work. Such skills are language communication, teamwork, time management and more.
- Horizontal skills are related to the management of our everyday life
- Soft skills can be defined as those competences that are the result of the elaboration of specific skills. By maturing the contents and methods of a certain technical discipline, the "know-how" (knowledge) and the "know-how" (ability) bring out the "know-how" of the person who plays a certain professional role.
- The soft skills are the subjective skills that one usually acquires through life experience and are related to the way one connects and interacts with other people. Those who have developed the 'horizontal' soft skills have developed Emotional Intelligence (EQ).

European cooperation in VET

The EU VET policy vision up to 2020 is set in the Bruges Communiqué and Riga Conclusions and is firmly embedded in the ET 2020 framework. This vision has further evolved through the adoption of:

- a number of Council Recommendations (EQF, EQAVET, ECVET, Validation) and Europass Decision
- the 2016 New Skills Agenda for Europe with the objective to make VET a first choice,
- the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights in 2017
- more recently, Council Recommendations on Upskilling Pathways, Tracking Graduates and European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeship.

The EU level cooperation in the field of VET r has been mainly delivered through four types of activities supported, where applicable, by funding from Erasmus+ and ESF:

1. Activities to support the implementation of Council Recommendations organised notably through specific stakeholders' groups and underpinned by targeted funding and mutual learning (networks, users' groups, dedicated calls for proposals);
2. Policy initiatives in the area of VET: notably the European Alliance for Apprenticeship and the European Vocational Skills Week;
3. Mutual learning activities: notably ET 2020 working groups, peer reviews and other peer learning activities (including Cedefop and ETF events);
4. Monitoring of progress: notably Cedefop and ETF VET policy monitoring, ET Monitor, ET 2020 benchmarks or IVET Mobility Scoreboard.



Annexes

Annex 1. INTERVIEW MEMO- POLICY MAKERS

Date:

When: online, onsite

Duration: how many minutes

Interviewer: name, surname position in project

Interviewee: name, surname, position, organization

Does a person agree to be recorded? : YES/NO

Does a person agree that his/her name is mentioned in the report? : YES/NO

Select country

- . Czech Rep
- a. Italy
- b. Latvia
- c. Greece

1. Is there a common /overall-curriculum in Vocational education and Training regarding soft skills?

a. if Yes, please select the level

- National
- Regional
- Local or VET provider specific

b. No / I do not know

2. Is there a common /overall-curriculum in Vocational education and Training regarding key competences?

c. if Yes, please select the level

- National
- Regional
- Local or VET provider specific

d. No / I do not know

3. How are the key competences in your country's vocational qualifications displayed?



- Separate modules
- Written in the vocational subjects
- Written in the general subjects
- They are not displayed at all

4. How are the soft skills in your country's vocational qualifications displayed?

- Separate modules
- Written in the vocational subjects
- Written in the general subjects
- They are not displayed at all

5. Are the skills or knowledge associated with the key competences recognized as part of the qualifications?

- YES
- NO
- I do not know

6. Are the skills or knowledge associated with the soft skills recognized as part of the qualifications?

- YES
- NO
- I do not know

7. How are the skills and knowledge associated with the key competences assessed?

- As part of the vocational skills/competences
- As a separate project or similar
- In national tests
- In test organized or conducted by VET organizers themselves
- Others, please explain what and how

8. How are the skills and knowledge associated with the soft skills assessed?

- As part of the vocational skills/competences
- As a separate project or similar



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- In national tests
- In test organized or conducted by VET organizers themselves
- Others, please explain what and how

9. How are the skills and knowledge associated with the key competences accredited as part of the qualification?

- separate grade in the certificate
- separate note in the certificate
- no mention in the certificate

10. How are the skills and knowledge associated with the soft skills accredited as part of the qualification?

- separate grade in the certificate
- separate note in the certificate
- no mention in the certificate

11. How does Vet education system devote attention to the empowerment of the professional competences like soft skills ?

high level of priority, medium level of priority, basic level of priority, no level at all

12. How does Vet education system devote attention to the empowerment of the professional competences like key competences?

high level of priority, medium level of priority, basic level of priority, no level at all

13. How is the priority level assigned by the Vet education system to the following skills empowerment goals according to the teaching plan?

13.1. SOFT SKILLS

high level of priority, medium level of priority, basic level of priority, no level at all

- Teamwork
- Dependability
- Empathy
- Cultural awareness
- Respect for diversity
- Flexibility
- Communication



- Coordination

13.2. KEY competences:

high level of priority, medium level of priority, basic level of priority, no level at all

- Communication in the mother tongue
- Communication in foreign languages
- Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology
- Digital competence
- Learning to learn
- Social and civic competences
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- Cultural awareness and expression

14. Do you consider the empowerment of soft skills in the VET education as a success factor for the integration of VET students in the labour market?

- high level of relevance
- medium level of relevance
- low level of relevance
- no level at all

15. How do you estimate VET providers and professionals' level of know-how and expertise, concerning the integration of the soft skills development in VET offer?

- high level of know-how and expertise
- medium level of know-how and expertise
- basic level of know-how and expertise
- no level at all

16. How much relevance do you assign about investing on VET providers and professionals' continuous training on soft skills?

- high level of relevance
- medium level of relevance
- basic level of relevance
- no level at all

Open questions:



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17. How could be SOFT skills better integrated into VET?
18. How could be VET system improved to ensure the increased employability of VET students by business/industry?
19. Are there any attempts on VET school level to improve students' SOFT skills, please mention what and how?
20. Which overall improvements could be implemented in VET and how? please give exact examples/ ideas/ suggestions

Annex 2. Soft Skills Statements VET Students Questionnaire

(30 students per country, will be interviewed)

Which answer describes you?

- . Female
- a. Male
- b. Other
- c. Prefer not to answer

Choose your country

- . Czech Rep
- a. Italy
- b. Latvia
- c. Greece

Which age group describes you?

- . under 18
- a. 18-23
- b. 24-27
- c. 28-30
- d. 30-35
- e. 36-40
- f. 40+

Which answer describes you?

- . I am VET student now
- a. I am VET graduate
- b. I am not VET student

1) How can you define soft skills? (open question)

2) to which extend do you agree with the following statement



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Teamwork:

- . I like to work on my ideas in a group and get feedback from the others
- a. Working in a group is annoying for me because it takes a long time to organize the work between each of the team members.
- b. I like to listen to the other members of the team.

(high level, intermediate level, low level)

Empathy:

- . I am not interested in other people's feelings.
- a. I am able to provide empathy for others feelings.
- b. My friends come to me to talk, because I am a good listener.

(high level, intermediate level, low level)

Cultural awareness:

- . When I meet somebody with a different cultural or social background, I am interested to get to know him/her.
- a. Interacting with people from a different culture can be challenging for me.
- b. I am interested in understanding the characteristics of different cultures.

(high level, intermediate level, low level)

Respect for diversity:

- . I am aware that people can have different lifestyles and identities and I am having a positive attitude towards it.
- a. I take actions when I see somebody is harassed because of his or her lifestyle or otherness.
- b. I feel annoyed by people who have different lifestyles and otherness.

(high level, intermediate level, low level)

Flexibility:

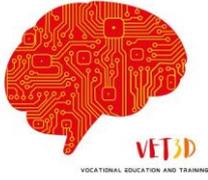
- . I make the best of a new situation; I consider myself as a flexible person.
- a. If something unexpected is happening, I fit into the situation very quickly.
- b. Changes make me feel lost and confused. I don't like them.

(high level, intermediate level, low level)

Communication:

- . I feel comfortable expressing my opinion, even if it is different from the opinion of others.
- a. When being on holiday I try to adapt to the language and style of communication of the region/country.
- b. I know my personal boundaries, but I have problems expressing them and saying "No" for example.

(high level, intermediate level, low level)



Coordination:

- . I can't organize myself very well, I never know exactly how long I need to finish a task.
- a. When I am given a new assignment, I analyze it for importance and prioritize it accordingly.
- b. I use goal setting to decide what tasks and activities I should work on.

(high level, intermediate level, low level)

Critical Thinking

- . I am able to have my own idea / approach
- a. I look for scientific information sources to make a decision.
- b. When something unexpected is happening, I am able to analyze it from different perspectives.

(high level, intermediate level, low level)

Motivation:

- . When I feel tired or weak, I do not know how to help myself to feel better.
- a. I can work independently by setting my own goals.
- b. When I am at work and I have nothing to do I ask for other tasks because I am the one who wants to be involved in the experience.

(high level, intermediate level, low level)

Creativity:

- . I use my creative thinking in everyday life.
- a. I don't feel good when I am asked to do something new and I have to use creative methods for it.
- b. I create new ideas and new ways of doing things.

(high level, intermediate level, low level)

Self-awareness:

- . I recognize my strengths and weaknesses.
- a. I avoid self-reflection and I am not very good at taking criticism.
- b. I am familiar with my emotions and moods.

(high level, intermediate level, low level)

Dealing with stress:

- . When things are falling apart I can't just stay calm and focused.
- a. I can see and recognize stress in other people.
- b. I know exactly what is causing stress to me in everyday life, I realize how to face it.

(high level, intermediate level, low level)

Desire to learn:

- . I feel uncomfortable when I need to learn something new.
- a. I want to become better and better.



b. I am sure I can learn literally anything if I decide to.

(high level, intermediate level, low level)

Annex 3. Soft Skills Statements VET Teachers Questionnaire

(30 VET teachers per country ,country, will be interviewed)

Gender

- male
- female
- prefer not to answer

Age

- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-60
- 60+

Country

- LV
- IT
- GR
- CZ

teaching experience (years):

- less than 1
- 1-3
- 4-5
- 6-10
- 10+

to which extend do you agree with the following statement

Teamwork:

. My students/trainees like to work on their ideas in a group and get feedback from the others.

a. Working in a group is annoying for my students/trainees, because it takes a long time to organize the work between each of the team members.

b. My students/trainees like to listen to the other members of the team.

Empathy:

. My students/trainees are not interested in other people's feelings.

a. My students/trainees are able to provide empathy for others feelings



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- b. One like to talk to my students/trainees, because they are good listeners.

Cultural awareness:

. When my students/trainees meet somebody with a different cultural or social background, they are interested to get to know him/her.

- a. Interaction with people from a different culture can be challenging for them.
- b. My students/trainees are interested in understanding the characteristics of different cultures.

Respect for diversity:

. My students/trainees are aware that people can have different lifestyles and otherness and they are having a positive attitude towards it.

- a. My students/trainees take actions when they see somebody is bullied because of his lifestyle or otherness.
- b. My students/trainees feel annoyed by people who have different lifestyles and otherness.

Flexibility:

. My students/trainees make the best of a new situation, they consider themselves as flexible.

- a. If something unexpected is happening, they fit into the situation very quickly.
- b. Changes make them feel lost and confused. My students/trainees don't like them.

Communication:

. My students/trainees feel comfortable expressing their opinion, even if it's different from the opinion of others.

- a. When being in another country my students/trainees try to adapt to the language and style of communication.
- b. My students/trainees know their personal boundaries, but they are having problems expressing them to others and saying "No" for example.

Coordination:

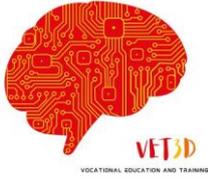
. My students/trainees can't organize themselves very well, they never know exactly how long they need to finish a task.

- a. When they are given a new assignment, my students/trainees analyze it for importance and prioritize it accordingly.
- b. My students/trainees are able to prioritize all tasks independently without my or other teachers help

Critical Thinking

. My students/trainees are not able to have their own idea / approach

- a. My students/trainees look for scientific information sources to make a decision.



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b. When something unexpected is happening, my students/trainees are able to analyze it from different perspectives.

Motivation:

. When my students/trainees feel tired or weak they do not know how to help themselves to feel better.

a. My students/trainees can work independently by setting their own goals.

b. When my students/trainees have finished their tasks, they ask for new tasks because they want to gain new experiences.

Creativity:

. My students/trainees use their creative thinking in everyday life.

a. My students/trainees don't feel good when they are asked to do something new, and when they have to use creative methods for it.

b. Students have an innovative approach

Self-awareness:

. My students/trainees recognize their strengths and weaknesses.

a. My students/trainees avoid self-reflection and they are not very good at taking criticism.

b. They are familiar with their emotions and moods.

Dealing with stress:

. When things are falling apart, my students/trainees can't just stay calm and focused.

a. My students/trainees can see and recognize stress in other people.

b. My students/trainees know exactly what is causing stress to them in everyday life. They know how to face it.

Desire to learn:

a) My students/trainees don't like to learn something new.

b) My students/trainees want to become better and better.

c) My students/trainees are sure that they can learn literally anything, if they decide to.

Annex 4. Soft Skills and key competences – Labor Market Interview

1. Organization data:

Sector of
activity.....
Country
.....;



2. Interviewee data:

- a) Entrepreneur
- b) General Manager, CEO
- c) Human Resources Manager
- d) Department Manager
- e) Other (specify.....)

3. Type of Organization:

- a) Private owned company
- b) Public organization
- c) Co-operative
- d) Foundation/Association – NGO
- e) Public Employment Center
- f) Career Center, Job placement
- Other (specify)

4. Organization Size:

- Micro
- Small
- Medium
- Big

5. How does your company test candidates' key competencies (knowledge, basic, hard skills)?

Interview with the manager of the involved sector

Interview with HR manager

Simulation (assignment of a concrete task and time for accomplishing it)

Written test

Group assessment

Internship/trial period

Other (specify)

6. How does your company test candidates' soft skills?

- a) Interview
- b) Aptitude test
- c) Group assessment
- d) We do not test soft skills
- e) Simulation (assignment of a concrete task and time for accomplishing it)
- f) Other (specify.....)

7. Which difficulties does your company generally encounter in recruiting personnel regarding soft skills?

- a) difficulties in skills assessment (how to evaluate them?)
- b) long-time is required requested for proper evaluation
- c) candidates may conceal behaviors/manners
- d) never thought about it
- e) other



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8. Which importance does your organization assign to each of the following criteria?

Extremely important, Important, Not Important

Educational background (diploma, certificates)

Prior working experience

Soft skills (non-job specific abilities, such as communication, problem solving, team working, flexibility, motivation, time management, etc.)

Hard skills (job-specific knowledge and abilities)

Foreign languages

Computer/IT skills

Other.....

ANALYSIS AND SCENARIO about the Most Relevant Labour Market Competencies and skills for

Employers

SECTION 1 - Existing studies and research reports about the Most Relevant Labor Market Competencies and skills for Employers

Please list at list 3 existing studies /analysis about most requested skills and competences profiles in national labor market (last 6 years)

a) national analysis nr 1 (title, author, short description, link for download)

b) national analysis nr 2 (title, author, short description, link for download)

c) national analysis nr 2 (title, author, short description, link for download)

SECTION 2 - Perspective of entrepreneurs - interview to entrepreneurs about most requested soft skills and competences profiles while selecting a worker.

1) Entrepreneur 1 - Human resources selection criteria

a) Which size is your company?

Micro business (up to 10 employees).

Small business (up to 50 employees).

Mid-size business (up to 250 employees).

Large business (above 250 employees).

b) Please tell us in which sector is your enterprise?

Primary: agriculture.

Primary: forestry.

Primary: fishing.

Primary: hunting.

Secondary: mining.

Secondary: industry.

Secondary: energy.

Secondary: construction.

Tertiary: bank and insurance services.



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Tertiary: transport.
Tertiary: trade, including e-trade.
Tertiary: tourism.
Quarterly: education.
Quarterly: culture.
Quarterly: public administration.
Quarterly: political organizations.
Other.

c) Human resources selection criteria – key competences for life long learning

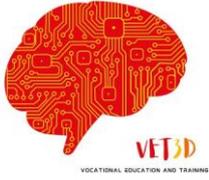
Please select the most relevant key competence you look for, while selecting a worker (please select only the most relevant competence you consider within the framework of the 8 European keystone competences of lifelong learning)

1. communication in the mother tongue
2. communication in foreign language
3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology
4. Digital competence
5. learning to learn
6. Social and civic competences
7. initiative and entrepreneurship
8. cultural awareness and expression

d) Human resources selection criteria – soft skills

Please select the most relevant SOFT SKILL you look for, while selecting a worker (please select only the most relevant SOFT SKILL you consider within the following list:

Teamwork
Dependability
Empathy
Cultural awareness
Respect for diversity
Flexibility
Communication
Coordination
Critical Thinking
Creativity
Motivation
Self-awareness
Desire to learn
Dealing with stress



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