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European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

Exploring leadership in vocational education and training

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Foreword

European policy on vocational education and training (VET) makes a strong link between the quality of education and the quality of teachers and trainers. Teaching staff are important stakeholders in implementing current VET reforms, and their training and professional development are crucial elements in ensuring quality. However, this working paper argues that the role of those managing and leading VET institutions must be more widely acknowledged and that the research base and policy initiatives specifically related to such staff ought to be strengthened. There is increasing evidence of the importance of leadership in education, though VET leaders have, so far, received only marginal attention. Leaders are crucial in implementing reforms and policy initiatives; they also serve as catalysts for change. The close links between VET and the labour market create specific opportunities for leadership but this has not yet been subjected to European research.

This working paper presents some initial findings on leadership in VET in Europe. Cedefop's main objective for this paper is to raise awareness of VET leadership, introducing the topic and escorting it onto the European policy agenda. As the scope and depth of this paper is limited, it should be seen as an initial contribution to discussing leadership in VET.

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Acknowledgements

([1]) Through research, comparative analyses and its training of trainers network (TTnet), Cedefop monitors trends affecting the roles, competences and training of vocational teachers and trainers; it promotes knowledge-sharing between practitioners and decision-makers, and formulates proposals for policy-making on key issues of interest for the training and professional development of VET teachers and trainers. The TTnet was established by Cedefop in 1998 as a pan-European forum for key players and decision-makers involved in the training and professional development of vocational teachers and trainers. The TTnet aims to foster cooperation between key national actors, produce recommendations, guidance and tools for practitioners and decision-makers, and support the implementation of EU priorities for VET teachers and trainers. The network is being dismantled during 2011. Its activities are being taken over by the new thematic working group set up by DGEAC on trainers in VET.

Table of contents

Executive summary

Vocational education and training (VET) in Europe is currently undergoing change. Most countries are putting VET reforms in place to improve the quality of provision and learning outcomes, make education and training more accessible and attractive for learners, and ensure a close and relevant connection to the world of work.

The potential success of these changes and reforms rests largely on the shoulders of VET staff, who are responsible for transforming policy into practice. European policy-makers have introduced measures to increase the knowledge, competences and skills of VET teachers and trainers, to prepare them for developments in pedagogy, technology and the labour market. However, this working paper argues the need to highlight the role of leadership in managing change and securing quality in VET.

While school leadership has received substantial attention in general education policy, in most countries it plays an insignificant part in VET. This paper demonstrates the lack of research, policies and strategies related to leadership in VET and claims that there is a need for such attention. Leadership is crucial for implementing change in educational institutions, and the specificities of VET call for specific measures. To underline this argument, the paper includes a survey by VET experts identifying the unique work tasks and competence requirements of VET leaders in ten European countries. The interaction with the labour market and the expectations on VET to act as an agent for economic and social transformation result in a high degree of complexity in VET organisations, networking, target groups and provision. These circumstances require a different type of leadership from general education.

The last few years have seen a substantial change in the governance of VET institutions, especially, but not exclusively, in the newer Member States. VET has undergone decentralisation of authority from the central government to regional and local actors, resulting in a higher degree of autonomy for VET institutions. Many countries have experienced new ways of financing VET, introducing measures like vouchers or per capita funding. There has also been a significant development in quality assurance systems in many European countries, a common trend being adoption of quality criteria or indicators and subsequent focus on performance and accountability. This paper will try to establish that developments in governance impact on VET leader roles, work tasks and competence requirements.

To address the issue of leadership in VET, policy-makers and other stakeholders need more information on them as a group. This paper offers a

tentative start by presenting the current qualification requirements and demands for continuing professional development (CPD) for VET leaders in selected European countries. It also offers suggestions for areas to be studied further.

CHAPTER 1
Introduction

1.1.   Why a working paper on VET leadership?

Leadership is a critical success factor in education. At the EU education ministers' event in Sweden in 2009 Sir Michael Barber gave a presentation on school leadership and system reform (Barber, 2009). He outlined nine characteristics of high-performing school systems, and categorised them into dimensions. Within the human capital dimension, great leadership at school level was one characteristic, Operational responsibility and budgets significantly devolved to school level (autonomy) and capacity to manage change were listed as characteristics within the structure and organisation dimension. According to Barber, school principals can influence most aspects of education: quality of output, school culture, relations with external actors, attractiveness and system development. Building on the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) *Seven strong claims for successful school leadership* (NCSL, 2009) Barber maintains that school leadership is important, that it can be learned, and, since personal traits explain a high proportion of the variation in leadership effectiveness, schools need to select their leaders carefully.

Research indicates that effective school leadership has a positive effect on student learning outcomes (see, for instance, Marzano, 2006). According to NCSL, 'there is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership' (NCSL, 2009, p. 5). The OECD activity on improving school leadership demonstrates its importance for effective teaching and learning. School leadership can improve school outcomes by influencing the motivation and capacities of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment (Nusche, 2009).

Since the 1990s there has been much debate on school leadership, increasingly considered essential for implementing reforms and establishing a framework for successful school policy. However, while there is a growing research base on leadership and management in general education, the theme has so far received marginal attention in VET. EU policy documents readily acknowledge the importance of teachers and trainers in VET, while paying limited attention to leaders. Recently, however, the *Bruges Communiqué* (European Commission, 2010a) listed VET leaders as key actors in raising VET quality.

The increasingly important role of VET in education and training and the labour market is changing the roles and adding to the responsibilities of VET leaders. There is a need for increased networking and integrated approaches to influence outcomes, not only for students but also the local community and economy (LSIS, 2009). European VET is currently in a transition phase characterised by constant change. Although the Member States are at different stages, and the policies, strategies and systems vary, it is possible to identify a set of common objectives, challenges and reform elements that influence VET leadership. Certain trends may be found – in varying degrees – in most Member States. Among these are structural and organisational developments in the form of decentralisation of VET authority from central to regional or organisational level. VET organisations are becoming more autonomous, gradually achieving more responsibility and independence in budgets and curricula. This growing autonomy, however, is accompanied by greater focus on quality assurance and learning outcomes, plus the introduction of management approaches such as new public management, characterised by objectives and accountability. These trends have changed the roles, activities and competence required of VET leaders. Pedagogical leadership has diminished, with increasing concern with legal and financial issues; there has been an increase in administrative tasks linked to quality assurance systems. Policy-makers and experts working on VET need to know more about this group of professionals and how leadership can contribute to achieving the objectives of VET policy to create strategies that can be implemented successfully at organisational and local level.

The ambition of this paper is to create awareness and to stimulate debate and reflection among policy-makers, researchers and other stakeholders on leadership in VET. It is our hope that leadership may be more widely acknowledged as contributing to the main priority of quality assurance at European level. However, leadership is a complex topic and there are numerous themes to investigate and explore further. Given the limited scope of this paper, most of these will not be discussed here but a short list of recommendations for further study is presented at the conclusion.

1.2. What is VET leadership?

In order to discuss VET leadership within the scope of a working paper, there is a need to present and define some essential concepts and make some choices.

According to Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, leadership is the office or position of a leader, the activity of leading and the capacity to lead. In this paper, the focus is mainly on the activity of leading, which is an activity executed by a leader.

This paper will make a distinction between leadership and management. Bennis and Nanus claim that many organisations, especially those that fail, are 'overmanaged and underled' (Bennis and Nanus, 1985). They acknowledge a fundamental difference between managers and leaders, and list several key differences between them. In their view, managers are crucial to the daily administration and supervision of an organisation. They:

- do things right;
- seek control, create and follow the rules;
- focus on how things should be done;
- seek compliance;
- value secrecy;
- use formal authority (hierarchy).

In contrast, leaders are crucial in influencing the organisation, in setting goals, priorities and a course for action, creating new ideas, visions and policies. Bennis and Nanus list as leaders' attributes that they:

- do the right things;
- see people as great assets;
- seek commitment;
- focus on outcomes;
- see what could be done and why;
- share information;
- promote networks.

This division in function between leaders and managers may be seen in an organisation which is led by a leader who makes use of a team of managers that concentrate on the daily management. This pattern may also be found in educational organisations. There is reason to believe that the division between leadership and management is blurred in many VET institutions: leaders and their teams often are referred to as 'the administration,' and leaders' activities may be categorised as administrative tasks instead of leadership ([2]).

While the term leadership is usually used for activities confined to the local level, such as an educational institution, governance typically involves larger processes and systems administered by a government at local, regional or national level. Governance is what a government does, which is the exercise of power and policy. The United Nations uses this definition for public sector governance: 'regimes of laws, rules, judicial decisions and administrative practices that constrain, prescribe, and enable the provision of publicly supported goods and services'

([2])   Even though this paper makes a distinction between leaders and managers, much of the literature referred to does not. Consequently these terms may operate side by side in the text when such literature is quoted.

(United Nations, 2006, p. 6). This working paper is primarily focused on leadership and not on governance. However, recent trends in VET governance and how they influence leaders are discussed in Chapter 5.

1.3. Who are the VET leaders?

As the literature review in the next chapter demonstrates, little research exists on leadership in VET. Consequently it is difficult to find definitions or discussions on identifying VET leaders in Europe. In *Terminology of European education and training policy: a selection of 100 key terms* (Cedefop, 2008) there is no definition of VET leadership or VET leaders. The *European Glossary on Education* series has been developed by the Eurydice Network as a reference resource on terminology to provide for all-round understanding and comparisons of how the various education systems in Europe work. Volume four (Eurydice, 2002) provides coverage of the terminology used nationally to refer to management, monitoring and support staff. In this volume Eurydice lists many of the national terms and words used for VET leaders, but they do not offer a definition of VET leadership or leaders.

However, general educational leadership research and strategies often include a variety of leadership positions and functions: principals, deputies, team managers, heads of units and teachers (being 'classroom leaders'). In many organisations the application of distributed leadership results in sharing of leadership functions and roles. This leadership design is also found in VET. The Dutch ROCs (Regionale opleidingen centra, regional vocational centres) show how leadership can be considered an umbrella term covering the various levels of leaders' positions, functions and tasks. A ROC has a governing board or supervisory board with overall authority or supervision of the executive board. The executive board is entrusted with following national policy or that decided on by the governing board, initiating institutional policy, and the day-to-day running of the ROC as an educational institution. The director is the education sector manager and represents the level where educational leadership is effected (the operational level). The team managers are middle management level and manage a number of educational teams responsible for learning and assessment ([3]).

The *Competence Framework for VET Professions* ([4]) was developed by Cedefop and the Finnish National Board of Education (Cedefop, Volmari et al.,

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([3]) This description of leadership levels in ROCs is made by Mr Gerrit Jansen at ROC Gilde, The Netherlands.

([4]) The Framework is discussed in more detail in the literature review.

2009). It defines VET leaders as 'one or several persons in charge of VET institutions, such as vocational upper secondary institutions and further education colleges or training centres providing continuing vocational education and training. These persons have the overall responsibility for the running of an institution' (p. 40). The framework consequently makes no distinction between leaders in IVET and CVET: 'The work and responsibilities of principals in VET institutions and directors in organisations providing continuing training is very similar. The main difference lies in the level of autonomy and responsibility.' The framework also acknowledges the scope of distributed leadership in VET institutions and maintains that the whole organisation is in charge, especially via a middle management level and leadership teams. However, this power is delegated from the principal or director, who still carries overall responsibility for organisation leadership.

Australian researchers discuss leadership in public VET providers like TAFE (Institutes of Technical and Further Education) and in private (including non-profit) training providers. The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) sometimes defines the objects of their leadership research quite broadly: 'those who assume roles that involve giving leadership and direction to those who see themselves as followers or subordinates' (NCVER, Callan et al., 2007, p. 13). Dianne Mulcahy also initiates a discussion on identifying VET leaders:

> '[S]enior managers were defined as those who have a high-level, specific responsibility such as heading a school, section, or sector. By extension, executive managers were defined as those who have the highest level organisational responsibility, for example, chief executive officers, managing directors, directors. [...] The term frontline manager has been employed to denote a diverse group within VET organisations who have responsibility for overseeing and co-ordinating the work of others. [...] Frontline managers' responsibilities within VET providers include course or programme co-ordination, professional and organisational development, business and industry services, research and evaluation, and budgets and income. Frontline managers are first-level managers or managers of work teams. They are directly involved at the operational or service end of the organisation.' (NCVER, Mulcahy et al., 2003, p. 14).

In *Improving School Leadership*, which also included VET leadership, the OECD attempted a definition of school leadership:

> '[S]chool leaders are defined to be those persons, who, from formal positions of authority in a school, work with others to provide direction and exert influence in order to achieve the school's goals, and most particularly those related to improving learning and strengthening teaching. [I]t does not include those persons who may carry out educational leadership functions, but do not hold formal positions of authority in a school (e.g. a regular teacher, or an educational leader at the regional level).' (OECD, 2006, p. 4).

The OECD also maintains that

'School leaders [...] have agreed from the start that effective school leadership is not exclusive to formal offices or positions; instead it should be distributed across a number of individuals in a school. Principals, managers, academic leaders, department chairs, and teachers can contribute as leaders to the goal of learning-centred schooling. [...] Thus principals must be not only managers but also leaders of the school as a learning organisation. They interact with teachers to create a productive, cohesive learning community.' (OECD, Pont et al., 2008, p. 16).

Who the VET leaders are, and where they work, was discussed by Cedefop's Training of Trainers network's (TTnet) thematic group on leadership in 2010. The discussion included these positions and workplaces:

(a) principals/headmasters of IVET organisations in general;

(b) directors of CVET organisations in general;

(c) middle management in the organisations mentioned above;

(d) teachers/trainers/facilitators of learning (performing 'classroom leadership');

(e) training managers and HR executives responsible for training in companies and organisations.

The discussion ended with a compromise that main focus of further work on VET leadership within the TTnet should be on positional leaders, i.e. leaders that are appointed or employed in a recognised leadership position (excluding, among others, VET teachers and trainers).

Positional VET leaders may have very diverse responsibilities. In Finland, for instance, a VET leader (principal) can be head of a single-field vocational school (e.g. the Finnish School of Watch making with 70 students) or a principal of a large multi-field vocational institution (e.g. Omnia, a VET institution of 3 000 students) or a director of an education and training consortium in a municipality.

To limit its overall scope, this paper adopts the TTnet compromise of focusing on positional leaders. Following the definition in the Competence Framework for VET Professions, the leaders discussed are those working in public or private VET organisations providing initial or continuing vocational education and training (including adult education). It is also a fact that most VET institutions employ one leader who carries overall responsibility for the objectives set for the organisation. The exclusion of leaders responsible for training in companies is, however, regrettable, since this group is crucial to workplace learning. A recommendation to study these leaders more closely is included in Chapter 6.

1.4.   The content and objectives of this paper

This working paper is not a research-based study but an exploratory paper introducing VET leadership to a wider audience. It aims to:

(a)   perform a literature review on European policy documents and research on VET leadership;

(b)   identify the requirements for initial training and continuing professional development of VET leaders;

(c)   explore the specificities of VET leadership compared to that in general education;

(d)   identify current trends in VET governance and discuss how they affect VET leaders' work tasks and required knowledge, competence and skills;

(e)   suggest areas that can be researched or studied further.

Chapter 2 presents a brief review of European policy documents and initiatives specifically linked to VET leadership, plus recently published research on VET leadership from a selection of countries in Europe. Chapter 3 gives an overview of the requirements for initial training and continuing professional development of VET leaders in a selection of European countries. Chapter 4 presents the results of a TTnet network project that aimed to explore the distinctiveness of VET leadership and outline what makes VET leadership unique compared to leadership in general education. The participating countries are the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Finland and the United Kingdom.

Chapter 5 identifies a set of common trends on governance in European VET and discusses how they influence VET leaders' work tasks and required knowledge, competence and skills. Chapter 6 identifies areas for further study.

1.5.   A note on data collection

Key stakeholders (Ministries of Education, VET experts, VET leaders) have contributed to this working paper. Empirical data come from semi-structured interviews with experts in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, and the UK. Due to the complexity and the scope of the subject, interviews were chosen as offering both sufficient flexibility and in-depth questions. The data reflect the respondents' position and discourse, but not necessarily actual practice; this would require closer observation over a period of time and additional data. The selection

does not aim to be representative, intending, rather, to cover a range of policies and practices among the interviewees. The country descriptions and analyses are primarily based on ReferNet and OECD country reports, not on extensive in-depth search for data. They are not meant to appear as finished products but as a starting point for further data collection and analysis.

The selection of countries ensures that old and new Member States are covered, and also different types of countries based on prior knowledge of their VET leadership policies and practice. To ensure coherence, the countries selected are as close as possible to the TTnet study.

CHAPTER 2
Literature review of VET leadership

This chapter explores VET leadership as addressed in the following:

(a) selected European VET policy documents, initiatives and projects (from the European Council, Commission, Cedefop, etc),

(b) national VET policy documents and published research from selected Member States ([5]).

This review is focused on VET, and does not include literature on leadership in general, school leadership in general or any other areas not specifically addressing VET. However, some policy documents on leadership in education are clearly intended to include IVET as such initial provision is a part of [upper] secondary school level in several Member States. Some of these documents are identified and included in this review. This literature review is not meant to be exhaustive.

2.1. Selected European VET policy documents, initiatives and projects

2.1.1. The European Council and the Commission

The European Council and the European Commission work strategically on education and training issues through the Lisbon and Copenhagen processes. The *Lisbon agenda for growth and jobs* (Council of the European Union, 2000) included the *Education and training 2010 work programme* (Council of the European Union, 2004), which was replaced by the *Europe 2020 strategy* (European Commission, 2010b).

European policy specifically devoted to VET has, since 2002, been a part of the so-called Copenhagen process (Council of the European Union, 2002). National education ministers meet every two years to review the process (see Communiqués below). In June 2010 the European Commission presented a 10-year vision for the future of vocational education and training in the Communication *A new impetus for*

([5]) It is difficult to identify national policy documents and research on VET leadership, especially documents written in the national languages. Such literature reviews ought to be the object of an individual study. A brief selection of national documents is presented in this paper.

European cooperation in vocational education and training to support the Europe 2020 strategy (European Commission, 2010c).

To improve the quality of VET, the *Copenhagen Declaration* (Council of the European Union, 2002) and the *Maastricht Communiqué* (European Commission, 2004) discussed the learning needs and roles of VET teachers and trainers. VET leadership was not an object of discussion in this first part of the Copenhagen process. The *Helsinki Communiqué*, however, stated that

> 'more emphasis should also be placed on *good governance of VET systems and providers,* through responsiveness to the needs of individuals and the labour market, highly qualified teachers and trainers, national quality assurance, improving public and private investment in VET, increased transparency of VET systems, *stronger leadership of institutions and/or training providers within national strategies,* partnership between different decision-makers and stakeholders, in particular social partners and sectoral organisations.' [italics by Cedefop] (European Commission, 2006, p. 6).

The *Bordeaux Communiqué* (European Commission, 2008a) did not follow up the 2006 focus on leaders but refocused on teachers and trainers and also included tutors and guidance officers. In the *Bruges Communiqué* (European Commission, 2010a) policy-makers returned to include VET leaders in the increased quality objective.

The 2010 Communication from the European Commission *A new impetus for European cooperation in vocational education and training to support the Europe 2020 strategy* (European Commission, 2010c) aimed at proposing a vision for the future of VET. While discussing important themes like flexible access to VET, mobility, attractiveness, quality, equity and innovation it does not address leadership issues. However, the Communication does discuss aspects linked to VET providers.

The report *New skills for new jobs: action now* was prepared by an expert group for the European Commission. The expert group gives a series of recommendations, some of which concern leadership in VET:

(a) make labour market needs analysis and the definition and implementation of learning outcomes a priority in leadership and strategy, as well as in quality management;

(b) increase coherence between instruments and measures such as the training and continuous professional development of institutional leaders;

(c) give priority to the development of institutional leadership, and to improving quality assurance efforts, including human resource development;

(d) encourage institutional leaders to spend time in workplaces in industry or other services and apply the experiences made (European Commission, 2010d).

The *Council conclusions on the professional development of teachers and school leaders* (Council of the European Union, 2009) discusses in detail the needs for leadership in education and training. However, this policy document is not concerned with the specificities of VET, but of education in general (implementation of the *Education and training 2010 work programme*) and does not make a link to the Copenhagen processes. The Council invited the Member States to:

- review responsibilities and support for school leaders, notably with a view to lightening their administrative workload so that they focus their attention on shaping the overall teaching and learning environment and on fostering higher achievement;
- ensure that high quality provision exists to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to provide effective school leadership.

In addition, the Council invited the European Commission to:

- enhance and support European policy cooperation in school leadership;
- promote and support greater participation by school leaders in transnational mobility schemes, partnerships and projects established under Community programmes, in particular the Lifelong learning programme;
- support the further development of an evidence base on school leadership professions.

The Lifelong learning programme (LLP) encourages learning initiatives via its various actions. The Comenius and Leonardo da Vinci (LdV) actions benefit teachers, trainers and other staff in VET and school education up to and including upper secondary school. One of the general objectives of the 2011-13 programme is to support initial and continuous training of education and training institution managers, while the LdV specific priorities include support to initial and continuous training of VET institution managers (European Commission, 2011). There is a direct link between the *Council conclusions on the professional development of teachers and school leaders* (Council of the European Union, 2009) and these objectives in the LLP; some LLP projects within LdV and Comenius include the theme leadership in VET.

2.1.2. Cedefop and the TTnet network

In 2004 Cedefop published *PROFF – Professionalisation of VET teachers for the future* (Cedefop, Cort et al., 2004). This includes recommendations on training for VET leaders, including middle management who do not always have the skills effectively to manage human resources and motivate teachers for change. PROFF underlines the important role of leaders in addressing training needs of teachers and trainers:

'Often the push to adopt (and teach) new teaching practices has come not from teachers themselves but from new legislation or management. It is essential, therefore, that teachers develop a sense of 'ownership,' working to make the new techniques their own. [...] Training programmes function best when management adopts a participatory approach allowing teachers and trainers to cooperate in identifying training needs and designing training required to satisfy those needs. In this way, teachers take responsibility for change and acquire a feeling of 'ownership' which contributes greatly to the effectiveness of the programme. [...] Important is the demand for stronger management commitment, ensuring that teachers have enough time to take part in in-service training programmes, even when these conflict with the short-term priorities of the training institutes where they work. [...] Change in teachers' working cultures requires commitment and time. Teacher and training programmes will only be effective if managers show their commitment through their own active participation and by ensuring that teacher training is allocated adequate time and financial support.' (Cedefop, Cort et al., 2004, p. 27, 39, 6, 7).

In addition, *PROFF* discusses how change and reforms influence VET teachers and trainers:

'Most changes [are] initiated not from within, but from outside the VET system, as a result of political decision and/or of pressure from industry. Often they challenge the teacher's view of the VET system, of their own role and of the way they teach. And in some cases the changes contrast with teachers' 'implicit', 'tacit' knowledge of how best to behave in specific teaching situation. This situation is made worse when government – or management – fails to provide teachers with the time, or the financial resources to retrain. Where these resources are not available teachers (and their managers) will give priority to the needs of their students rather than to their own training. In short, and as a result of all these factors, whole-hearted teacher acceptance of change cannot be taken for granted and teacher resistance to change is one of the most significant threats to the success of VET reform.' (p. 19).

Consequently, change management is one of the most important areas of expertise for VET leaders.

The 2009 Cedefop conference *Teachers & trainers at the heart of innovation & VET reforms* included presentations that introduced leadership onto the VET agenda. One of the main messages was that leadership is crucial for effective teaching and learning. Leadership and management standards, main challenges of VET leaders and leadership activities and competences were also discussed.

The TTnet pilot project *Defining VET professions in line with the European qualification framework* was carried out by 13 TTnet country members in 2005/06 (Cedefop, TTnet, 2006). The target groups studied were IVET teachers, IVET trainers, trainers in adult education, in-company training managers, training managers working in training agencies, as well as principals in initial VET institutions. The focus was on the professional activities of these professions and

the competences required. The project found that there are several factors affecting the professional identity and values of VET professions, such as social needs and/or political priorities, training market opportunities and rules, company (organisation) strategy and priorities, and learners and learning processes. The project also identified working conditions, responsibilities and qualification requirements of heads of VET institutions that provide initial VET qualifications. The interviews indicate that the responsibilities, challenges and required competences are, despite the different systems and realities, very similar. Among the findings the study highlights the increasing administrative role of IVET principals, and growing need for communication, networking and other soft skills.

In 2009 Cedefop and the Finnish National Board of Education published a *Competence framework for VET Professions – a handbook for VET practitioners* (Cedefop, Volmari et al., 2009). Based on the work in the above project, the handbook was produced to support practitioners and decision-makers, such as teachers, trainers and administrators, in their efforts to advance the professional development and well-being of VET professionals and organisations. The framework presents an overview of leadership activities and the corresponding knowledge, competence and skills required to execute these activities. The activities are divided into administration, training, development and quality assurance and networking. This competence framework provides a basis for the new TTnet survey in Chapter 4 of this working paper.

In the 2010 report on findings from recent study visits, Cedefop finds that the role of school leaders across Europe has changed. 'School leaders nowadays are at the forefront and central actors of school improvement efforts. In this new context, school leaders are supposed to be able to cope with a wider range of competences and responsibilities than in the past' (Cedefop, 2010c, p. 37).

2.1.3. Clusters and thematic groups

The *Education and training 2010 work programme* established eight clusters, one of which was on teachers and trainers. The clusters and other working groups applied the open method of coordination that aims to help Member States to reflect critically on their own polices in the context of European cooperation and to learn from other countries' practices. A sub-cluster of the teachers and trainers cluster was established with the main aim of dealing with issues relating to VET teachers and trainers and to organise peer learning activities (PLAs) in different countries ([6]).

([6])   For more information, see
     http://www.kslll.net/PeerLearningClusters/ClusterDetails.cfm?id=11 [cited 24.8.2011].

The third PLA on VET teachers and trainers was hosted by the Slovenian National Institute for Vocational Education and Training and supported by the Slovenian Ministry of Education and Sport (European Commission, 2008b). The agenda addressed, among other themes, the meaning of autonomy in VET, support mechanisms and instruments for VET teachers in their new roles, and new relationships between teachers and management by focusing on new roles for headmasters. One conclusion of the PLA was that management is a vital element in the process of developing a school into a learning organisation.

Based on the experience of the clusters and other groups set out as part of the *Education and training 2010 work programme*, new thematic working groups are organised under the new *Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training* (ET 2020). The cluster on professional development of teachers discusses school leadership.

2.1.4. ETF and the OECD

The European Training Foundation (ETF) ([7]) is involved in projects to reform vocational education, training and employment systems. In the *Yearbook 2005: Teachers and trainers. Professionals and stakeholders in the reform of vocational education and training* the ETF discusses VET leadership and maintains that the roles, responsibilities and performance requirements of VET leaders are changing because of decentralisation and the introduction of modern curricula:

> 'The new functions of a school 'leader' are crucial for the establishment of a school culture that nurtures innovation. The role of the school principal will in many ways resemble that of the director of a private company. However, this role will still be based on the ability to lead a pedagogical institution. [...] New teacher and trainer roles cannot be separated from the development of the school organisation; the competence development of school principals appears to be a necessary first step. [...] Principals should act as agents of change inside and outside the school. They should develop cooperation both within the school and between the school and the outside world, and encourage teachers to work with local players. Finally, principals should protect teachers from the unending, excessive and sometimes contradictory requirements of central authorities. [...] Rather than the focus being on selected teachers, it should be the school itself that is seen as the central development unit for developing and implementing VET reform. VET reform driven competence development projects in schools are probably better organised as a collaborative project involving school principals, heads of department, teacher trade union representatives, members of the school board, internal reform change agents and external consultants. These projects must also be guided by the

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([7]) The European Training Foundation (ETF) helps transition and developing countries to harness the potential of their human capital through the reform of education, training and labour market systems. The agency works with the countries surrounding the EU in the context of the EU's external cooperation programmes.

needs of the local or regional labour market, and some involvement from representatives of industry will be crucial. Members of the teacher team are heavily involved as key actors, though always in cooperation with school management.' (Grootings and Nielsen, 2005, p. 62, 106, 145).

The OECD report on teacher policy *Teachers matter: attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers* (OECD, 2005) highlights that strategies to improve the quality of school leadership must be a central element in any national plan to address the teacher quality challenge; principals and other school leaders are responsible for creating the conditions under which teachers can perform well, achieve job satisfaction and continue to develop professionally. To follow up this report, the OECD launched in 2006 an activity which aimed to support policy development by providing in-depth analyses of different approaches to school leadership (in both VET and general education). Certain key questions were explored. What are the roles and responsibilities of school leaders under different governance structures? What seem to be promising policies and conditions for making school leaders most effective in improving school outcomes? How can effective school leadership be best developed and supported? What policies and practices would be most conducive to these ends? An analysis of these questions in 22 countries was undertaken during 2006-08, leading to a report on improving school leadership, as well as individual country reports (OECD, 2008).

The activity concentrated on school leaders in primary through upper secondary schools (i.e. ISCED 1, 2 and 3) in the public and private sector and included general and vocational secondary education. It acknowledges that the roles and skill requirements of leaders may differ by level of schooling, type of programme and sector, as well as by the social and demographic context of the communities from which students are drawn. The OECD maintains that school leaders in OECD countries are facing challenges linked to rising expectations on learning outcomes for all students. As countries aim to transform their education systems, the roles and expectations of school leaders have changed radically. Effective school leadership is increasingly viewed as key to large-scale education reform. The OECD demonstrates that the roles of school leaders have changed dramatically lasting recent years, due to increased school autonomy, the new focus on accountability of learning outcomes and new approaches to teaching and learning. The OECD sees the core challenges of school leadership as: lack of clarity of the core role of leader, role overload, lack of sufficient training, and recruitment (OECD, 2008).

2.2.   National VET policy documents and published research on VET leadership from selected Member States

The following country reviews are based on an informal survey and a brief data search and are not meant to try to cover all national research that exists. Because of limitations on time, as well as the scope of this paper, the reviews are purely meant as a tentative introduction to the topic in a selection of countries.

VET-Bib, Cedefop's bibliographic database, has been consulted for information on studies, research and literature on VET leadership. However, the search process revealed that hits are linked almost exclusively to educational leadership in general, or referred to VET leadership outside Europe (Australia or the US).

A questionnaire on VET leadership conducted by the TTnet in 2010 revealed that the 15 TTnet members that answered the survey found little or no evidence of such research in their Member States (except the UK and Finland), though VET leadership is part of national policy agendas. However, the main areas of interest in the public debate on VET leadership were identified as qualifications and CPD of VET leaders ([8]).

2.2.1.   Estonia

Professional development of VET leaders in Estonia is an important policy issue as a part of the VET development programme (European Social Fund, ESF) for the period 2008-13. The development programme includes steps for creating a training system for VET leaders and a competence model which will become a basis for self-assessment procedures. In 2006, all Estonian comprehensive and vocational schools were obliged to introduce quality management principles. Institutions are free to choose the system, but all supporting and study materials have been developed on the basis of the European foundation for quality management (EFQM) model. The EFQM is a membership-based non-profit organisation, created in 1988 by 14 leading European businesses, with a mission to be the driving force for sustainable excellence in Europe. According to a research report by Kukemelk, successful implementation of quality management systems in Estonian schools depends on understanding the need for change within the institution, the

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([8])   Two areas were explored by TTnet members: (a) are VET leaders or their professional development a policy issue in your country (for example mentioned in a policy document/plan/strategy) or has leadership been visible in the public debate? (b) have any challenges been identified regarding VET leaders (in debate, surveys, research)?

involvement of the target groups and the commitment of leaders (Kukemelk et al., 2009).

The University of Tartu has investigated relations between attitudes of school leaders towards school performance criteria and the national examination results in Estonian schools (Aidla and Vadi, 2008). Their main findings are that leadership attitudes have an effect on national examination results, although this also depends on the size and location of the institution. Leaders can influence student achievement and cooperating with other stakeholders would assist this crucial development.

In their paper *The meaningfulness of the European Commission policy paper 'Improving the quality of teacher education': Estonian teachers', teacher educators' and policy-makers' perspectives* Eve Eisenschmidt and Erika Löfström from Tallinn University analyse Estonian teaching professionals' views of the policy paper. They found that the teachers regarded the paper as an excellent guideline, but idealistic. The question of school leadership was emphasised:

> 'If schools are to function as learning communities, leadership questions rise to the fore. [...] The situation is symptomatic of the lack of mutual support and leadership: "The school leaders are indifferent. [...] I think that a lot depends on the leader of the school. Our teachers are pretty well educated, but the culture of the school is in a very bad condition" (teacher, 7 years teaching experience). Another example shows that teachers wishing to participate in continuing training may be expected to pay themselves for the substitute. This indicates a strong lack of support from the school leaders.' (Eisenschmidt and Löfström, 2008, p. 8-9).

Eisenschmidt and Löfström conclude that regulations on teacher education in Estonia support similar goals as the EU policy document, but that schools often do not support teachers' professional development strongly enough. It follows from this that there is a need to recognise school development and school leadership as a whole, and that policies outlining educational initiatives for school leaders are needed.

Krista Tuulik and Ruth Alas discuss *Leadership in transformational Estonia* in their 2009 article (Tuulik and Alas, 2009). The purpose of the research was to see whether leadership expectations in Estonia differ from those in other East European countries and from other neighbouring countries and also to investigate actual leadership perception in Estonia. They found that the crucial aspect of the Estonian working environment during the transformation period was team spirit and team reinforcement. Estonians expect their leaders to be charismatic: value-based, team-oriented and participative.

2.2.2. Lithuania

In Lithuania the qualification descriptions for VET leaders have been developed and confirmed by the Minister for Education as a result of academic and public debate. The main challenges and current debates are establishing a high quality reserve for leaders who are leaving their positions.

Lyderių laikas [Time for leaders] is a part of the school improvement programme plus. It is a project aimed at encouraging the independence of Lithuanian schools. The project is financed with European Union structural funds and national funding allocated for the 2007-13 Human resource development action programme objective: 'To improve and strengthen the institutional system for lifelong learning which involves decentralisation of management, expansion of the autonomy and independence of educational institutions, enhancement of internal management and personnel motivation systems, strengthen managerial capacities, etc.' ([9]).

The first phase of project implementation has the following objectives:

- development of an education consultancy services market responsive to the needs and opportunities of education entities;
- promotion of education management decentralisation;
- provision of conditions for a single and integrated system for development of competences of leaders at all levels that would be conducive to education quality improvement.

A study on the effectiveness of management in Lithuanian schools was undertaken along with this project. The study included the following elements: an analysis of the economic and administration-related aspects of school management; an analysis of legislation regulating school management and financing; an analysis of opportunities for use/implementation of consultancy services, employee secondment, and other models; a description of examples of good practice; an overview of opportunities for liberalisation of school management and for increasing the independence of schools; and recommendations on increasing the effectiveness of management. The conclusions include:

(a) resourceful leaders can find a niche for leadership development by making the operation of their organisation more effective. On the other hand, there are a number of regulations, instructions, and orders that confine the initiatives of school heads: they must satisfy requirements set in the regulations and perform certain set procedures. Such 'regulated operations' are highly restrictive for leadership development;

([9]) For more information on the project, see http://www.lyderiulaikas.smm.lt/en/ [cited 24.8.2011].

(b) school founders have a great impact on the development of leadership in schools because they found, reorganise, and liquidate educational establishments in municipalities; they appoint school heads, approve school strategic plans, provide financing, approve school regulations, control school operation via executive authorities, etc. The competence of the staff of the founder educational authorities is of particular importance for school management effectiveness and leadership development;

(c) the following internal administration-related factors influence the effectiveness of management and leadership development in schools:

   (i) school structure;

   (ii) a precise definition of functions in job descriptions, to clarify areas of responsibility;

   (iii) the competence of school heads.

Liudmila Rupšienė and Aelita Skarbalienė have studied the characteristics of educational leadership. They maintain that leadership in education has not been widely researched in Lithuania, and that the major part of the research is devoted to determining the leadership competence of school leaders, means and styles of the leadership, and the characteristics of the expression of the leadership in different staff groups. Research also attempts to define the attitudes of school representatives towards the leadership and to identify expectations of leadership ([10]).

In an article in the journal *Ekonomika ir vadyba: aktualijos ir perspektyvos*, Regina Kontautiene and Julija Melnikova highlight the methods of experiential learning employed in professional preparation of school leaders and professional development programmes (Kontautiene and Melnikova, 2008). They have also gathered information from school leaders on how to support and prepare school leaders in the future. In their conclusion they maintain that preparation programmes must go further than today's practice and create sensitivity and attitudes that contribute to change, improvement and success for all students. They also distinguish mentoring as an effective measure in an induction period.

2.2.3. Denmark

To reach the goal that Danish VET should be among the best in the world, and that 95% of the youth cohort should complete upper secondary education, there has

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([10]) Rupšienė, Liudmila; Skarbalienė Aelita: The characteristics of teacher leadership. [Paper presented at the web site of the Lyderiu Laikas project, Lithuania]. Available from Internet:
http://www.lyderiulaikas.smm.lt/ll/attachments/354_Mokytoju%20lyderystes%20savybes%20(EN).pdf [cited 24.8.2011].

been increased emphasis and focus on VET in Denmark. In 2006 the government established a Globalization Council, which reported that teacher qualifications and the management or leadership of VET schools ought to be improved. Retaining 95% of the youth cohort remains a challenge for the whole system including teachers, leaders and school boards and is an objective that shapes and influences national policy as well the way the VET schools deliver their educational programmes in terms of organisation of curricula and competence development of staff. VET leaders are a part of this challenge but no specific requirements have been formulated from either the government or social partners until now.

The Ministry of Education published in 2005 an analysis of educational governance in Denmark (Undervisningsministeriet, 2005). The analysis highlights that the education management system's main objective is to secure education of high academic quality relevant to the needs of the labour market, developing specialist, general and personal skills to the advantage of individual students and of society as a whole. The decentralisation of decision-making powers and responsibilities to individual institutions accepts that these institutions possess knowledge of the labour market required to meet local and regional needs and preferences, and that this ensures optimum deployment of resources by giving the institutions incentives to use their finances efficiently. The analysis found that the current management system, based on self-governing institutions, taximeter funding and supervision, is performing well and working to promote objectives established both politically and administratively.

The Ministry of Education has also published a *Code on educational management* (Undervisningsministeriet, 2009a). This code is designed to inspire leaders and boards to develop leadership, so that leaders, boards and employees can have dialogue about, reflect and act on what good leadership is and should be at an educational institution. The aim is that leaders and boards of individual institutions will use the code to discuss and articulate what constitutes good leadership.

The publication *Anerkendelse, dialog og feedback. Pædagogisk ledelse på uddannelsesinstitutioner – med eksempler fra erhvervsskolerne* [Recognition, dialogue and feedback. Pedagogical leadership in educational institutions – with examples from VET schools] is published by the Ministry of Education and discusses pedagogical management in VET (Undervisningsministeriet, 2009b). The publication acknowledges that the need for education management in recent years has increased because of new and different demands on leaders and how they support their staff:

(a) teachers' work has become more complex and unpredictable. Student groups have become more heterogeneous, and the 95% target on completion results in increased focus on the individual's needs to deter early school leaving;

(b) teachers have expanded their role. Now they must act as liaisons, educational developers, project managers and more;

(c) there is constant demand for new initiatives and projects, and rarely time for contemplation;

(d) a leader must be able to embrace a diverse workforce. The younger generation of teachers is increasingly expecting the opportunity for self-realisation and personal growth in the job. They have learned to work independently, take initiative and create ideas. Leaders must be able to accommodate and acknowledge these expectations, but they must also be able to use and recognise the experience of older teachers;

(e) a leader must be able to formulate a strategy for the school, taking responsibility to realise it and to document actions and effects of such action plans and performance contracts.

Based on the five national and legislated action areas for adult VET, so-called development contracts have been drawn up between the 13 newly established VET centres and the Ministry of Education during 2010. The contracts set specific results to be achieved within each of the action areas, supported by halfway indicators and milestones. The Master thesis of Clausen and Brusen Rasmussen explores the contractual platform used by the Danish government towards leaders in these VET centres. They claim that contractual governance within the public sector is on the decline as it has achieved negative associations, resting on an image of organisations as businesses and on actors as economic agents. A result of this management style is that non-profitable but 'socially crucial' institutions are shut down and short-term success privileged over long-term sustainable educational objectives. However, in 2010 the reinvention of contractual governance is to be found in adult vocational education and training (Clausen and Brusen Rasmussen, 2011).

Denmark took part in the OECD activity on *Improving School leadership*. The OECD country report makes a list of primary tendencies within leadership in Danish vocational schools. The OECD finds that

> 'an evaluation culture has grown up at many vocational schools, where there is emphasis on issues such as strategy, organisation and leadership from a quality perspective. [...] The leadership culture is characterised by the fact that these institutions have been functioning as self-governing institutions for a number of years now. [...] Since 1991, vocational schools have been forced to deal with the challenges linked with an existence on market-like terms. This has necessitated the development of leadership skills so that schools have been able to

attract students – and hence taximeter funding. [...] The enhanced local framework and structure of financial incentives has probably helped make the vocational schools think in terms of community perspectives and strategies. At the same time, innovation in the form of quality measurements and development have taken on a central position in respect of organisation development. [...] The leadership-related basic conditions must be considered to be a strength as regards the development of leadership practice at vocational schools via – for example – emphasis on systematic quality measurements, including leadership, staff, customers and society perspectives. The basic conditions may perhaps have made systematic quality measurements a necessity. However, it must be noted that there always is the major challenge of implementing quality work in reality in the classroom. Documentation requirements in connection with systematic quality measurements may otherwise – contrary to intentions – obstruct specific leadership work, because head teachers need a relatively large amount of time for documentation/administration.' (OECD, 2007a, p. 90-92).

2.2.4. The Netherlands

In the Netherlands there are no regulations concerning VET leader qualifications and recruitment procedures but the competences required are being clarified. New concepts such as learning organisations and a focus on quality management have an impact on the profile of the VET leader. The position of the VET institute in the social context is also an important issue. Changes in national policy on autonomy and deregulation change the role and position of VET institutes. This also affects the role of the VET leader: he/she is increasingly responsible for dealing with the social context at regional and national level and these changes make strong demands for a flexible, proactive and innovative approach. Publications and surveys on VET leadership are partial and fragmentary. There is little information from systematic surveys or publications on the overall profile, qualifications and the expectations of VET leaders. Some of the topics in studies, surveys and publications on the role of the VET leader (or educational leadership in general) are:

- the need for the educational manager;
- managing innovation in vocational education;
- situational leadership;
- communication and leadership for educational managers;
- project and process management;
- managing professionalism;
- strategic vocational training programmes;
- evaluation and accreditation in VET.

Stephen Drodge's article *Managing under pressure: the management of vocational education in the British, Dutch and French systems* reviews approaches to managing further education (FE) colleges, *Regionale opleidingen centra* (ROCs) and *Lycées professionnels*. It suggests that there are similarities between the pressures on leaders, and some in responses and key issues. In each country there

has been a move towards greater institutional autonomy, combined with greater expectations of performance. The article identifies three areas of particular importance: the leader's role as an educator, managing boundaries, and personal leadership. With respect to the Netherlands, Drodge quotes Van Esch, Vrieze and Maass' research which identifies a key change in the role of the ROC director, from administrator to leader; this characterises leaders as transformers and buffers against external turbulence. They observe that ROCs that are further advanced in what they regard as the modernisation process – market-orientated, flexible, vision-led – share a number of characteristics. Van de Venne and Karstanje's research is also acknowledged, listing the correlation between management structures and styles in ROCs. An ROC with a flat hierarchy usually has a leader that is more engaged in educational issues than appears to be the case in more hierarchical structures. Educational engagement seems to Bontius to be a key feature of ROC leadership in general. She sees a very positive development towards a culture of purposeful collaboration across ROCs, contrasting with the bureaucratic culture of their predecessors, while recognising differences between ROCs (Drodge, 2002).

The OECD country report on school leadership in the Netherlands lists several of the trends that have changed VET schools lasting recent years, such as mergers into larger entities, maintaining that 'increase of scale has consequences for the school leader. Larger, and therefore more complex, organisations have more layers of management each with its own duties and functions. In larger organisations there is also scope for specialisation: managers occupied specifically with personnel policy, accommodation, ICT, finance and accountability' (OECD, 2007b, p. 7). Decentralisation of powers and the lack of legislation and regulation of school leadership are also discussed, as is accountability of learning results:

> 'Schools are accountable for their results to both their immediate environment and to the Minister for Education. Guidelines about quality assurance systems and public accountability have had their effect; more and more schools have a system of quality assurance. However, the question whether or not this will have undesirable side effects has never been asked in the Netherlands. The fact that public accountability has become so prominent could lead to school taking a risk-avoidance attitude. Quality assurance and public accountability can also result in an increase in internal bureaucracy in institutions.' (OECD, 2007b, p. 11).

2.2.5. Finland

Finland was one of two countries that in 2009 delivered a national research report on VET leadership (Cedefop ReferNet Finland, 2009), reflecting interest in the topic in the Finnish Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education. Finland took part in the OECD project on school leadership and received praise for its

culture of trust between the different education levels, the decentralisation of power and its well-educated staff (Finland, Ministry of Education, 2007).

The ReferNet research report acknowledges that

'the most common topics of research into leaders have been the content of their work. Anne Karikoski investigated how good school leaders manage and act in their roles and what kind of difficulties school leaders encounter in their daily working life. Pekka Kanervio and Mika Risku described the educational leadership of general education in Finnish municipalities in 2008 and the changes that will be taking place in provision of general education before 2015. [...] Aarne Mäkelä's research aimed at clarifying what the tasks are for general education principals and identifying the main domains of activity and how these have changed since the 1990s. Teija Vuohijoki investigated how principals coped with their work and what differences there were between how male and female principals coped. Helena Ahonen (2008) studied how leadership is constructed in the context of educational institutions and how principals and leaders experience their own identity.' (Cedefop ReferNet Finland, 2009, p. 34-35).

VET is not specifically targeted in Finnish school management research. ReferNet identifies a 'pressing need to explore issues related to leaders within VET. Although the problems and challenges are largely similar to those of leaders in general education, there is extra pressure from the demand to cooperate and take into account the world of work and anticipation of future trends in the labour market in provision and development of education and training' (p. 39).

2.2.6. The United Kingdom

In the UK, VET leaders and their professional development have been the subject of public policy concern, strategy groups, plans and documents, ministerial debate in parliament and statutory legislation. According to Jill Jameson of TTnet UK,

'numerous challenges have been identified regarding VET leaders in the UK, particularly in the period between 2002-05, when the Foster report analysed the state of further education (FE), and detailed 60 recommendations for raising the profile of the FE/VET sector, including the need for a clear purpose and role. Since then, a great deal of work has been done by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) and the 157 Group of leading colleges to increase the status of vocational education and training itself and the quality of its leadership across the UK. This work has achieved some successes, but there remain continuing challenges, especially at a time of financial recession. There have been a range of research projects and surveys on leadership in VET, many of which have been published [11].'

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[11] Jill Jameson, in response to questionnaire on VET leadership conducted by the TTnet, summer 2010.

The Leitch review of skills has had great impact on VET in the UK. In the review the reader can find many of the policies, strategies and attitudes now prevailing in the UK education. Among these are the change to a demand-led system and the empowerment of learners (often referred to as 'consumers' or 'customers' in the review) and employers. These trends have affected how VET institutions are steered and financed:

'Recent reforms in England have attempted to develop a more 'demand-led' system, responding to demand rather than trying to plan supply. [...] This approach leads to provision that better reflects the needs of consumers, increasing relevance, higher completion rates and value for money. The Review has concluded that this sort of approach must be embedded across the system so that providers only receive funding as they attract customers, rather than receiving a block grant based upon supply-side estimates of expected demand. Building a demand-led system is the only way in which to increase employer and individual investment in skills and ensure that increased investment delivers economically valuable skills.' (DfES, 2006a, p. 12).

'[Previously,] people were unable to access quality training at a time and place that fitted in with their job, had little choice over training and faced a complex system of financial support. The Government saw its role as protecting people from change through income support, rather than preparing them for it through skills support. It focused on overseeing a training system that tried to predict and provide future skill needs from the centre, rather than empowering people and employers to make the right training decisions for themselves.' (p. 48).

The FE White Paper of 2006 also recognised the challenges in the UK skills sector; it advocated clear economic missions for FE colleges and removal of funding for colleges that were deemed 'inadequate' (DfES, 2006b). The white paper also encouraged more college specialisation and better cooperation between FE colleges and employers, as well as introducing measures for increasing the student choice and control over their learning process. CPD and qualifications for school leaders were also addressed.

The Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) project *Researching leadership in the learning and skills sector: by the sector, on the sector*, for the sector presents a number of research reports on leadership. In the volume on collaborative research, the editor claims that policy-makers, practitioners and researchers increasingly acknowledge collaborative leadership as one of the main success factors in improving UK education quality; collaboration with multiple partner organisations is seen as essential for implementing current reforms. Collaborative leadership practice is considered less hierarchical and implies a stronger focus on relations and continuous learning in VET institutions. Through empowerment of the

individual staff, the organisation will release its productive potential (Collinson, 2007).

In David and Margaret Collinson's article *Blended leadership: employee perspectives on effective leadership in the UK further education sector* the authors maintain that FE employees tend to prefer subtle and versatile leadership practices that may be labelled 'blended leadership.' This type of leadership practice is a combination of delegation and direction, proximity and distance, and internal and external engagement (Collinson and Collinson, 2009).

2.2.7. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia

In countries like the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia there seem to be no specific debate on VET leadership, though the role leaders play in VET can be identified in, for instance, the Czech *Implementation plan of the LLL strategy*. In Slovakia there is no systematic approach to research and surveys regarding VET leaders at national level but some activities are found in the regions, e.g. the *Survey on importance of competences and educational needs of VET leaders in Banska Bystrica self-governing region.* National policy in Hungary does not yet focus on leaders in general education nor in VET; the latter are not mentioned in the *Strategy for the development of vocational education and training until 2013*. However, Hungarian researchers are active looking into school leaders, one of the six or seven topics considered as key areas in regular reports on national education.

2.2.8. Australia

Compared to Europe, Australia has published extensively on leadership in VET. The Australian VET landscape is different from Europe and much can be learned in terms of leadership. A research programme *Supporting VET providers in building capability for the future*, funded through the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), has supported a number of Australian research papers. The research programme examined three areas of development which, together, have the potential to build capability in VET organisations: developing people, developing cultures and developing practices (NCVER, Callan et al., 2007).

Australian researchers have identified the core competences of VET leaders: the ability to communicate a vision for the organisation, build successful teams and inspire staff to make a commitment to change, as well as interpersonal skills, risk-taking, team-building and analytic and decision-making skills. Another finding is that the crucial leadership task in VET seems to be actively to design the future in terms of social, community, learning and organisational issues, rather than simply respond to existing or forthcoming policy (NCVER, Falk and Smith, 2003; NCVER, Callan et al., 2007). A study concluded that the effectiveness of leaders in Australian VET

institutions needs to be substantially improved, and that there is a gap between the leaders' perception of their effectiveness and the teachers' evaluation. This study also demonstrated that elements like gender and seniority do not have significant impact on effectiveness, but that workload, lack of support and training, and hierarchical issues do (Adams and Gamage, 2008). Rice demonstrated in her study the paradox regarding the Australian government's policy on how to create a flexible and responsive VET sector. Current leadership research advocating the use of a transformational style of leadership built on a set of commonly acknowledged values is challenged by the government's wish to introduce corporate management styles focused on accountability and economic restraints (Rice, 2000).

This brief overview of publications in a selection of countries indicates that European policy-makers and researchers are becoming interested in leadership in VET. The most common elements of debate are VET leader training and professional development, leadership as part of the overall school improvement reforms and exploration into the new role and activities of leaders. In the next chapter, qualification and CPD requirements for VET leaders in 12 European countries are presented and discussed.

CHAPTER 3
VET leader qualification needs

The Bruges Communiqué recommends that policy-makers raise VET quality by improving the quality and competences of teachers, trainers and school leaders (European Commission, 2010a). An informal survey conducted by the TTnet on VET leadership (2010) demonstrated that the main areas of interest in the current public debate on this issue are qualifications and continuing professional development (CPD) of VET leaders. However, policy on qualification requirements in Europe needs studies on the existing situation. This chapter gives an overview of 12 European countries' qualification specifications for VET leaders; it also provides information on whether or not CPD is required for VET leaders. The definition of 'required' is that the requirement is stated in an Act, elsewhere formally regulated or strongly encouraged and expected by all stakeholders. A brief country comparison is offered after the country review.

Much of the information in this chapter has been provided by selected members of TTnet, generally through an informal survey conducted during summer 2010 and specifically for this working paper during spring 2011. Information has also been gathered from ReferNet country reports ([12]) and provided by European experts via email, telephone or face-to-face interviews. Contributors are listed in Annex 2.

3.1. The Czech Republic

A Czech VET leader (director) must have a higher education degree, teacher qualifications, training in administration and work experience. These requirements are required by directors of schools listed in the school register. Qualification requirements for leaders in other education institutions and companies are set out by the owners, founders and managers of these companies. For directors of all school types there is a duty to pass a so-called functional study programme.

According to the Labour Code employees have a duty to undertake CPD. VET directors and their deputies have at their disposal programmes of continuing education within the system of CPD for pedagogical staff. Courses and seminars aim to give updates, most often to legislative changes and to curriculum reform. A

([12]) For information on ReferNet, see http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/about-cedefop/networks/refernet/index.aspx [cited 24.8.2011].

special continuing education programme for school leaders is provided by pedagogical universities. Other educational activities are organised for VET leaders within European Social Fund projects and other European programmes, e.g. Leonardo da Vinci or Arion.

Several educational programmes, oriented towards leadership, are available for managers of commercial institutions. The Association of Adult Education (AIVD) is one such provider.

3.2. Denmark

There are no formal qualification requirements for VET leaders in Denmark. VET schools are self-governed, with a board of representatives from local government and the social partners. Everyone with relevant general qualifications can apply for a job as a VET leader. The best applicants are asked to do a test and eventually called to an interview with an employment committee comprising board members, members of the staff, and, very often, a professional head hunter. The candidate with the best qualifications gets the position.

There is no current plan for compulsory leadership education for school leaders in Denmark. The Ministry of Education offers a leadership course which supports school leaders with practical leadership tools on how to develop the organisation and implement national policy and strategies. This course has lasts 18 months. It is not compulsory and it is not part of a management qualification. Other support structures include a new magazine on school leadership (*Ledelse*) and a set of leadership guidelines (*Kodeks for ledelse af uddannelsesinstitutioner*).

There are no formal requirements for CPD for VET leaders. As in most countries, Danish VET leaders form and take part in networks with other leaders: participation is voluntary. Cooperation between schools is very common, and some VET leaders offer and receive systematic support from colleagues in other organisations.

3.3. Estonia

The qualification requirements for leaders (head teachers) of vocational schools are one of the following:
(a) pedagogical higher education, at least three years of experience as a teacher and having passed 240 hours of management training;

(b) other higher education, at least five years of experience as a teacher, possessing the occupational grade of at least teacher and having passed at least 240 hours of management training;

(c) higher education and at least three years of management experience from a similar institution.

VET leaders in municipal schools are hired by local governments on the basis of public competitions. In the case of state-owned schools, the same process is carried out by the Ministry of Education and Research.

There are no official requirements for CPD for VET leaders, though they receive substantial support from the Ministry of Education and Research. The government has introduced a model of competence (self-assessment test); from the results, the leaders choose their level of continuing training. The Ministry also arranges training, especially targeted at VET leaders, and two or three seminars a year inviting all VET leaders to exchange information and discuss current affairs. As in other countries, Estonian VET leaders do a lot of networking between themselves.

3.4. Finland

VET leaders (principals), who are also members of the teaching staff, have a Master or Bachelor degree and pedagogical qualifications in some of the education fields offered by a VET college. They should also have sufficient teaching experience and a certificate of educational administration accredited by the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE); studies in educational administration at a university or comparable administrative experience are also accepted. Principals of polytechnics should have a licentiate or doctorate, sufficient knowledge of education, and administrative experience. Most principals today end up in their positions without any prior training or preparation and so learn their job through work experience.

There are no specific requirements for CPD for VET leaders but it is common to take part in in-service training. FNBE offers leadership training to VET leaders. Principals also get extensive support from their peers.

3.5. Hungary

VET leaders (principals) in Hungary must have a university degree at Master level and teaching qualifications, in addition to a pedagogical professional examination (which can be acquired via a postgraduate specialisation programme provided by universities). Qualifications in education management are required only from those

principals who are assigned for subsequent periods. From 2016 this qualification will also be compulsory when applying for a leadership position for the first time.

VET leaders also need at least five years professional experience in a teaching post or in education governance within public administration. Similar experience in an activity providing pedagogical special service and pedagogical professional service, or in a vocational instructor's or practical training instructor's post in non-school practical training, are also accepted.

VET leaders have the same CPD requirements as teachers: compulsory in-service training to be undertaken at least once every seven years. This obligation can be fulfilled by:

(a) participating in an accredited further training course(s) (total of 120 hours);
(b) passing the pedagogical professional examination within the framework of a postgraduate specialisation programme in higher education;
(c) obtaining a second or further Bachelor or Master degree, completing supplementary undergraduate training or postgraduate specialisation programmes (ISCED 5A);
(d) obtaining an advanced qualification improving the pedagogical and teaching work. Participation in international in-service teacher training programmes (study visits) may also count for this obligation.

VET leaders receive support from the school owners (maintainers) and from the central government. Both networks and continuing training are common features of CPD. Training in school leadership is provided by the universities. This training encompass 360 hours (two years duration) and results in a diploma. Most VET leaders have this qualification.

Human resource management has received much attention following EU accession (2004). At that time, regional integrated training centres (*térségi integrált szakképző központ*, TISZK) got access to compulsory training in project and change management. This resulted in early identification of VET leaders as crucial in VET reforms and contributed to the development of the infrastructure and quality assurance systems.

3.6. Ireland

VET leaders (principals) need to have at least a higher education or Master degree, a primary degree and a higher diploma in education and training. Previous work experience in administration is required, as well as previous work experience in teaching or training.

CPD is encouraged in all circumstances, though some institutes have it as a specific requirement. There is no formal support system for principals, but they have a network of peers and meet regularly to discuss common targets and problems. The In-Career Development Unit of the Department of Education and Science (DES) funds and develops a national programme of in-service training and CDP for teachers, tutors and school leaders at all levels in the education system. These programmes are provided by teacher training colleges, universities and by other state agencies. A leadership development programme has been developed for principals and deputy principals at primary and post-primary levels.

Courses are also held by the DES on school management practices and other topics relating to running schools. Teachers who wish to advance within the school system are encouraged to attend these courses prior to applying for senior posts such as principal or deputy principal. The Irish Management Institute provides management training, education and development and has created a number of post-graduate level programmes in association with Trinity College, Dublin.

3.7.   Lithuania

According to the Law of Education, a minimum of a higher education degree is required to qualify as a VET leader (head) in Lithuania. Pedagogical and vocational qualifications (in a field which fits to VET school profile) are obligatory. Those who want to compete for a position as head of school for the first time must pass the state language exam and finish courses in foundation of school management, ICT and a foreign language.

To become a VET leader a candidate should have reached a managerial level. Those leaders aspiring to the third managerial level must have at least two years of experience in the position of head: the requirements are three years for the second level and five years for the top level. The candidate then has the opportunity to participate in a competition organised by the founder of the school according to special rules confirmed by the Ministry. If she or he wins the competition, a contract is signed.

According to the Law of Education, CPD is compulsory for VET leaders (one week every five years). CPD can be formal or non-formal or recognition of prior learning achievements. The Vytautas Magnus University Centre for Vocational Education and Research organises continuing studies for VET teachers and leaders.

3.8.   Malta

VET leaders (principals) are expected to have formal qualifications, even a Ph. D in some instances, and training in leadership (but not necessarily pedagogical leadership). There is no specific degree relating to VET leaders in Malta. The university offers a module on leadership during the Bachelor degree in Education. The Education Act states that a principal shall be appointed by the Minister on the basis of a definitive and renewable contract, with a selection process, following a public call made by the Directorate for Educational Services. Applicants should have the professional qualifications and the required educational experience, and also the managerial and leadership skills, for the networking and effective coordination of schools falling within the College.

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) expects their institute directors to be in possession of a first university degree in an institute-related field and a post-graduate degree related to management, the main area of study of the institute or educational leadership. They must also have a minimum of five years experience in teaching or lecturing.

VET leaders are recruited in different ways; for instance, they can be promoted from a teacher or trainer position to an administrative leading role. Other people are recruited directly for the post. In the first case, the persons concerned are usually fully qualified teachers while in the latter they are mostly in possession of management qualifications.

During the last few years the Education Department has set out quality control systems, with support being provided through CPD and training sessions for State and non-State school leaders. The Division of Education has formulated and implemented a number of training initiatives for leaders, assistant leaders, teachers and staff members, handled internally and sometimes in conjunction with external partners.

3.9.   The Netherlands

VET institutes (ROCs) are autonomous in their strategy, activities and quality management. This also implies autonomy in staff policy, especially for VET leaders. The management board of a ROC has freedom of action in appointing a VET leader without restrictions on standards or certifications. The vision and strategy of the management board define recruitment policy.

There are no formal qualification requirements for VET leaders but most have a degree and additional training and experience in coordinating and managing a team

or a section. A Master in management and coaching (e.g. Master of Educational Management) is one of the initial training options for prospective VET leaders, but not a formal condition to be appointed as one. VET leaders are generally recruited from different sources:

(a) from commercial companies: candidates who are well acquainted with the business network in a specific sector and who have knowledge of the development of professional careers (e.g. are involved with in company training);

(b) from another institute of (vocational) education and training: candidates who have worked as a VET leader, coordinator or teacher;

(c) from the ROC itself. Most ROCs have their own programmes to give 'talented' employees the opportunity to develop their leadership competences with the potential of an appointment as VET leader in one of the sectors in their own VET institute. This usually means training off and on the job. This 'reservoir for potentials' can be found in most ROCs and is the main resource for the recruitment of VET leaders.

CPD is assumed as part of the job for most VET leaders. The policy of ROCs is that all members of staff have to professionalise continuously to develop their competences. Most ROCs have a provision for CPD, mostly a blend of formal, non-formal and informal learning (reflection activities). These activities are often organised in a 'ROC-academy.' Training, workshops and seminars for VET leaders are also offered by a number of universities, commercial and semi-commercial institutes.

3.10. Norway

The Education Act states the qualification requirements and framework for leaders (principals) in IVET. Each school must have proper professional, pedagogical and administrative leadership, and the learning processes are to be led by a principal. The principals need pedagogical qualifications and proper leadership qualities. The schools may apply for exemptions from the qualification requirements.

The government has established (2009) a National study programme on school leadership. Its objectives are to equip participants with knowledge, competences and skills to execute their leadership activities. The programme is not compulsory and is provided by universities and university colleges free of charge.

County governments are responsible for IVET and their regional policies and strategies differ. Most counties offer CPD for VET leaders in the form of seminars and meetings. CPD is not compulsory but strongly encouraged. Collaboration with other school leaders is common and regarded as crucial. Oslo county offers a

Master in school management that leads to a Master of Management degree. The first year of study is identical to the National study programme on school leadership. New VET leaders in Oslo are offered an experienced mentor who ensures that the newcomer quickly understands his or her role as leader: the mentor also helps the new leader become acquainted with the management by objectives strategy. The one-year mentoring scheme is established to provide CPD for both parties. A mentoring handbook is supplied. In 2010 school leaders in Oslo were offered a personal coach or a coach for the school's leader team. The coach helps the leaders with strategic management, analysis of results and objectives (Oslo kommune, Utdanningsetaten, 2010).

3.11.   Slovakia

The qualification requirements for leading positions in VET are as follows:
(a)   full teacher or trainer qualification (see below);
(b)   at least five years of pedagogical practice;
(c)   first level of attestation;
(d)   blameless citizen's life (clear criminal record).

A second degree university education is necessary to be qualified as a VET teacher. For graduates of non-pedagogical programmes, additional pedagogical training on level ISCED 5B is required. VET trainers must have at least a first degree of university education and additional pedagogical training. The 2009 Act on Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff defines a set of categories of pedagogical and professional staff and specifies their qualification prerequisites. It aims to improve teacher qualifications by using a model of CPD with four career levels and sets of respective standards for:
(a)   beginning pedagogue/professional worker;
(b)   independent pedagogue/professional worker;
(c)   pedagogue/professional worker with first attestation;
(d)   pedagogue/professional worker with second attestation.

There are two specific career positions: specialist and leader (manager).

A credit system for standard-driven continuing training has been introduced. Accreditation of continuing training programmes is carried out by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Training of Pedagogical and Professional Staff, established in 2009. A so-called function education is compulsory for teachers in administrative positions. The function education certificate is valid for seven years; after this time updated training is required. VET leaders do not earn any credits for its completion.

3.12.   The United Kingdom

Normally, a minimum of Bachelor degree or equivalent is an essential requirement for almost all levels of senior, middle and junior leadership in VET. For many senior and middle management posts, there is also an expectation of a Master degree or some kind of post-graduate higher professional qualification. Often the MBA (Masters in Business Administration) will be highly valued by VET institutions, though it is usually a 'desirable' rather than 'essential' qualification.

Teaching and/or training qualifications will usually be an expectation for many levels of leadership in VET, especially for junior and middle management leaders who are heads of curriculum areas or departments. Staff who used to be (or still are) teachers or trainers with teaching qualifications are strongly represented throughout VET leadership in the UK.

However, there has also been a tendency in the last two decades to prioritise business-focused engagement, industrial and professional training. Sometimes leaders have been appointed to VET institutions with business or industrial expertise rather than a teaching qualification and background. Training in administration and/or leadership and management is recognised as an important prerequisite for VET leaders. Between 2007 and 2010, all newly appointed principals were required to hold, or be working towards achieving, the Principals qualifying programme: Executive leadership development within three years of appointment.

For leaders, there is a strong requirement to engage in CPD. The Further education teachers' continuing professional development & registration regulations (England) also requires teachers in English FE Colleges to register with the Institute for Learning (IfL), the professional membership body for VET teachers and trainers, including leaders. This is extended to all Learning and Skills Council (LSC) provision through provider contracts and subcontracts.

3.13.   Discussion

This chapter demonstrates that most VET leadership positions in the countries surveyed carry formal qualification requirements. Such requirements usually include an expectation of completed formal education and, often, work experience. Of the 12 countries included in this chapter only two, Denmark and the Netherlands, have no formal requirements related to education or work experience.

The most common educational requirement is higher education (HE). Nine countries (all except Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway) demand that their VET leaders have a university degree; in Hungary at Master level. The requirements for a

specific type of HE vary between the countries. Most have HE as a general requirement while some require pedagogical higher education or a degree in a VET-related field.

Nine countries (all except Denmark, Malta and the Netherlands) require pedagogical qualifications, while six require some form of teaching experience. Qualified teachers are the main recruitment base for VET leaders in many countries; staff showing promising leadership talent or interest in becoming leaders are often encouraged to take part in leadership training, or supported and nurtured in other ways. The Dutch ROCs call this group a 'reservoir for potentials.' The main purpose behind this qualification requirement is to ensure knowledge, competences and skills related to pedagogical leadership. There is a debate in some countries (for instance in the UK and Norway) on lowering pedagogical qualification demands, to attract leaders with closer ties to the labour market or who possess qualifications like a Master of Business Administration (MBA). In the Netherlands there has been a development from a situation where VET leaders were always recruited from staff to the current position where a broader qualification background is an asset. Dutch VET experts state that 'being an excellent teacher is no guarantee for becoming an excellent leader'; a view that is echoed in other countries. In the Nordic countries, traditional flat power hierarchies have encouraged a perception of the school leader as spokesperson for the pedagogical staff, and a peer rather than a strong leader. The school leaders' pedagogical qualifications and experience ensure these close ties. A report related to the OECD activity on *Improving school leadership states*:

> 'In many countries, school leaders have served more as elected managers of their schools or been slowly promoted from within them. While this has served schools well in maintaining efficient coordination of operations during times of relative stability, it has hindered them in contexts of rapid change which call for administrators to behave more as leaders who are responsible for changing the practices, relationships and cultures of those who they represent.' (Hargreaves et al., 2007, p. 6).

Nine countries (all except Denmark, the Netherlands and Slovakia) have requirements for leadership:

(a) Czech VET leaders must possess training in administration and pass a so-called functional study programme;

(b) Estonian VET leaders must have passed a 240-hour management training course or have at least three years experience from management;

(c) Finnish VET leaders are expected to have a certificate of educational administration;

(d) Hungarian VET leaders need to have qualifications in educational management if they are assigned a second period as leaders;

(e) Irish VET leaders must have previous work experience in administration;

(f) Lithuanian VET leaders must finish a course in foundation of school management and reach a managerial level;

(g) Maltese VET leaders need a post-graduate degree related to management or educational leadership;

(h) Norwegian VET leaders need to have 'proper leadership qualities' (the Education Act does not mention any specific training or work experience);

(i) UK VET leaders are required to have training in administration and/or leadership and management.

Several countries have developed programmes for school leaders and these are becoming increasingly important as an instrument for ensuring quality management in VET institutions. These programmes are often approved by the Ministry of Education and provided by a university. Finnish VET leaders, for instance, need a certificate of educational administration accredited by the National Board of Education. This qualification recognises training in policy planning, budgeting, quality assurance and in how to manage relationships with staff, students and parents.

Another example of such a programme is the Danish course *Ledelse i praksis* [Leadership in practice], which is offered current and prospective school leaders (not exclusive to VET). It comprises six seminars dealing with topics like leadership for change, pedagogical leadership, financial issues, developing a personal leadership style, and transferring strategies into practice. The seminars make use of case studies and relevant leadership challenges. The course supports the Ministry of Education's strategic school policy, which calls for increased competence and professionalisation of leaders. In line with Denmark's policy of decentralisation and respect for the autonomy of VET institutions, the leadership programme is voluntary.

In Norway a similar school leadership programme is offered to current and prospective leaders. As in Denmark, the Norwegian programme is voluntary. The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (an association for public school owners) is somewhat sceptical of the formalisation of competence requirements:

'Their position is that the school owner [the county] has, and should have, the responsibility for leadership training since they can best evaluate the need in co-operation with their school leaders. Municipalities and counties do not wish governance intervention by the State in the form of formal requirements, or that the Directorate and county governor [the state representative in the county] shall have a co-ordinating role on behalf of the school owners [...] Nor do they take it for granted that key competence is linked to colleges and universities in this context, and therefore encourage the formation of a local network where schools and school leaders can learn from each other. 'Best practice' is considered to be a basic principle,

and it is the school's/schools owner's own perspective, not a centrally developed model by experts and researchers.' (OECD, 2007c, p. 56).

This view is reflected in the current policy development on school leadership in the UK, which had a statutory requirement for VET leaders to undertake leadership and management training for principals (the principals' qualifying programme) provided by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS, 2009). In June 2010 the government announced that it will remove the regulatory requirement for college principals to undertake the principals qualifying programme, recognising the range of development opportunities and qualifications open to principals. Nevertheless, LSIS currently estimates that there will be a continuing strong interest in principals undergoing this training, even though the statutory requirement to undertake it is to disappear.

Hungarian VET experts consider the formal qualifications required of VET leaders to be satisfactory. However, there is an discussion of whether these programmes really prepare leaders for the current changes and challenges in VET. Irish experts point to the fact that VET principals need specific personal traits to be able to create a vision for the organisation. They also need to be excellent political operators to secure support from the school owners to execute policy. These traits are not easily obtained via a school leadership programme.

Compared with the other countries surveyed, Denmark and the Netherlands have no formal (national) qualification requirements for VET leaders. The policy of decentralising power or authority from the Ministry of Education to create autonomous and self-governed VET institutions has resulted in a corresponding freedom to decide locally the requirements for VET leaders. The same principle supersedes any wish or need for standardisation. This level of independence or freedom carries a similar level of responsibility for the boards of ROCs and Danish VET centres to seek out and hire the best qualified leaders. The lack of standardised qualification requirements in these countries does not mean that the qualification level of their VET leaders is low: most Dutch and Danish leaders have a higher education degree and training and experience in leadership. Many also possess pedagogical qualifications.

Continuing professional development (CPD) for VET teachers and leaders is considered a success factor for the implementation of VET reforms in Europe, ensuring the shift to learning outcomes and the relevance of VET provision for the labour market (European Commission, 2010a). CPD is compulsory for VET leaders in about half of the countries surveyed. The Czech Republic regulates CPD via the country's Labour Code, while countries like Hungary couple the CPD requirements for VET leaders with the requirements for teachers and trainers. Ireland and the

Netherlands do not have specific CPD requirements regulated by law, but taking part in continuing training is considered essential and is strongly encouraged.

In most countries VET leaders take part in local or national (sometimes even international) networks which function as CPD. These networks may be formal associations like trade unions, non-formal meetings arranged by the Ministry of Education, a government agency or other stakeholders, or informal support groups for sharing information and exchanging views. VET leaders may also take part in mentoring schemes or coaching, as these can be more easily adapted to their individual needs and timetables. Some leaders also take part in study visits and mobility schemes.

CHAPTER 4
The distinctiveness of VET leadership

4.1. Introduction: the TTnet survey

The lack of research and specific policy on VET leadership may stem from a view that leadership in VET is not different from leadership in general education and does not warrant special attention. The main aim of this chapter is to explore the distinctiveness of VET leadership and provide a contribution to discussion of what makes VET leadership unique.

The chapter provides an overview and brief analysis of a study on the distinctiveness of VET leadership carried out by the TTnet during spring 2011. The network has discussed leadership since the project resulting in the *Competence framework for VET professions* (Cedefop, Volmari et al., 2009), and in September 2010 a TTnet seminar in Helsinki, Finland was fully devoted to this topic. In a TTnet seminar in Limassol, Cyprus in November 2010 a sub-group was established to undertake a survey on VET leadership. Ten Member States were involved in this activity, with Cedefop as coordinator. The participating countries were the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Hungary, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Finland and the United Kingdom.

The survey aimed to investigate the specificities of VET leadership, as compared to leadership in general education. To ensure a common approach in all participating countries, it was decided to base the survey on leadership functions/activity areas and corresponding competence requirements listed in the *Competence framework:*
(a) administration (general administration, finances and marketing, HRM, leading organisation);
(b) training (strategic work, pedagogical leadership, student needs);
(c) development and quality assurance (staff development, self development, quality assurance);
(d) networking (supporting teams and collaboration, external networking, development networking).

The survey focused on positional leaders working in public or private VET organisations providing initial or continuing vocational education and training (including adult education). The TTnet members conducted semi-structured interviews with VET leaders, policy-makers, leadership trainers and researchers in

their Member States. In several countries the TTnet member collected some or all informants and discussed the topic in a seminar. In the UK, an electronic survey was distributed to add to the interview data. The following questions were asked in the interviews:

(a) what are the activities that you consider specific for VET leaders, that is, activities that would not be so common in general education? What are the knowledge and skills required?

(b) are there activities common to all fields of education that differ and require different competences due to the VET context? What are the knowledge and skills required by these VET-specific activities?

The TTnet compiled country reports which were then analysed and the activities and competences unique to VET leaders were extracted. The data common to several countries were presented into a table to illustrate the uniqueness of VET leadership in Europe (see the Annex).

The outcomes of this survey reflect small-scale discussions in 10 European countries. They are also a synthesis of leadership activities conducted in a wide range of VET institutions. An individual VET leader in Europe may only recognise or carry out some of the activities, so the results have severe limitations and ought to be considered a first attempt to investigate the topic. However, the findings demonstrate some common trends and characteristics that may be used as a basis for further research and discussion.

During informal discussions before the study was carried out, Cedefop and the TTnet recognised or anticipated that the distinctive framework that VET leaders operate in is characterised by the following factors:

- strong connection to the labour market;
- strong connection to and a high level of networking with a wide range of stakeholders outside the education and training community, including trade unions, sectoral and vocational associations, companies and businesses (the world of work and social partners);
- a high level of innovation and a need for continuously changing learning contents and dynamically changing staff composition (due to the pace of technological development and change of labour market needs);
- special responsibility for social inclusion, with the high number of disadvantaged students struggling with learning and social difficulties, a high rate of drop-outs, and a great diversity of students and training programmes;
- declining interest and growing negative sentiment towards VET, resulting in a need for marketing the training provision on offer.

4.2. ## Results

The results from the country reports show, despite the obvious national differences in VET systems, a set of unique characteristics of VET leadership in the countries surveyed; these are very much linked to the anticipated factors above. Some activities and competence requirements may have features that are common in educational leadership in general. However, executing these leadership activities in a VET context sets them apart from leadership in general education; the competence requirements also differ.

The results clearly underline the strong connection between VET and the world of work, recognising it as the main aspect that separates VET leadership from leadership in general education. The level of involvement from social partners may vary between the Member States (see Chapter 5) but in all countries surveyed VET leaders operate in an environment focused on the labour market. The Danish TTnet member describes a VET leader's main task as acting on an understanding of VET as a product of the social partners, the Ministry of Education (or other government entity), and 'the customers' (the labour market and the students). A VET leader has three masters to serve. In order to understand and act on the intimate connection between the stakeholders in VET it is important to have a political sense and an understanding of, and respect for, the many interests. VET experts in the Netherlands believe that one of the main responsibilities of a VET leader is to 'realise possibilities' for companies.

Leadership in VET reflects the fact that curricula and study programmes, to a much larger extent than in general education, function as only a starting point for the provision of education and training. The world of work changes constantly, and VET must change accordingly. Leaders in VET need to steer the organisation into a modus or a level of responsiveness where these changes are not only accepted but actively absorbed into provision. VET staff need to be alert to continuous developments in the labour market, and strive to understand them and their relevance for VET provision. To react quickly to the changing needs of the labour market, VET leaders have to support needs analyses and develop the analytical and creative sides of the organisation. They need to have a clear vision of VET in terms of developing the organisation's professional identity. UK experts draw attention to the fact that each VET institution must define its own direction and character: for example, an equestrian training centre is very different from a forestry training college and each will have a different character and organisational strategy. Strategic leadership, visioning and positioning must be adapted to those unique contexts.

The impact of the labour market on VET affects human resources management (HRM). Hungarian experts make the case for HR policy being specific in VET as more dynamic staff are needed to accommodate continuous changes in provision, resulting in a high emphasis on internal training programmes. Reflecting the many responsibilities of VET institutions, VET leaders need to hire, train and accommodate staff with diverse qualifications and work tasks. Finnish VET experts highlight the fact that VET leaders must operate within a variety of collective agreements and work contracts of different staff groups. Due to the low status and pay of VET staff in many countries, and challenges linked to students with learning and/or behavioural problems, there is a higher rate of fluctuation and turnover. The preparation and continuing professional development of teachers of technical subjects is oriented not only on new pedagogical approaches but also on new technical innovations and advancements. Czech experts find that HR strategy includes the accommodation of staff receiving relevant training in companies to update their knowledge, competences and skills: internal collaboration among professional teams in Czech VET institutions has increased in recent years. This situation is demanding for leaders because the teams are distributed in various buildings and working environments whereas in other types of schools they are usually under the same roof. Slovakian VET experts emphasise that HRM strategy includes making analyses of jobs in the labour market to identify core and specific competences that need to be taught by staff that have developed the skills to do so. The VET leader must understand changing human resource management strategies and practices applied in companies, and how these strategies influence the requirement for the skills and qualifications among VET students and apprentices. In some Member States, VET leaders are also expected to understand the principles and practices of international human resource management. The VET leader must establish and lead a dynamic organisation with highly flexible staff, with a high degree of motivational and supporting elements.

VET leader vision and attitudes have a decisive influence on their staff's work, both in curriculum reform and methodological development. Lithuanian experts emphasise that VET teachers are specialists in vocational subjects in addition to their qualifications as pedagogues, resulting in combined pedagogical management. VET teachers and trainers often have to prepare learning material themselves following the rapid changes in the labour market. They need the ability to find necessary information, skills in analysing data and combining pieces of information, in communicating information and ideas in writing so others will understand, plus ICT skills. Irish experts expect their VET leaders to display an ability to be innovative in study programme design. They also demand experience in creative programme development, with flexible learning design features to accommodate on/off-site

learning, programme design skills to meet the flexible requirements of companies, and programme management skills including marketing and budgeting. VET leaders in large UK colleges may need to balance the requirements of one specialist vocational area against another in deciding on the allocation of resources, staff and organisational priorities: a centre of excellence in a very advanced industry may require constant, expensive investment in expert staff, building facilities and equipment (e.g. a marine engineering centre). It may serve only a smaller elite international market, in comparison with more routine VET provision that serves local needs for a larger community with more basic requirements that is also cheaper to run (e.g. business administration). Yet the VET college profile may benefit from the elite market for the centre of vocational excellence in terms of prestige, demand and high trainee fees. This may give them an overall advantage in their locale, but only if constant high updating costs are met. The demands of different VET areas may, therefore, compete against one another. The VET leader must demonstrate clear strategic goals as well as good financial resources and data management, people and partnership insight, and skills in working with others to determine and plan the best priorities for the organisation.

Most countries surveyed have made the shift to a focus on learning outcomes. VET institutions are now organising and adapting curricula, teaching and training to a learning outcomes approach. Many VET experts point out that there is more focus on assessment of learning outcomes and other types of assessment in VET than in general education. Finnish VET experts recognise that assessment of competence means that diverse and comprehensive methods have to be used in VET and that assessment always involves individual student self-assessment. In vocational qualification units, competence is assessed by means of vocational skills demonstrations, which entail performing work assignments relevant to the vocational skills requirements in the most authentic settings possible. Skills demonstrations are arranged as part of on-the-job learning, either in workplaces or at vocational institutions. The design of the school-based curriculum and the planning and placement of vocational skills demonstration in workplaces is more challenging and rewarding in VET because of the flexibility to submit the providers' own profile and values into the curricula and define their own conception of learning. In their pedagogical function, VET leaders are expected to lead in adapting and developing curricula, didactics and assessment of learning outcomes in cooperation with local/regional employers, trade unions and professional associations. In countries like Ireland, VET leaders are expected to have a comprehensive understanding of the national qualifications framework and its relevance to labour market needs.

VET leaders also need to ensure that the technical equipment in the learning environment is relevant and up-to-date and appropriate for study programmes. VET

experts in Slovakia presume that their VET leaders know how to arrange a user-friendly learning environment for practical exercises. Other countries report the importance of a certain level of labour market-relevant technological 'literacy' among VET leaders. Lithuanian experts expect an ability to keep up with the changing technological and organisational requirements of business sectors and enterprises, a corresponding openness to the pedagogical, organisational and technological innovations in the training process and the ability to propose innovations in these fields. Taking the limited resources of the VET sector into consideration, many VET leaders need to find creative solutions on how to get access to new technology. UK VET experts point out that updated skills training and techniques using modern equipment enables trainees to distinguish themselves to obtain good qualifications and maintain a competitive advantage over other applicants in the job market.

The survey results partly reflect the complexities of the VET student group. The trend of merging VET schools into large institutions with a variety of responsibilities has had direct consequences for VET leadership. Lithuanian experts require VET leaders to display know-how in the development of flexible learning and training strategies adapted to the increasing variety of training needs, including on-the-job training for company employees. Finnish experts demand knowledge, understanding and ability to apply the special features and financing principles of different education systems, e.g. initial vocational education for young people, apprenticeship training, adult education, labour policy education, and pre-vocational programmes (such as preparatory instruction and guidance for VET, rehabilitative instruction and guidance for the disabled and preparatory education for immigrants). Most VET experts acknowledge that the student 'material' is more diverse in VET than in general education since students enter VET from all educational levels, occupational sectors and life situations, and have a wide age and skills range. This means that the pedagogical approach must be flexible and comprehensive and VET leaders have to know the whole education structure. There is also a need to develop a system of student counselling that relates specifically to the current and prospective needs of the labour market and the career of each individual.

Several country experts claim that there are more instances of disadvantaged and low-skilled students in VET than in general education. Hungarian experts, for instance, use PISA results to show that the ratio of low-skilled students is much higher in VET than in other types of education institution, and that this is reflected in the job and the decisions of the leaders in many ways. They need to possess personal competences and skills like high flexibility and tolerance, and maintain extensive knowledge of legislation relevant for this group of students. They also need to have a national level perspective on the possibilities and challenges of inclusive education and how VET can become a means of enhancing catch-up by

disadvantaged students. Czech experts support the view that there are more students with learning or behavioural difficulties in VET than in general upper secondary schools. Irish experts expect VET leaders to have skills in designing flexible study programmes which can accommodate low (academic) achievers. Maltese experts also acknowledge that VET institutions have problems with academic excellence and have students struggling with literacy. In the Finnish education system the aim and principle of educating the whole age cohort means offering a student place for everyone graduating from basic education, either in vocational education or in general upper secondary education. In practice this means that those with good grades go, if they want to, to general upper secondary school, and those with lower grades 'have' to go to vocational education. A consequence of the higher number of disadvantaged students in VET is the need for greater emphasis on student counselling, and a focus on the teaching and training of special needs students in staff continuing professional development.

According to this survey, VET leader involvement in quality assurance is largely linked to the effort of keeping VET relevant to the labour market, and addressing the issue of staff continuing professional development. Some countries address quality assurance by working on set objectives and indicators, being concerned with accountability.

VET leaders support the development of quality management by actively involving external stakeholders such as employers, trade unions and professional organisations. In most countries these social partners take part in VET management via their representation in boards and councils. VET leaders in the UK must report to and liaise with the governors and chair of governors of their organisation to ensure that the governors meet their obligations as the accountable body. This is routine for all education institutions, but VET organisations typically have more demanding governance requirements for specialist knowledge, skills, equipment, work experience, training, fieldwork and health and safety demands associated with particular industries. Lithuania is among the countries indicating that VET leaders who establish cooperation with social partners contribute to assuring the quality of VET provision. Many VET institutions in Europe organise networks with partners from regional trade and industry to receive feedback on VET quality.

Continuing staff development is more important in VET than in general education due to the changing training needs and labour market demands. Accommodating these needs is an integral part of a VET leader's quality assurance focus. Dutch VET experts support current national and international policy views which maintain that the quality of VET depends on the quality and competences of VET teachers and trainers. It is a main concern of the VET leader to keep staff competences in line with the demands of the labour market and current and relevant

pedagogical concepts. In the Netherlands, as in many other countries, periodic internship in trade and industry is used as a quality assurance mechanism. For some experts there is a continuing development strategy dilemma for VET leaders over whether pedagogical or professional development of staff is more important. The current focus on learning outcomes means demand for staff training on new teaching and assessment methods. Some countries, like the Czech Republic, list participation in specialised competitions for students as a factor increasing the need for professional knowledge development among teachers. Quality assurance also demands continuous professional development of leaders.

The many effects of VET are reflected in greater legislation than exists for general education. Not only do the different sectors have different regulations, there is also different legal status among VET students (apprentices, employees, the unemployed, IVET students). In some countries labour acts regulate for apprentices or the institutions' relationship with the stakeholders. In many countries VET is steered by multiple ministries, most commonly the Ministry of Education and of Labour. The involvement of companies in VET provision means that VET leaders must follow labour market legislation. The practical and hands-on training of students and staff also demands focus on work safety regulations. VET leaders also have wider responsibilities for facilities than in general education, including taking care of (planning and maintaining) buildings and premises due to the VET focus on practical skills.

Most VET leaders operate according to general or specific objectives set by the government or the school board. Several country experts specifically mention early school leaving as a challenging topic. Danish VET institutions work hard at reducing dropout: the government target is 5%. To retain 95% of students VET teachers and trainers need extensive support and encouragement from their leaders. In Hungary and the Czech Republic, VET leaders pursue ISO quality accreditation for the institution. Quality assurance can also involve managing self-evaluation of the organisation and cooperating with external evaluation and inspection agencies. VET leaders are responsible for the output of their organisation, whether this output is measured by learning outcomes, grades, financial output or dropout rate. They are accountable for the public funds allocated to VET, and they are increasingly challenged by their owners and the general public on the use of these funds. To tackle the expectations from maintainers, stakeholders and society in general, VET leaders need to be sensitive to these influences and possess political and perhaps even persuasion skills.

All countries surveyed place great emphasis on the networking abilities of VET leaders. Networking with the world of work is a major concern: this reflects the importance of commercial organisations in the ownership of VET institutions and

their influence on VET provision and strategic development. Networking contributes to needs analysis and staff training to ensure the relevance of VET provision, and external stakeholders such as councils, boards and social partner associations are important collaborators in quality assurance systems. While the main partners for general education are the education sector and the local community, VET has many partners with a huge array of interests, business cores, specialisations and organisational forms. For VET leaders these partnerships (and the variety of partnerships) are not only useful but essential to the normal functioning of the institution.

Cooperation with external stakeholders includes leadership activities like identifying prospective partners, researching their needs and expectations and involving them in the main decision-making process of the VET institution. Networking with companies is often necessary to secure updated facilities and technology for training staff and students. Having active relationships with employers is also necessary to assure reasonable care of VET student practice. External networking demands skills in establishing and sustaining effective partner relationships with stakeholders, especially employers. Partnerships with researchers and developers of technological innovations, and with other VET institutions, are also important.

Many countries, like Denmark, Lithuania, Hungary and Slovakia, see international networking as important; this is especially the case in the newer Member States. Lithuania, for instance, maintains that it is an essential VET leadership task to support partnerships in EU projects: meeting VET staff from other countries, sharing good practices, visiting other VET institutions, and discussing common problems and perspectives. Leaders' attitudes play a decisive role in such projects and leadership is crucial to student and staff mobility, organising international and national events and taking part in international forums.

Several countries, including the Czech Republic and Finland, believe it takes more to attract students to VET, compared to general education. Slovakian experts see declining interest from parents and students in VET, with recent changes in the structure of the economy being socially painful. Marketing of training and creating a positive reputation is consequently a main leadership responsibility in VET, as is creativity in accessing funds from various sources. Hungarian experts acknowledge that the acquisition of funds for continuous new developments is a speciality VET leader activity. In the Netherlands, the ROCs promote the institutions as important partners for companies and regional institutions. Lithuanian experts address the need for 'competition management,' with leaders having the ability to compete with other VET providers. Finnish experts also maintain that a VET leader must be familiar with regional and national VET providers, and she or he needs teamwork,

networking, marketing and business skills. In Denmark VET experts highlight that VET management must make public student and employer evaluations of the whole institution, on individual subjects and specific courses. This calls for extensive marketing skills.

In addition to the leadership activities considered unique to VET, there are tasks and responsibilities similar to leadership in general education. Nevertheless, the scope of activities is larger in VET, and they carry specific VET characteristics. The need for VET to adapt continuously to external forces is a major challenge for VET leadership. It is important to reflect a very dynamic education arena with fluctuating contents, structures and conditions: pedagogical issues must respond to rapid change and the unpredictability of the labour market. VET leaders have the responsibility to support continuous staff development. All education leaders need to provide general pedagogical leadership for the students in their organisations. For VET leaders, there is a particular need to ensure a learning culture of openness to feedback, reflection and self-criticism, so that the training provision is updated to remain current, relevant and engaging for students and employers. The student group includes a great diversity of people – youngsters, adults, apprentices, employed, unemployed, skilled and low-skilled – and VET provision includes many different levels, sectors, subjects and traditions.

The country reports show that leadership in VET is partly context-based; the various leadership activities and corresponding competence requirements differ from country to country. In some countries, managing the commercial activities of the institution is a common leadership task. Experts from the Czech Republic and Lithuania refer to the fact that practical training takes place in school workshops and that the resulting products and services are sold to the public. These activities bring specific leadership responsibilities and specific risks and opportunities arise. According to UK experts, VET leaders need to work together to give shape and direction to national VET education and training policy, due to a lack of general knowledge and first-hand experience of vocational education among those in government. In Finland the government grants financing to VET providers to plan and implement development projects. Such projects are targeted at companies, the aim being to develop their staff and increase their skills and expertise. This activity requires proficiency in project work, and Finnish VET leaders are expected to master project management. Such competence requirements are emerging in several countries, varying from handling the financial mechanisms of project work to applying projects in staff competence development.

The survey of activities and competence requirements may also reflect the national regulations and expectations concerning VET leaders' required qualifications (see the previous chapter for a further discussion of this topic). In

Lithuania the leaders of VET institutions need a background from VET. Irish experts presume that VET leaders have experience from the industrial sector. In Finland VET leaders perform teaching duties and consequently need to keep updated on pedagogical development as well as labour market development in their own field.

Finnish experts believe that decision-making powers are more comprehensive in VET institutions than in general upper secondary school; the principal has more power and responsibility in financial matters (e.g. planning and implementing investments, preparing annual accounts) and in HRM (e.g. the principal can recruit new teachers). The VET leader is more concerned with strategic issues while the principal in general upper secondary school is more responsible for pedagogical issues and planning the timetables. The interviews in the Czech Republic suggest that delegation of powers to the deputy head is common in VET, and that such delegation is greater than in general education, resulting in the delegated powers being more fundamental.

Developing common goals and creating commitment to them is a major leadership task in all organisations. This task is more complicated in VET than in general education because the leader has to build one identity for a fragmented and complex institution and within the sphere of a conglomerate of regulations and administrative systems. A VET leader must adhere to a wide range of stakeholder policies and work within the scope of a variety of frameworks. Building a participative learning community with shared values and visions is consequently more challenging than in general education.

CHAPTER 5
European VET governance and its influence on leadership

5.1. Governance trends in European VET

5.1.1. Trends to be discussed

This chapter discusses:

- the merger of VET institutions into larger establishments with a broader activities (including more target groups) and responsibilities;
- the decentralisation of power or authority from the central government to local/regional governments, school boards or other stakeholders, and other processes aiming at increasing the autonomy of VET institutions;
- a shift in focus from input factors (registration and participation, length and nature of programmes) to increased focus on quality assurance, learning outcomes and results (accountability);
- an increase in the sharing of power with social partners.

These trends change the landscape in which VET leaders operate and consequently have an influence on VET leaders and their competence requirements. However, although European VET is affected by many of the same trends, there are large differences in national VET policies, strategies, traditions and how systems respond to new reforms. Consequently, VET leadership must be understood in the context of national VET systems and this chapter will relate the trends to such national developments.

The focus of this chapter is primarily on public IVET organisations in a small selection of European countries: these serve as good examples of typical European trends. The information presented is primarily gathered from ReferNet country reports, the country reports from the OECD's project *Improving school leadership,* Cedefop's thematic reviews and interviews with national experts.

5.1.2. Mergers

In many European countries there is a clear trend to merge VET institutions into larger entities. Cedefop believes the purpose of these mergers is to widen access to VET, expand the capacity of training provision, and increase the quality of VET. 'Many countries promote mergers and partnerships of VET providers to pool and make better use of resources,' since coping with the technological developments in

the labour market means that 'schools and training providers need up-to-date equipment and this can be expensive. Many countries are struggling to ensure state-of-the-art training while keeping costs down' (Cedefop, 2010a, p. 81). Newer Member States like Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia have experienced a demographic decline resulting in a decrease in the number of VET institutions. While some countries started this development at the beginning of the 1990s (the Netherlands), most have merged their VET institutions in the 2000s.

The number of vocational educational institutions in Estonia has been reduced from 71 (2003) to 44 (2011). In 2002, there were 58 state-owned VET institutions run by the Ministry of Education: there are now 30, a result of decisive actions to increase the quality, accessibility and efficiency of VET (Cedefop ReferNet Estonia, 2010). Many smaller institutions have been merged into regional VET centres, the so-called 'centres of excellence', with a wide variety of subjects taught in one building. The school network has been optimised, many schools have been combined into regional centres of excellence, yet, highly specialised schools have been preserved. This has enabled a pooling of resources and improved training provision.

The number of IVET institutions in Lithuania has gradually decreased in the last decade. From 2000 to 2007 the number of vocational schools was reduced from 106 to 80, while the number of professional colleges (providing ISCED 3, 4 and 5) has gone from 67 to one. In the same period 28 new VET colleges have been established. There has also been an optimisation of the network of VET institutions connecting some initial VET institutions (VET schools) with those for continuing (labour market) training. Eight centres of VET practical training were established by 2009, with 33 forecast by 2013.

The trend to merge is also found in Finland, encouraged by the Ministry of Education and Culture (which has provided targeted funding for the mergers) and as part of regional policy. However, the mergers are done voluntarily. The number of VET institutions has been reduced from about 200 to 150, with mainly smaller institutions merging into larger ones. In many instances the merged institutions do better together than on their own. Finland has a tradition of offering IVET and CVET/adult learning in the same institutions, so this trend is not new.

The rapid demographic decline in the Czech Republic after 2000 resulted in a need to reduce the number of schools at general and vocational upper secondary level. The predominance of vocational schools with a diversity of educational programmes was an obstacle to enlarging and merging the institutions. Currently the issues are tackled mainly by school mergers or, to a lesser degree, by dissolution.

In the Netherlands, vocational colleges have been merged and set on a path of self-government since 1992, leading to the establishment of major providers called

ROCs (*regionaal opleidingencentrum, regional vocational colleges*). These VET colleges offer a variety of courses within IVET and CVET, including provision for adult learners.

At the beginning of the 2000s, the VET system in Hungary had become extremely fragmented. It included well over 1 000 VET institutions, as the local governments of even very small settlements had the right to establish and maintain a VET institution. This fragmentation brought about problems of efficiency and quality. The system has since undergone radical transformation and VET institutions have been concentrated into larger, so-called regional integrated training centres (*térségi integrált szakképző központ*, TISZK). Originally, the Dutch regional vocational colleges (ROCs) were taken as a model. The financial background for setting up the TISZKs was provided by the Structural Funds, as well as the vocational training contribution (a VET 'tax' amounting to 1.5% of the gross salary base). 2005 saw the establishment of the first 16 centres based on the consortium-like cooperation of 6-8 VET institutions. An amendment of the relevant laws in 2007 resulted in closer cooperation among the institutions. This amendment also stipulated that only TISZKs which train at least 1 500 students and which accept the recommendations of the regional development and training committees with respect to occupations and volume of training have access to development funds. In 2010, 84 regional training centres had been established, using five different organisational models (Cedefop ReferNet Hungary, 2010). These 84 TISZKs cover at least 90% of school-based VET in Hungary. The TISZK system encompasses very different types of VET schools, and the number of students ranges from 1 500 to 20 000.

VET in Malta has been decentralised and transferred to 10 different institutes which together make up the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). Previously VET was supplied by six different schools under the control of the Department of Higher Studies and Adult Education of the Education Division. MCAST has embarked on a plan for the physical restructuring of the Corradino main campus to incorporate the institutes currently spread in five different locations. This will result in a state-of-the-art campus that will satisfy the estimated growth in the number of full-time and part-time, day and evening, students as well as adult learners. The aim is to bring together all the institutes to pool and share resources, facilities, expertise, spaces and services and to provide more opportunities for students to mix and exchange ideas and experiences. The institutes will work together in delivering joint programmes and making it possible for students to follow modules across the institutes (Cedefop ReferNet Malta, 2010).

The trend of merging institutions has not yet become an objective in Norway but some counties (19 county governments are responsible for IVET in Norway) have started discussing this topic. In Oslo county there is currently an initiative to merge

an upper secondary vocational school with a *fagskole* (ISCED 5) and CVET/adult education. The Risløkka project offers an arena for cooperation between education and the labour market. Some municipalities have decided to merge several schools to form an administrative unit governed by one school principal. The main reason for this is that the small size of the schools has not warranted having their own principal, but practical reasons, such as the lack of good candidates for leadership positions, have also been important.

The number of vocational high schools in Bulgaria is decreasing along with the general population. However, vocational colleges have increased in number since professions requiring a fourth degree of vocational qualification are in demand on the labour market. The existing institutions have become firmly established and are in position to expand the scope of their activities (Cedefop ReferNet Bulgaria, 2010). Bulgarian VET leaders believe that the policy of mergers has not yet been fully implemented, but there is a need for the establishment of bigger institutions to optimise provision.

Slovakia also has population decline, reflected in a reduction in the interest in vocational training (due to its lower status and lower employability) and gradual loosening of the links with the world of work. Introducing per capita financing meant that SOŠ (secondary specialised schools, *stredné odborné školy*) and SOU (secondary vocational schools, stredné odborné učilištia) were encouraged to merge to form associated secondary schools (ZSŠ, *združená stredná škola*) or joined schools (SŠ, *spojená škola*). From September 2008 there are two secondary streams in Slovakia: the general education stream and the VET stream (Cedefop ReferNet Slovakia, 2010).

5.1.3. Decentralisation

In the Cedefop policy report *A bridge to the future* it is stated that

> 'devolving decision-making, including budgetary responsibility, from central government to regional or local self-governing bodies is a clear trend, predating the Copenhagen process. The rationale is that education and training resources will be more efficiently and effectively allocated if decisions are made by those closer to and more aware of regional or local labour market needs [...] Many countries have also given VET providers more financial independence to provide more flexibility to meet regional or local labour market needs and encourage participation of local stakeholders in managing the funds.' (Cedefop, 2010a, p. 80).

The degree and nature of decentralisation vary between the Member States; there are differences, for instance, in which tasks are delegated. Daun distinguishes between four types of decentralisation:

'**Deconcentration** is the transfer of work and tasks from higher to lower levels within the administration; decision-making power is not transferred. Most often issues have been moved from national to provincial level (e.g. France, Greece, Italy and Spain). **Delegation** implies conditional transfer of decision-making power or administrative tasks to lower levels in the hierarchy. **Devolution** is the transfer of authority to autonomous units or local bodies. This has been the most common type of decentralisation in the Czech Republic and the Nordic countries, for example. Finally, sometimes **privatisation** is seen as a type of decentralisation.' (Daun, 2010, p. 124).

Decentralisation changes the role and work tasks of the central government (in many countries represented by the Ministry of Education and government agencies) which may delegate administrative tasks but still steer education development by setting common (national) objectives. The tasks or responsibilities most commonly decentralised are evaluation, recruitment of school principals and teachers, services, school construction, and financial and management audit (Daun, 2010).

In some countries, such as the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the decentralisation of VET authority is part of a larger policy of decentralising public administration from state to regional level. Such transfer of power to regional or local governments happened a long time ago in many countries. In the Nordic countries the typical model has been to delegate authority to county and municipal level: local providers are considered best suited to matching students' educational aspirations and interests. Consequently, Sweden has become one of the most decentralised countries in the western world (Miron, 1993). Despite the increasing levels of decentralisation, Denmark, Finland and Norway continue to express their deep ideological beliefs in egalitarianism and universalism. School leaders may worry that decentralisation of decision-making and of the allocation of funding to schools will lead to inequalities among regions and individual schools. Delegation of responsibility and cutting staff costs in public services can lead to concern among teacher and school leader unions and school administrators about a 'draining of school-based competence' at local authority level. Concern has also been expressed that school leaders will no longer have dedicated 'spokesmen' in the decision-making processes where financial resources are distributed and where schools compete with other worthy causes (OECD, 2007c).

Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK have devolved authority to the individual institutions. However, this scale of action may require a whole set of decentralising measures, such as the need to dismantle the status of teachers as civil servants employed and paid by state or regional authorities and transfer employment (hiring, deciding level of salary, firing) to the institutions.

In Estonia, the VET and Adult Learning Department of the Ministry of Education and Research coordinates education through local governments and other

ministries. The implementing arm of the Ministry is the National Examinations and Qualifications Centre (NEQC), which establishes state curricula and the competence-based modular curricula on which school curricula have to be based. County governments and their education departments manage education development plans for their administrative county; they organise vocational guidance and counselling. Local governments plan and implement education programmes locally, coordinate and organise the activities of municipal educational institutions. A scheme of state-funded study places was implemented in 2007/08: this allocates study places within the curriculum group (sectors) for the coming three years, giving schools the additional flexibility to decide the number and time of admission of new applicants (Cedefop ReferNet Estonia, 2010). Schools are obligated to fill all the state-funded study places during the whole calendar year. The Ministry monitors the number of places each month and funding depends on the VET organisation being able to fill up the places. The measure has increased the flexibility of funding and autonomy of the schools.

In Lithuania the Law on Vocational Education and Training (1997, 2007) states that management of VET shall be implemented on a state, county and local authority level. At national level the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) shapes and implements state education policy. The Methodological Centre for VET under the MES provides methodological support for IVET institutions. Decentralisation of VET started in 2003 through a change of status of state-run vocational schools to self-governing institutions. This change enables different stakeholders (social partners, regional and municipal governments) to participate in the management and funding of VET providers. It also results in more flexible management structures, increased opportunities for VET institutions to participate in international projects, stronger links between providers and employers, and positive changes in student attitude to the training institution. The openness of training providers to labour market needs and new technologies is increased and the attractiveness of the VET institution and its recognition at regional level improves. The new status also increases their financial independence. Currently, 13 VET providers have a status of self-governing institutions and the initiative is continued further.

From being centrally planned and hierarchical in the 1970s, Finnish education has been transformed, following the economic collapse of the early 1990s, into a decentralised system of governance. The national curriculum steers overall policy direction and sets a broad national curriculum framework. Within this broad steering system, considerable decision-making power is devolved to the country's municipalities. The Ministry of Education and Culture is the highest authority and is responsible for the strategic and normative steering of VET and all publicly funded

education in Finland. The Ministry grants authorisations to education providers for provision of education and training, determining the fields of education in which they are allowed to organise education and their total student numbers. Providers determine which vocational qualifications and which study programmes within each field of education will be organised at their institutions. The local authorities and the joint municipal boards maintain the majority of vocational institutions. Providers are responsible for organising training in their areas, for matching provision with local labour market needs, and for devising curricula based on the national core curricula and requirements of competence-based qualifications. They also decide independently on the types of institutions or units that they run. A VET provider may be a local authority, a municipal training consortium, a foundation or some other registered association, or a state enterprise. Each vocational institution must always have a principal in charge of its operations. The general criteria for the organisation of education, administration, authority and duties of bodies and staff and other necessary matters are determined in the institutional regulations (OECD, Pont et al., 2008).

In the Czech Republic the governance and administration of IVET were affected by the public administration reform launched in the area of education in 2001. Until 2000 major powers in the VET area were concentrated in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy, MŠMT). In January 2001, as part of public administration reform, these powers were taken over by newly established regional administrative bodies. The MŠMT thus lost its responsibility for establishing secondary schools and tertiary professional schools. The major principles of the reform included decentralisation (14 regions were created instead of former 10, with an aggregation of regions into eight greater regions), strengthening the role of regional administration and support for school autonomy. The regional authority is responsible for state administration in the region; its main education tasks include development of a regional long-term plan for the development of education and the education system, and a report on the situation in education in the region. The regional authority allocates resources from the state budget to schools to cover pedagogical salaries and direct educational costs; it also monitors their use. The regional assembly, which has decision-making powers, is obliged to form a commission for education and employment, which has its say on, for example, the number and the structure of the schools and their educational provision, the quality of schools, and the funding of education in the regions. Regional self-governing bodies are directly responsible for establishing and closing down VET schools and school facilities. Established schools must be approved by the MŠMT and included in the school register for being eligible for public funding. The regional bodies appoint directors of the schools based on

appointment procedures and ministerial approval (Cedefop ReferNet Czech Republic, 2009).

In Malta, local government does not have responsibility for VET. The move towards decentralisation and autonomy in state schools has seen directors taking on more responsibility for fund management and teaching materials. VET institutions usually have a board in charge of deciding the targets or objectives of the institution. There are also national targets that come from the Ministry, valid for three years. The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) is autonomous and run by a board of directors that includes representatives from private industries and public corporations and authorities. Funding is still mainly provided from the state. Principal education officers monitor teaching and learning, perform audits and provide support and advice to teachers and school management.

The establishment of TISZKs (regional vocational centres) has increased the level of autonomy in Hungarian VET. The decision-making body of the TISZKs is the board or the local/county authorities. However, the TISZKs have autonomy or self-influence in some aspects, such as the number of students. They can recruit and hire their own staff. The curricula of the study programmes are regulated on two levels: there is a national core curriculum that regulates VET areas, while the local institutions decide the content (subjects and methodology). Normally the director approves the pedagogical programme. Due to political changes after the elections in 2011 it is expected that the new government in Hungary will make changes in the TISZK system. Current discussions on the future organisation include a wish to return to a stricter centralised system.

In the 2000s, Slovakia underwent decentralisation, with regional parliaments and heads of eight self-governing regions elected for the first time in 2001. Self-governing regions got responsibility for the establishment and dissolution of the previously state-managed secondary VET schools and VET establishments aimed at provision of practical training. Regional governments, advised by the Regional VET Council, with the dominant influence of employers, are responsible for regional VET strategies. Sectoral VET Councils, under the supervision of specific employers representing the professional bodies identified by law, prepare plans of labour market needs, indicating the number of graduates needed in respective study/training branches the following five years. These plans are expected to be used as the basis for the decisions on VET schools and their study programmes. No centre can be created by regional authorities without the support of the respective professional organisation. The establishment of a VET institution can be assigned to a SOŠ (secondary specialised school), centre of practical training, school farm or centre of vocational practice provided it cooperates with a professional organisation,

is equipped with modern technical equipment, and delivers VET for the respective occupations (Cedefop ReferNet Slovakia, 2010).

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the Danish Ministry of Education has regulated IVET provision through a system of governance based on taximeter grants per student. The Ministry also lays down the overall objectives for IVET programmes and provides the framework within which the stakeholders (the social partners, the colleges and the enterprises) are able to adapt curricula and methodologies to labour market needs and students. The Ministry is responsible for ensuring that IVET programmes have the breadth required for a youth education programme and for allocation of resources. VET institutions are self-governing. The institution is managed by a board compiled such that most of its members entitled to vote primarily come from the institution's local area. Colleges and the training centres have autonomy in staff recruitment, i.e. the Ministry of Education is not involved in teacher recruitment procedures (Cedefop ReferNet Denmark, 2010). VET leaders have fixed-term contracts with salary related to objectives. The contracts are seen as an inherent and important part of the decentralisation process.

Under the Department of Education and Science, VET in Ireland is conducted in vocational schools, secondary level schools, in higher education colleges and in a variety of locations for early school leavers and adults. Around 20-25 years ago Irish vocational schools were turned into colleges of further education (FE). Going against the trend of decentralisation, this was a forced development as the department wanted more control over the sector. The FE colleges in Ireland are in different stages of development. The roles and responsibilities for the Irish education system, including vocational education, are separate from the vocational training system, which is the responsibility of the labour market authorities. There are three levels of administrative responsibility in the publicly funded VET sector and some organisations may operate at more than one level:

- government departments (ministries), which set policy and overall direction, including providing public funding for VET. The administration and implementation of government policy for IVET falls mainly within the remit of the Departments of Education and Science (DES) and of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE). The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland has the authority to validate FE programmes;
- intermediate organisations which may be involved in implementing government policy, channelling funds or acting as a provider of VET programmes, for example the 33 vocational education committees;
- VET provider bodies such as FÁS, the National Training and Employment Authority (Cedefop ReferNet Ireland, 2009).

The trend towards decentralisation in the Netherlands began many years ago and is still underway. Tasks and responsibilities are progressively being transferred to lower levels of government, to provinces and especially to municipalities, but also to social interest groups such as school associations and/or boards of governors. The central government still has a clear set of expectations of regional VET institutions, ROCs, especially regarding the scope of networking with partners, types of provision and target groups. ROCs have high levels of autonomy within a framework of general, statutory regulations. They are responsible for the organisation of teaching and learning, staff and budget with relatively little supervision from above. The annual budget is received as block grant funding (Cedefop ReferNet Netherlands, 2010). ROCs are free to decide how the budget is spent and are responsible for the quality of education provided. An inspectorate monitors the quality of VET providers in the Netherlands. Every ROC has an executive board that is formally responsible for the ROC's activities; this board is the employer of the Director of the ROC.

No single piece of legislation provides the basis for the legal framework for VET in the UK. The overall policy for vocational learning and skills is the responsibility of the Learning/Skills or Education Department of each national government in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Cedefop ReferNet United Kingdom, 2010). The funding, provision and management of learning opportunities within the learning and skills sector in each nation is delegated to a funding council which determines priorities and the allocation of funding, as well as overseeing data collection. The UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has the primary role for VET in further and higher education, which – in further education in the UK – also includes 16-19 (and some 14-19) provision. Legislation has given colleges in the FE sector independence from local authorities, allowing them to control their own budgets: a core aim is to move from a model where institutions respond to government priorities to one where they respond directly to the needs and demands of individual learners, parents and employers. One reason for this is the recognition that when potentially unlimited demand confronts limited public resource, the role of public funding must be clearly defined. In terms of governance and funding, arrangements have been changed to support government priorities, i.e. by merging or creating semi-independent agencies (e.g. for inspection and regulation of qualifications). The new performance assessment framework for colleges and providers in England (framework for excellence) helps to trace destinations of learners and improve courses and choice for learners. VET in the UK is now in a context where the sector is being expected to become increasingly self-regulating, in terms of being responsible for driving its own destiny (LSIS, 2011). Recent education legislation has transferred much authority to the school-governing body:

the principal has to cooperate with this body in all major decision-making processes. The boards have governors who are non-executive appointments (not part of the senior management team which manages the FE college), to ensure that the voice of the community influences VET.

Decentralisation in Bulgaria has been mostly in financial terms, of which the so-called 'delegated budgets' are the visualisation. Delegated budgets were introduced in 2009 to develop decentralised financial management of secondary education and to endorse the financial independence of schools. The approach also aims at achieving transparency with respect to allocation of funds. VET institutions are entitled to receive funds according to a certain formula. The funding formula is specific for each school (Cedefop ReferNet Bulgaria, 2010). This measure has created the conditions for increased autonomy of VET institutions. The freedom to redistribute finances according to the needs of the specific school may ensure good results but also highlights the need for good management. Bulgarian VET leaders see mostly advantages in decentralisation: more flexible reaction to labour market requirements (including more independence in applying the curricula in line with the needs of the students); increased quality; more effective use of resources; increased level of motivation in applying learning outcomes approaches; and more use of project and team work.

The Ministry of Education and Research has overall responsibility for all areas of education in Norway. The Education Act and the national curriculum are active national policy instruments; agreements between employers and employees are negotiated for the country as a whole. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training is the executive agency for the Ministry and has the overall responsibility for monitoring education and the governance of the education sector, as well as for implementing Acts of Parliament and regulations. The Local Government Act of 1992 paved the way for a high degree of self-governance on the part of the municipalities and county authorities. The development has shifted from several detailed laws for various levels and types of schools to more general and less specific provisions in an integrated body of legislation (OECD, 2007c). For instance, in the most recent reform in VET (2006) the curricula have become less detailed. This also applies to provisions that regulate the role and responsibility of school leaders. Most IVET schools in Norway are owned and run by the county authorities, with each deciding the powers to be delegated to the individual school. Such delegation affects both the content and the empowerment of the school leader role, which can vary to some extent among the 19 county authorities. The school leader positions were previously regulated through common instructions laid down by the government, whereas currently there is only the provision that states that there must

be an administrative and professional leader for each school. The scope and content of the tasks for all school leader positions are decided locally.

5.1.4. Output focus

In recent years European VET has seen a shift to measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of VET provision. This is partly in response to demands for better quality. Output standards and objectives are progressively used rather than input and process standards together. Financing is also being linked to results, with incentives for reaching set objectives. European countries are increasingly using internal and external evaluation of their VET systems to improve quality (Cedefop, 2010a).

VET funding or financing systems have in many countries been redesigned to become an instrument in reaching targets set, for instance by the Ministry of Education. Funds are linked to the institutions' performance on quality criteria, objectives and benchmarks. Since 2006 in Finland, about 2% of total funding allocated to upper secondary VET is based on measurable criteria, for example the number of students who complete their studies, who enter the labour market, and who transfer to other types of education. Such output-related funding can also be seen in a much stronger degree in the Danish taximeter system and in the Netherlands and the UK. The argument behind output-related funding is that it helps providers become more efficient by encouraging them to improve their policies and training services and to optimise the uses to which their revenue is put. Measures like training vouchers make it possible to finance training demand rather than training supply since learners can redeem vouchers in the institution of their choice. Training vouchers require a highly flexible system (for instance a shift to training modules, as well as guidance services) to help individuals define appropriate training paths (Cedefop, Descy, Tessaring, 2002; Cedefop, 2010a).

Although governments typically set objectives and allocate funding accordingly, they have usually decentralised the responsibility of developing measures to achieve the objectives. This responsibility may be devolved to regional/local governments or to the institutions themselves. However, many countries have instruments like national curricula that are used to steer VET, and governments may award extra funding for institutions that take part in specific projects or initiatives aiming at reaching national targets.

The current shift to learning outcomes (LO) also mirrors these trends. The adoption of an LO approach ensures that the focus shifts from input factors (e.g. number of hours to attend or pages to be read) to learning results. A focus on outcomes reveals the effectiveness, strengths and weaknesses of VET provision, and adoption usually calls for stronger measures to ensure better quality. LO-based

frameworks, standards, curricula, certification processes, assessment and teaching methods are now pursued by most European countries. Reform of VET standards and curricula is an area where implementing LO is most visible and can be seen in countries like Estonia, Lithuania, Hungary, the Netherlands and Slovakia. A recent study (Cedefop, 2010b) on curriculum reform in nine Member States (Germany, Ireland, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and the UK) documented how these countries are reforming VET curricula and introducing LO and competence-based approaches.

To increase the quality of VET provision, European countries have adopted quality assurance systems and promoted a culture of quality in the institutions. Countries that have had VET quality mechanisms for many years, such as the UK, tend to apply comprehensive approaches. Denmark has introduced indicator-based inspections, self-evaluation systems, quality benchmarks and promoted extensive networking among VET colleges. However, Denmark has had difficulties in finding the right balance between autonomy and quality assurance. Finding such a balance can, for example, raise difficulties about how much flexibility to give VET providers while needing to set central objectives, quality indicators and targets to maintain accountability for public money (Cedefop, 2010a).

Another challenge is illustrated by England's Common inspection framework for inspecting VET institutions, which could be regarded as either a form of support for raising standards and reform, or as a restraining factor on local responsiveness and innovation in the sector. Inspectors themselves are often faced with the difficult role of both criticising and supporting institutions. Performance monitoring and evaluation may foster innovation in some institutional settings and stifle it in others (Holmes, 2009).

The shift to focusing on outputs may also be non-VET specific, more associated with economic and societal changes like the ageing of the work force and the pressure on public budgets. Increasingly, the public sector in Europe is facing demands for transparency and accountability on how public funds are used. Some governments have responded to these demands by adopting management styles such as New public management (NPM) with implications for public services like education: greater focus on privatisation; the creation of an education market with greater competition; a shift from maintenance management to change management; cutting costs; a shift from input controls to output and outcome controls; devolution or decentralisation of authority and the introduction of new forms of governance structures (e.g. boards of governors or chief executives); detaching policy formulation from policy execution; and tighter performance specification. The UK is perhaps the best example of a country that has introduced NPM principles into the VET system (Tolofari, 2005).

The creation of an education market has broadened the range of options from which learners can select. The competition between schools to attract students can be seen in several European countries (for a Swedish example, see: Söderqvist, 2007 below; Lund, 2008; and Daun, 2010). To spread awareness of the quality of the individual institutions, countries like Norway publish results from performance tests (like national tests and PISA) in public media (newspapers and the internet). Björn Söderqvist describes how the Swedish education system has changed since the 1980s, when it was centrally steered:

'If the 1980s was a decade of rules and regulations with schools all over Sweden organised in almost the same way; the same class sizes, the same finances, the same number of pupils per teacher, and so on, the picture of the 1990s and this decade is totally different. Market forces have now been introduced in many municipalities and there is competition among the schools, both between the increasing number of private, or independent schools, and the community schools, and between the community schools in the same municipality. [...] [The schools in Sweden] now have to compete for pupils/vouchers and the finances of the schools are to a very large degree dependent on the number of pupils the school is able to recruit. Furthermore, the decentralised steering system that has replaced the old centralised educational system, together with the other innovations has to a large extent changed the educational sector of Sweden.' (Söderqvist, 2007, p. 3-4).

Some researchers (see for instance Daun, 2010) believe that these trends in governance are a result of globalisation and have their basis in economic policy. They claim that Member States are introducing these measures to improve national competitiveness and to meet the challenges of globalisation. The Lisbon process aimed to make the EU the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion (Council of the European Union, 2000). Education was seen as one of the principal instruments to reach this aim:

'education is restructured according to the requirements and demands of the economy (to make people and countries competitive). [...] A review of policy documents published by the big international governmental organizations shows that decentralization, privatization and choice are important elements in these models. [...] Globalization is changing the conditions for the traditional modes of state governing and intervention by restructuring national societies and education. With the comprehensive changes in education (e.g. networks, decentralization and introduction or reinforcement of market mechanisms in the public sector) during the past decades, the state leaves – either deliberately or as adaptation to globalization forces – to the market and civil forces to implement and administer educational issues.' (Daun, 2010, p. 118, 120).

Daun's views are reflected in the discussion on the creation of a European education policy space and how European and international organisations like the European Commission and OECD influence the governance of national education policy and strategies (Grek et al., 2009).

In 2006, the Estonian Ministry of Education amended the organisation of state supervision in vocational schools and launched compulsory internal evaluations aiming to support the creation of an internal quality assurance system in these institutions. The objective of the internal evaluation is to ensure student excellence and consistent development of the education institution. The methods for internal evaluation are chosen by the education institutions themselves. This constitutes an important change of approach: instead of regularly checking on education institutions, gathering information for making decisions on education policy, education institutions are guided to analyse their activities themselves. Like most European countries, Estonia is influenced by the shift to learning outcomes. A new curriculum with assessment practices based on learning outcomes is currently being developed, and teachers and trainers receive training in how to apply the new curriculum. Study programmes were previously based on earlier educational levels. Today the study programmes are designed to lead to EQF levels 3 and 4, and the focus is on the learning outcomes of the programmes. The introduction of state-financed study places and the new VET Financing Act also secure a shift in focus to an outcome-based approach.

Much is happening in Lithuanian VET in the shift to a learning outcomes philosophy. From 2010 a quality assurance system and modular study programmes based on the ECVET credit system and learning outcomes have been introduced. A large number of occupational standards and training standards are being developed on learning outcomes or competences. For many years VET institutions have been encouraged to make use of internal quality assurance systems. The first initiative in this direction was undertaken in 2000 with the drafting and publishing of the *Handbook for quality assurance in vocational schools* within the framework of PHARE VET reform programme. Since then a number of teacher training institutions have systematically organised training for school staff on this issue. An external quality assessment model was developed in 2003-05 as an outcome of the PHARE 2001 project *Framework of qualifications standards* and subsequently tested in vocational schools. Since the internal quality assurance system in Lithuanian VET institutions is still in development, supervision of training quality is important. The National Audit Office conducts selective examinations of training institutions which includes analysis of performance efficiency.

Finland does not have a system of standardised testing or test-based accountability. It does not have systems of competitive choice between schools or

list its schools in public performance rankings. There is no inspection body for schools in Finland and no plan for introducing it. The providers of education have a statutory duty to evaluate their own operations and participate in external evaluation. Their activities are steered through the national core curricula and objectives laid down in legislation. Feedback concerning the operations of the education system is collected by means of statistics and evaluations. A performance-based funding system was established in 2002 when education providers were granted separate state subsidies based on their performance. In 2006 this was expanded and integrated into the overall system of funding based on unit prices (Cedefop ReferNet Finland, 2010).

In the Czech Republic national and/or regional administration steer VET through legislation and other policy activities (strategies, action plans, etc.). Throughout the period 2009-12 the project Path to quality is creating a system to support of self-evaluation in VET organisations. A database containing examples of good practice in quality management will be established. Field consultants will be present at schools and the teachers will be able to contact call centres for advice. Consensus of all parties, including the founders of the schools, will determine the most appropriate way for the Czech School Inspectorate to deal with self-evaluation results.

In Malta the Qualification Council (MQC) started the development of the Maltese qualification framework. The MQC is also involved in Malta's system for VET linked to the NQF, quality assurance policy and level descriptors for key competences. These initiatives aim at ensuring that formal, informal and non-formal qualifications and skills are certified. The concept of quality in education provision is reflected in a number of policy documents. Standards setting and external quality assurance mechanisms for all levels and sectors of lifelong learning have been identified as some of the challenges in education, as well as a framework of national vocational qualifications. A number of policy and structural initiatives have been defined to improve quality management at the institutional level. All major institutions have quality charters that include a specific quality policy as well as recourse and consultation mechanisms for the specific body and its staff.

In Hungary the Strategy of VET development, adopted in 2005, set 2008 as a deadline for enabling all VET institutions to adopt a quality assurance model based on the Common quality assurance framework (CQAF). A CQAF-compatible model was worked out in the framework of the Vocational school development programme, and implemented in 2003-09. The so-called VET self-assessment model was successfully adopted in at least one quarter of the vocational schools participating. This model is unique, being the first self-assessment model indirectly built on the

EFQM excellence model and was developed with taking into account the tasks VET organisations perform and their specificities.

The introduction of the national quality assurance system in Slovakia is still pending, although increased employer involvement in monitoring quality, stipulated by the Act on VET, is a positive step. Nevertheless, there has been no national quality assurance scheme developed so far and IVET is still based on traditional quality assurance mechanisms focusing on inputs. Quality checking activities are dominantly aimed at assessing student educational performance. The first impulse to address quality management from an institutional perspective came from the Ministry of Education in 2009. It introduced obligatory annual reporting to the public and encouraged schools to declare mission statements and perform self-evaluation. Nevertheless, there is no strong accountability-inducing mechanism and no national policy on quality management (Cedefop ReferNet Slovakia, 2010). An ESF project, *External evaluation of school quality facilitating self-evaluation processes and school development* (2009) aims to support schools in self-evaluation, and improve current know-how in quality monitoring. Quality management is addressed extensively in the 2007-13 ESF operational programme education. However, in the 2004-06 ESF programming period, within which quality assurance was not seen a priority, some schools decided to adopt the quality management system and achieved the ISO norm 9001:2000 certificate. The ESF project Teacher training with regard to developing school educational programmes has been designed to improve the skills of curriculum designers at schools to reflect the new learning outcomes approach. Innovative pedagogy aimed at increasing motivation, critical thinking and creativity is envisaged.

The Danish Minister for Education supervises the self-governing VET institutions, together with the boards. The board maintains overall leadership of the institution and may delegate responsibilities to the principal. The annual programme for the work of the institution is established at the recommendation of the principal, and the budget approved. Since the 1980s, a shift has taken place from detailed regulation on input to regulation on output. The aim of output regulation is to increase focus on results and quality so that the practices of the institutions meet political objectives, and adaptation to the needs of the regional and local business sectors for competence development. A set of reforms has been adopted to make the system more transparent and attractive to students, and to make it more adaptable to the continuous labour market and social changes. The reforms have attempted to simplify the VET system to make it more coherent and to make it a more individually focused system tailored to both strong and weak learners. Reforms include:

- the 1991 reform introduced principles of decentralisation, management-by-objectives, semi-privatisation of colleges and free choice of colleges for students;
- the reform of commercial training programmes in 1996 introduced learning outcomes-based curricula and a higher degree of individualisation;
- the 2000 reform changed VET programmes by reducing the number of entry programmes, introducing a modularised structure in the basic programme, making provision more individualised and flexible and introducing new pedagogical principles, new teacher roles and new pedagogical tools;
- the 2003 amendments strengthened the individualisation and relevance of programmes. It also introduced the principle of assessment of prior learning and the creation of a number of short VET programmes;
- the 2007 reform gathered all IVET programmes under the same legislation. The reform introduced more structured basic programmes aimed at weaker students who have problems handling the highly individualised system, new basic programmes, increased possibilities for partial qualifications; also, the electronic education plan system was made compulsory (Cedefop ReferNet Denmark, 2010).

The present funding system for Danish VET was introduced following major reform in 1991. This introduced the taximeter principle in which VET providers are funded in accordance with the number of students entering and completing a VET programme. VET providers also receive an annual block grant for maintaining buildings and salaries. The reform introduced management-by-objectives as a means to improve the overall provision of VET. The funding system was introduced as part of a New public management (NPM) strategy to decentralise and make institutions compete on 'quasi markets.' Over the years, however, the budgetary room for the vocational colleges to manoeuvre has been restrained; the current trend seems to be towards greater centralisation as the Ministry of Education sets up more specific objectives, quality indicators and targets for the colleges.

The Netherlands has a new competence-based and objectives-led qualification structure for VET. This includes a description of competences for work, (further) learning and citizenship as central issues for preparing future employees for the requirements of modern society. This structure gives education institutions more freedom to adopt innovative pedagogical and didactical methods. Features of the modernisation are:

(a) focus on competence-based learning in multiple forms;
(b) more active forms of work, which call for greater levels of independence and self-regulation among VET participants;

(c)   the introduction of greater variety in practical learning, with emphasis on the practical applicability of knowledge: workplace learning, simulation companies, carrying out assignments for companies;

(d)   the development of longitudinal learning strands that transcend different types of vocational education;

(e)   the introduction of different forms of supporting participants: coaching, mentoring, career guidance;

(f)   the introduction of more varied means of assessment, including the simulation of an aptitude test.

ROCs make their own choices when it comes to the finer points of modernisation (Cedefop RefNet Netherlands, 2010).

Further education (FE) was traditionally regarded as the 'neglected middle child' of UK education, having low status resulting from its vocational focus. However, during the past decade, FE has expanded to become a significant economic and training driver for the modernisation of the learning and skills sector and the UK economy overall. The government-initiated *Leitch review* stressed the need for a more market-driven approach to the provision of FE (DfES, 2006a). A seminar hosted by the Learning and skills improvement service (LSIS) in 2009 concluded that England needed a model of shared regulation that recognised the legitimate strategic leadership role of the government in setting national priorities, but that it should step back from detailed prescription, that empowered citizens and customers should become more influential in shaping services and informing notions of quality, and that public sector professionals should be more empowered and effectively engaged as an essential source of expertise (LSIS, 2009).

LSIS was formed to accelerate quality improvement, increase participation and raise standards and achievement in the learning and skills sector in England. The Skills Funding Agency funds and regulates adult FE and skills training, working closely with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to allow rapid and effective response to policy, while reinforcing the autonomy of the FE sector. Funded colleges and other skills and training organisations have discretion over expenditure to meet the needs of local businesses and communities. Regional and local bodies advise on the provision of learning opportunities to meet local needs, within the overall national policy and funding arrangements, but individual colleges have considerable autonomy. The FE sector has undergone a major change in recent three years, introducing new quality measures to improve transparency and provide greater coherence of planning where decisions will be based on the quality and responsiveness of the provision. A series of government policy documents aim to:

- develop a network of colleges with the confidence, independence and autonomy to shape their own futures for the benefit of learners, employers and their local community;
- reduce bureaucracy by introducing a 'lighter touch' inspection regime, based on colleges' own assessment of their performance, and a more streamlined planning and funding system that increasingly allows colleges to become more focused on priorities.

In 2010 the FE, Skills and Lifelong Learning Minister lifted restrictions on how FE colleges operate. All colleges apart from poor performers will be able to move money between budgets to respond quickly to local demand. The government will work to remove the requirement for Ofsted inspections of colleges rated as outstanding, unless their performance drops. The government will remove the regulatory requirement for college principals to undertake the Principals qualifying programme, recognising the range of development opportunities and qualifications open to principals.

In Bulgaria, the national qualifications framework (NQF) is expected to be completed in the current year. The implementation of curricula and training programmes in vocational schools, vocational high schools and colleges is controlled by regional inspectorates. Vocational training in vocational training centres is monitored by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training. Assessment of outcomes and the organisation of examinations follow state requirements. A model of self-assessment, external and internal assessment, and criteria and indicators for assessing the outcomes of the vocational preparation in school-based VET have been introduced. Analysis of the results of the implementation of the quality assurance system elements introduced in VET is pending. Vocational training centres build their own quality systems in accordance with the licensing procedure (Cedefop ReferNet Bulgaria, 2010). In Bulgaria the leading term for learning outcomes is occupational standards; these should correspond to state requirements for the occupation. The state requirements are described or are in the process of formulation in the form of LO: what one should know and is able to do as a result of one's training for a specific profession. State requirements have not yet all been elaborated and made official by the ministry, consequently the LO approach is still not operational. Bulgaria has a generally unfavourable social, cultural and economic environment, which hampers the introduction of LO and quality assurance systems.

Norwegian VET schools are owned by the counties, which are bureaucratic organisations with national regulations on the rights of the individual students, quality assurance and learning outcomes. There is cooperation between school owners and the individual VET institutions on LO, CPD, leadership, budgeting and

accounting, health and safety and other topics. Systematic quality assurance, in the form of reporting and analysis, aim to increase the LO of the individual student. Some counties have developed a strategic system for management by objectives, in line with the recommendations in a White Paper of 1991 on New public management and the modernisation of the public sector. The trend is now to focus on student LO and introduce quality assurance mechanisms to ensure a greater degree of transparency. A new national curriculum has been created and the different subject syllabuses have been simplified and clarified to express clear learning targets. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training has the responsibility for the national curriculum, assessment/examinations and supervision/control, and for the development of VET. The increased emphasis on basic skills and knowledge, greater diversity of working methods and organisation, and training that is better adapted to the individual student are essential elements in the new curricula (OECD, 2007c).

5.1.5. Sharing power with social partners

VET has a fragmented structure, shared responsibilities, extensive mission and large and diverse target group which all make it difficult to manage. Compared to general education, VET is a complex territory. General education is usually the responsibility of a single ministry while responsibility for VET is often divided between the ministries for education, employment and economic affairs, as well as regional governments and social partners (Cedefop, 2010a).

There are great differences between the Member States in how they involve the social partners. Germany, Austria and the Scandinavian countries have formalised systems of social partnership with employer and employee organisations, while others have informal voluntary partnership systems (as in the UK, where the union roles are limited and non-statutory). There is a discernable trend towards devolving more power to the social partners in a number of countries, not least as a way of encouraging employers to invest more in training (Cedefop, Descy, Tessaring, 2002).

VET has a long tradition of involving labour market actors through councils, committees, projects and agreements at national, regional and sector levels, to develop VET strategy and curricula. However, even countries with such a tradition have recently given greater impetus to these relationships. Others have sought to develop the capacity of the labour market to play a greater role in VET development. These partnerships play a key role in ensuring the relevance of VET curricula to labour market needs and are increasingly found at different levels: European, national, regional and sectoral. Integrating changing skill needs into VET provision means being more proactive. It is necessary to get a better grasp of emerging

sectors and skills, and changes in existing occupations. This requires improved systems and methods to anticipate skills in partnership with all labour market actors (Cedefop, 2010a).

In Estonia the number of actors involved in local decisions on VET has increased. Social partner participation is regulated by national legislation and by their own charters, action plans and agreements with other stakeholders. Employers play a more active and influential role through their participation in professional councils, creating professional standards. The councils develop qualification requirements and vocational standards, which are used as the basic reference in curricula development at educational institutions. At local level, social partners participate in school boards (established under the amendments to the Vocational Educational Institutions Act, in 2006) (Cedefop ReferNet Estonia, 2010).

In Lithuania, representatives of state and municipal institutions, and employer, business and employee organisations are members of the Vocational Education and Training Council functioning as an advisory body for the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and governmental agencies in making decisions regarding strategic questions in VET. The final qualification assessment is delegated to social partners. The county VET councils play a regional advisory role; they provide conclusions on VET development and quality, assess VET providers' applications for funding, and analyse need for VET programmes. At the sectoral level industry legal bodies are the main consultative bodies of the MES in developing VET standards and curricula. Cooperation at institutional level is especially encouraged: employers take part in defining training needs and preparing particular training programmes, and they also participate in managing VET by being members of schools councils and boards. The self-governance bodies within schools (teachers' council and school council) address school activity and funding; they also exercise influence on the decisions and resolutions taken by the head of the school (Cedefop ReferNet Lithuania, 2010).

Cooperation between the education sector and the world of work has been strengthened in Finland since the late 1990s. The labour market is actively involved in developing the structure, qualifications and curricula. One of the platforms for national cooperation is the Council for Lifelong Learning. The national core curricula are drawn up by the Finnish National Board of Education in cooperation with employer organisations, trade unions, the Trade Union of Education and student unions. They are dealt with by National Education and Training Committees, which are tripartite bodies established for each occupational field to plan and develop VET. Local tripartite bodies and other representatives of the world of work take part in the curriculum work as advisers and consultants. Local curricula are approved by the boards of education providers (Cedefop ReferNet Finland, 2010).

The role of social partners in the Czech Republic has been strengthened by the new School Act, stipulating the obligation of social partners to participate in negotiations on the national curricula. The partners – mainly representatives of employers – are actively involved in all processes starting with setting the qualification requirements of occupations and defining the qualifications, via development and implementation of curricula up to verification and validation of continuing education and learning outcomes. Further cooperation with social partners is being developed. Cooperation between education institutions and labour market actors is dependent on the activities and involvement of the individual education institution.

In Malta the social partners are consulted on their respective education and training needs. Their ideas and suggestions are welcome but developing curricula, teaching and training methods and the provision of the appropriate certification are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

Sectoral interests are rarely feature in Hungarian VET, mainly because VET policy has given preference to local economic chambers instead of sectoral professional organisations. The basic institutions of social partnership have gradually evolved since the beginning of the 1990s and relevant parties now have a stable position. Since the 2007 legal amendment these stakeholders have had a decisive role in shaping regional VET policies. They are the majority in the Regional Development and Training Committees (*Regionális Fejlesztési és Képzési Bizottság*, RFKB) which have been assigned important decision-making rights on top of their previous functions of recommendation and review. The most important new task of the committees was to draft mid-term regional VET development plans. From 2006 on, the committees were entitled to determine which vocations classify as shortage occupations, with special financial advantages training accorded providers and students entitled to additional allowance. The composition, tasks and entitlements of the committees were again changed in 2007: the aim has been to expand the scope of RFKBs, improve their status and strengthen their role in communicating the demands of the labour market.

Although social partners in Slovakia could have participated in decision-making processes in curriculum development, education standards establishment and in qualification exams, their role in IVET has primarily been that of advisors to the state administration. The Economic and Social Council of the Slovak Republic is a consulting and concerting body that discusses all policy papers and legislation but has little influence on IVET delivery. The new governance architecture (2009) creates more space for social partners to influence IVET. A representative of the trade unions is one of the vice-presidents of the newly established National VET Council (Cedefop ReferNet Slovakia, 2010).

In Denmark social partners are active contributors to legislative reform of both initial and continuing vocational training and contribute to implementing the consequent amendments. The social partners play an institutionalised role at all levels of VET, from the National Advisory Council on Initial Vocational Education and Training, advising the Minister for Education on principal matters concerning VET, to the local training committees advising the colleges its local adaptation. The influence of social partners has grown since recent reforms which have led to fewer advisory bodies. The trade committees of industry representatives are the backbone of the VET system, with a central role in the creation and renewal of VET courses and a dominant position in the formulation of curricula (Cedefop ReferNet Denmark, 2010).

Over the past two decades a system of national partnership agreements has been in place in Ireland, involving the government and the social partners. Every three years these partners agree on a national programme for social and economic development which also includes VET policies. The current programme *Towards 2016* runs from 2006-16. The social partners are represented on the Boards of FÁS, Fáilte Ireland and Teagasc, and have a representative role on the awarding bodies, the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), established under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act. They also have a consultative role in allocating funds for training schemes and programmes under the employer-levied National Training Fund. The Vocational Education (Amendment) Act (2001) broadened the representative element of the regionally-based vocational education committees (VECs) to include public representatives, parents, teachers, local businesses and a requirement for the VECs to adopt education plans (Cedefop ReferNet Ireland, 2009).

The UK government has encouraged and invested in forming different partnerships with representatives of various stakeholders. The creation of the sector skills councils and their umbrella organisation, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), is seen as the formation of a strategic partnership of major stakeholders, to strengthen the employers' voice and ensure that vocational qualifications meet their needs. There has also been progress in recognising the positive role of trade unions in helping to deliver the government's skills strategy. Legislation in 2002 gave statutory recognition to the union learning representatives and in 2006 Unionlearn was set up as a coherent framework within the Trades Union Congress (TUC) to support workplace learning activities ([13]). Most social

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([13]) Cedefop thematic review: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Information-services/detailed-thematic-analyses.aspx [cited 25.8.2011].

partnership agreements have an advisory function. The link between training, access to a job, salary level and progression is less clearly defined or regulated in the UK than in countries where a social partnership approach structures these arrangements.

In Bulgaria the social partners are involved in the external assessment process during state examinations for acquiring qualification in a profession. The employment committees at the regional development councils of the regions assist in the implementation of the national employment policy and its coordination in terms of national and local interests. The employment committees have social partnerships at regional level, which are of crucial importance. With few exceptions, local level social dialogue on continuing vocational training is not very effective (Cedefop ReferNet Bulgaria, 2010). Most Bulgarian VET leaders enjoy a good and serious partnership with trade unions and employer organisations but cooperation with companies is weaker, reflected in the rather limited employment rate of VET graduates in local companies. VET institutions experience a certain degree of unwillingness on the companies' part to be included in the work of VET schools and in common projects. There may be debate and growing understanding of common targets, but less support or partnerships. Some VET leaders acknowledge that when businesses perform better, there will be stronger support. Where cooperation exists, it takes the forms of support of the VET school infrastructure, cooperation on apprenticeships and participation in exams, participation in school boards and the schools' centre for career development. In most cases these partnership are a result of the private contacts of the director.

Social partners play an extensive part in Norwegian VET. Active unions are important in the institutions, representing employees in the negotiations with the leaders, contributing to a form of institutionalised trust. Most amendments to Norwegian legislation are processed by a committee set up by the government and circulated for review to the various interest organisations affected before the government submits the draft legislation for Parliament. The teachers' and school leaders' unions appoint members and representatives to committees that address such matters and are given the opportunity to express their opinions on relevant legislative amendments (OECD, 2007c). According to the legal framework the social partners have representatives, most often the majority, in all important advisory bodies at national and county level: The National Council for Vocational Education and Training, nine vocational training councils; the county vocational training board in each county; the trade-specific examination boards in each county; and the national appeals boards. Through this representation, the social partners are directly involved in advising on the framework of the national structure of VET, the development of national curricula, the regional structure and volume of VET

provision, and the framework of examinations leading to trade or journeyman's certificate. Many enterprises enter contractual agreements with VET offices at the regional county councils about the provision of practical training for apprentices ([14]).

5.2.   European VET governance trends and VET leadership

On the basis of the findings from the OECD activity *Improving school leadership* Deborah Nusche claims that the role of school leaders (including VET leaders) has changed dramatically in recent years. The increase in school autonomy has made leadership more similar to running a business, with greater emphasis on human and resource management. New demands on accountability of outcomes have created a new culture for evaluation, and strategic planning, assessment and monitoring have become more important. Data are produced and used as a basis for improvement. There is also a shift to a learning-centred pedagogical leadership in which new approaches to teaching and learning are adopted, with local adaptation of curricula. Leaders are in the process of supporting collaborative approaches, raising the level of achievement and managing greater diversity. Nusche maintains that school leaders are experiencing an increase in workload, and that many leaders accumulate too much responsibility. She also points to the fact that many school leaders lack sufficient training and preparation for the job (Nusche, 2009). The OECD also emphasises that aspects such as governance and management structures, amount of autonomy afforded, accountability prescriptions, school size and complexity, and levels of student performance can shape school leadership. In the activity *Improving school leadership* the OECD proposes a set of school leadership roles that are crucial to improving teaching and learning. There is 'a set of core responsibilities which lead effective school leadership:
- supporting, evaluating and developing teacher quality;
- goal setting, assessment and accountability;
- strategic resource management;
- leadership beyond the school borders' (OECD, Pont et al., 2008, p. 256).

    The decentralisation of authority and the increase in local autonomy may ensure more power, responsibility and higher esteem among VET leaders. Autonomy may lead to more flexibility and give more room for experimenting with new approaches to education and training. More budgetary independence may

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([14]) Cedefop thematic review: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Information-services/detailed-thematic-analyses.aspx [cited 25.8.2011].

result in a higher level of responsibility, as the leaders become more aware of the costs and benefits of their decisions. In this time of reform, VET needs visible, courageous leadership. To succeed in VET, European leadership needs to build a shared identity and visions for the future, and links between the internal world of VET and the external world of the labour market, national and international actors, and the local community. Bulgarian VET leaders, for instance, claim that decentralisation and increased autonomy are necessary measures for leaders to develop and execute their leadership visions. This view is supported by Danish VET experts, who also maintain that self-governing VET institutions are a necessary instrument in reaching VET quality targets. Budgetary independence underlines the power of VET leaders in making priorities to reach their visions.

There are large differences between the countries in the level and scope of decentralisation and autonomy. However, within individual countries it is also possible to detect parallel policies or strategies. In Denmark, which has given VET institutions full autonomy, the Ministry of Education still retains much steering power over certain areas, like early school leaving initiatives.

The leadership discourse in VET is currently influenced by management theory from non-education fields. In some countries there is tension regarding the way school leadership is being conceptualised (OECD, 2007c). The introduction of public administration management reforms has seen an increased focus on approaches such as New public management. The shift to more businesslike management structures has also had an impact on school leadership. In some countries, VET leaders' salary is based on their performance. According to the Danish Ministry of Education, the objectives linked to performance-based salaries are:

- to support dialogue between the school owner and leader on the formulation of essential short- and long-term targets;
- transparency and visibility in relation to the institution's targets and objectives;
- to be a lever for the leader when prioritising;
- to support centrally given education targets ([15]).

In many countries VET leaders have a work contract with a description of the concrete objectives on which the leader is expected to focus. Such contracts may be permanent or temporary (fixed-term). Countries like Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK have temporary contracts. VET directors in Hungary usually have five-year contracts that can be extended to 10 years. By the end of the period they are expected to be evaluated using a leader evaluation model; there are few data on this model in practice. By law the leader is supposed to hand in a compulsory

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([15]) See:
http://www.uvm.dk/For%20institutioner/Loen%20og%20ansaettelse/Loen/Resultatloen.aspx [in Danish only].

evaluation report every year, but only the largest institutions seem to demand this. In Slovakia the VET directors are appointed for a fixed term; a new selection process is obligatory every five years. In Malta most leaders have a contract with a job description and set objectives. There are no fixed-term leader contracts for VET leaders in Ireland, only general contracts with wide expectations (traditional model). According to the Norwegian Education Act, VET leaders may have fixed-term contracts; however, most do not. The Finnish Ministry of Education does not advocate the use of leader contracts, but sometimes the school boards use them. However, the school boards or the VET schools usually have targets for the institution to meet. There are also national targets, e.g. on the number of drop-outs, which are valid for a five-year period. Within the countries there may be regional differences: VET schools in the county of Oslo in Norway have temporary leadership contracts while Estonia has shifted the policy regarding this issue back and forth and would like to introduce it again.

Intensive legal activity concerning VET leaders in Estonia in the last few years may be due to shifting governments. In 2008, the Vocational Educational Institutions Act was amended and the requirement for fixed-term employment contracts for directors of education institutions that had been in force since 2003 was abolished. The reason was a concern that with fixed-term contracts with management objectives directors may become political instruments for the Ministry or local governments. In 2009, a new Employment Contracts Act was approved. The Ministry of Education is discussing a reintroduction of fixed-term contracts in 2012.

Mergers into larger institutions with a range of target groups and responsibilities have had a great impact on VET leadership. The size and complexity of these institutions pose great challenges to structural and organisational management. Most VET leaders have to face these challenges by reserving larger parts of the working hours for administrative work tasks, reducing the number of hours used on pedagogical leadership and exploring various forms of delegation and shared decision-making. As a result of the size and increase in administrative tasks, some teachers report a problem with an increasing power gap. When leaders and top management are busy with strategy and financial issues, they have little time to invest in day-to-day leadership.

The broadening focus of VET institutions has also increased cooperation with the labour market and strengthened the community approach with the inclusion of new target groups. In the Netherlands, the ROCs need to negotiate with a wide range of partners in the region. This has major consequences for leaders; the principal must be much more outward-looking than before. It is necessary to work with enterprises, government departments, local government and other organisations across the region, and a great deal of time and effort goes into

maintaining these relationships and balancing the interests of competing parties. This is seen as a semi-political role, which it is necessary to undertake in order to ensure that the ROC can fulfil its legal requirements. The director responsible for the ROC's adult education programme, including basic education and Dutch language classes for immigrants (an important part of provision) now has to work more closely with local government. Whereas funding for these programmes was formerly channelled through the colleges, now the municipalities contract it to providers. An important role for the VET leader is to negotiate a programme that the municipalities will buy. Marketing, consultancy and sales are consequently on the increase in VET institutions, resulting in leadership tasks related to reputation and financial issues.

The increasing importance of quality development in VET has, in many countries, resulted in more stringent focus on accountability. Extensive quality assurance systems have been introduced and, with them, increased documentation and administration, planning, evaluation and reporting. VET leaders need to report on the objectives set for the institution, in regard to the use of budget, learning results on national tests and exams, and early school leaving. They also need to develop or take part in self-evaluation of their institutions. In countries that have implemented European quality assurance reference framework, the indicators to report on include share of teachers and trainers taking part in CPD and the costs invested, number of students and their characteristics, completion rate of VET programmes, and percentage and success rate of disadvantaged groups ([16]). The increased competition for students has also had an impact on the work tasks of VET leaders. In the UK there has been intense competition among schools for the last two decades; a good reputation for the individual institution is important to attract students. Ranking by exam results has consequently become extremely important for VET leaders since their institutions' income is dependent on it.

The shift to output-based financing and LO approaches, and the corresponding demand for transparency and accountability, have in some countries led to a break with the 'culture of trust' that previously existed between education institutions and the community or government. The results from PISA and other national and international testing measures showed that many students lacked key competences, even after many years of schooling. This discovery contributed to breaking the traditional authority of schools, teachers and school leaders. In several countries the publication of school performance results is seen as the foundation for the community's right to exercise their individual choice in selecting the appropriate learning provision. However,

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([16]) For more information, see http://www.eqavet.eu/gns/policy-context/overview.aspx [cited 24.8.2011].

'in the UK many educationalists claim that these 'ranking lists' have had an unfortunate influence on public perceptions. Certainly, the consequences for the individual school, as well as for the individual pupil, are often negative, and it is clear that the construction of the tables favours schools that are already advantaged. Less successful schools have to fight against the following vicious circle: bad reputation, worsening school atmosphere, decreasing identification of the pupils with their school, decreasing number of pupils, reduction of resources, decreasing job satisfaction and motivation among staff, lack of applications of well-qualified teachers for this school, worse quality of lessons, decreasing pupil achievement, worse results in the league tables. Different studies show that most head teachers disapproved of the great competitive pressure open enrolment and league tables had produced, and considered the strong market orientation as educationally misconceived, even harmful.' (OECD, Pont et al., 2008, p. 115).

However, some countries choose other approaches. Finland does not have a system of standardised testing or test-based accountability. There are no public performance ranking lists and the schools are not supposed to compete with one another. Finland has no inspection body for schools. Instead, Finnish VET leaders and the Ministry of Education are involved in a continuous dialogue where trust plays a large role. The Ministry does not consider it its role as controlling the VET institutions, but working together with them to develop relevant targets and supporting them in executing VET policy. Even when a VET school obviously fails in its performance, the Ministry assumes a supporting role.

One argument behind the new accountability and management measures is that clear goals and objectives increase the commitment of the staff working in VET institutions. They make it easier to focus and make priorities between a number of good causes, and to develop strategies closely connected to the set objectives. The above quote from UK experts shows, however, that using accountability as an instrument in quality assurance only takes the process half-way: revealing the weaknesses and strengths of VET institutions. Documenting performance levels must be followed up by investment in staff skills development, better equipment, and other measures to increase the quality of provision. VET leaders need to document their institutions' standing and performance, but the main challenges lie in the subsequent work on how to change the organisation to improve quality. Several VET experts point out that there is a lack of resources to develop the quality that the accountability systems have revealed as lacking.

The shift to LO-based curricula has important implications for leadership in VET. The learning outcomes approach changes the content, assessment, teaching methods and learning conditions in a VET institution, and requires changes in attitudes of teachers and trainers and in the traditional culture of the institution (Cedefop, 2010a). To ensure successful implementation of reforms and develop the

quality of VET provision, teachers and trainers need continuing professional development (CPD) and commitment to the changes. Leaders need to support their staff in developing their professional identity and in handling the increasingly diverse student groups. VET leaders need to ensure that funds and time are allocated to CPD, and to organisational processes aimed at developing commitment and motivation for change. In some countries, for example Denmark, principals can award bonuses to teachers who reach their objectives but most have few opportunities to stimulate their teachers in this manner.

European policy documents indicate that strong and visible leadership is needed to transform schools into learning organisations. In 2008 the Norwegian government published a White Paper on school quality, with a chapter on school management (Det kongelige utdannings- og forskningsdepartement, 2008). The paper states that the school leader and the leadership team are important to student learning outcomes because of their duties in formulating common objectives and motivating for a common effort to reach and assess these objectives. The paper underlines the fact that the current reforms, trends and developments require a new leadership role. However, several researchers point out that the scope of administrative work has been intensified as a result of management by objectives and decentralisation. There are those who claim that this is diametrically opposed to the intention of placing greater emphasis on pedagogical leadership (OECD, 2007c).

This chapter has demonstrated that the current trends in VET governance and reforms have increased and changed the work tasks and roles of VET leaders. In many countries the role of principals as pedagogical leaders has diminished due to lack of time and increased administrative work pressure. Recently, many institutions have dealt with work pressure by delegating leadership to middle management or leadership teams. Division of labour and delegation of authority are typical characteristics of the new forms of learning organisations developing in many countries in Europe. A prerequisite for developing a dynamic learning organisation is the ability of leaders to transform the individual learning of teachers and trainers into opportunities for organisational development. To achieve this there is a need for each member of staff to share the professional identity of the institution and feel empowered by the common learning environment. Principals must not only be managers but also leaders of the school as a learning organisation. They must interact with their staff to create a productive, cohesive learning community (OECD, Pont et al., 2008).

Recognising and managing competence are success factors in networked and learning organisations, and feedback and shared reflection on the learning process and achievements support professional development among employees. As

important is the need for VET leaders to acknowledge CPD as a strategic factor in producing quality VET provision. To manage a group of professionals like teachers involves encouragement and support as well as the policy of leaving room for their individual development and visions.

This chapter has also demonstrated that some countries are less affected by the current trends in governance. Finland is a good example of a country that implements VET reform and policy based on an alternative approach. Finnish VET leaders may, for instance, continue teaching in addition to their leadership tasks. According to the OECD, this gives them credibility among their staff, enables them to remain connected to their students, and ensures that pedagogical leadership is not merely rhetoric but a day-to-day reality. Finnish principals and government officials have ensured a moderate number, pace and range of reforms so that schools can concentrate on the work at hand, and they practice distributed leadership. The OECD finds that learning, rather than measured performance, defines the focus and form of leadership in Finnish education. Improvement of schools is achieved by processes of self-evaluation. In this respect,

'one of Finland's lessons for other nations may be that successful or sustainable educational reform comes with widespread social and economic reform. Leadership currently contributes to Finnish high performance not by concentrating on measurable performance outcomes, but by paying attention to the conditions, processes and goals that produce high performance. These include a common mission; a broad but unobtrusive steering system; strong municipal leadership with lots of local investment in curriculum and educational development; teachers who already are qualified and capable at the point of entry; informal co-operation and distributed leadership; principals who stay close to the classroom, their colleagues, and the culture of teaching; and (from the principal's standpoint) being first among a society of equals in the practice of school-based improvement.' (OECD, Pont et al., 2008, p. 92-93).

5.3. Governance as influence on VET leader knowledge, competences and skills

Current reforms and changes in governance have increased the number and scope of leadership activities, and VET leaders face higher expectations from their staff, their owners and the community than previously. This development has greatly influenced their skills requirements. However, it is also possible to see a more fundamental role change among VET leaders. This issue has previously been explored by Cedefop and the TTnet and resulted in a *Competence framework for VET professions* where VET leader activities are identified and linked to required competences and skills. The framework recognises that

'the ideology of leadership in education and training has changed [...] there is a clear shift from the ideology of the captain steering a ship towards one of shared expertise and leadership. The new ideology of leadership means management that empowers people. It is not possible to anticipate all changes anymore, and thus, people have to be able to act independently in different situations for which they must be empowered. Principals and directors with a leadership orientation have a personal and active role in dealing with concerns and situations. They ought to be visionaries, encouragers and innovators.' (Cedefop, Volmari et al., 2009, p. 40).

Research supported by NCVER in Australia supports this argument. The overarching challenge for leaders in VET today is to get staff to cope with change and the increasing complexity of the work environment, give a sense of direction, set an appealing vision, convince colleagues about the need for change, and reward them when the changes occur (NCVER, Callan et al., 2007). Leadership is also needed to plan and implement changes. To be able to promote change, VET leaders need to be focused on developing a range of services and products, have intimate knowledge of the businesses they serve, and develop models that respond to the individual needs of the learners. Participative and collaborative models of leadership are crucial to find the potential in the organisation. These views fit nicely with one of the conclusions from the *Competence framework for VET professions*:

'It is quite certain that no one person can have all the competences to fulfil what is required from a leader in education and training. Instead a new type of leadership is required. We talk about distributed and empowering leadership when the whole organisation takes responsibility for the different parts of the organisation. In learning organisations the core competence and expertise residing in the organisation must be lead and nurtured. The [...] increased responsibilities of the leaders have created the need for distributed leadership within and in between schools. The authority to lead should not be limited to one person but distributed to persons with different roles. Therefore leadership should be delegated more to the middle management and set up leadership teams.' (Cedefop, Volmari et al., 2009, p. 41).

To help VET leaders delegate work responsibilities, Bennis and Nanus' discussion on the definition of leadership versus management may be helpful: Leaders focus on external forces that affect operations and the future, like the labour market, networks, clients and customers, and legislative changes. Managers focus on internal functions, administration, and systems that control the organisation (Bennis and Nanus, 1985). A leader who tries to encompass and execute both functions may fail in both, experiencing cynicism from staff looking for a visionary leader and frustration from those expecting an administrator.

The Finnish ReferNet report on leadership research in VET reports on research claiming that VET is in a situation where there are no clear boundaries defining the

leader's work. This situation substantially affects their well-being. Due to unclear job descriptions, leaders are overburdened and many experience a blurring of working time and free time. One solution could be that qualifications and the training for VET leaders could be more targeted and specified. Finnish research also demonstrates that school leadership is often understood as being a semi-profession, as the job profile often includes teaching duties. Professionalisation means that there should be proper and specific training as well as ethical norms (Cedefop ReferNet Finland, 2009). In order to increase the professionalisation of VET leaders, The Finnish researcher Karikoski recommends that:

(a) routine administrative work should be centralised to local administration; more resources for secretarial work should be made available at schools;

(b) there should be more support from local education authorities;

(c) leaders' roles and duties should be clarified;

(d) leaders should be free from teaching duties;

(e) more resources should be allocated to distribute leadership effectively;

(f) regional networking should be encouraged;

(g) more info for schools on their performance should be made available to support pedagogical leadership and strategic planning (Karikoski, 2009).

The Council conclusions on the professional development of teachers and school leaders call for a definition of required profiles of prospective school leaders and a review of responsibilities. The Council identifies mobility, collaborative learning with other leaders and international networking as beneficial to professional development. The Council also invites Member States to ensure high quality provision to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to provide effective school leadership. The Council recognises that

'the knowledge, skills and commitment of teachers, as well as the quality of school leadership, are the most important factors in achieving high quality educational outcomes [and that] effective school leadership is a major factor in shaping the overall teaching and learning environment, raising aspirations and providing support for pupils, parents and staff, and thus in fostering higher achievement levels. It is therefore of key importance to ensure that school leaders have, or are able to develop, the capacities and qualities needed to assume the increasing number of tasks with which they are confronted. Equally important is ensuring that school leaders are not overburdened with administrative tasks and concentrate on essential matters, such as the quality of learning, the curriculum, pedagogical issues and staff performance, motivation and development. [...] Given the considerable impact which school leaders have on the overall learning environment, including staff motivation, morale and performance, teaching practices and the attitudes and aspirations of pupils and parents alike, there is a need to ensure that school leaders have sufficient opportunities to develop and maintain effective leadership skills.' (Council of the European Union, 2009, p. 8, 10).

In their activity *Improving school leadership* the OECD supports the need for continuous professional development among school leaders. The activity demonstrates that there is significant cooperation and networking between school leaders today, and that many countries have established school leadership initiatives and competence development programmes to prepare school leaders better for their complex tasks and responsibilities. However, they warn that school leaders' inadequate competence and lack of experience in change management and organisational development may hinder substantial change in the education and training sector (OECD, 2007d). Consequently, policy-makers may support leadership development by:

(a) encouraging initial leadership training, voluntary or mandatory. Establish national programmes, collaborate with local government and develop incentives for participation;

(b) organising induction programmes to prepare and shape initial school leadership practices, and provide vital networks for principals to share concerns and explore challenges;

(c) ensuring in-service training that is set in the context of prior learning opportunities for school leadership. In-service training should also be offered periodically to principals and leadership teams so they can update their skills and keep up with new developments;

(d) ensuring consistency of provision of school leadership training (clear standards and a focus on quality);

(e) ensuring appropriate variety for effective training provision with curricular coherence, experience in real contexts, mentoring, coaching, peer learning and structures for collaborative activity between the programme and schools (OECD, 2008).

Based on the particular challenges of VET, it may be necessary to develop leadership development programmes that are specifically created for leaders in VET. Many countries train their school leaders using the same programmes for leaders in general education and VET, or they have no specific requirements for leadership training (to accommodate prospective leaders from outside the education sector). However, some countries have developed such specifically adapted leadership programmes. An example of such a programme is the UK leadership programme for leaders in the FE sector. The Principals qualifying programme is for principals, chief executives and senior leaders in the FE sector, including general, specialist and sixth form colleges, adult and community learning and work-based learning providers. The emphasis of the programme is on exploring real leadership practice, with participants encouraged to reflect on their leadership style and the impact of their leadership on their institutions, and as part of the leadership of FE as

a 'whole system.' Part of the programme's intention is to professionalise the FE sector and enhance the standing of the role of principal. The overall framework is designed to:

(a) build on current experience, skills and knowledge to improve leadership capacity;

(b) develop excellence in leadership as a key driver to raise standards and performance, and respond to the diverse needs of employers and learners;

(c) develop a systematic approach to strategic leadership challenges in the sector with greater awareness of the critical factors that determine organisational capability and success;

(d) extend personal and professional commitment to inclusion and diversity management and the promotion of equality of opportunity;

(e) increase the understanding of how to work more effectively in collaborative and lateral relationships;

(f) create a community of leadership practice which is in a continuous dialogue about leadership thinking and practice (LSIS, 2009).

There are large differences between VET leaders in the various Member States in how they are affected by the new trends and reforms. There are also national differences in the qualification requirements for VET leaders (see Chapter 3) and in the level of support they receive in their leadership duties. The small size of Estonia, for instance, makes it easy for the government to offer support to VET directors. There are 30 state-owned VET institutions in the country and the head of the VET Department in the Ministry of Education knows all directors personally. This is also the case in Slovenia, among the staff at the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training who are responsible for overall development in VET. Bulgarian VET leaders, in contrast, see current demands as tough, and call for more extensive training of directors and teachers. They maintain that communication between VET institutions and the ministry is predominantly administrative and not supportive, and that bureaucracy is a burden.

In England, the Learning and Skills Service (LSIS) is dedicated to working with all parts of the skills sector to build and sustain self-improvement. They host invitation-only seminars for leaders in the FE and skills sector to examine and discuss policy developments. The LSIS web pages contain links to discussion reports and support materials that help colleges and providers implement initiatives and improve quality. This is achieved by commissioning products and services, identifying and sharing good practice throughout the system, and providing tailored programmes of support. Such government agencies or directorates can be found in many countries.

The PricewaterhouseCoopers report on how Norwegian school owners may become successful maintains that the increasing demands for better student learning outcomes have resulted in growing expectations of school owner or maintainer expertise and role execution. In their report PwC makes a case for developing a system where the steering dialogue between owner/maintainer and school, on content, results and methods, has a potential of becoming the strongest drive for quality improvement, staff development and the creation of learning organisations. They conclude that:

- there is a need for more visible school ownership;
- there is a need for increased knowledge management of schools;
- there is a need for policy-makers with ambitions, passion and competence;
- there is a need for administrative competence, capacity and ability to translate visions and objectives into practice;
- there is a need for increased professional identity and responsibility among school leaders and teachers (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2009).

In conclusion, it seems fair to say that leadership in VET is firmly connected to the governance of the sector and the mode, scope and speed at which reforms and policies are implemented. There is, however, a lack of theoretical or empirical knowledge in this rapidly evolving field. There is a need to devote more resources to strengthening analytical research, and to monitoring and evaluation capacity, especially in a European perspective since leadership roles, styles, competences and tasks reflect the variety of VET contexts in Europe. More attention should also be given to the processes through which actual transformations take place (Holmes, 2009). Understanding how VET institutions are changing is important for policy-makers at all levels. The next chapter offers suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER 6
Suggestions for further study and/or policy development

The previous chapters have served as an introduction to the topic of leadership in VET. Due to lack of research and policy initiatives specifically relevant to VET leadership, this working paper has refrained from offering any concrete proposals or recommendations on this issue. Documentation on VET leadership is of such fragmented nature that few conclusions can be made.

Below the reader will find a brief list of policy or research areas that need to be explored further. The list is far from exhaustive:

(a) extensive literature review (especially from the Member States) on research on VET leadership;

(b) do current reforms, changes, innovation and trends in the VET landscape influence VET leadership? Chapter 5 of this working paper gives a brief and inconclusive overview of some of the factors that may influence VET leadership. This field warrants more research and broader scope;

(c) what is the distinctiveness of VET leadership? This issue is dealt with in Chapter 4, but the analysis is based on a handful of countries and few informants. A deeper probe into national characteristics as well as country comparisons are also warranted;

(d) what characterises leaders responsible for training in companies? Who are they, what qualifications do they have? This group of VET leaders were excluded from this working paper;

(e) what types of leadership exist in VET? Is there a shift towards more collaborative and delegated forms of leadership?

(f) what types of leadership approaches, cultures or traditions exist in the various Member States and how are they embedded in national VET cultures?

(g) what is the impact of leadership in VET organisations? Several policy documents and surveys on general education find a link between good leadership and successful schools. In a specific VET environment, has leadership any impact on:

(i)   The quality of the learning outcomes of learners in VET organisations?

(ii)   The drop-out rate?

(iii) The attractiveness of VET?

(iv) The efficiency of VET?

(v) The shaping of the overall teaching and learning environment, and the attitudes, aspirations and motivation of staff, parents and students, as well as the performance of staff?

List of abbreviations

CEL	Centre for Excellence in Leadership (England)
CPD	Continuing professional development
CVET	Continuing vocational education and training
DfES	Department for Education and Skills (United Kingdom)
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
ESF	European Social Fund
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
FÁS	National Training and Employment Authority, Ireland
FE	Further education
HR	Human resources
HRM	Human resources management
ICT	Information and communication technology
ISCED	International standard classification of education
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IVET	Initial vocational education and training
LLL	Lifelong learning
LO	Learning outcomes
LSIS	Learning and Skills Improvement Service, the UK
NCSL	National College for School Leadership, the UK
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Australia
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PHARE	Poland and Hungary: Assistance for restructuring their economies programme [today 10 new Member States are included]
PISA	Programme for international student assessment
ROC	Regional vocational colleges (Regionale opleidingen centra), the Netherlands
UKCES	UK Commission for Employment and Skills
VET	Vocational education and training

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ANNEX 1
Activities for VET leaders and their specific skills requirements

This table presents results from the analysis of the TTnet survey on the distinctiveness of VET leadership (see Chapter 4). The results are categorised according to the leadership functions/activity areas listed in the Competence framework for VET professions (Cedefop, Volmari et al., 2009).

Administration General administration Finances and marketing HRM Leading organisation	**Leadership activities:** Execute leadership based on: • the needs, expectations and policy objectives from a complex variety of stakeholders: 1) the social partners 2) the government [the Ministry of Education and/or other public bodies] and 3) 'the customers' (the labour market and the students) • regulations and procedures belonging to a number of legal areas beside education, including company regulations Be aware of developments and changes in society and the labour market and translate these developments into VET concepts and opportunities. Realise possibilities and expectations of companies and institutions via VET provision Manage a dynamic and complex staff composition, e.g. manage: • staff working in and with companies • the variation of their contract types (including collective agreements) • a high staff fluctuation rate Supervise income from services provided (sales, consultancy, provision) to be used for educational and training purposes Promote the institution's training provision by developing a marketing strategy and steering the marketing processes (marketing surveys, advertisements, etc.) Develop and maintain facilities, technology and buildings appropriate to a wide variety of study programmes and for a great diversity of students: youngsters, adults, apprentices, employed, unemployed, students with strong and/or weak qualifications, low-skilled people unaccustomed to education, etc. Create adequate conditions for the work of teaching and training teams that are distributed in various school buildings and in companies

	Have responsibility for safety regulations concerning students and staff with a specific view to the practical training environment
	Develop strategies to reduce the number of drop-outs, especially in the perspective of changes in the professional career of students
	Competence requirements:
	Possess a vision of the VET institution's role in the labour market, community and society as a whole and the knowledge, competences and skills needed to steer the institution towards this vision
	Have knowledge of different VET fields and study programmes
	Have intimate know-how of general educational and VET field-specific legislation and regulations
	Have knowledge of lifelong learning policy and how VET fits into the LLL strategies
	Have competence in how to arrange the learning environment to be applicable for practical training
	Have know-how in recruitment and employment of training staff, especially in attracting experienced specialists from companies
	Have the ability to tackle declining interest and negative sentiment from students and their parents towards the institution and VET in general
Training Strategic work Pedagogical leadership Students' needs	**Leadership activities:** Ensure that the educational activities of the institution closely follow the continuous changes in education and training and the operating environment, by: • monitoring labour market changes and the change of technology used • identifying strategic sectoral training needs in line with national and regional recommendations • steering the design of study programmes to meet local labour market needs Lead the development of a learning environment with a special view to the equipment and methods used (in relation to requirements of the professions and the labour market) Steer the balance between academic and practical competences in the study programmes. Execute a combined pedagogical leadership (a VET teacher is a specialist in a vocational subject and also qualified as a pedagogue) Create a flexible response to labour market needs in the planning of continuous professional development of staff Search for, and motivate staff to apply, new methods in practical training, for developing and modernising the practices of apprenticeship and for developing new curricula for VET study programmes Support the pedagogical approach of teachers and trainers to meet the highly diverse student mass (students lacking basic education, secondary school graduates, adults) Support a system of student counselling that relates specifically to the labour market, but also includes general and higher education

	Competence requirements: Have a wide understanding of the different sectors of the labour market and what they require from a VET institution; have knowledge of specific sectoral skills and competences Have know-how of the changing human resource management strategies and practices applied in companies, as well as understanding how these strategies influence the requirements for the skills and qualifications of VET students and apprentices Have knowledge about: • vocational adult education • technological literacy in VET • general knowledge of developments in workshop technology Have expertise and knowledge of initial vocational education and competence-based qualification systems Have a comprehensive understanding of the national qualifications framework and its relevance to labour market needs Have know-how in developing flexible and changeable learning and training strategies adapted to the increasing variety of training needs (for initial education and training, apprenticeship, corporate training, training of the unemployed) Have the ability to motivate staff: • in the assessment of competences in VET • in combining professional expertise with pedagogical theory and didactics
Development and quality assurance Staff development Self development Quality assurance	**Leadership activities:** Make analyses of staff competence development needs in relation to labour market developments Keep the competences of staff in line with the demands of the labour market as well as promote pedagogical skills Create opportunities for training of VET teachers in companies at home and abroad Support the transfer of knowledge: • to staff on trends concerning training offers and new challenges in the labour market • from innovative competence environments (universities, research centres, companies) to staff and students Develop quality management processes by actively involving external stakeholders like employers, trade unions and professional organisations Have an active relationship with employers to assure reasonable care and relevant outcome of student practice in companies Support processes of standard certificating of quality (e.g. strive to get and maintain ISO, if applicable) Track developments in policy on national level concerning VET and the labour market

	Keep oneself professionally updated in management and leadership theory applicable for VET as well as in the vocational fields relevant for the institution.
	Competence requirements:
	Have knowledge of the role of VET in society, trends and changes
	Have professional (vocational) expertise and pedagogical expertise
	Have the ability to keep up with the changing technological and organisational requirements of the world of work
	Have knowledge of how to identify and address competences linked to innovation of technology and materials
	Have knowledge of, and take into account, the special requirements set by different VET fields to the quality assurance system and safety regulations of the VET institution
	Have knowledge of study paths available for students after VET
	Have the ability to motivate staff:
	• to seek continuous updating on new technical innovations and advancements in their fields
	• to visit trade fairs and exhibitions in their field of study, and to prepare and send students to specialised student competitions
	Be able to tackle and influence the continuing development strategy dilemma for VET leaders on whether pedagogical or vocational development of staff is more important and what to prioritise now
Networking Supporting teams and collaboration External networking Development networking	**Leadership activities:** Create and maintain close cooperation between the institution and the labour market (employers) at regional and national level, by: • identifying new groups of VET stakeholders and maintaining and developing the relationship with existing stakeholders • meeting local stakeholders (representatives for bodies of employers, employees, and support agencies) to ensure support for proposed staff training, new study programmes and provision for workplace learning • organising and maintaining networks of social partners (regional trade and industry and other relevant institutions) for feedback on the quality of VET (quality of teaching and the content and assessment of the study programmes) Involve external stakeholders in the main decision-making process of the VET institution Establish contacts with technologically-developed companies where student and staff training takes place Promote the VET institution as an important partner for companies and institutions in the region. Function as a VET figurehead in the region Take part in guilds, associations, and other partnerships. Motivate teachers to establish and take part in external structures like networks and associations, especially linked to the labour market Promote participation in international projects and networks.

Competence requirements:

Have a political sense and an understanding of the complexity of VET stakeholders: the social partners, the government [Ministry of Education and/or other public bodies] and 'the customers' (the labour market and the students)

Have knowledge of local, regional and national actors in the world of work and in other training institutions and a deep understanding of their needs, practices and procedures

Have the ability to cooperate with government, regional, and local decision-makers and other stakeholders specifically relevant for VET. Have the ability to create and sustain effective VET partnerships (bilateral and multilateral) by involving stakeholders at regional, sectoral, national and international levels

Be able to communicate with actors of different fields of VET, and to use field-specific terms and expressions in order to be understandable and legitimate

Have know-how in the establishment and sustaining of the effective partnership with research institutions and developers of technological innovations

Have personal competences and skills like flexibility and tolerance to meet the demands and expectations of a wide range of stakeholders

Be familiar with:

- best VET practices from abroad
- sectoral qualification frameworks in Europe

Understand the importance of international cooperation with EU partners and institutions

ANNEX 2
List of contributors

Bulgaria	Group of Bulgarian principals of VET upper secondary schools (Questionnaire in relation to visit to Cedefop, 13.4.2011)
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CEDEFOP | European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

Exploring leadership in vocational education and training

Exploring leadership in vocational education and training

The potential success of current reforms and changes in vocational education and training (VET) in Europe rests largely with VET staff responsible for transforming policy into practice. This working paper argues the need for better understanding of the role of leadership in implementing changes and securing quality in VET.

The last few years have seen substantial development in the governance of VET institutions, including decentralisation, new ways of financing, and the introduction of quality assurance systems. This paper will try to establish that these developments have great impact on VET leader roles, work tasks and competence requirements.

Stakeholders need more information to be able to address the issue of leadership in VET. This paper offers a tentative start by presenting the specific work tasks, current qualification requirements, and demands on continuing professional development for VET leaders in selected European countries. It also offers suggestions for areas of further study.