

A bridge to the future
European policy for vocational education
and training 2002-10

National policy report – Hungary 2010

This report is one of a set of European country reports on VET policy development prepared within Cedefop's ReferNet network. ReferNet is a European network of national networks providing information and analysis on national VET to Cedefop and disseminating information on European VET and Cedefop work to stakeholders in the EU Member States, Norway and Iceland. The report has been produced by ReferNet Hungary as a contribution to Cedefop's fourth policy report which reviews progress in VET towards the policy goals of the Copenhagen process. The opinions expressed in this national report are not necessarily those of Cedefop.

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PREFACE

In 2010 ReferNet member states prepared their VET policy reports for the second time, discussing national progress in VET in priority areas as set in the Copenhagen process. These reports are one of the main sources Cedefop has relied on to prepare its 2010 VET policy report that will be presented at the informal ministerial meeting at the end of 2010 in Belgium. The preliminary findings of the analysis have also been fed into the work of the European Commission and the Bruges working group preparing the 2010 communiqué on cooperation in VET beyond 2010 as well as other related policy documents.

National ReferNet policy reports discuss VET policy developments, challenges and priorities, as well as policy measures taken in each country since 2002, organized around the following nine priority themes:

- Socioeconomic challenges for future VET policy development;
- Economic crisis – VET policies as recovery measures;
- Impact and implications of the joint work on European principles and tools;
- Strengthening links between VET and the labour market;
- Addressing equity, social inclusion and active citizenship;
- Quality, excellence and attractiveness of VET;
- Enhancing creativity and innovation;
- Financing VET.
- Progress in modernising European VET systems in the Copenhagen process and priorities for future cooperation;

For each theme, one or more initiatives have also been selected as examples, and described in relative detail so as to illustrate progress in the given area.

Since the Hungarian policy report was finalized before the general elections in the Spring of 2010, some parts of it might not be valid anymore. The newly elected government has already indicated its intention to introduce some major changes in VET. Some of these are already mentioned in our annual country report published online in September (www.observatory.org.hu), while the more recent ones will be covered in next year's reports.

National VET policy reports of ReferNet member states are available from the homepages of the national coordinators of the network. The list of these coordinators and the Hungarian version of the Hungarian report are available from the homepage of ReferNet Hungary (<http://www.refernet.hu>).

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THEME 1: SOCIOECONOMIC CHALLENGES FOR FUTURE VET POLICY DEVELOPMENT

1.1 The impact of globalization on VET

The impact of globalization on Hungary is primarily channelled through the European integration process. The VET profiles and contents, the pedagogical methodologies and the quality assurance frameworks used in the countries of the European Union affect the Hungarian VET system primarily through EU cooperation programmes, such as LLP (Lifelong Learning Programme), the EQARF (European Quality Assurance Reference Framework), EQF (European Qualifications Framework) or Europass (8.2, 9.1 and 3.1), and various EU policies. These policies bring about significant, ongoing changes in the actual training, but especially in the stakeholders' approach. We should include among the impacts that in certain vocations, prominently in catering (in the training programme of waiters and cooks) and in the service industry, training is strongly focused on the EU labour market, with training programmes geared towards European labour force demands.

Other impacts of globalization on the Hungarian VET system are mediated by other (non-EU) means, even though they are less widespread or powerful as the EU ones. We have two such impacts in mind here, one being the so-called 'Stars of the Vocation Festival' (*Szakma Sztár Fesztivál*) (see 6.2), modelled after WorldSkills and EuroSkills, which has now been organised for the second year in a row. It follows the foreign example in that – contrary to the competition 'Outstanding VET Student Competition' (*Szakma Kiváló Tanulója Verseny, SZKTV*), which has been organised for decades – it has been turned into an entertainment event to attracting media attention, which is evidenced by the inclusion of "star" and "festival" in its name. The motivation behind this was the aim to increase the prestige of VET. While SZKTV was able to mobilize only a small portion of students, schools and teachers, and it did not have much publicity, the 'Stars of the Vocation Festival' and the new style final of SZKTV, on the other hand, have been successful in attracting wide audiences not only of those most concerned, but other VET students and professionals, friends and others who are interested in vocations. Beside attending the publicly organised competition, the audience has the opportunity to visit other professional events as well, organised in the venue.

Hungary is now relatively well-integrated into the global economy, which is best indicated by the fact that multinational companies (MNCs) have settled down in the country, playing a great role in the generation of GDP and particularly in export. Obviously, these companies are connected to school-based VET at a number of junctions; for instance, major commercial chains offer VET students in commerce an abundance of workplace practice places. Some MNCs, operating mainly in the IT sector, (Microsoft, IBM, Cisco) have traditionally maintained active cooperation both with secondary and higher education institutions, supporting them through investments, which is in no small part motivated by the effort to promote their own technology as well.

Some agreements concluded, often informally, between multinational companies and the major vocational training institutions providing for the labour market may also affect training contents and particularly the acquisition of the equipment and

technology used in training. This is made possible by the so-called vocational training contribution (*szakképzési hozzájárulás*), a kind of VET tax, which companies are required to pay in the value of 1.5% of their gross wage cost. A large part of this contribution may be directly transferred to schools (see 8.1), providing them with the largest source for financing their technological upgrades. Given the fact that the gross wage cost of these companies is usually high, their contribution to school's investments often reaches tens of thousands of Euros, and occasionally may be in the range of €100,000, which entitles them to have a voice in specifying the school's investments. There have been attempts even to transfer the maintenance of some schools from local governments to MNCs but so far this has not been put into practice yet.

1.1.1 Changes in the education policy of a city

In addition to supporting technological investments, some multinational companies are able to affect local VET and education policy through some other means as well. For instance, Audi has an enormous influence in the city of Győr, Western Hungary, for it greatly contributes to the city's economic performance and to the fact that the city is considered relatively rich in the Hungarian context. In 2008 measures were introduced to cut the grammar school enrolment ratio by one quarter and, in turn, increase the number of places in industrial vocations in VET schools. It is now the second year that only those young people may gain entrance to secondary high schools, which allow them to obtain the secondary school leaving certificate and thus go on to study in higher education, who have achieved a certain score on a test administered on a city level. If their result is over 50%, then they will be entitled to go to high school (*gimnázium*), while a 30-50% score will allow them to pursue their studies in secondary vocational schools. All the other youngsters will have no option but to go to vocational school. Although it has not been announced publicly, locally it is believed that the introduction of the measure was in large part due to multinational companies, pre-eminently to Audi, being concerned about the decrease in skilled workforce.

It is also Audi that is held to be behind the setting up of a local grant scheme to support VET students beyond the nationally set allowances, with the aim of increasing the attractiveness of VET professions among the youth. This is accessible for those who participate in training in occupations that are considered in short supply in the labour market. In the first two, so-called pre-vocational years, the city provides allowance. In case in the following 2-3 years a company, a potential future employer, should conclude a contract with a VET student, then the city municipality will complement the student's wages with the same amount as the company offered.

The fact that a significant share of the local business tax is paid by the company, a greatly influential actor in the global economy, provided the grounds for their lobbying: it is logical that a part of their significant contribution should be used to make sure that the workforce demands it raises are better met. The above-described measures cost as much as HUF 1 billion (EUR 3.6 million) for the city¹.

The city of Győr has been the envy of the country for the introduction of these two measures and especially for the local grant scheme. It is understandable that some

¹ Ferenc Hajba: Győrött csak a legjobbakat veszik fel [In Győr only the best are admitted]. In: Népszabadság, 26 January 2009

stakeholders with differing interest - high schools, teachers in secondary schools, parents who would like to see their children in a high school despite their poor school performance - are unhappy about the changes. Nevertheless, the restructuring of the secondary school system has equally attracted criticism from independent experts. The expansion of the education system which produces a workforce that is of lower prestige and quality, and less willing to learn, may also result in the overall lower qualification level of the workforce, which on the long run may create challenges for maintaining the city's employment and economic level.

1.2 Impact of technological progress on VET

Because of the fast changes in technology, its impact on vocational education and training, especially within the school system, is limited. Meeting the investment demands of VET, a sub-sector in education seeking to directly follow the changes and to use new technologies, is possible only within certain confines. In addition, both the invested technique and the renewed content are prone to get outdated on account of the fast changing cycles of change. Therefore it is particularly important both to be circumspect, to identify demands that are valid on medium term as well, and which are cost efficient. Certain development initiatives, however, are only indirectly linked to technological progress.

Some experts claim that a periodic renewal of VET content is particularly strong, or even over-emphasized. As a rule, this is not prompted by some technological change but the introduction of some kind of a regulatory tool - such as the renewal of the National Qualifications Register and then its transformation based on the principle of modularity, as well as the inclusion of new occupations into NQF; evidently, these developments respond to technological changes, which can happen in a number of ways. Naturally, the curriculum incorporates new technologies that emerge between development periods. It is a trend that the weight of ICT training is becoming greater in the central programme of certain occupations - aside the IT-related occupations - and their examination requirements.

It can be said that the professional and examination requirements also respond to technological changes in the sense that certain key competences, including learning and language competences, which are unrelated to professional content, receive more weight in them. It is unquestionable that an auto-mechanic working in a garage for a brand often has no choice but to search for information in a foreign language. This is not possible unless this auto-mechanic possesses adequate digital competences and language skills, as well as learning skills, enabling him to use these constantly renewing systems. The modularity of the qualifications system in itself also supports the adaptation of central programmes to technological progress, as individual modules can be updated at a lower cost and more easily than the content documentation of entire qualifications.

Various study areas/occupations differ in how they adjust in the demands and the opportunities to the practical environment. The content of IT professions is bound to get outdated sooner than other and the professional content needs greater adjustments. It is not accidental therefore that IT professions are criticized more on account of their being outdated. At the same time, certain traditional occupations require content adjustment and updating as well. Some engineer teachers believe that the content of occupations in construction places too much emphasis on the theory and practice of

building with traditional technologies based on the use of bricks, mortar and plasterwork, when light structure construction technologies are quickly spreading.

It is less problematic to provide for investment demands in sectors where new technological knowledge is embodied in softwares on computers in modern computer labs (e.g. trade), as opposed to those where expensive equipment is needed (e.g. machinery), even if simulation can often successfully replace the use of equipments in reality. A further obstacle to this is that the utilization rate of very expensive equipment is low, they serve students in one or two schools only, as the travel costs from schools located at a longer distance and other corollary costs are not built into the system.

The policy that practical training should increasingly take place in the economy in certain vocations - industrial, engineering, transportation - may also indirectly contribute to augmenting the probability of students having the chance to see more up-to-date technologies, as enterprises are generally in a better position to make investments than schools. The financing scheme which provides financial incentives for organising practical training in the second half of the training can be mentioned in this context as well. There has been constant effort to foster cooperation or contact between schools and enterprises that do not provide practical training. This does happen in the case of some domestic and multinational companies.

For decades, an important pillar of VET financing has been the so-called vocational contribution (*szakképzési hozzájárulás, SZH*), a kind of VET tax amounting to 1.5% of the gross wage bills. The most important function of the SZH is exactly to ensure a stable background for teaching the use of technology in practical training. The amount of available resources for this varies from year to year but is generally over several tens of millions of Euros. The Structural Funds allow developments of similar scope in the 2007-2013 planning period (see 1.2.1).

Over the past two decades, VET-related decisions have given an increasing role to economic actors. What is particularly important for our topic is that the Professional Consultation Committees (*Szakmai Tanácsadó Testület, SZTT*) and the regional development and training committees (*regionális fejlesztési és képzési bizottságok, RFKB*), operating beside the regional integrated vocational training centres (*térségi integrált szakképzési központok, TISZK*) (see 7.3.1) have a decisive role in defining the direction of investments implemented from the resources provided by the SZH.

The quality of education, including that of VET, is greatly dependent on the teachers. Updating their knowledge of technologies and ensuring that they keep abreast with changes in methods and techniques, is key. Although there is a possibility for teachers and vocational teachers to constantly update their knowledge, and to a certain degree it is a requirement towards them, an important constraint factor in this context remains the consistently low, or the stagnating or depreciating status and wages of teachers in VET.

When talking about the appearance of up-to-date technologies in education, we must not forget the Leonardo Programme which contributes to the improvement of training through promoting the mobility of a significant number of students and teachers.

1.2.1 Developing the infrastructure of practical training

Employers are perpetually dissatisfied with the quality of Hungarian VET. Behind this, among others, lies the uneven level of technology, used in the course of training. Students rarely have the opportunity to use modern technology while undergoing training, and during their practice they do not necessarily work with up-to-date equipment, as schools or enterprises providing practice places hardly have the resources for that. Practical training is not likely to take place in well-funded large enterprises and neither SMEs that employ VET students or were established to provide practical training are in a position to invest in expensive technology, nor are school maintainers unless, they receive funding specifically targeted at such development. Another problem lies in the fact that training is conducted at far too many sites, therefore funds earmarked for developing the infrastructure – which in total is not insignificant – are scattered among these sites. Since 2004 VET policy has attempted to address this problem by the regional concentration of VET institutions (see 7.3) in two ways: on the one hand, large sums have been earmarked from EU funds (within the Human Resources Operational Programme – HEFOP 4.1 – between 2004 and 2006, and within the Social Infrastructure Operational Programme – TIOP 3.1.1 as of 2007) to support integrated training centers to invest into cutting edge technology. On the other hand the procedures of using the funds are undergoing changes.

The model for the concept of technological training centres was provided by the system of inter-enterprise training centres established in Germany in the 1960's and 1970's. The idea was that students would spend only some of their practical training in these technological training centres, when partaking in the modules that are connected to the technology available at the site. This way in principle one centre could provide training for the students of over five schools. In the first 16 regional integrated training centres (*térségi integrált szakképző központ, TISZK*), established in 2005 (see 7.3), machinery-metallurgy training workshops were created in 2007-2008 from HEFOP funds in the amount of EUR 40 million. Feedback so far indicates that most centres are underutilized, and they serve only very few students from schools located in other settlements or faraway places. Covering travel or accommodation costs, wherever relevant, has not been sorted out, nor the remuneration for the extra work on the part of teachers, and there have been problems related to education administration as well. The extent to which available capacities are used in adult education is also limited.

It is perhaps due to this as well that as of 2008 tenders announced in the framework of TIOP, targeting the development of VET infrastructure, have been shaped according to new concepts. The resources used for this purpose are of the same volume as before (EUR 2-3 million) but they will be allocated among several centres, as opposed to focusing on the development of only one, although it remains to be a criterion to use the money in a concentrated way. At least 50% of the money granted at the tenders for each TISZK has to be used for modernizing the study workshop and it favourably affected the decision in the course of the tender if the tender application included a proposal to spend the funds in a concentrated manner, on few sites only. As a rule, the implementation of the tenders, announced since 2007, will be completed by the end of 2010. The 27 winners received altogether EUR 80 million, which they should use for renovating the building of the study workshop and renewing its equipment. Therefore in the course of only a few years, around half of the TISZK's (43 of the 84) received funds for development in volumes unprecedented before.

In addition to EU funds, the renewal of the equipment used in practical training is financed from other sources as well, notably from the so-called vocational training contribution (*szakképzési hozzájárulás*) a kind of VET tax levied on enterprises amounting to 1.5% of total labour cost, which ensures around EUR 100 million for this purpose. Beside the enterprises carrying out practical training, over 1000 VET institutions were also eligible to apply for funds from this, a consequence of which was that everyone received a little and only few applicants were awarded larger sums, so the use of these funds was fragmented, therefore substantial development was possible only at few sites. Since 2008, only the 84 TISZKs are eligible to apply for funding, which integrate certain groups of schools. This is expected to result in a more concentrated use of funds, especially given that decisions on the local level are influenced by the consultative bodies of TISZK's, composed of experts delegated by employers, while tendering is handled by the Regional Development and Training Committees (*regionális fejlesztési és képzési bizottságok*) whose members are also predominantly delegated by economic actors. At present this resource is unavailable for this purpose as a consequence of the economic crisis, and it will not be before 2011 that we will have an idea whether changes in the mechanism have yielded in the desired results or not.

1.3 Impact of demographic change and international migration on VET

In Hungary labour mobility, both inward and outward, is of lower scale than in older and in many of the newer EU member states. Only recently has it been highlighted that in some occupations (for instance, in healthcare and catering) a massive part of the workforce is leaving the country to work abroad, threatening with increasing labour shortage. Efforts have been made to remedy the problem by systematically increasing the strikingly low wages and introducing administrative constraints in healthcare and by increasing the enrolment rate in catering professions that are attractive for young people. The majority of the workforce arriving to work in the country are ethnic Hungarians from the neighbouring countries with qualifications higher than the average among the local population. Their labour market integration does not raise any VET related problems. The number of migrants from third countries selecting Hungary as a destination is very small. Training for them is provided through smaller scale programmes, such as an EQUAL programme or a pilot programme of the National Employment Public Foundation (*Országos Foglalkoztatási Közalapítvány, OFA*), etc.. While the labour market integration of this population is unresolved, no systematic solution has been elaborated to tackle their problem, so this remains a task to be urgently accomplished in the near future.

The conflicts arising as a result of the decrease in the number of young people have so far prompted only debates in which professional arguments are mixed with ones concealing group interests. In Hungary this issue is all the more serious because the expansion of secondary and higher education took place over the past two decades at a great pace. Absolute enrolment figures both in secondary and higher education have been decreasing but the main actors – including ones in economic policy, employment policy, and interest representation bodies in education and economy – have failed to reach consensus on the changes to be made in internal proportions which would calculate with the expected shorter and longer term labour market demands. On the contrary, there are only conflicting solutions for the short term – increasing the

number of secondary level VET students and improving the quality of education and the average qualification level. The new government that will come to power after the elections in May 2010 will have to make a decision on this. The current situation – a weak government and strong lobby groups – is expected to change after the elections.

Between 2002-2007 the proportion of people aged 50-64 within all the employed population of 15-64 years of age increased from 20% to 25%. Thus the employment rate of the population of 50-64 increased from 41% to 47.5% over the five years, and their share in the total population increased as well. Nevertheless, in international comparison the employment rate of this age group still lags behind by 8%, as is the case with younger age groups. Despite the fact that unemployment rate in this age cohort increased by 1.5 times over five years, it is still below the international average, while the proportion of inactives who have already exited the labour market is extremely high: although it shows a decreasing trend, it still makes up half of the population in the age group. The education level of older job seekers is similar to that of all job seekers: almost every other job seeker is without qualifications and one in every three is a skilled worker.

Between 2002-2007 the share of people over 50 participating in active labour market programmes increased from 6.6% to 15.5%. The central programme „Promoting the employment of people over 50”, launched in 2005, greatly increased this rate, which is now hardly lower than the share of the age group among all job seekers (17.4%). Over these five years, the proportion of this group among those unemployed who took part in training increased from 3.4% to 8.3%. In absolute figures this signifies a 20% increase (in 2002 there were 2675 people, in 2007 as many as 3197), while the number of all unemployed who participated in training significantly decreased. It is worth mentioning that the relative training participation rate grew not only among people over 50, but among those of 40-49 years of age as well.

In 2002, 44.4% of unemployed people who had participated in training had a job 3 months after its completion. At this time almost the same proportion (42.2%) of the people over 50 were also successful in securing a job following the training. By 2007 these proportions had decreased in the entire target group by 6% to 38.2%, and by 12% (to 30.4%) among people over 50. This suggests that the training involvement of an increasing number of older people in active age decreased the relative chances of their finding a job after the training.

Statistics on indicate that between 2002-2007 the proportion of people over 50 participating in adult training was consistently 10% both among the employed and the unemployed.

It is typical that older active age people constitute one of the target groups of large-scale programmes, either funded by the government or by the EU, which are directed at disadvantaged groups. In 2005, as many as 1000 people of those over 50 obtained qualifications in the framework of the programme „Supporting qualifications, recognized by the state, in accredited adult training institutions” with an overall budget of EUR 6 million. Their proportion was 14% among all participants. The programme „Take One Step!” (see 5.1.2) enabled close to 4000 people over 50 years of age to obtain their first or second qualification, making up 11-12% of all participants.

1.3.1 PreQual-Steps

As a consequence of the small number of migrants, their integration does not present a major problem in Hungary. Close to three quarters of all migrants, representing no more than 2% of the population, are of Hungarian ethnicity from the neighbouring countries, with qualifications higher than the average. This explains why there have been only local projects to address migrants' problems, and these projects are significant because of their inventiveness rather than their scope. In addition to an EQUAL project² implemented in 2005-2008, a Leonardo Innovation Transfer project must be cited in this context.

A fundamental difficulty facing migrant women lies in that an already fragmented labour market drives them into specific vocations, such nursing, caretaking, domestic labour, sex work, and service jobs with low prestige. What provides a way out of this situation is programmes that combine training and support services, and which handle various tasks and conditions together (helping migrants to obtain vocational qualifications, or adapting existing qualifications to the local conditions of the receiving country; the particularities and demands of the local labour market; the disadvantages of migrant existence; racism; exclusion and social isolation). Such a complex approach requires a training programme and methodology, tailored to the needs of a special target group, and the participation of professionals with an in-depth knowledge of the life and existence of migrants.

The basis of the project was an innovation, financed from a Leonardo da Vinci Programme and developed between 2004 and 2007 under the leadership of an Austrian organisation, where programme development was built on research. The goal of the programme was to improve migrant women's access to training and the labour market. The programme was aimed directly at migrant women with a work permit, who wish to work in healthcare but the indirect target group is in fact much broader including primarily healthcare institutions and employees, potential employers of migrant women and their professional organisations, experts of the areas of asylum seeking and the labour market, as well as the staff at employment services.

Two ideas were central to the innovative approach taken in the project. One was a training course on interculturalism and anti-racism, which participants were required to take. The other was that migrant women were employed as experts throughout the development and the implementation of the project and all those involved were regarded as experts who have the most expertise on their own situation, thus their knowledge and experience were considered as indispensable resources.

The training programme was originally developed in three languages; the Foundation for Development of Democratic Rights, the Hungarian partner in the project and the founder of the Hungarian Network for Migrants, embarked on the adaptation of this and all other elements of the innovation in the framework of the Leonardo Transfer of Innovation project, implemented in 2007-2009. After a review of the local circumstances, the organisation decided to continue the training in the refugee camp in Bicske, and no longer focus on involving Hungarian speaking migrants from the neighbouring countries, as they face a different fundamental problem: they either have to have their existing qualification recognised or they can participate in training in their mother tongue. What needs to be taken into consideration in the course of the

² "Önállóan, egyenlő esélyekkel" [Independently and with equal opportunities]. A project implemented by a consortium, under the leadership of Artemisszió Foundation

programme adaptation is the constraints: for instance, there was no possibility for an accredited training course, whereas in healthcare the completion of an accredited training course is a precondition to take up employment. There was no possibility to use grants as incentive, and because of the differing level of knowledge of the Hungarian language, the training course had to be preceded by an intensive language course. This way the original training programme had to be reduced.

Altogether eight migrants applied to the five-day course (which consisted of altogether 320 classes, 16 a week), six of them attended the course regularly. The predominantly Muslim participants came from six different countries, including Libya, Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Vietnam and Georgia. The programme triggered both changes and conflicts in their personal lives; and although their motivation dwindled because of the family conflicts and language barriers, in principle they were satisfied with the programme. The course, consisting of four modules, enabled them to engage in accredited vocational training in healthcare after they have completed further language training. This was possible after the project has ended but we have no information whether this actually happened or not.

The small scale of the project successfully highlighted the constraints - the lack of time and resources, the need for support, continuous mentoring and reconciliation with family life - which prevent the integration of migrants even into the most marginal employment positions in the labour market.

1.4 Impact of greening of economy on VET

In the wake of the large-scale transformation of vocational education and training in the 1990's – which included the renewal of the VET structure, the creation of the National Qualifications Register (*Országos Képzési Jegyzék, OKJ*) and the development of the related vocational programmes – environmental protection gained a substantial position in VET. Training began in new vocations – and later on in the area of waste management as well -, and in existing vocations, such as agriculture, trade or machinery, were complemented with a curriculum on environmental protection. Such training courses are popular and because of their focus on the future, they have been popular among young people, although employment opportunities have not confirmed massive demand and supply for the training.

Although in Hungary there is no policy level discourse on green economy, the transition to renewable energy sources and the economic consequences of climate change, there are frequent mentions of such issues in the media. The government has not yet formulated a policy on green economy, and as of now there is only a draft strategy of environmental protection. The biggest political parties – those in government between 2002-2010 and the one that won the elections in April 2010 – do not discuss in their official programmes how they would support the greening of the economy; their views on the issues are expressed in interviews given by their environmental policy experts. There are only two small parties that have developed official position papers: the 'Green Economic Stimulus Programme' was elaborated by Politics can Be Different (*Lehet Más A Politika, LMP*), and the 'Green Hungary Development Model' was put forward by the Hungarian Democratic Forum (*Magyar Demokrata Párt, MDF*). However, these parties were not involved in previous

governments or the one newly set up after the parliamentary elections in April 2010. It is characteristic also that the only two parties officially embracing these issues are ones with marked green orientation (LMP), while the other (MDF) has a representative, the author of the document, in the European Parliament, where greater priority is given to environmental issues than in Hungary.

What comes up on the internet when searching for Hungarian sources on „green economy”, „renewable energy sources” and „climate change” is mostly expert and scientific documents. These documents have been predominantly created by the academic and the research community, or civil society organisations working on these very issues. For example, the NGO Energy Club (*Energia Klub*)³ has been conducting a study titled „Green jobs” since October 2009. The majority of the documents have been written from the point of view of traditional environmentalism and corporate social responsibility (CSR). There are only very few documents suggesting a paradigm shift either related to climate change or to renewable energy and they include even fewer references to the – presumably – changing demands with respect to the labour force.

Consequently, the issue of green economy, at least in the sense it is nowadays interpreted, has had virtually no impact on vocational education and training. However, the gradually increasing and most up-to-date knowledge of the field is taken into account when updating, wherever necessary, some of the 12 and 53 vocations under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment and Water (*Környezetvédelmi és Vízügyi Minisztérium, KVV*) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (*Földművelésügyi és Vidékfejlesztési Minisztérium, FVM*). The Ministry responsible for VET enlists 28 occupations related to industry, agriculture and environmental protection, which will have role in implementing green policy in the future.

1.4.1 Introduction of the „Climate specialist” advanced level vocational training

There is one concrete and relevant measure that definitely needs to be highlighted in relation to the topic, which is the appearance of an occupation within the current National Qualifications Register (*Országos Képzési Jegyzék, OKJ*) directly related to sustainable development. The necessity of the qualification is justified by the fact that although the curriculum of many occupations includes content related to this issue, however, this is the first one to put sustainable development, more particularly climate change, into the focus. According to a press release of the Ministry of Environment and Water, dated 19 February 2010, the qualification „climate specialist” has been included in the OKJ. Young people interested in climate change, climate protection and energy can now choose a two-year, four-semester training in higher education.

The training of climate specialists is made up of 6 modules. The future students will have the opportunity to learn about the duties of an environmental protection technician, including the methods of measuring environmental load, the impacts of industrial production, fines for environmental violations, and environmental impact assessment. They will familiarize themselves with the tools in climate science, such as various climate scenarios, the Kyoto Agreement, emission trade, extreme weather and disaster management, as well as the health-related effects of global warming. Another module provides insight into the theory and practice of sustainability: the social and

³ <http://www.energiaklub.hu/en/>

economic conditions of sustainability, the constraints, the environmental impact of agriculture, environmental friendly food production, producing crop for energy use, the characteristics of environmental conscious tourism, and rural and ecological tourism. The curriculum incorporates information on energy and environmental technology, for instance the renewable and the non-renewable sources, the changes of global energy structure, the harmful impact of solid fuels on the environment and the climate, the environmental impact of burning hydrocarbons, the environmental advantages and disadvantages of solar energy, the utilization of thermal heat, and atomic energy. The training of climate specialists may start once the basic documents of the qualification – professional and examination requirements and the core programme – have been worked out and issued by the Ministry.

1.5 Other challenges for VET

Hungary will have a new government in place as of May 2010. Its responsibilities with respect to VET are threefold. First, it will need to continue the revamping of the VET system, which was initiated by the previous government and financed from the Structural Funds. There is agreement among most of the VET professionals that the directions of the reform initiatives are adequate. Second, the new government will need to tackle certain „ever-green” issues related to VET; the preceding government was unsuccessful in this respect, as it failed to pay as much attention to these problems as their weight would have warranted, in addition, the measures it took were ineffective. Third, it will have to respond to the challenges that have emerged over the past 10-15 years and which have not been (effectively) addressed by VET policy makers or which require a long time for the changes to be felt. Such so-called evergreen problems or new challenges can easily occur anywhere; however, the responses given to them and the stage their handling stands at are particular to a country.

1.5.1 Managing large scale ongoing developments and restructuring processes

Following the systematic changes that took place in the 1990's, VET development was carried out at a slower pace for several years; however, the Structural Funds made it possible to launch larger scale development projects. Fundamentally two kinds of such projects were initiated. One aimed to tackle the low efficiency of the VET system, deriving from its fragmented nature, which was envisaged through the establishment of the system of Regional Integrated Vocational Training Centres (*térségi integrált szakképző központok, TISZK*) (see 7.3). Close to 50 billion HUF (200 million EUR) was spent to this end with the outcome being a transformed system, which - albeit fulfilling previous hopes and fitting into the legislative framework - failed to entirely meet the goals previously formulated. Setting the new system on an adequate development path and creating the legal, professional and financial framework in order to ensure sustainability for it remains a task for the future.

Another important and forward-looking development has been the modular-based transformation of the National Qualification Register (*Országos Képesítési Jegyzék, OKJ*) (see 6.4), the framework for which had been developed by 2006 already. However, the development work related to the transformation, including the content development for 3000 modules, is still in progress. A further task will be to make sure

on the policy level that changes do happen in reality, not only formally, and the actors in VET - following the modification of the regulations and adjustment of interests - have the chance to voluntarily start modular education and enjoy its advantages.

Albeit with smaller funds than the above, there are other important development projects within the Social Renewal Operational Programme (*Társadalmi Megújulás Operatív Program, TÁMOP*). Among these the project on content and methodological development of the career guidance system should be highlighted, which promises for the first time the laying down of the foundations of an up-to-date career guidance system, standardized both for the education and employment sectors in the framework of career management and competences. A further task during the continuation of the TÁMOP development projects will be to create greater synergy between various measures and development projects and their alignment with the goals defined centrally.

1.5.2 Inadequate responses to inadequately addressed or evergreen challenges

The challenges referred to above include the following: better harmonization between training and the labour market, quality improvement, increasing the attractiveness of VET, ensuring better access to VET, better representation of sectoral interests and ensuring effective financing.

Policy makers have sought to ensure greater matching between VET and the labour market primarily by taking two approaches. One aimed at ensuring greater involvement of economic actors in the provision of training sites (see 4.4) and in deciding training directions (see 8.4). The other targeted information collection concerning the labour market career of VET graduates, i.e. career monitoring, on a national scale (see 6.1). Both directions are important and adequate, however, both are criticized with respect to their implementation.

As to the involvement of economic actors in VET-related decisions and measures, it needs to be highlighted that there is a significant difference between what the economy would need (short term interests) in terms of workforce, and what (longer term) demands are posed by the entire economy. The former is applied in the case of school-based VET as well, although only in certain segments of the economy can they decrease the shortage of labour force, whereas they certainly benefit training institutions by creating demand for their services. However, on the longer term they can have negative impact on the labour market as well by nurturing the demand for low qualified labour force and holding back the competence development of the workforce. They refrain from even defining what longer term economic demands are, partly as a result of the fact that currently the knowledge available for this is insufficient for this.

With respect to efforts at career monitoring, two kinds of critical remarks have been formulated, both related to the methodology. One questions the approach itself on the basis that in certain occupations it focuses on training output and employment opportunities, whereas this is only a simplistic model of labour market correspondence. Not only is it becoming increasingly outdated but it failed to yield satisfactory results even several decades ago. The other argument concerns the question of feasibility, which seems to be problematic both in terms of validity and reliability.

An other evergreen requirement towards VET is to improve access and to help people with low credentials to acquire better qualifications (see 5.1 and 5.2); there are particularly great deficiencies in this domain with respect to the Roma and the labour market integration of those who dropped out of education without obtaining qualifications. Although substantial funds are being spent to remedy these problems, both from national and EU sources, the programmes hardly seem to improve the labour market participation of this population. The reason behind this is most probably the fact that the deficiencies of this segment of society are so great when it comes to employability, that providing a crash course in vocational in itself will be ineffective and will not result in stable employment unless other - pre-eminently learning and social competences - are developed as well.

This is connected to the consistently low level of attractiveness of VET as well. The prestige of VET in society has been low, it is chosen by young people as a last resort only in case they are not admitted to training programmes with a higher prestige. What is questionable in this case is the impact of one of the two approaches, the effects of media campaigns, and a more positive positioning of VET. On the other hand, it seems that increasing financial incentives in physical vocations and the increasing amounts included in the study contracts and scholarships, have been successful in promoting participation in VET.

A further recurring topic is the necessity to improve the quality of VET. Quality assurance efforts have been consistently on the agenda, however, in themselves they cannot be effective enough, which is why the quality of training has received much criticism from many aspects. One has already been mentioned above: young people choose VET as a last resort, their level of knowledge is low, many of them struggle with reading, computational problems, and lack motivation, as the occupation they are to have in the future has low prestige and does not ensure a stable position on the labour market. The other problem lies in the fact that the VET teachers, who are key actors with respect to the quality in VET, have low prestige in society and earn little money, with an ongoing contra-selection process in their case leading to the situation that only some of them are able to meet the high training requirements. The third reason that leads to a shortfall with respect to quality in VET is related to the fact that after someone completed teacher training, it is easy to obtain qualification irrespective of the acquired competences, the passing rate at the exams is above 95% and it fails to filter out those students who are unprepared to obtain a qualification. Although the 2005 VET Development Strategy also placed emphasis on the issue, the implementation of the planned measure - creating the conditions of an independent examination system - has since been taken off the agenda.

VET policy has failed with respect to the reform of VET financing as well. Its necessity was touched upon in the VET Development Strategy that was passed on governmental level in May 2005 and in theory remains the VET strategy in force at present. This domain requires a formulation of the concept still.

It is a Hungarian peculiarity that sectoral interests are hardly asserted in VET. The main reason behind this is that for the past decade and a half VET policy has given preference to economic chambers - instead of sectoral professional organisations - which are organised on local level.

Finally, mention must be made of the necessity to make adjustments in the structure of school-based VET; this, however, is a sensitive issue, which is supposed to have an impact on the longer term only and is bound to harm interests. Its necessity, however, follows from the way VET has operated over the past decade, which involved modifying the structure of certain programmes without an overarching concept, along the lines of the interests of various lobby groups. Thus today both school-based VET provided in vocational schools and vocational training schools, as well as the post-secondary training which builds on it, and advanced level VET receive much criticism. Another important structural problem is related to the correspondence of school-based VET and adults training, as well as their rivalry. This is indicated by the fact that in certain vocations a 20-year old young person may obtain qualifications within as little as 6-8 months if he/she pursues them in adult training, while in school-based VET they may require 2-3-4 or even 5 years.

1.5.3 Effective response to new challenges

In the past two decades Hungarian VET policy has consistently addressed the issue of VET having to respond quickly to social, economic and technological changes. The frames of this are provided by the ideas and recommendations formulated in EU institutions. Real life adaptation to the changing world, however, lags behind. The reasons behind this are related partly to attitudes and partly to measures, or the lack thereof. We will outline the main points only where these processes of adaptation have been launched or wherever they are planned.

Real processes have progressed mostly in areas where concrete EU tools (EQF, ECVET, EQARF, Europass - see 3.1 and 9.1) were employed to help developments. These receive special attention and adequate sources from the government. In these cases the quality of developments and the success of implementation both help the adjustment of VET to the changing world.

Switching to thinking in the context of lifelong learning (LLL) is progressing slowly and only with difficulties. In connection with this, VET is predominantly interpreted in a traditional way, which focuses more on transferring skills pertaining to a particular vocation rather than creating the conditions for the long-term employability of the workforce. The latter approach would require interdisciplinary thinking with a wider horizon, which would take into account the fast changing social and labour market processes as well. This may be the original reason behind the fact that so far there has been no public discourse on the changes in labour force demands of the economy, and what „green” workforce would be like (in terms of composition and competences) which the often mentioned green economy will need.

A very concrete challenge is posed by the higher level/advanced VET (see 6.3), launched over a decade, which has most recently got into the focus because of the development work related to the National Qualifications Framework (*Országos Képesítési Keretrendszer, OKKR*). Here we speak about the expanding border areas of VET and higher education, which require cooperation between the two domains and institutions of education, which had previously been distinctly separate, and its handling on policy level. More generally speaking, what we can observe is the blurring of the borderline between the sectors of public education, VET and higher education, which are traditionally under public administration control, and an increasing need for these sectors to cooperate, which are indispensable for an LLL-

conform approach. Here we come to sense the source of an absence, particularly typical to Hungary, which characterizes the validity of formal and informal learning and especially the competences acquired through those learning forms.

THEME 2: ECONOMIC CRISIS – VET POLICIES AS RECOVERY MEASURES

2.1 Initiatives for recovery

Consequences

As a consequence of the economic crisis, in 2009 the employment rate of the Hungarian population between 15-64 years of age (55.4%) was 1.3 percentage point lower than a year before, while the unemployment rate increased by 2.2 percentage points to 10.5% - the highest value since 1995. What is also noteworthy is the rapid deterioration of these indicators at a pace unprecedented since the beginning of the 1990's.

The economic downturn affects regions and sectors unevenly. The regions most affected by the economic crisis include Hungary's most developed regions, Central and Western Transdanubia, where shortage of – primarily skilled – labour force had previously been the greatest. The most affected sectors are construction, some segments of the processing industry and the automotive industry. As a consequence, differences between company groups and regions decreased (with the exception of the capital). The scale of lay-offs has been highest in the processing industry (6.8%), construction (6%) and in commerce (5%). Qualified skilled workers were most affected by the decrease in the demand for labour.

A business cycle research published in Q3 of 2009 (Tóth, 2009), which was based on companies' self-assessment, found that the measures that enterprises envisage for the 2010 represent a turning point. Although the decrease in the number of the employed continued in 2009, its pace had slowed down by the end of 2009, which is also promising.

The training activity within enterprises was not affected significantly by the economic crisis. While large, foreign-owned companies continue to demonstrate the largest training activity, over a year there was a 2 percentage point drop in companies' propensity to train employees (see Annex 1., Figure 1.).

The same study concluded that the proportion of companies offering practical training opportunities increased in 2009, especially among smaller companies in Hungarian ownership (see Annex 1., Figure 2.), although the 2010 figures reveal a slight decline again .

Although a number of government measures have been introduced in 2009, including ones which targeted training as well, to alleviate the effects of the crisis the Regional Integrated Vocational Training Centres (*térségi integrált szakképző központ, TISZK*) were not entitled to apply for development support from the decentralized funds of the Labour Market Fund allocated for training, which implied a shortfall of 3-4 billion forints on national level.

What we are able to conclude at this point about the effects of the crisis on pupils' intentions at further study is only limited and unconfirmed. This is due also to the fact that changes may depend on previous trends, as well as governmental measures aimed at influencing them, which are starting to have an effect now. Governmental policies in recent years have laid particular emphasis on increasing enrolment rates in vocational schools (*szakiskola*), especially in occupations in short supply in the labour

market. In accordance with policy efforts, the number of pupils wishing to study further in grammar schools (*gimnázium*) on secondary level has shown a decreasing trend in the past years and has declined by 3 percentage points (from 42.5% to 39.5%), while the proportion of pupils going on to study in vocational schools has increased by 2.4% (from 19.1% to 21.5%). The proportion of students applying to secondary vocational schools (*szakközépiskola*) has remained virtually unchanged at a rate of 39%.

On secondary level, the previously low demand for vocational training in machinery and construction has increased, which may have been influenced by the measures that provide financial benefits for both pupils and training providers in these qualification groups.

The number of pupils applying to higher education has significantly increased in 2009, which signifies a break in the previously decreasing trend, though several, occasional factors had a role in this increase, too. One of these reasons was that in many secondary schools the training period has been extended with one (preparatory) year, which resulted in the appearance of these older students among the applicants. Another reason is the transition to the Bologna training system: 2009 was the first year when BA and BSc degree students applied to master training programmes, so the number of once already admitted university students appeared again in the statistics and almost doubled it. There were some changes in the proportions as well. It would be difficult to tell apart changes that are due to the crisis from those resulting from other factors. The abolition of tuition fee by the referendum in 2008, as well as the new MA and MSc courses launched for BA and BCs student but accessible for others also, together with a governmental preference for practice-oriented higher level vocational education and training and for majors in technology and natural sciences, have most probably also shaped student choices.

Debates on whether VET provision should react in any way to the crisis have so far been limited. Various views on this have been voiced, one of which claims that VET is a long term investment, which is not influenced by a crisis, be it prolonged or not. It also claims that although the demand for skilled workers has by now declined, the volume of VET provision should be increased in order to ensure that the necessary labour force will be available after the crisis has ended. This viewpoint does not count with a paradigm shift in economy and implies that the quantitative and qualitative structure of the labour force demand will be the same as before the onset of the crisis.

Others, on the contrary, assume that an economic era has come to an end and the East-West division of labour – for instance in the processing industries – will be organised along different lines. They foresee the emergence of new and innovative sectors which will primarily ensure economic growth, while the relative weight of sectors that were previously the motors of growth will decrease. If this scenario should prevail, then a new economic structure will bear impact both on the structure and the content of training as well. The possible conclusion has so far been formulated only on a general level – for example in the VET strategy document, published in April 2009, of the Central Transdanubian region, which is most affected by the crisis – as „in VET provided within the school system preference should be given to training programmes with learning outcomes that ensure the most general and easily convertible knowledge, while the weight of overly specialised courses or those building on each other should decrease.

VET-related measures to mitigate the consequences of the crisis

Below are examples of measures which, though envisaged before the onset of the crisis, contributed to mitigating its impacts:

- support for training people with altered work capacity (TÁMOP 1.1 and 1.2);
- support for training people without qualifications or with low educational attainment (see 5.1.);
- the introduction of scholarship for vocational school students training in occupations high in demand (see 4.2.1)

A defining innovation of previous years is the modularisation of the OKJ. Following its introduction in adult training, it is now beginning to be used in the school system as well, which may allow a more flexible reaction to the crisis. Having to complete only certain modules will make it easier for people holding some kind of vocational qualification already to attain a new qualification in a new profession.

The most important measure aimed at alleviating the impacts of the crisis, which addressed training as well, was the so-called “4+1 Programme” (see 2.1.1) but several sub-programmes of the „Way To Work” Programme, targeting primarily employment, and a number of the initiatives launched by the National Public Foundation for Employment (*Országos Foglalkoztatási Közalapítvány, OFA*) also include training components.

The consequences of the economic crisis in Hungary are mitigated by the fact that in the period of 2007-2013 significant amounts of development funds will be available from the Structural Funds. Besides, in 2009 Hungary was authorized to reallocate funds between operational programmes (the programmes providing the framework for the development) with the explicit aim to alleviate the effects of the crisis. As a result, the volume of the Operational Programme for Economic Development (*Gazdaságfejlesztési Operatív Program, GOP*) has been increased by HUF 111 billion (EUR 395 million). These funds were used to support the operation of micro, small and medium size enterprises. The propensity of companies to provide training for their employees is also enhanced by the fact that each operational programme provides substantial amounts for training.

A study was conducted in the beginning of 2009 (DGS, 2009) to assess the position of enterprises vis a vis the measures introduced to protect workplaces. The study highlights that these measures can only be successful if clear and precise information is distributed in the widest possible scope about calls for applications. The respondents pointed out that it would be important to make the application procedures easier and faster, since because of the administrative burden such tenders imply, many companies are forced to give up the idea of submitting an application, or hire a company specialized in writing proposals, which incurs substantial additional costs.

2.1.1 The “4+1 Programme” – crisis alleviation and training

With co-financing from European Social Fund, a measure within a TÁMOP 2.3.3 sub-programme was launched in May 2009 with the explicit aim to maintain the employment capacity/potential of enterprises particularly affected by the crisis, which, on the other hand, are viable in the long term. In addition, it sought to contribute to preventing employees from becoming unemployed by providing training

for them. The long-term goal of the measure is to improve the competitiveness of enterprises and the labour market position of employees.

The measure is not specific to any sectors and aims to support both employees individually, as well as enterprises. An important target group, however, is micro-, small- and medium enterprises. The non-repayable financial support, for which companies have to apply, can be used to cover the training and examination costs of their own employees, as well as to finance the wage costs during the training. A certain number of employees at the recipient enterprises thus have the opportunity to take part in vocational, general or catching-up training, or in training aiming to improve their key competences (e.g. foreign language or ICT competences) for 3-10 months, in 20% of their working time. One condition of receiving the funding is that after the training the employer must continue employing the worker for as long at least as the length of the training.

The funds available in the amount of HUF 30 billion (EUR 107 million), as much as HUF 20 billion (EUR 71 million) is earmarked for small and medium size enterprises, HUF 10 billion (EUR 35 million) is allocated to support large companies. Additional HUF 2.5 billion (EUR 9 million) is available to support micro enterprises employing less than 5.

The number of people that had started the programme as of January 2009 was 16 000, which contributed to the maintenance of 46 000 jobs to date.

The programme coordinated by the National Employment Service (*Állami Foglalkoztatási Szolgálat, ÁFSZ*) is an integral part of the government's national level crisis management strategy and its goals are in line with policy measures which aim to provide support for SMEs for the further training of their employees (see 8.1).

One complaint about the measure is that tenders were announced in May 2009 – relatively late in light of the appearance of the consequences of the economic crisis and decisions were not made before November 2009. Many enterprises were unable to wait that long and were forced to start the lay-offs sooner.

Despite the fact that the amount of support per enterprise varies between HUF 2-150 million (EUR 7 000- 534 000), and HUF 100 million-2 billion (EUR 356 000 and 7 million) in the case of large companies, the majority of employers do not believe that the support enables them to avoid the dismissals (DGS, 2009).

There is a chance that the enterprises participating in the programme choose the training based on financial considerations, instead of their utility or quality. To ensure a certain level of quality for the training, it is prescribed that the training must be conducted through accredited programmes – or in the case of in-company training, requirements specified in the Act on Adult Training must be observed. The dismissal-prohibition after the completion of the training may also contribute to curtailing the efficiency of the training. This may drive employers to choose shorter training programmes, which often discourages efficient learning.

THEME 3: IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE JOINT WORK ON EUROPEAN PRINCIPLES AND TOOLS

3.1 Impact of joint work on European principles and tools on national LLL policies and practices and VET developments

The implementation of EU tools has been linked with some important national development targets: the renewal of VET system and the increasing of its transparency and flexibility.

In recent years, the most important steps facilitating the accumulation and transfer of vocational qualifications have been the introduction of the new National Qualifications Register (*Országos Képzési Jegyzék, OKJ*) and measures aiming at the development of higher level vocational education and training. Hungary has been represented in the European Credit Transfer for VET (ECVET) working group of the European Commission since it was set up in 2003. In February 2007, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (*Szociális és Munkaügyi Minisztérium, SZMM*) organized a national consultation on this subject. Since then this cooperation has yielded the elaboration of 280 competence descriptions, which correspond to the European Qualifications Framework System (EQF). Building domestic partnerships related to ECVET is also under way, which is made more difficult by the fact that the form of and participation in institutional cooperation is at present not regulated by law. Credit-based training has received much attention recently in the strategic thinking of education policy makers, its introduction will take place in close cooperation with the elaboration of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) (*Országos Képesítési Keretrendszer, OKKR*).

The NQF must be compatible with the principles and structure of the European Qualifications Framework System (EQF) (*Európai Képesítési Keretrendszer, EKKR*). A government decree stipulates that the NQF must be introduced as of 2013, and also orders the setting up of an inter-ministerial commission to deal with issues related to OKKR (*OKKR Tárcaközi Bizottság*). The related developments are financed and organized in the frames of TÁMOP programme.

In 2006 the VET Quality Assurance Framework (*Szakképzési Minőségbiztosítási Keretrendszer, SZMBK*) was developed as a national adaptation of the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) (*Közös Minőségbiztosítási Keretrendszer*) and its adaptation to adult training has also begun. In order to ensure that this system, which is compatible with EQARF, is introduced equally for all VET institutions, a sub-programme has been dedicated within TÁMOP 2.2.1 to develop a unified quality assurance system based on the ones previously used (see 9.1).

Since the establishment of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) at EU level, national developments have pushed ahead. The Hungarian LLG Council (*Nemzeti Pályaorientációs Tanács, NPT*) was founded in January 2008 and in September of the same year a new national programme was launched in the framework of the Social Renewal Operational Programme (*Társadalmi Megújulás Operatív Programja, TÁMOP*) of the New Hungary Development Plan (*Új Magyarország Fejlesztési Terv, ÚMFT*) 2007-2013 which includes the development of a new national LL guidance network. The Measure 2.2.2 of TÁMOP was contracted in the value of HUF 2.08 billion (EUR 7.3 million) on 15 October 2008

and covers the period between 22 September 2008 and 21 September 2010. The programme supports development in the areas of IT, education and methodology. In the area of IT development, the development of a new national guidance portal is envisaged, targeting the youth, adults and professionals/experts, with the aim of providing integrated, up-to-date, and user-friendly information related to education and the labour market. The webpage would also offer a portal for career guidance professionals with the information and tools regarding the project. The Training component, the aim of which is to sensitize participants to the issue of career orientation, has started in February 2010 with approximately 150-200 participants.

The fastest and most spectacular measure following the Copenhagen Declaration was the introduction of the Europass system. While it is primarily the representatives of educational administration and experts who face the challenges of the introduction of ECVET and EQF at national level, Europass is met directly by the users. The relatively quick and successful spreading of its use may suggest – among others – that the measures facilitating transparency and comparability met the needs of participants of the labour market.

3.1.1 Policy progress since 2005 to introduce and promote Europass

The continuous expansion and development of Europass assists the national comparability of qualifications and competences, which should undoubtedly have positive effects on national mobility, and ensure the frames for international mobility.

The Hungarian National Europass Centre (NEC) was established by the Ministry of Education (*Oktatási és Kulturális Minisztérium, OKM*) in 2004. Since then, the legal regulations, software and databases facilitating the nationally uniform application of the documents, as well as the informational flyers and homepages (<http://www.europass.hu>, <http://www.nive.hu/nrk>, <http://www.okm.gov.hu/ds>) have been created.

Several aspects of the introduction of the Hungarian Europass system can be considered outstandingly successful. The first ECV-compatible recruitment database has been introduced in Hungary. To create the database NEC cooperated with private companies which consequently adapted their databases to ECV, thus making it easier to register for job-seekers with this type of CV.

Issuing a Mobility certificate (which was called VET document at the time) for those partaking in vocational practice abroad became available immediately after the EU Accession in 2004. The Europass Mobility, the Certificate Supplement and the Diploma Supplement have been available nationwide since 2007. The software used to issue the latter enables universities to award uniform documents, which can still be individual according to the different training programmes. As of 1 March 2006, higher education institutions issuing diplomas are obliged to issue a diploma supplement to their graduates for free both in English and in Hungarian. The Hungarian homepage of Europass (<http://www.europass.hu>) became operational in May 2005 making it possible to download the documents and the related information.

Table 1: Number of issued Europass Diploma Supplements, Certificate Supplements, Motilities and visits at <http://www.europass.hu>

Year	Diploma supplement (head)	Certificate supplements in Hungarian (pcs)	Mobility certificates (pcs)	http://www.europass.hu (number of visits)
2005	104	61	670	33 291
2006	15 924	2 529	1 110	100 722
2007	31 165	15 849	818	167 255
2008	34 551	9100	877	252 549
2009	27 732	10 117	972	160 530

Source: Europass statistics

The effectiveness of the work of NEC is evidenced, among others, by data provided by the Europass homepage operated by Cedefop and their statistics. While Hungary is only the 13th largest state by population in Europe, it took the 4th-5th place regarding the number of Europass users and 7th-8th by the number of homepage visitors in 2007.

Although the goals of Europass include the enhancement of international mobility, its introduction did not trigger significant changes in this field, and also the number of online documents (CV and Language Passport) filled out in native language is quite high compared to other countries. The growth has been continuous since then: while there were only 23,000 visitors in the year the website was launched in 2005, by 2007 this figure increased to 164,000 and in 2009 there were as many as 294,000 people visiting the website from Hungary. The Europass documents have been downloaded from Hungary in greater number as well: from 16 thousand CVs prepared in 2007 using the web application, this figure increased to 114,000 by 2009. What may lie behind such increase is that Hungarian job-seekers recognized that ECV can be equally used for job search in their native country as well and the CV wizard enables users to quickly and easily prepares their CVs.

3.2 Promoting geographical mobility of learners/apprentices and teachers/trainers in VET

The importance of geographical mobility in VET has been recognized by Hungarian VET policy makers, and the success of the Leonardo mobility projects, coordinated by Tempus Public Foundation, has served as an example for the development of domestically organized mobility programmes (see 3.2.2). The impact of the development of common EU tools remains to be small with respect to mobility indicators (see 3.1.1). However, their introduction and spreading will probably increase the number of students and teachers who undertake studies or practical training abroad not only through centrally organized programmes but also individually.

The most important obstacles to the geographical mobility of VET students and teachers include the lack of appropriate language skills and the insufficiency of the financial support resulting from the inequalities between Hungarian and EU wage levels. In addition, since many VET students come from disadvantaged families,

covering the costs that may be incurred by a study visit abroad may be impossible for these students and their families.

With respect to language skills, several studies have highlighted the low level of foreign language skills among VET teachers and students and the low efficiency language training in VET schools. A sub-programme of Social Renewal Operational Programme (*Társadalmi Megújulás Operatív Programja, TÁMOP*) 2.2.1, launched in 2009, aims to remedy the problem by improving the efficiency of language teaching in VET schools by developing vocation-specific curriculum for language classes, as well as by enabling teachers and instructors to participate in 3-week language training programmes, both in Hungary and abroad.

3.2.1. European resources for mobility in VET – the Leonardo programme

Hungary joined the programmes which preceded the Lifelong Learning Programme in 1997. Since 1999 Tempus Public Foundation has managed tenders in these programmes. Lasting satisfaction with the operation of the agency expressed by all parties concerned (applicants, training and other institutions involved in VET, experts of maintenance and management) and the high level of professional work it carries out have made the Ministry of Education consistently rely on the Tempus Foundation in implementing its policies in the fields of EU co-operation and mobility.

Since the launch of the Leonardo da Vinci (LdV) programme in Hungary in 1997, the number of beneficiaries travelling abroad with support from the programme has shown an increase.

Table 2: Number of participants in the Leonardo Programme, 2000-2009

	Pupils in IVET	Students in higher education	Young employees/young graduates / People in the labour market	Total
2000	460	71	32	563
2001	524	136	92	752
2002	371	126	78	575
2003	713	144	82	776
2004	805	274	117	1196
2005	1159	250	203	1303
2006	1066	273	182	1521
2007	1190	-	202	1392
2008	1186	-	162	1348
2009	1275	-	238	1513

Source: Tempus Public Foundation, 2010

Except for the year 2007, the number of students participating in the programme was 2000 or beyond in the past couple of years: in 2006 as many as 2000 students took part in the programme, in 2007 there were 1649, and in 2009 there were 2065. In the same period another 380 people travelled abroad as part of partnership projects.

The good quality of the Hungarian Leonardo mobility programmes is underlined by several facts: the opinion expressed by the beneficiaries of the programme; the recurring statements in the evaluations and effectiveness studies, which have been

carried out four times so far. The 2004 evaluation of the programme underlined the positive impact of study visits on the vocation skills, language and other skills (social, etc.) of students. The high quality of the projects is also evidenced by experience of the competitions for the European Quality in Mobility Award in 2004 and 2005. The nominated Hungarian projects were all among the best ones; one fifth of the nominations and one third of the quality awards were granted to Hungarian institutions. The European Quality Charter for Mobility is well-known among nominees and its 10 points serve as guidelines for the information and the review-evaluation processes. Another indicator of the high level of the Leonardo mobility tenders is that in 2005 as much as 72.6% of applications were qualified as excellent or good and thus received funding, while in 2006 their proportion was 71.6%. The 1% drop against the 50% increase in the number of applications suggests significant reserves in quality mobility and it could effectively utilise larger resources as well.

Since 2009 the maximum length of mobility projects has been extended to four years, which seeks to promote the development of mobility strategies, a better integration of mobility into the training provision, and thus high quality mobility projects. (For further detail on Leonardo da Vinci programmes after 2007, see 8.2)

3.2.2 Domestic resources for mobility in VET

Study visits and internships abroad in the framework of the Leonardo programme may be the most well-known VET mobility programmes in Hungary; however, they may not be the largest ones with respect to their volume. A study prepared in 2003 during the evaluation of the Leonardo programme suggests that student and teacher mobility projects containing vocational elements, which had existed in great number even before the launch of the Leonardo programme in Hungary in 1997, greatly exceed the Leonardo Programme in their volume. These study programmes may be shorter and less elaborate in terms of their professional content; however, the number of participants is very high. These are often financed through joint funding but most often local resources – including family budgets, to a large extent – are used to cover expenses.

VET policy-makers revealed a commitment to promoting mobility also in their decisions to incorporate an international mobility component into all the major development programmes - already before 2002, as well as into the Vocational School Development Programme (*Szakiskolai Fejlesztési Program, SZFP*) launched in 2003. This mainly concerned teachers, instructors and managers but complementary resources were made available for student mobility as well.

In 2003, following the initiative of Tempus Public Foundation (*Tempus Közalapítvány*), the National Vocational Training Council (*Nemzeti Szakképzési és Felnőttképzési Tanács, NSZFT*), the multilateral interest reconciliation body of that time, provided HUF 62.5 million (EUR 0.25 million) from the Labour Market Fund (LMF) (*Munkaerő-piaci Alap, MPA*) for supporting student mobility for schools participating in SZFP. They announced a “Leonardo-type” call for applications in terms of its logic and algorithm, which was, at the same time, adjusted to the vocational school segment under-represented in the Leonardo. Out of the 89 schools participating in SZFP I, 18 applied and eventually 10 institutions were given the opportunity to carry out 11 projects with the involvement of 163 beneficiaries. A

study assessing SZFP I found that teachers considered mobility projects very useful (giving it an average score of 4,1 out of the maximum 5) and especially the possibility of experience exchange was highlighted as most useful. Despite the positive feedback on the part of teachers, only 36% of the institutions in the study indicated that they would include mobility into their pedagogical programme in the following year, which may indicate weak embeddedness of mobility in the schools' work. In 2005 it was again NSZFT which provided the resource from the Labour Market Fund for school mobility programmes in the amount of HUF 160 million (EUR 0.65 million). This additional resource, which also aimed to alleviate the disadvantages of the vocational school segment, under-represented in the customary call, enabled 308 students and 57 teachers to travel. In 2008 the amount allocated from domestic sources for supporting mobility projects increased to HUF 300 million (EUR 1.2 million) so there has been a steady and significant increase in the amount of support for mobility.

The institutionalisation of mobility would favourably affect the sector's overall knowledge. However, with the termination of SZFP as of December 2009, VET institutions wishing to continue the mobility projects will have to seek funding elsewhere. The positive assessment of international mobility in VET has not yet resulted in the drawing up of concept-based, additional continuous, institutionalized support for this type of learning. This is evidenced by the unfortunate fact that neither the chapters on education and VET nor the action plan of the Social Renewal Operational Programme of the 2007-2013 planning period include this type of learning among the priorities or the activities which may receive support in the first two years.

There is a novel initiative which supports cooperation between VET institutions in Hungary and Hungarian VET schools and institutions in the neighbouring countries. The initiative was launched as a pilot programme in November 2009 by Apáczai Public Foundation (*Apáczai Közalapítvány*), established in 1998 by government decree 1162/1998. (XII.17.) to promote the vocational and higher education of ethnic Hungarian youth in the neighbouring countries, as well as further training of education professionals. The Hungarian-Hungarian mobility programme titled 'Without borders!' (*HATÁRTALANUL!*) aims to facilitate exchange between Hungarian students within the country and beyond the borders through supporting study visits to Hungarian VET schools in Romania, Slovakia, Serbia or Ukraine, as well as cooperation projects with the same countries, in the total amount of HUF 199 500 000 (EUR 740 000). The applications received by the deadline, January 2010, applied for funding for mainly study visits predominantly to Transylvania, Romania. Many of the applications received failed to comply with the formal requirements of the tender and therefore had to be rejected even if the proposed programme was good, so the Foundation decided to post the call once again. As a result of the two rounds of the call, as many as 6000 Hungarian VET students will have the opportunity to go on study visits to vocational schools in the neighbouring countries between May and October 2010. Continuation of the programme in the following years is contingent upon the results of the pilot programme this year.

3.2.3 Support for in-country student mobility

Public awareness and recognition of the Leonardo mobility programmes led to the announcement of calls for applications for domestic mobility programmes within SZFP in 2007, 2008 and in 2009 as well. The calls, as well as the applications, were shaped mostly after those in the Leonardo programme. The resources available were limited (HUF 50 million/EUR 200 000 in 2007, and even less in 2008 and in 2009). External evaluators assessed the programme as positive, which contributed to the broadening of the recruiting base of the continuously expanding Leonardo Programme.

There was a possibility within SZFP to receive support for domestic study visits as well, which was defined as visits by students and teachers in schools, enterprises and other institutions relevant for VET, at least 100 kilometres away from their locality with the aim of implementing a previously defined work plan. The programme set out to promote the exchange of knowledge and experience of actors in VET, and to renew teaching methodology the mobility as a unique form of learning. Between 2007 and 2009 every year on average 130 students conducted study visits. Some of the applicants had substantial experience in conducting mobility programmes, having previously participated in Leonardo or Socrates projects. Participants reported of positive experience in their feedback.

THEME 4: STRENGTHENING THE LINKS BETWEEN VET AND THE LABOUR MARKET

4.1 Identifying and anticipating skill needs

In Hungary short-term labour market forecasts have been made since 1991. Up until 2003 they were carried out two times per year, and since 2004 they are made once a year. The forecasts are based on a stratified sample of companies, representative for sector and size, and data is gathered through face-to-face interviews with company representatives. Until the year 2003, they covered a nine-month period. These forecasts proved to be highly accurate. Since switching to the yearly system, the scope of the forecasts is one and a quarter years. The important by-products of these forecasts are the so-called ‘occupation position matrixes’ that provide information about prospective layoffs and increasing demand in particular occupations. Since 2005, data gathering and processing have been carried out by the Research Institute of Economics and Enterprises of the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (*Magyar Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara Gazdaság- és Vállalkozáselemzési Intézete, MKIK GVI*), commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (*Szociális és Munkaügyi Minisztérium*). Since 2008 the basic statistics of the survey have been accessible to the public on the Internet through an interactive database⁴.

The database also contains information on the following: the number of prospective layoffs and new hires for each occupation; the requirements career starters need to meet; a list of the so-called ‘shortage jobs’, comprising occupations with critically low labour force supply for the typical wage categories; some basic data on in-company training organised by enterprises, and on practical training provided in school-based VET, also listed by vocations. Data is also available in regional breakdown, as well as by counties.

Every now and then mid-term (3-5 years) and long-term (5-10) labour-market forecasts are also prepared, usually commissioned by the ministry responsible for employment-related issues. Most recently research projects on forecasts related to employment and sectoral workforce structure (see Borbély and Fülöp, 2008) were carried out within the framework of ‘Development of the Public Employment Service’ programme of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme (*Humán Erőforrás Operatív Program, HEFOP*). They were funded by Structural Funds.

On occasion, studies and forecasts are commissioned to explore sectoral aspects of the labour market. The most recent sectoral studies were conducted in 2007 focusing on 6 sectors (Dávid et al, 2007); and another one was carried out in 2008 concentrating on the labour force demands of the construction industry in a specific region of the country (Schröder, 2008.).

The fact that forecasts are being made does not necessarily guarantee that accurate information is available with regard to future labour market needs. For example, several studies have confirmed the drastic depreciation of vocational qualifications over the past two decades (see for example Kézdi et al. 2008, 2009). The high unemployment rate of skilled workers as well as the large number of them working in unskilled jobs could be interpreted as signs of overproduction in VET. At the same

⁴ Hungarian Labour Force Forecast Survey (*Magyar Munkaerőpiaci Prognózis*): <http://www.mmpp.hu>

time, the shortage of skilled labour as often articulated in public discourse (in the media, by representatives of economic chambers, policy makers, etc.) is not completely unfounded, either. However, a clear understanding of the unemployment and shortage of skilled labour is a necessary precondition in bridging the gap between the potential labour force produced by VET on the one hand, and the needs of the labour market on the other.

However, precise and reliable information regarding the true extent and form of the labour shortage is not available – partly because shortage estimates made by employers, as many experts point out, should be treated with caution (Kézdi et al. 2008, 2009; Mártonfi 2006; Nagy 2008). Exaggerating the number of skilled workers who are alleged to be missing lies in the interests of the corporate-entrepreneurial lobby, and quite understandably so. In this way they can attract attention and cause state funding of vocational training to be increased in areas (in specific occupations) that suit their wishes; thus employers can ensure that they have just the right amount of skilled workers produced for them, to meet their present and short-term needs.

In many cases the paradox of simultaneous shortage and unemployment is just an apparent contradiction; it has little to do with the realities of the labour market since the figures cited rely on questionable methodologies (Juhász et al., 2009). Of course, there is also a real shortage of skilled labour; that, however, is not an issue of quantity. Rather, it has more to do with the quality of VET: properly trained skilled workers who are prepared for lifelong learning and capable of adjusting to constant economic and technological change are, in fact, in short supply.

4.1.1 Surveys conducted by MKIK GVI

A 2007 law amendment authorized the Regional Development and Training Committee (*Regionális Fejlesztési és Képzési Bizottság, RFKB*, see 8.4.1) - consisting mainly of members delegated by the economic sector - to decide about the vocations to be taught in school based VET at the regional integrated vocational training centres⁵ (see 7.3.1) as well as about the number of classes the training should be provided in. It is also the RFKB that is in charge of defining which jobs are in short supply in the labour market, which entails extra allocation to both trainers and students. Similarly, the recently introduced scholarship programme (see 4.2) is meant to benefit vocational school students who are learning for qualifications which have been singled out as being in great demand by the RFKBs. In addition, the same regional bodies are responsible for inviting and evaluating applications for vocational education and training funds. All these tasks require up-to-date and in-depth knowledge of the regional labour-market on the part of the RFKB members. From 2008 on, in order to make this information available, 900 million HUF (approx. EUR 3.6 million) are allocated annually for carrying out surveys.

⁵ RFKBs made decisions on enrolment in 2009 for the first time (regarding enrolment frames of 2010). In 2008 they only sorted the vocations to be taught in three categories (prominently supported, supported and not supported) in order to orient the training offer of institutions and the awarding process of development funds.

The most influential non-governmental actor in vocational education and training, the MKIK, organises and carries out the assessments and MKIK GVI provides the research background. The central part of a survey (Fazekas and Makó, 2008), conducted in the spring and summer of 2008, drew on a sample of 12,000 enterprises. This survey collected information about the employment of people with vocational qualifications, and the prospective demand for them during the next one to four years with respect to 250-300 occupations. The researchers applied various methods to give an estimate of the number of students aged 14 participating in secondary education, including those enrolled in vocational schools, in each region in the period until 2015.

MKIK and other economic organisations actively took part in gathering the data, which are largely based on opinions and forecasts. The data gathered this way was then displayed in a table by region and occupation, which were then sent to the RFKB. The results should be regarded as merely informative with the specific figures often disputed, occasionally even viewed as unreliable, which do not yet provide satisfactory information about local and regional needs. Although the survey was carried out before the onset of the economic crisis, the respondents had been reluctant to give an estimate for the next 4 years ahead. The results were debated at a conference where delegates from a wide variety of organisations were present, representing the state, employees and employers. On the basis of the recommendations and the data available – albeit often deviating from them when particular interests proved to be stronger – participants came to a general consensus about the new list of shortage jobs (Fazekas 2009b).⁶ Identifying the vocations with excess in labour force supply proved more difficult, even if the number of such occupations is relatively few at the level of skilled workers.

Lessons learned from the previous year were used to improve the 2009 survey (Fazekas 2009a): the methodology was refined so that previously neglected segments of the labour force demand and supply could be taken into consideration, too. Data were gathered from a wider range. For example, institutions of the public sector were included as well. Furthermore, in addition to using questionnaires of similar structure as before in the case of enterprises, interviews were also conducted with experts and employers. In the new survey more attention is paid to aspects of quality when assessing the issues of training and labour shortage. In addition, based on a sample of several thousands of respondents a ‘career tracking snapshot’ was taken to map the labour-market success of those who acquired a vocational qualification in 2008. The most significant change was the increased emphasis on the use of qualitative methods – as complementary to quantitative ones – in the course of data gathering. Thus the results could be presented in various forms: not only in tables and charts, but also in more nuanced analytical studies, discussing issues of quality as well.

⁶ According to this follow-up study (Fazekas 2009b), the “hard/objective” findings of an empirical study (Fazekas és Makó 2008), commissioned specifically to assist the work of the regional development and training committees, had only a “moderately significant” effect on the decisions made by the aforementioned bodies. The employers’ lobby often proved to have more influence.

4.2 Integrating skill needs of the labour market into VET provision

Due to several reasons – from the permanent shortage of skilled workers in several vocations and in certain regions through the signs of oversupply in some fashionable vocations, as well as the dissatisfaction of the economy with the practical vocational skills and general competences of new entrant skilled workers – ensuring correspondence between VET and the economy has been a top policy priority since 2002.

Although both the national and regional bodies of interest reconciliation and the economic chambers had legally defined entitlements concerning VET development since the beginning of the 1990s, increasing the involvement of economic actors in decision-preparation and decision-making processes of various levels has been an important item on the policy agenda. The following steps were taken:

- increasing the responsibilities of chambers in the definition of VET content, the supervision of practical training and vocational examination (see 4.3.1);
- widening the decision-making rights of the regional bodies (RFKBs, see 8.4.1) and creating institutional-level consultative bodies (see 7.3.1) in order to convey local labour market needs and ensure the appropriate training offer and student enrolment.

Increasing the proportion of workplace learning in IVET has been a policy priority. Due to the economic transformation in the 1990s, the collapse of the former state company system, the participation of the economy has significantly decreased in practical training. As a result, in school year 2001/2002 practical training was provided to a large extent in schools, often – especially in vocational schools – in workshops with outdated technical-technological equipments. Education policy aimed to increase primarily the proportion of student contract-based trainings, especially in ISCED 3 level practice-oriented vocations and in the final part of VET, by legal provisions and financial incentives (see 4.4).

Modernizing the outcome requirements of qualifications in accordance with the demands of the economy has also been a central policy issue. In order to ensure the continuous content renewal of VET, first National Qualifications Register (*Országos Képzési Jegyzék, OKJ*, see 6.4) qualification group committees were set up, including representatives of social partners. That was followed by the complete structural-content reform of the OKJ, in which representatives of the economy were actively involved.

In addition, VET policy intended to strengthen links between VET and the economy primarily by

- producing labour market and career monitoring information and introducing financial and other incentives in order to tailor the training structure of VET to the needs of the local labour market;
- establishing regional integrated vocational training centres (*térségi integrált szakképző központ, TISZK*, see 7.3.1); and
- defining training offer and enrolment numbers in VET schools in cooperation with the social partners (see above).

Before the onset of the economic crisis in 2008, a shortage of skilled labour force was quite characteristic in the Hungarian labour market, particularly within the construction and machinery sectors. In order to encourage training provision within vocations high in demand, special incentives have been introduced: in addition to the scholarship programme for vocational school students training in shortage occupations (see 4.2.1 below), the amount of the allowance payable to students with student contracts (see 4.4.1) has also been increased. This makes training providers, providing practical training in these vocations, more interested in concluding apprenticeship contracts, since they can expect higher refunds from the segment of the Labour Market Fund (*Munkaerő-piaci Alap, MPA*) allocated for training, compared to those who offer practical training in non-shortage occupations.

4.2.1 Scholarship for vocational school students training in occupations high in demand (national)

Pursuant to the Government Decree No. 328/2009., a scholarship programme for vocational school⁷ students was launched in February 2010 to support students training in occupations in high demand in the labour market. The list of high demands jobs are prepared by the regional development and training committees (*Regionális Fejlesztési és Képzési Bizottság, RFKB*), according to specific economic needs of each region. For identifying a maximum of ten jobs, RFKBs rely on the same methodology they apply when defining the regional demands of VET, i.e. vocational programme offers and proportions of student enrolment.

The overall objective of the scholarship programme is to improve the competitiveness of the economy by making VET more demand driven. More specifically, it intends to support students who are training for vocational qualifications which are high in demand in the labour market but have insufficiently low enrolment figures. That is, to make the vocations in question – and the career of skilled workers in general – a more attractive option for students, and to improve both the quality and the prestige of VET. The fact that the programme supports individual students is meant not only to bolster their motivation for learning but also to help disadvantaged young people to complete their schooling and obtain a qualification.

In the first, introductory semester, eligible students receive a uniform amount of HUF 10 000 /month (EUR 37), from the second semester on the monthly amount may range between HUF 10-30 000 (EUR 37-110). Every vocational school student in their VET years is entitled to receive the monthly allowance who meets the following eligibility criteria:

- trains for a vocation high in demand in the region;
- reaches a minimum grade point average of 2.5;
- has a good attendance record with less than 10 hours of unjustified absence.

⁷ Vocational schools (ISCED 2/3) constitute the most problematic part of VET in Hungary. These schools have become a repository for the most disadvantaged students with the lowest abilities. Vocational schools are characterized by high rates of dropouts, while students graduating from these schools have to face the severe depreciation of their qualifications

Even though the list of vocational qualifications supported by the scholarship programme vary from region to region, the following ones are identified everywhere as being high in demand: bricklayer, metal cutter, welder and joiner-rigger (approx. 8 000 students in total). Altogether 24 vocational qualifications from 11 qualification groups have made it to the regional lists. The scholarship programme is funded from the training sub-fund of the Labour Market Fund (MPA); with HUF 2.088.000 (EUR 7700) set aside for the year 2010. The

Interest in the vocations supported under the scholarship programme is expected to increase. However, as it is a brand new measure there are no results to be reported yet. As for figures, the only one that is available at this stage is the number of eligible students in the second semester of the 2009/2010 school year, and this is 10 956. This falls short of the estimated 13-15 000. A further 4 643 could be eligible if their GPA was not below the required minimum. For them schools are required to provide coaching to help them to improve their performance.

In theory, RFKBs are expected to observe principles of equal opportunity, that is to ensure that vocations preferred characteristically by female students are also included in the list of high demand jobs. That requirement, however, is difficult to meet in practice because there is no outstanding shortage of skilled labour in those areas. Out of the seven regions there is only one where the ratio of male and female jobs, by the most simplified standards of gender stereotyping, is more or less balanced. In three additional regions there are a couple (1-2) of jobs which are more likely to attract female students; while in the remaining three there is none. The fact that the compilation of the lists of high demand jobs (see 4.1) is itself a demanding job is explicitly discussed by regional experts: in one specific case the authors of a study that was meant to support the decision-making process stress the inadequacy of the statistical data available, including methodological and other issues (i.e. that statistics fail to reveal or support otherwise existing social demands, for example the need for skilled health workers).

4.2.2 Local VET scholarship programmes

In an effort to compensate for both the internal problems of VET and the mismatch between VET supply and labour market demand, a few local (municipal) governments have implemented their own local measures.

Győr

Prior to the introduction of the national scholarship for vocational school students (see above 4.2.1) a similar programme was already in effect in one of the most significant industrial – and relatively wealthy – towns in Hungary. The local council in Győr launched a VET scholarship scheme in 2008. Besides, prospective employers may also conclude a so-called ‘pre-contract’ with students who, upon completion of their studies, will work for the company for as many years as he/she was the recipient of the scholarship provided by the company. Thus the allowance vocational school students in Győr receive are funded from several sources: local council scholarships, allowances from the student contract (see 4.4), company scholarships, and from February 2010 the national scholarship programme for vocational school students

(discussed above in 4.2.1). Altogether these may add up to an amount similar to the minimum wage.

Since its introduction in 2008 the number of eligible students has almost tripled (from 450 to 1240, the growth of enrolment rate is 8%, approx. 80 students/year). The scholarship scheme is considered a success; it had a positive impact on students' GPAs, and parents are said to make more informed decisions regarding the future of their children. The programme has attracted nationwide attention; city leaders are approached for sharing their experience from all over the country. The scholarship scheme in Győr has also been considered in the development of the national scholarship programme.

However, it is difficult to say to what extent these incentives have boosted the number of applicants to vocational schools, since simultaneously with their introduction, the number of places offered by secondary grammar schools was reduced by 25% in Győr, while the number of classes offered in vocational schools was increased, and the level of entry requirements to secondary schools was also raised. The objective behind this measure has been to provide the necessary level of skilled labour force supply in this industrial city. Those involved in VET are in favour of these measures, although the broader professional community is divided with regard to their long-term impact.

Zalaegerszeg

The local council of Zalaegerszeg, a county capital with 60 000 people, has also developed a local scholarship scheme of their own to support VET students; the objective is to at least alleviate the national-level and systemic problems of VET locally. Specifically, they aim to influence the school choice decisions of students and their parents, and to improve the quality and prestige of VET schools. The increased involvement of economic actors and employers in VET is also among the priorities.

The local scholarship programme will be launched in September 2010 to support vocational school and secondary vocational school students training in certain shortage occupations. The number of occupations singled out for support is contingent on the financial situation of the city. As it is right now, students of mechanical engineering will be eligible; the monthly allowance they can receive ranges between 6-HUF 15 000 (EUR 22-55), depending on their GPA.

There is, however, an already controversial element in the scholarship scheme. While 50-60% of the students enrolled in VET schools in Zalaegerszeg commute from neighbouring villages, only those with a permanent address in the city are eligible to apply. Those, on the other hand, who live just a few kilometres away cannot be considered, even though their educational and future employment opportunities are located right there in Zalaegerszeg.

Because the scholarship scheme is going to take off in September 2010, there are no results yet to report. Estimates, however, can be made based on statistical data available for the school year 2009/2010: if the scholarship programme was already in effect, approx. 15-20 students would be eligible, costing HUF 1 million (EUR 3650).

4.3 Involving labour market actors in VET

During the economic crisis of the first half of the 1990s, companies have for the most part moved out of VET provision. By the time economic growth set in towards the end of the decade, a major part of practical training was organised by VET institutions maintained by local or county governments. VET was dominated by the governmental/local governmental sphere, although economic actors had proper and institutionalised representation in the interest reconciliation council all along. The participation of economic actors in practical training, including the defining of its content and allocating funds, has shown continuous increase in the past years, especially since the governmental change in 2002.

These changes point to a trend, and that has been a declared objective of policy-making as well. Policy-making bodies are hopeful that the increased involvement of economic actors in VET – as well as in shaping the structure, directions and content of training – will result in a better match between economic demands and vocational education and training, and that will eventually make economic actors more satisfied. The economic sector's role has particularly increased in practical training, which was facilitated by the regulation as well (see 4.4). At the same time, practical training provision at enterprises is typically limited to blue collar jobs, whereas on higher levels or in white-collar jobs such training is still low-scale, although an upward trend can be noted here as well.

Following the enactment of the law on chambers in 1994, legislation demonstrated preference for chambers as key actors of economy. Among economic organisations, chambers have consistently appeared to be the most influential ones with their influence having gradually increased in the past years, especially since 2004 when they took over a number of governmental responsibilities (see 4.3.1 below). Sectoral organizations play a less significant role, although they have continuously delegated experts to the working groups of content development. Chambers have been acquiring an increasing role in quality control as well. In most cases they are entitled to nominate the presidents of the examination boards in the area of skilled workers training, thus economic interests enjoy a solid representation on these boards. In addition, chambers organise so-called “level-examinations” at mid-term into the training, which provide important feedback for all those involved in training.

The role which economic actors played in renewing the National Qualifications Register (*Országos Képzési Jegyzék, OKJ*) between 2004 and 2006 was larger compared to their previous contribution in content development. They delegated experts to the concrete development projects, and they were also present in the 21 qualification group committees which designed the new structure of qualifications of the qualification groups.

The basic institutions of social partnership had gradually evolved since the beginning of the 1990s and actors of the economy have a stable position in them. In the past few years, especially since the 2007 legal amendment, these institutions have received a decisive role in shaping regional VET policies. They constitute the majority in the Regional Development and Training Committees (*Regionális Fejlesztési és Képzési Bizottság, RFKB*) which have been assigned some important decision-making rights on top of their previous functions of recommendation and review (see 8.4 on RFKBs). In 2007 the National Vocational and Adult Training Council (*Nemzeti Szakképzési és Felnőttképzési Tanács, NSZFT*) approved a HUF 900 million (EUR 3.6 million) project, co-ordinated by the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (*Magyar*

Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara, MKIK), to prepare for these new tasks, specifically for decision making with regard to vocational programme offers and corresponding enrolment figures in vocational schools. In 2008 data collection and research carried out by the research institute of MKIK was supported by a similar amount (see 4.1).

4.3.1 Delegation of state functions to the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Magyar Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara, MKIK) (2004-)

Since the governmental change in 2002, the chambers' positions in VET decision-making have improved rapidly both with respect to defining the content framework, as well as the location of the training. Among the organisations representing the economy, chambers have continued to have a prominent position since the middle of the 1990s, and their role have by now become of decisive importance in this field.

The first significant action was taken on 27 January 2004 when MKIK signed an agreement of cooperation with the Ministry of Education to modernise the professional and examination requirements for 16 vocational qualifications, as well as to develop the system of practical level-examinations. The vocations covered represented 40-50% of vocational school training. MKIK was successful also in increasing the duration of vocational training following pre-vocational training in qualification groups by 50%, from 2 to 3 years, in 14 of the 16 vocations. Thus beginning from September 2005, it takes a longer training period to become a skilled bricklayer or a waiter (altogether 13 years⁸) than to obtain the secondary school leaving examination certificate, i.e. the entry pass to higher education. The content modernisation of the 16 vocational qualifications was financed from resources allocated by the NSZFT, from the Labour Market Fund (*Munkaerő-piaci Alap, MPA*) and by the Fundmanager Directorate of the Ministry of Education (*Oktatási és Kulturális Minisztérium Támogatáskezelő Igazgatósága, OKMT*).

Based also on the 2004 agreement, since 2005 chambers have been entitled to organise so-called "level-examinations" in the abovementioned 16 vocational qualifications at mid-term into the training. These provide feedback for the training providers on the activities carried out in the first phase of the training, and on how to make the second one more efficient.

Following the 2006 framework agreement, MKIK and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour – the latter being responsible for VET administration since the summer of 2007 – concluded another agreement in February 2007. As a result, the Chamber took on tasks and positions which had previously belonged to the ministerial administration. Thus in the 16 vocational qualifications, the content management of which they took over in 2004, they became entitled to delegate the president to the examination boards as well. MKIK was assigned the responsibility to develop the professional and examination requirements in an additional 11 vocational qualifications, for which it will also organise level-examinations with the right to delegate presidents to the examination boards. These 27 vocational qualifications altogether cover the larger part of ISCED 3 level skilled workers training.

In 2008 chambers were already responsible for conducting so-called mid-term level examinations in 24 vocations in school-based VET. These are meant to assess

⁸ Up until 1998 it took 11 years, while between 1998 and 2005 it was 12 years.

competences necessary for working under supervision and the professional and technological skills the student has mastered so far. Pilot examinations are conducted in the modular system as well, in those vocations for which exercise banks have been developed and are ready to be used.

MKIK also took over from the ministry the task of the organisation, management and coordination of the national competition “Outstanding Student of the Trade”, which first took place in Spring 2008. Since then the competition has been organized every year, and in an increasing number of vocations. In addition, a competition for young skilled workers who have already completed their studies is organized simultaneously, which also functions as a preliminary contest for WorldSkills and EuroSkills (see 6.2).

According to the agreement and frame agreement between the Ministry and MKIK, all these additional tasks are financed from the training sub-fund of the Labour Market Fund.

These measures have generated changes almost exclusively in ISCED 3 level VET. Their effects on the labour market cannot yet be judged, however, economic actors seem to be utterly satisfied with the changes themselves. This does not mean, however, that they do not call for further changes. The transfer of tasks from the state fits the key concept of VET policy-making, which strives to involve the economy more and more actively in the process of defining the content, the structure and conditions of training. Behind this lies the expectation that tensions between demand and supply in the labour force would decrease as a result.

VET experts and the institutions concerned more or less agree on the necessity of increasing the role of the economy in VET, however, they have differing views on how that should be done. In the light of current developments it is not clear yet how the government will be able to keep its control, that is, how it will be able to exercise its ultimate responsibility. It is also unclear whether transferring more and more tasks from local governments and schools to enterprises and economic chambers will result in a better co-operation between education and economy. Co-operation is of vital importance as it is a precondition for ensuring the quality of training and the better representation and the meeting of the long term needs of the economy.

4.4 Promoting workplace learning

Enhancing practical training in IVET and adjusting it to the demands of the economy has been a highlighted objective of VET policy which it intended to achieve by more actively involving economic organizations. Pursuant to the VET act, in school-based VET practical training can be provided at an enterprise in two forms: based on a cooperation agreement or a student contract. VET policy promoted primarily apprenticeship training. In comparison with the former, the most characteristic feature of the latter is that the student contract is concluded by the student and the enterprise, under the supervision of a representative of the local economic chamber which inspects the conditions and standard of training. In addition, students making a student contract receive regular monthly payment from the enterprise (the amount of which it can reimburse from the training sub-fund of the Labour Market Fund). They

are also entitled to social security benefits, and the time of their training is counted as work time when calculating pension.

The main principle governing VET policy was that the first phase of practical training focusing on mastering basic vocational skills should be provided in school workshops, but then skills should be deepened in the immediate environment of the economy. In order to increase the proportion of workplace training, VET policy offered financial incentives to enterprises and transformed the per capita funding of schools. This was required because training students entails considerable administrative and sometimes additional financial burden for enterprises, while schools lose the per capita funding they would get for students trained in the school workshop if they participate in external practical training.

From the school year 2004/2005 the per capita funding of practical training provided in the school workshop was raised to 140% in the first, but decreased to 60% in the final VET grade, thus encouraging schools to favour workplace training in the final period of VET. The experience of the past years, however, shows that this regulation has not resulted in a major change; the proportion of workplace learning has not increased in the last grade, and has not decreased in the grounding phase significantly. This suggests that there are other, much stronger aspects which determine the place of practical training: whether existing infrastructure is already available, and the fact that practical training provision is actually a thriving business (Mártonfi 2007). The share of workplace training has remained low, especially in VET provided by secondary vocational schools after the secondary school leaving examination, because in post secondary VET programmes the proportion of practical training is usually only 1 or 2 days a week which does not motivate enterprises to provide training.

Measures promoting student contract-based training (see 4.4.1 below) have, however, been rather successful inasmuch as it has become the dominant form of workplace learning in vocational schools. This training form – preferred by both legislation and financial incentives – is considered by VET policy to be the best tool of strengthening links between VET and the economy, which also facilitates transition to the world of work and increases graduates' chances of employment. However, scholarly researches on the subsequent employment status and the learning activity of young people participating in school workshop versus workplace training – based on either a cooperation agreement or a student contract – have not so far been conducted.

Except for state supported programmes providing initial and continuing training linked to employment programmes for disadvantaged young people and adults (see 5.1 and 5.2), there has been no policy measure applied to promote workplace learning in VET provided outside the school system in adult training.

4.4.1 Promotion of student contracts (2003 -)

Student contract-based training, as one form of vocational practical training provided by an enterprise, is available in IVET at upper and post secondary levels since 1997/1998. The number of student contracts has increased from 6616 to 14063 by school year 2001/2002 but the proportion of students participating in these trainings remained rather low.

The objective of the policy promoting student contracts is to increase the number of students participating in such training in IVET, especially in the last VET grade which

should deepen vocational skills following vocational pedagogical grounding in a workshop. In order to achieve this goal, the following measures have been implemented since 2002:

- since 2005 the VET act defines the cases when practical training can be provided based on a cooperation agreement, and since 2007 it prescribes that in case practical training is provided at an enterprise in more than 50% of its total duration, it can be organized only based on a student contract;
- the amount of payment apprentices are entitled to has been increased⁹;
- the administrative burden of enterprises providing student contract-based practical training has been reduced and they have been offered various financial incentives¹⁰;
- in parallel with differentiating the amount of per capita funding of practical training in a VET school (see 8), schools became entitled to a partial per capita support in case their student participates in student contract-based training.

As a result of these measures, the number of student contracts increased to 45 900 by 2009 (see Annex 2, Table 1) and the number of enterprises providing student contract-based training increased significantly. (As it can be seen in Annex 2, Table 3, it has been around 9000). Increase in the number of student contracts in shortage-jobs is presented in Annex 2, Table 4.

This form of training has become common primarily among vocational school students; in school year 2007/2008 more than half of students participated in practical training at an enterprise based on a student contract (while less than 10% based on a cooperation agreement). The majority (72.9%) of secondary school students, however, still received practical training exclusively in school workshops. Even though among full time students participating in practical training at an enterprise the proportion of those having a student contract has tripled (from 10.4% in school year 2001/2002 to 33.24% in 2007/2008), cooperation agreement remained the popular form of external practical training in post-secondary VET (see Annex 2, Table 2).

A training form corresponding to student contract became available also in higher level VET (see 6.3) from 2006, when practical training is provided uninterrupted in at least 25% of the duration of training. New opportunities to extend this form of

⁹ In 2003 it was raised to maximum 50% of the minimum wage, so that the amount of this allowance that qualified as exempt from taxes was at least 15% of the minimum wage in the first term of the first VET grade, and had to be increased by at least 10% in each of the following terms in view of the student's performance and diligence. Since 2007 the amount to be paid in the first term was increased to 20% which is supplemented by another 20% in case the training is provided in shortage-jobs, and thereafter the training provider decides on the amount of mandatory increase.

¹⁰ In 2003 the cost of materials used in the training of students became eligible for deduction in the amount of 20% of the minimum wage per student per year, also the flat rate deduction of costs became possible annually in the amount of the minimum wage, and the amount of tax base reduction per student per month was raised to 20% of the minimum wage. In 2006 the range of costs deductible on a flat rate basis was widened by making the wage costs of students' payment, such as the social security tax, deductible, and further costs became deductible in up to 150% of the minimum wage. In 2007 the deductibility of materials costs was raised to 40% of the minimum wage in case the training was provided in shortage-jobs, and administrative costs related to practical training provision and the deduction of its costs also became deductible in the amount of maximum HUF 15 000/EUR 60 per student per year, but up to at most the annual amount of minimum wage per enterprise.

training include the one-term-long practical training of the new, so-called practice-demanding BSc trainings, and VET programmes provided outside the school system.

As the data above show, the measures promoting student contracts have not brought significant change in VET provided by secondary vocational schools, primarily because the proportion of practical training is usually only 1-2 days per week in these (short) vocational training programmes, which does not motivate enterprises to provide training. The impact of measures encouraging enterprises by financial incentives is also weakened by the fact that the vocational training contribution which is the basis of writing off the costs of practical training can be allocated also (to a certain extent) for financing the training of employees (see 8.1) thus the two priorities act against each other.

Promotion of student contracts has so far concentrated on increasing their number. However, in order to ensure the adequate standard of workplace learning it is also very important to eliminate quality differences that currently can be experienced among training locations, and to ensure the pedagogical qualification and regular further training of trainers instructing the students.

Up until recently, students could enter a student contract to receive practical training at an enterprise in the VET years of their training, at the age of 16 at the earliest in vocational schools, and at the age of 18 in secondary vocational schools.

In the summer of 2009, however, the minimum age limit was reduced to 15 years. That is, upon successful completion of their 9th grade students can start apprentice training now, provided they have parental consent.

The long term goal of a project starting in 2009 within the framework of the Measure 2.2.1 of TÁMOP (see 7.2) is to promote apprenticeship contracts with an innovative content and further the increase of the number of economic organizations offering practical training. On the one hand, the innovative pedagogical methods, teaching materials and tools developed in this project will help students' integration in the workplace. On the other, it will further improve the pedagogical-didactic competences of trainers conducting practical training in enterprises.

THEME 5: ADDRESSING EQUITY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

5.1 Addressing equity in VET

It is a permanent tendency in Hungary that young people entering VET programmes either at ISCED 3 level or above are increasingly less prepared and come from a more disadvantaged social background. The expansion of secondary and tertiary level education has been particularly rapid in Hungary, primarily because of the country's previous lagging behind of more developed countries. As a result of the radical transformation of the labour market, VET qualifications have suffered a dramatic loss of value in comparison with higher level qualifications.

Consequently, the gap has increased between entrants into general versus VET programmes, and even between VET programmes of different levels and varying prestige. In short, vocational programmes are becoming less and less attractive. Students often apply to VET schools on a "residual basis", instead of following their own choice. As a result, their motivation level is well below the average. They consider their being in VET a failure, and thus are more likely to leave the programme without obtaining a qualification or leave their chosen trade right after completing their training. Many of them continue their studies instead of starting to work in the vocation they had prepared for. Three-fourth of those who start studying in a vocational school wishes to obtain a secondary school leaving exam certificate at a later point; and at least one-third of them in fact do so.

However, a very large number of young people do not even get to enter vocational or secondary education. A fifth of them obtain neither a vocational qualification nor a secondary school leaving exam certificate by the age of 25. They are victims of the previous training levels (ISCED 0, 1, 2) which are unable to effectively handle social inequality. Most of them live in impoverished villages, micro-regions or neighbourhoods, on the peripheries of society along with their unemployed parents. Many of them are Roma. They see no hope of breaking out of their circumstances for want of positive examples; with no perspective they lack the motivation for learning and achievement. Vocational schools constitute a segregated group of institutions educating mainly disadvantaged students with special educational needs. Unfortunately, they struggle with their problems without receiving priority attention from VET policy or additional financing for their extra tasks.

Increasing access to VET was singled out as one of the issues to be tackled by policy makers a few years ago. Social integration through VET is a declared objective with substantial resources. Nevertheless, the current social environment is a major obstacle in the way of diminishing inequalities and the integration of marginalized social groups. Solidarity with the losers of the post-socialist transformation is rather weak in Hungary, and the labour market is not expanding steadily or only slightly does so. The income level of the least qualified, even if supplemented with aids and occasional illegal work, is hardly at all competitive. Therefore the chances of the social integration of the unskilled Roma, the unemployed, and those living off benefits and aids can hardly be increased solely by their enrolment in VET.

The provision of labour supply both for skilled workers and at higher educational levels is a growing problem that can be accounted for by the permanent decrease in the attractiveness of VET. This is an issue that is constantly on the agenda. For example, in the Strategy for VET development approved by the government in 2005 "Improving Access To All" is declared as one of the main objectives right at the beginning of the document. Tasks to be done are

broken down into 7 sub-categories. These include both general objectives, for example reducing the number of drop-outs and improving access, but also more specific ones, such as developing a modular National Qualifications Register (*Országos Képzési Jegyzék, OKJ*) – the development of which was already underway at that time - and related content development (see 6.4). Measure 2.1 of the Human Resource Development Operational Programme (*Humánerőforrás-fejlesztési Operatív Program, HEFOP*) entitled “Ensuring equal opportunities for disadvantaged students in education” was meant to fully serve the policy priority of improving access to VET. Furthermore, the title of priority 3 of the Social Renewal Operational Programme (*Társadalmi Megújulás Operatív Program, TÁMOP*) for the budget period 2007-2013, “Ensuring Quality Education and Access to All”, indicates that providing access continues to be a high priority for policy makers.

The biggest challenge with regard to the training of skilled workers – i.e. the shortage of skilled workers in certain vocations and/or regions – results from the fact that these jobs are not attractive enough for young people to enter training or for the older generation to stick to their trade and build a life on it. Because the reasons lead beyond the realm of VET and are rooted in the labour market (low wages) and the lack of interest and motivation (hard work, uncertain future), VET policy cannot substantially influence the situation. There are, however, a few measures to be mentioned. For example significant financial benefits are provided for those who undertake training in shortage-jobs since 2007 (see 8.1 and 8.4). Student contracts (see 4.4.1) and the scholarship programme for vocational school students training for jobs in high demand (see 4.2.1) also aim at raising the attractiveness of VET.

Post-secondary level VET has become less attractive because of the expansion of tertiary education. Young people can now quite easily enter higher education institutions which offer higher qualifications and thus higher income. Theoretically speaking, this is the area where VET policy may have some space to manoeuvre but the sectoral division of education administration (vocational education and training – tertiary education) severely limits these opportunities. Recently the increase of quotas on the number of students in state-supported tertiary education has been stunted. Nevertheless that does not change the competitive situation between post-secondary and higher level vocational education and training on the one hand, and tertiary education on the other. Credit recognition rules foster entrance into tertiary education instead of entrance into the labour market (see 6.3.)

Participation in adult learning in Hungary is low in international comparison: it was 4.5% in 2005, only 3.1% in 2008¹¹, and the national target by 2013 – as opposed to the EU target of 12.5% - is 8%. One of the reasons for this low figure is that adult learning activity is concentrated in the more educated and younger population who are also more motivated to be trained. For the lower-qualified and older employees there are specifically designed programmes, especially in the form of labour trainings organized by the labour organization and financed from the Labour Market Fund and in some measures supported by the Structural Funds. Participation of the low-educated unemployed (max. 8 years of primary school) in labour training increased slightly between 2005 and 2008 (from 24.0% to 27.5%). Participation according to age groups has not changed significantly; almost half of the participants were under 30 years of age (50.5% in 2005, 46.1% in 2008%).

Policies aiming at increasing the attractiveness of VET are, in a certain sense, tentative. It has been recognised that there are complex social problems at stake that can only partly be tackled via direct measures, but there is no experience to rely on in using more complex techniques. The National Development Plan (*Nemzeti Fejlesztési Terv*) and the New Hungary

¹¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0640:FIN:EN:PDF>

Development Plan (*Új Magyarország Fejlesztési Terv*) were the first attempts in that direction.

5.1.1 Introduction of competence-based access requirements in VET (2005 -)

In Hungary a high number of young of people face severe school failure before the age of 16, that is, the time when VET can start at the earliest. As a consequence, many young people do not obtain the minimally required school qualification to enrol in a VET school, or their grades are so poor that they can only move on to vocational training that do not match their ambitions and abilities. The latter get into VET unmotivated, and therefore they are likely to drop out half way through or to quit the trade right after finishing their training more frequently than the average. As a consequence, one-fifth of young people in their early twenties do not have an ISCED 3 vocational qualification, or the vocational qualification/school certificate they have hardly assists them with their entry into the labour market.

VET administration, in accordance with social partners, wished to relax the conditions of entering VET, making it possible that a larger proportion of the relevant age groups could start studying in programmes providing a vocational qualification. At the same time, they wished to increase the proportion of those starting VET with the appropriate competences. This measure aims at easing the entrance to all programmes below the level of higher level vocational education and training. The preferential target group is young people lacking the appropriate school qualification and wishing to enter programmes preparing them for blue-collar jobs.

The 2003 amendment of Act LXXIX of 1993 on Public Education provided for the launch of one or two year long 'catching-up' programmes (*felzárkóztató oktatás*) in vocational schools to help students over 15 without the primary school graduation certificate (ISCED 2A) to obtain the competences required for entering a VET programme. The certificate awarded is equivalent to the primary school certificate in cases where the participant has completed at least 6 years of primary school, and thus entitles the student to pursue their studies in the VET grades of vocational schools.

Those who have completed less than 6 years of primary school may obtain the necessary academic and practical elements of knowledge (competences) needed for joining VET in a one or two year long preparatory training (depending on how many – six or seven – grades of primary school they have completed). Then they may enter vocational training where they are prepared for obtaining the vocational qualification contingent upon certain competences as defined in the professional and examination requirements. Entering VET without the standard requirements was made possible by the decrees 14/2005 and 1/2006 of the Ministry of Education.

In 2005 17, in 2006 40, and in 2007 nearly 60 schools that were supported within the Vocational School Development Programme (*Szakiskolai Fejlesztési Programban, SZFP*) launched one-year preparation programmes the completion of which makes it possible to start VET in several vocations preparing for blue-collar jobs. In 2008/2009 1catching up programmes were offered in 18% of vocational schools, involving a total number of 2647 students. The programmes, aimed at developing competences necessary for entering VET, were supported by the SZFP both professionally and financially.

The measures are in accordance with the new, modular qualification system (see 6.4) as well as the competence-based approach and content development that are gaining ground both in public education and VET.

In the course of the programme about every fourth student drops out; all-in-all almost half of the students enter the vocational training programme after the course. With regard to the effectiveness of catching-up programmes, a 2007/2008 study – based on data from 166 schools – revealed mixed results (André et al, 2008). The success of the preparation programme may lie in the fact that it is 100% based on the project method and thus is tailored to meet the needs of the target group. However, the human resource and material needs of the project method exceed those of more traditional methodologies. As a result, the success of the program is to a great degree contingent upon the actual opportunities, preparedness and commitment of specific participating schools and teachers. While there are quite a few enthusiastic teachers who are genuinely committed to the reintegration of disadvantaged young people, there are also schools where teachers themselves flee the programme in such high numbers that their drop-out students can hardly keep pace with. Even the latter, the drop-out rate of students is very much school-specific and shows very different – from extremely high to almost negligible – values.

Problems to be solved include the introduction of the per capita financing of the task and the extension of the system to a wider circle of institutions, at least to those training for blue-collar jobs. Teachers/trainers and other professional competences capable of performing the task are currently in shortage in vocational schools, especially in the most disadvantaged institutions and micro-regions. Furthermore, it creates a conflict situation to be resolved, i.e. that within the same institution traditional programmes, based on classes and school subjects on the one hand, and 100% project-based shorter programmes on the other run concurrently, and both may lead to the same vocational programmes. This causes an unclear competitive situation within the institutions and could bear harmful side effects. In addition, preparatory programmes for starting jobs that require the secondary school leaving certificate are yet to be developed and it will probably not happen in the near future.

However, the very rationale for catching-up programmes may be questioned by a new measure to be introduced in September 2010. The 2009 amendment of Act LXXIX of 1993 on Public Education allows the introduction of so-called early VET. That is, in 80 vocations students may enter vocational training before the age of 16, right after the completion of the eight-grade primary school. According to a survey conducted in November 2009¹², approximately three-quarters of vocational schools are planning to launch such a programme. In these schools competence-based catching-up programmes will become totally irrelevant, i.e. devoid of purpose.

5.1.2 „Step one forward!” (Lépj egyet előre!, LEE I. and LEE II.): 2006-2009

Employment rate is significantly lower in Hungary than the European Union average. Among higher education graduates it is approximately the same, among those with secondary qualification only slightly lower; however among those without a secondary qualification only slightly exceeds the half of the European Union average. Low employment rate in Hungary is caused by the fact that it is difficult to enter the labour market with a low qualification, as even for unskilled jobs qualified employees are preferred. The proportion of low-qualified people is high: 40% of all working/age people fall into this category, that is

¹² The survey cited was part of a research on VET institutions, entitled „Odds of Employment”, conducted by the Institute for Educational Development and Research (OFI).

more than 2 million people. The “Step one forward!” (Lépj egyet előre!, LEE) programme was launched to address this problem.

The first phase of LEE was carried out between in 2006-2007 as Measure 3.5.3 of the Human Resource Development Operational Programme, with a budget of 6.2 billion HUF (EUR 2.5 million), 75% of which was financed by the European Social Fund. LEE I. covered the training of 20 107 adults.

The programme was continued as LEE II. in 2007-2009 as part of the Social Renewal Operational Programme (*Társadalmi Megújulás Operatív Program, TÁMOP 2.2.1*). The number of participants was similar to that in LEE I. (20 391 to be exact), but the budget was significantly raised (to HUF 10.6 billion/EUR 3.8 million 85% of which was funded by the European Union). Because LEE II. was just concluded at the end of 2009, indicators with regard to the success of the programme are not yet available. It seems, however, that the number of those who have successfully completed the training – obtained a qualification – fails to reach the target figure (set at 90% of the number of participants).

The main objective of LEE is to increase the educational level of working-age adults, to enhance their chances of securing employment, and thus help at least a part of the unemployed and the inactive to enter the labour market as well as to diminish the workforce demand in shortage-jobs.

Target groups of LEE are people whose highest educational attainment is primary school or below, people whose vocational qualification has become obsolete or who wish to take part in CVET, and people who have obtained the secondary school leaving exam certificate but have no vocational qualification. Approximately half of the beneficiaries are unemployed, and at least 70% of them do not have a vocational qualification. The LEE programme provides training free of charge in vocations considered shortage-jobs in the given county, at least in 150 hours and at maximum in 1000 hours; upon successful completion participants receive a monthly minimum wage.

The programme quickly became popular as it provided more favourable conditions – due to the training premium – than trainings provided by labour market centres. Typical training programmes were the same as in other trainings organised for the unemployed (shop assistant, sales entrepreneur, light machine operator, heavy machine operator, financial and accounting assistant, personal and property guard, computer operator (user), social caretaker and nurse, cleaner).

Naturally, the programme was popular primarily among those with a higher prior qualification: training centres for those with a secondary school leaving certificate and a job were filled in first, while those with less than 8 years of primary school typically did not enrol in the programme; only 3.9% of all participants belonged to this latter group instead of the originally targeted minimum 10%. In the second phase of LEE more than 10% of the participants attended catching-up programmes which were designed to help the most uneducated to complete the eight-year primary school or to go further to 9th and 10th grades. 1811 of those participating in primary school education completed the programme successfully; the drop-out rate in this group was 5%. (For participants by highest educational attainment see Table 1. below.)

Drop-out rate was low in both LEE I. and LEE II., and the rate of satisfaction was high among the participants. 60% of the participants in LEE I. could find a job upon completion of the programme, which is similar to the success rate of trainings organised by labour centres. The scheme is very advantageous for all participants, that is for training providers and training participants alike. However, it attracts people who are motivated to participate in training

programmes anyway. In comparison with the first phase, the employment indicators of LEE II. were much less impressive (36% right after completing the training programme, and 38% 6 months later). Those figures, however, should be interpreted within the context of the economic downturn and the consequent changes in labour market conditions.

Evidently, the programme is popular among accredited training providers as well, as it resulted in a market increase for them; in addition, the administrative burden of LEE is said to be quite easy to manage.

Table 1: Participants by highest educational attainment – LEE I. and LEE II.

Participants by highest educational attainment - LEE I. , LEE II., (number / %)								
	less than 8 yrs of primary school	primary school	secondary grammar school	VET schools				total
				<i>vocational school</i>	<i>secondary vocational school</i>	<i>skilled workers' school</i>	<i>Technical school</i>	
LEE I.	792 (3.9%)	14 587 72.5%	2515 12.5%	901 4.5%	591 2.9%	635 3.2%	86 0.4%	20 107 100%
				2213 11%				
LEE II.	1844 9.3	11989 60.44	3306 16.66	2698 13.6%				19837 100%

5.2 Support services for groups at risk

The reduction of educational inequalities and the promotion of equity were first identified as crucial goals in the 2002 government programme. However, these issues were not elaborated in the context of VET. The 2005 Strategy of VET Development also emphasised the importance of access, but the questions of inequalities and equity were not explicitly addressed. At the same time, as a result of foregrounding the issue of access in policy matters, several development and tendering programmes have been launched which, even if only in part, aimed at increasing the participation of specific social groups and enforcing the principle of equity.

The reduction of drop-out rates was one of the most important goals of the Vocational School Development Programme (*Szakiskolai Fejlesztési Program, SZFP*)¹³. In general, the quarterly monitoring reports show an overall improvement in drop-out figures and the number of repeaters. However, the degree of improvement varies within a wide range – from rather modest to quite significant – by school, class, and even by occupation. Probably the programme in itself can only slightly affect drop-out rates, for its reasons are more deeply rooted, and are of social – rather than pedagogical – origin.

There are some special schools, applying alternative pedagogical methods and approaches, which try to take care of secondary school dropout students. However, second-chance education has not yet been institutionalized. In addition, dropouts may get a chance to acquire a vocational qualification in projects run by either the employment services or non-profit organizations (see 5.2.1). As for the extension of compulsory schooling from 16 to 18 years, it is not yet seen how it will influence drop-out rates and the career of those who fail school in the long run.

One component of the Vocational School Development Programme expressly focuses on the poorest achieving students, i.e. those who could not start a VET programme for want of a formal school qualification (see 5.1.1).

The government introduced an integration per-capita support in the autumn of 2002 for which schools with students in the first, fifth and ninth grades – upon meeting certain conditions – could apply; among these institutions there were some vocational schools as well (approx. 2-3%). The per-capita support aims at promoting the integration of socially disadvantaged and Roma students through the introduction of a so-called “integrated pedagogical system”. In practice schools receive an annual 60 000 HUF (240 EUR) per student. As it is indicated above, the overwhelming majority of vocational schools refrain from this opportunity. For example, in 2005/2006 about one-third of all students enrolled in vocational schools were considered disadvantaged but the special per-capita support was applied for only after 10% of them (Papp, 2008). Opinions about the real and potential effects of this measure are split.

The programme called „Road to vocation” (*Út a szakmához*) provides modest support for disadvantaged students learning a vocation in short supply in the labour market as well as for their teachers, as part of the programme „Supply for the journey” (*Útravaló*) that contains several components (see 5.2.2). In accordance with the concept of lifelong learning, the

¹³ The Vocational School Development Programme was carried out in two phases between 2003-2009, with 90 and 70 vocational schools involved respectively. The main goals of the programme were the following: the modernization of vocational training, the reduction of drop-outs and the reintegration of disadvantaged students, the increase of the labour market value of vocational qualifications, and the overall raising of the prestige of vocational schools.

programme called „One Step Forward” supports unskilled workers to acquire a vocational qualification (see 5.1.2).

One of the measures of the Human Resource Development Operational Programme (*Humán Erőforrás Fejlesztési Operatív Program, HEFOP*) supported the reintegration of women into the labour market. The beneficiaries of HEFOP 1.3.1 were women wishing to re-enter the labour market either after maternity leave or over the age of 40. Civil society organizations ready to provide training and employment for women or to support female entrepreneurs were eligible to apply. The total amount available for the programme was around HUF 2,000 million (EUR 7 576 000)

Measure 1.1 of HEFOP (“Preventing and tackling unemployment”) aimed at integrating groups vulnerable to exclusion in the labour market with a budget of HUF 30 billion (EUR 114 million), targeting to involve 25000 people in the programme. It has become easier for those with low qualifications to obtain a state-accredited „partial vocational qualification”: students, who dropped-out from vocational training, can get a certificate of partial vocational qualification upon completing a certain number of modules in the future. Programmes leading to a partial vocational qualification can be launched in adult training institutions as well as in institutions accepting graduates of primary schools offering special needs education; this way even the most disadvantaged people can have the opportunity to obtain a vocational qualification.

Currently it is the lack of transparency that seems to be the most problematic part of these measures, especially with regard to their impact. Monitoring is rarely done, and even more rarely published; and the number of impact assessment and follow-up studies is very small.

The group most difficult to integrate into IVET and CVET is the population of those economically depressed micro-regions where the unemployment rate exceeds 50%. In areas like this lack of education and training is accompanied by hopelessness and utter despair, further aggravated by the life style and habits permanent unemployment is likely to produce. The proportion of the Roma is particularly high in these regions, and their employment is further hindered by prejudices, should they obtain a qualification.

5.2.1 Labour market integration programmes with training components (from the second half of the 1990s)

Since the beginning of the 1990s the Hungarian labour market is also such that a relatively large group of underqualified and/or disadvantaged people cannot enter the labour market without support. The most important shortcoming is underqualification. That is why (continuing) training is an essential component of support aiming at lasting employment.

Various central state programmes and tenders have been launched since the beginning of the 1990s, aimed at increasing the employability of disadvantaged people through promoting the development, piloting and implementation of complex, innovative training programmes designed to match the special needs of their target groups.

In particular, the National Employment Foundation (*Országos Foglalkoztatási Közalapítvány, OFA*) has been supporting the labour market integration of disadvantaged unemployed people since 1992 through innovative pilot programmes. All pilot activities are based on complex support that might include training, subsidized employment, psychological counselling, financial support, career guidance etc. depending on specific needs of specific target groups. In the majority of cases vocational training concludes in a state recognized qualification as part of the programme. In fewer cases training only aims at delivering key competences

indispensable for starting a vocational programme. In any case, all programmes have a training component that strengthens the employability of beneficiaries.

The dissemination of successful methodologies and models developed by and/or piloted through prior OFA tenders, PHARE/EQUAL programmes and projects supported through the HEFOP and Regional Operational Programmes (*Regionális Operatív Programok*) is currently supported by Measure 1.4.3 of the Social Renewal Operational Programme (*Társadalmi Megújulás Operatív Program, TÁMOP*) financed by Structural Funds assistance. Measure 1.4.1 of TÁMOP provides temporary financial support for alternative employment programmes assisting the permanent employment of disadvantaged job-seekers. The supported projects develop individually tailored service packages including assistance to low-qualified participants to obtain an OKJ qualification.

Among beneficiaries youth at risk and Roma ethnic minority are preferred, but other well defined target groups of specific disadvantage are also included.

By the beginning of the current decade the piloting of the so-called “Transit Employment Programme” delivered much experience. The elaboration of the model reached the necessary level that dissemination could get a start. New measures from 2004 on were financed from the Structural Funds.

Calls for application were announced in 2004, and projects started in 2005 as part of the Human Resource Development Operational Programme (HEFOP). In the piloting phase (1997 to 2003) 8 to 10 project promoters got supported, while in HEFOP 2.3 the number of subsidized organizations almost reached a hundred. Project promoters are typically civil society organizations, i.e. associations and foundations. They must work in consortium usually with companies and public institutions, relying on the expertise of a wide range of professionals.

The evaluation of the piloting phase took place in 2002, and the viability and efficiency of the model was verified. The projects were monitored from the beginning to the end. Programme indicators regarding training activities and successful qualification exams were realized. However, several project promoters failed to meet the integration indicators as a consequence of the unexpected negative turn of the economy and labour market demands over the past two years. Project promoters are obliged to follow the career of the beneficiaries for 6 months after participants complete vocational training, but to date there is no information on their careers after this deadline.

The programme confirms that the following principles are indispensable for the successful and lasting labour market integration of disadvantaged people:

- provides complex support;
- includes a training component and enables people to obtain a qualification;
- offers individualized support;
- is based on the cooperation of wide range professionals, experts and institutions.

These principles appear in many policy documents on education, employment and social welfare, and they are of growing importance in the culture of policy-making.

This programme based on tendering is flexible enough to meet the needs of different target groups and local labour market conditions. However, only a minority of potential beneficiaries, those who are motivated enough to change their life can be involved. The applying civil society organizations skim the marginal groups of potential participants. They focus on involving the best of the crop – the most motivated – as they have to answer the

expected output indicators (e.g. 70% of participants must be employed after 6 months following the end of the project). As a result, those who are the neediest remain outside the circle potential beneficiaries.

5.2.2 “Road to vocation” (2005 -)

The Hungarian education system cannot effectively reduce the social differences of students. The Hungarian public had to face this rather unpleasant news, the country’s unfavourable ranking in international comparison in the PISA-reports. Since 2002 the issue of equity has received increasing attention in the government’s education and employment policy.

The Programme “Útravaló” (“Supply for the trip”) was launched by a governmental decree (1016/2005) in February 2005. Its aims at assisting the socio-economic integration of children coming from disadvantaged families afflicted by poverty or lasting unemployment. Target groups consist of students characterized by cumulative social disadvantage, coming from corrective boarding schools, cared for by professional caretakers, getting aftercare etc. This priority order is to be applied in case the number of applicants exceeds the amount of available funds.

The Programme “Útravaló” (“Supply for the trip”) consists of 3 sub-programmes, these are: “Út a középiskolába” (“Road to secondary school”), „Út az érettségihez” (“Road to the secondary school leaving exam”) and „Út a szakmához” (“Road to vocation”). The first one is intended for primary school pupils, the other two for students of secondary levels. Students and their mentor teachers/trainers can apply in pairs for a monthly allowance. The amount is HUF 4000 (EUR 16) for students and mentors alike. Contracts are drawn up with the primary or vocational schools, and not with the students/parents or mentor teachers.

In the first rounds in the summer 2005, 21000 students applied, the next year 16000. In the latter case 7000 application were supported. Out of the 7000 only 1050 attended a vocational school. In the following year (2007) 3415 vocational school students applied, and 2536 were successful. Over the last couple of years the proportion of VET students decreased (1600 in 2008, and 1504 in 2009).

The yearly budget of the “Útravaló” programme is about HUF 2 billion (nearly EUR 8 million), and approx. one-seventh of this amount goes to vocational schools. There is a restriction for VET students: only those who are learning for a vocation in short supply are supported. That is, the programme supports training in areas which – due to unfavourable working conditions and/or low wages – are unpopular even among the poorest.

The Programme “Útravaló” is not the only or the most important measure that tries to create better opportunities for disadvantaged students. Rather, it is just a complementary social allowance and support.

There is no information available on the effectiveness and the popularity of the programme, and it is not being monitored. One may assume that the miniscule budget limits both the number of beneficiaries and the overall impact of the programme.

It is only a vague judgement that the not very high budget and low per capita grants limit both the number of beneficiaries and the impact.

5.3 Active citizenship

The National Core Curriculum¹⁴ is binding for all institutions that the Act on Public Education applies to, including secondary level VET schools. The NAT defines the common content requirements of public education in terms of cultural domains. In addition to the development tasks assigned to each domain, so-called key development tasks are also specified; these are instrumental in the development of key competences.

In line with trends in European educational policy, „social and civic competences” are one of the nine key competences defined by the NAT; „education for active citizenship and democracy” belongs to the group of nine key (cross curricular) development tasks. Out of all the cultural domains it is „Mankind and society” within the framework of which education for active citizenship is concentrated.

At present it is the „Recommendations for an educational strategy for active and responsible citizenship”(OFI, 2009a), developed by the Institute for Educational Development (*Oktatáskutató és Fejlesztő Intézet, OFI*), which is considered the core document in the field of education for democratic citizenship. The paper rests on the basic premise that active and democratic citizenship can be learned, taught, and developed. Therefore it has to be given the attention it deserves in the process of shaping the direction of educational policy, even if there are obstacles and challenges to be overcome.

Following the political changes in 1989, the basic institutional structures of democracy were set up, however, this was not automatically accompanied by a widespread development of democratic practice. In other words, the framework is already there but it still has to be filled up with content. In addition to the democratic deficit, the effects of the current economic crisis and the social tensions in today’s Hungary – some of which are directly related to the global economic and financial downturn, some of which have deeper, more complex roots – have created an atmosphere in which the education for active citizenship can only be envisioned as a long-term task, backed up broad social consensus.

Along with the National Core Curriculum, optional framework curricula¹⁵ play a significant role in the Hungarian education system. “Citizen in a democracy” was the first framework curriculum to address directly the issue of education for active citizenship (both as a key competence and a key development task), concentrating on the development of competences required for an active, responsible citizenship (e.g. information management, opinion forming, decision making, argumentative skills, conflict management, problem resolution).

In addition to participating in international projects, several national initiatives (programmes, grants, projects) have been launched to promote the issue of active citizenship.

The establishment and maintenance of social cohesion is contingent on effective conflict management skills. The “Violence-free, health-conscious school” movement was launched in

¹⁴ Government decree 243/2003 (XII. 17.), modified by 202/2007 (VII.31.)

¹⁵ A three-tier structure – comprising the National Core Curriculum, framework curricula and local curricula – constitutes the overall framework for curricular matters. The National Core Curriculum, which is built around the key competences of lifelong learning, is issued by the government.

There is an increasing number of recommended framework curricula accredited or issued by the ministry of education. These recommendations are based on the principles of the NAT, and serve as a basis for developing local curricula by schools.

At institutional level local curricula are developed by schools in accordance with the stipulations of the National Core Curriculum and are approved by the teaching staff and the maintainer. Local curricula define the pool of compulsory and optional study units (subjects, projects, etc.). Hence schools can launch subject-based courses and projects to teach active citizenship in an integrated way according to their own local curricula.

2008 by the Commission for School Safety, appointed by the minister of education and culture. The initiative was called for by the increasing public concern over and media attention to school violence. The call has been successful, approx. 150 institutions and individuals have joined the movement so far.

As part of the movement for violence-free schools numerous, national as well as regional-level events have been organized (conferences, lectures, civil roadshows, etc.), grant programmes have been announced, and examples for good practices are being collected with regard to safe school programmes, alternative conflict resolution, education for democracy and health-conscious schools. The winners of the good practices competition were compiled in a book (OFI, 2009c), which was then distributed to schools.

A project entitled „Introducing alternative conflict resolution, interest-based negotiations and restorative techniques into the operation and pedagogical practice of VET schools” (2008-2011) has also been launched by the OFI, including:

- the setting up of a counselling service network;
- dissemination of alternative conflict management techniques;
- the training and continuing training of approx. 600 professionals (accredited professional training programmes for teachers are being run in several modules).

The mission of the programme is the introduction and institutionalization of mediative and restorative, techniques of alternative conflict management in VET schools and their partner institutions in three regions (Southern Great Plains, Southern Transdanubia, Northern Hungary). Its goal is to improve school-parent relations, to reduce school violence, and to improve the cooperation between schools and their partners.

With the support of the Ministry of Education and Culture, an e-learning programme has also been developed by education experts, as part of the “Social and civic education in vocational schools” project. It consists of training programmes for VET leaders, teachers and trainers as well as vocational school students.

In Hungary, every school has at least one student union. According to a study (OFI 2009a), however, only 90% of secondary vocational school students, and 80% of vocational school students confirm that there is in fact a student union at their schools. Different forums publicity (school radio broadcasting, on-line discussion groups, school newsletters and newspapers, etc.) are not commonly used, and with only a small fraction of the students being involved in their operation. With regard to democratic school governance, vocational school students have strikingly low expectations.

Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights (EDC/HRE)¹⁶ is a set of practices and activities for equipping young people and adults to play an active part in democratic life and exercise their rights and responsibilities in society. The first two phases of the project – devoted to the development of the underlying concepts, and their adaptation by national educational policies – have already been completed. The evaluation of Phase 3 (2006-2009), which focused on policy development, teacher training, democratic school governance and democratic school organization, is under way. In order to better realize the goals of the project a network of coordinators have been set up by the member states of the Council of Europe. National coordinators are responsible for communicating the results and achievements of the project between the Council of Europe and the member states, including national institutions.

¹⁶ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/Default_en.asp

With regard to Hungarian language publications, “Democratic governance of schools” has already come out, and two volumes of teachers’ manual are in translation.

The network of Eco-schools deserves to be mentioned, too. The project was launched in 1986 by OECD ENSI (Environment and School Initiatives). Hungary’s Eco-school Network (*Ökoiskola Hálózat*) has been running since 2000 under the coordination of OFI, and is supported – professionally as well as financially – by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Ministry of Environmental Protection is also involved. Up until 2009 altogether 471 primary and secondary schools have met the criteria to use the title “eco-school”.

The aim of the programme “Europe for Citizens”¹⁷ is to bring Europe closer to its citizens, to enable the citizens of Europe to be involved in transnational exchanges and cooperation activities, contributing to developing a sense of belonging to common European ideals and encouraging the process of European integration. In order to achieve these goals, the programme supports the cooperation of citizens and their organizations of different European countries. Hungary joined the programme in 2008, and has been considered one of the most active participating countries. Since then 87 successful Town-Twinning Citizens’ meetings have been realized (959 344 EUR), and 23 civil society organizations have won operating grants in the total amount of EUR 66 935. Among the winners of Action 4 “Active European Remembrance” there were three grant proposals coordinated by Hungarian organizations (EUR 55 651).

The issue of active citizenship will be further highlighted and developed, and will be one of the priorities when Hungary fulfils the role of EU Presidency in 2011. In order to combat learning disadvantages and to improve equity in education, the Spanish-Belgian-Hungarian presidency trio supports the fight against school failure and early drop-out. Policies that promote the integrated education of children with special needs and the social integration of disadvantaged students will also be emphasized. The realization of the goals of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010) and the European Year of Volunteering (2011) is also on the agenda.

5.3.1 Civil society organizations and active citizenship: GE Foundation Life Skills for Employability Program, Hungary

Civil society organizations play an active role in education for active citizenship. There are several programmes – developed either locally or implemented as local adaptations of international models – which aim at the improvement of skills and behavioural patterns associated with responsible citizenship. However, these initiatives are isolated for the most part and they are lacking coordination with one another. The dissemination of good practices is erratic, and a permanent professional forum still needs to be established. Furthermore, continuous and reliable funding is also a matter waiting to be resolved.

The GE Foundation Life Skills for Employability programme was implemented from 2006 through 2008 in Hungary. It was based on the cooperation of schools, local governments, the business sector and civil organizations. The programme was coordinated by a Hungarian organization, Foundation for Democratic Youth (*Demokratikus Ifjúságért Alapítvány, DIA*) and an international non-profit organization (International Youth Foundation, IYF). The budget available for the whole period was 400 000 USD.

Based on GE’s presence in Hungary, two cities were selected to run the programme in two counties of the Western Transdanubia region (Zala and Vas). Primary schools, grammar

¹⁷ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.php

schools and secondary level vocational schools as well as a higher education institution (Institute for Pedagogy and Psychology, University of West Hungary) were invited to participate in the programme. The proportion of secondary vocational schools and vocational schools among the participants was quite high: approx. 40% of all teachers and students were from these schools, and 46% of the participating institutions were VET schools (see table below).

The aim of the programme was to develop the social competences of students aged between 13-18, to prepare them to become active, responsible adults who are capable of planning their future with a sense of purpose. The emphasis was on ideas and proposals initiated by the students themselves, as well as on communal activities.

Due to special local circumstances, the implementation of Life skills for Employability was different from how the programme was carried out in other countries (e.g. India, Poland). On account of what may be seem trivial technicalities – such as the lack of transportation for commuter students after the mid-afternoon period – the programme here was squeezed into the students' regular class schedule, i.e. it became incorporated into PSE classes. Furthermore, unlike in other countries, the training of teachers and future teachers was given special attention in Hungary.

Participating teachers could start the programme after a 30-hour long training. The programme itself lasted for one school year, following a tight schedule and was carried out under regular monitoring and review (provided by 15 mentors).

In addition to practicing teachers, the training of educators was extended to an equal number (approx. 240) of university students in teacher training programmes. This was particularly important for one of the most typical and recurring difficulties the coordinators faced during the implementation of the programme was the lack of trust on the part of teachers. That is, they could not believe that their students were capable of realizing their projects all by themselves, i.e. without their guidance and control.

Most of the participants successfully completed the programme; the drop-out rate did not exceed 15%. More importantly, for most of the teachers involved the programme meant more than a simple one-time project. Rather, they consider it a model, and the majority would like to continue the work they had started in “Life Skills for Employability” one way or another. In fact, this was one of the goals of the programme. To further assist teachers, DIA launched another, one-year pilot programme in 2009/2010 to help schools to set up base workshops for competence development. The programme's goal is to make community education and learning more widespread. Over the course of the programme students are expected to develop a plan for a voluntary community project, and then make that happen with the support of their teachers. With regard to the future, schools are supposed to work out how to keep these base workshops running once the programme is over. (Approx. one quarter of the participating teachers were also involved in DIA's previous programme, “Life Skills for Employability”.)

Table 2: DIA: *Life Skills for Employability* – Participation of VET schools

	Total number of teachers	VET teachers		Total number of students	VET students		Total number of schools	VET schools	
		number	%		number	%		number	%
2006/2007	35	12	0.34	536	265	0.49	7	3	0.43
2007/2008	119	37	0.31	3,216	906	0.28	13	6	0.46
2008/2009	89	40	0.45	2,348	1206	0.51	8	4	0.50
total	243	89	0.37	6,100	2377	0.39	28	13	0.46

THEME 6: QUALITY, EXCELLENCE AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF VET

6.1 Improving the quality of VET

Quality assurance in Hungarian VET began to gain ground in the second half of the 1990's. These developments, however, have often taken place in the framework of simultaneously implemented measures and programmes:

- The first and most important developments were brought about by the actions implemented in the framework of the Comenius 2000 Public Education Quality Assurance Programme, 2000-2004 (*Comenius 2000 Közoktatási Minőségfejlesztési Program 2000-2004*). As much as 40% of VET institutions took part in this programme.
- Many institutions shaped their quality assurance system based on ISO; around one quarter of VET institutions has ISO certificates.
- Beginning from 2003 all public education institutions have been obliged to prepare and develop a so-called Institution-level Quality Management Programme (IQMP). Although these programmes have been developed, they have hardly affected the actual processes of self-assessment or quality assurance at schools. One of the main reasons behind this was that schools received no support for carrying out these tasks, which they perceived as extra burden. In addition, schools had differing views on the importance of these measures; those institutions which are convinced of its importance carry out quality management anyway, no matter if it has been prescribed or not.
- 2002 saw the introduction of the accreditation of adult training institutions. The accreditation of adult training programmes was introduced in 2003. In 2004 regulations were introduced to define quality criteria for training and programme accreditation. For an adult training institution or programme to be eligible for state support or EU funding, it has to be accredited. The criteria prescribe quality assurance to be carried out on the basis of self-assessment. While suitable for identifying programmes of very low quality, this method cannot guarantee that the quality of accredited programmes would be improved on the long run.

The Strategy of VET Development, adopted in May 2005, set December 2008 as a deadline for enabling all VET institutions to adopt a quality assurance model based on CQAF. A CQAF-compatible model was worked out in the framework of the Vocational School Development Programme (Szakiskolai Fejlesztési Program, SZFP), which was implemented in 2003-2009. The so-called VET Self-assessment model (Szakképzési Önértékelési Modell, SZÖM) was successfully adopted in at least one quarter of the vocational schools participating in SZFP. This model is unique in international comparison, as this was the first self-assessment model which was indirectly built on the EFQM Excellence Model and was developed with taking into account the tasks VET schools perform and their specificities.

The local adaptation of Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF), the VET Quality Assurance Framework (*Szakképzési Minőségbiztosítási Keretrendszer, SZMBK*), was developed in 2006 and further developed in 2007. In addition to an institutional aspect, its concept also covers school maintainers on regional and local governmental levels as well.

The adaptation of CQAF to adult training began in 2006, which sought to develop the current quality assurance system. This aims to improve the current quality assurance system which is

based on accreditation. The concept was approved by the relevant ministry in the spring of 2008, therefore the conditions of implementing CQAF-conform quality assurance in adult training were ensured as well.

The Hungarian VET system has been undergoing radical transformation and efforts have been made at institutional concentration: starting from 2005, VET institutions have been concentrated into larger, so-called regional integrated training centres (*térségi integrált szakképző központ, TISZK*). One programme of TÁMOP, launched in 2009, allocated HUF 600 million (EUR 2.4 million) for improving the quality of VET institutions; this supports the introduction of a CQAF compatible system in 1200 training institutions. The programme is implemented by a support institution of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, which at the same time serves as a National Reference Point as well. In the framework of the project a proposal has been worked out for every aspect and condition of a Unified VET Quality Management System (*Egységes Szakképzési Minőségirányítási Keretrendszer, ESZMK*), which can be applied both in school-based VET, as well as in adult training (see 9.1).

The above-mentioned TÁMOP Programme is implemented under the title „Improving the quality and content of VET”. This goal is being achieved through nine sub-programmes which are implemented simultaneously (see 8.3). The goal of one of the sub-programmes is to transform the examination system into a unified, consistent and regularly controlled outcome system. The first step of this process was the amendment of the VET Act, which came into effect as of January 2010¹⁸. On the one hand, the amendment simplified the administrative process of approving the examination organisation but, on the other hand, introduced obligatory and frequent supervision of examination organisers, as well as central registration of examination results and documents.

6.1.1 Efforts to introduce career monitoring into IVET (2007-)

Experts in Hungary and across Europe expect that introducing a career monitoring system (*pályakövetési rendszer, PKR*) into VET may be an important tool from the point of view of improving the quality of VET. Elements of such a system have been under development since 2007, as prescribed by the 2007 amendments of the acts on higher education and on public education, based on the VET Development Strategy (*Szakképzés-fejlesztési stratégia, 2005*).

The measure have the potential to provide information for actors at all levels in VET:

- On sectoral level, it can facilitate the setting of directions for VET and employment policy development, as well as the mapping and tackling of common problems, such as dropping out, unemployment, reconciling the requirements of training and employers.
- On regional level it can help to better match VET output and labour market demands, as well as minimizing overlaps between training areas, and ultimately to rationalize the financing of VET.
- Through career monitoring schools and their maintainers, can get feedback on the training they provide with respect to the methods used, the specializations they organize and the labour market benefits of their training, the analysis of which may help them set the directions of institutional quality development.

¹⁸ Act CXXXV. of 2009

- As a tool that provides feedback, among others, on employers' expectations, PKR may have an important role in informing students about labour market demands, help them with career orientation, and a more conscious planning of study paths.

The responsibility of running the system will lie with the National Agency of Vocational and Adult Training (*Nemzeti Szakképzési és Felnőttképzési Intézet, NSZFI*). With respect to IVET, the Public Education Act stipulates that the following actors are obliged to provide data for the career monitoring system:

- Starting from the 2007/2008 school year, VET institutions are obliged to provide data about their students who took professional examinations. They also publish – anonymously – data about the graduates' labour market position.
- As of the school year 2008/2009, students are obliged to provide data for the purpose of career monitoring for three years after their graduation (about their labour market position and satisfaction with the qualification they obtained).
- In case the student finds employment in the meantime, his/her employer is obliged to provide data.

The Act on Adult Training prescribes data provision obligation for trainers, participants and employers in the case of state supported trainings as well.

The 2005 Act on Higher Education stipulates that institutions providing higher education are obliged to develop a career monitoring system (*diplomás pályakövetési rendszer, DPR*). However, given that the act does not prescribe sanction in case a higher education institution (HEI) should fail to do it, only few of HEIs have developed and implemented such a system. A study was carried out to review the DPR systems already in place, which concluded that the majority of the models elaborated is adequately founded neither with respect to methodology, nor to content. This is the reason why the TÁMOP Programmes 4.1.3. and 4.1.1. seek to assist with refining existing models on the one hand, and to link to other databases on the other.

A number of government orders have been prepared for regulating in detail the operation of PKR covering both IVET and CVET. However, so far none of those have been adopted, as their coming into force would require that a number of acts be amended beforehand (e.g. the ones on taxation, data protection, unemployment benefits, etc.)

The career monitoring system is expected to be set up by 2010 in the framework of a TÁMOP Programme, which will help the mapping of requirements and opportunities. Parallel to this, also in the framework of the TÁMOP Programme, several needs assessment studies have been conducted with the aim of providing feedback and guidelines for further developments, the first being a survey carried out in 2009 (Tarjányi et al, 2009). This concluded that employers would find it useful to have a registry but feel negative towards additional administrative burdens its maintenance would entail. Therefore the recommendations formulated on the basis of the study point to the necessity to provide information for the following stakeholders:

- Reliable information for employers about the employees' careers,
- Reliable information for employees about the chances of finding employment in their profession,
- Reliable information for training institutions about the quality and adequacy of their work.

Challenges facing the implementation of the system include:

- how to make the collected data available for users in an anonymous way;
- how to link the emerging databases with others and handling related data protection issues;
- failure to meet data provision obligation in a great proportion of the cases, and the absence of sanctions in those instances;
- some of the data is unreliable (e.g. in case of an undeclared job);
- analysts (Tarjányi et al., 2009) believe that the time-span while data provision is obligatory (i.e. within three years following graduation) is too short and is not long enough for achieving long-term goals such as assessing the benefits of training in the labour market, the quality of training or how to make training more effective.

Data-collection within the system that is to be developed in the framework of the TÁMOP Programme would extend to additional domains as well, such as the competences of graduates and feedback from employers about their performance.

6.2 Promoting excellence in VET

In addition to the initiatives mentioned in 6.1, some measures seek to encourage efforts on the part of outstanding students and institutions.

Primarily, the model seeks to promote institutional self-assessment, i.e. for institutions to identify strengths along with areas which need to be developed, which ensure uniform and measurable standards to compare the results of the quality development work different institutions carry out. The impact of the award is limited by the fact that it is symbolic and it does not entail other advantages, e.g. financial, for its holder. Those who have good chances of winning the award are institutions with a good reputation and have no enrolment problems.

An assessment was carried out of the quality development measures implemented in the period 2000-2010, which concluded that compared with others, VET institutions are “generally more open to quality development, they have participated in organised, large scale development programmes in large numbers, and the majority of institutions continue to implement quality development even after national programmes have been discontinued” (Menner, 2010). It follows from this that VET schools are generally very successful on the KMD competition as well.

The title and award “Excellence Award for vocational training” was created in 2005 with the aim of supporting quality development in VET. Eligible institutions are VET institutions providing school-based, full time education and higher education institutions with courses offering advanced level vocational qualification. The most important criterion based on which the award is granted is to see a great proportion of VET graduates find employment in the labour market in their occupation after completing training. Its appeal, in the first place, is the substantial amount of funds (EUR 100-150 thousand) which the five winning schools in each region, selected every year, receive from the Labour Market Fund (*Munkaerő-piaci Alap*), which they are free to use for the purposes they define themselves. Besides, the award also increases the prestige of schools in that awarded schools become eligible to use the title “Excellence in VET” with a clear indication of the year when it was awarded. The recognition was aimed to motivate applicant organisations to implement a training programme which matches labour market demands. The competition was announced twice among schools, in 2007 and 2008, however, it was not popular and only few applied. In the absence of

systematic tracking the career of students, only institutions' self-assessment is used, which poses problems not only from the point of view of the assessment of applications but also undermines the credibility of the award. In the course of the two years, no more than ten schools received the prize altogether, which has no real prestige and is not recognized by professionals. It is perhaps thanks to this as well that the award has not been announced since 2008.

Hungary has been a member of the Worldskills organisation since 2006. Since 2007, Hungarian participation, both with respect to the range of vocations and the number of participants, has been increasing at the Euroskills and Worldskills competitions (in 2009 it was because of the distant location of the competition, which broke this trend), organised on alternate years, with increasing success. One of the most important impacts of these competitions is that they provide an example for the finals of the Hungarian competition, Outstanding VET Student (*Szakma Kiváló Tanulója, SZKTV*) and the Star of the Trade Festival (*Szakma Sztár Fesztivál*) (see 6.2.1). SZKTV also serves as a preliminary contest for participation in the international competitions, along with the finals and qualifying competitions

The organisational tasks related to participation in international competitions are performed by the National Institute of Vocational and Adult Education (*Nemzeti Szakképzési és Felnőttképzési Intézet. NSZFI*), while economic actors and professional organisations have been taking an increasing role in supporting participants' preparation for the competitions and the provision of the necessary equipment and financing.

Between 2007 and 2009, students from schools partaking in the Vocational School Development Programme (*Szakiskolai Fejlesztési Program, SZFP*) were eligible to participate in a competition, organised on a yearly basis, where they had to devise and implement projects in groups of four. Unlike traditional competitions, this was built on students using complex and key competences which are transversal with respect to several areas and subjects, along with a practically oriented comparison of their performance. Skills related to the following areas have been particularly highlighted: entrepreneurship, mother tongue, social and digital competences. The most important objectives of the competition are developing creativity, enhancing cooperation and increasing the prestige of vocational schools, as well as promoting project based work. It is difficult to measure the extent to which these objectives are fulfilled, however, the number of participants and their activity rates unequivocally prove that the opportunity provided by the competition has been attractive for institutions: over the past three years altogether 4640 students participated in the competitions and they were supported by as many 1145 mentors, parents, local enterprises and ones involved in regional VET provision.

6.2.1 Star of the Trade Festival

The competition "Outstanding Student of the Trade" is organised on a yearly basis. It is linked to the other competitions and entertaining events and its final is the Star of the Trade Festival.

As a consequence of the expansion of secondary and higher education, as well as the substantial differences in wages, the training preparing students for blue-collar careers has significantly lost its appeal over the past two decades. As a result, there is a shortage of labour in various vocations and regions. Not having the opportunity to get into a secondary school is

interpreted as social and school failure, so as a last resort students choose to pursue vocational schools, but the appeal of blue-collar vocations is small.

Therefore, one of the primary objectives of renewing SZKTV and turning it into a media event is to increase the prestige of VET and make vocational qualifications more attractive – both for VET students and as young people before embarking on secondary education, as well as in the eyes of parents, thus assisting with choosing a career and with career orientation. (This is reflected in the slogan of the competition: "A good vocational qualification equals a higher education degree.")

Further objectives of the competition include:

- increasing the quality of VET;
- building contacts between VET and economic actors, reconciling training and labour market demands;
- strengthening the role of the optional, mid-term level-examinations (see 4.3), which assess professional competences prior to the vocational examination: the scores received at the level examination are included in the score received in the competition's finals.

The competition consists of three rounds. Qualifiers are held all around the country which are then followed by a written test: these two rounds are equivalent to the written part of the vocational examination. The finals organised in the framework of the Festival take place according to the rules regulating the oral and written parts of the vocational examination. The organiser of the competition is the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry but the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, together with a number of professional organisations and enterprises, also provide assistance and sponsorship.

Table 1: The number of participants at the SZKTV competition between 2007-2010

	No. of vocations in the final	No. of applicants to the competition	No. of schools whose students got into the final	No. of students who got to the final	No. of visitors (approx)
2007/2008.	15	2 000	66	145	10 000
2008/2009.	25	2 568	93	209	11 000
2009/2010.	23	2 665	110	224	11 000

The number of participants in the competition and the audience shows an increasing trend which is a result of a variety of incentives:

- students whose score is above 60% in the semi finals are exempted from having to sit the written part of the final vocational examination. Those, who perform above 60% in all parts of the competition are exempted from taking the entire vocational examination, so the best performing students leave the competition as qualified skilled workers;

- successful participants automatically become part of the teams preparing for the WorldSkills and Euroskills, with the best performing members representing Hungary at the international competitions;
- applicants are exempted from paying the application fee, while the final is free for the visitors;
- students and teachers from VET institutions are transported to the venue of the finals free of charge from all over the country;
- concerts and entertainment, presentations;
- inviting primary schools from Budapest;
- dissemination of information: website, information in national daily newspapers and showing short information films in TV programmes, etc.

The initiative is very successful and its media coverage has been increasing every year. The finals in 2010 were broadcasted live on Hungarian public television and the printed media and radio channels also covered the event. Feedback and interviews indicate that VET schools and students from the country are more eager to apply than those in the capital, Budapest. Some believe that one of the reasons behind this is that - because of more gloomy prospects in them finding employment - VET students in the countryside are more motivated to learn a vocation.¹⁹

It is also a discouraging tendency that a significant portion of the best VET students plan to find employment abroad after completing their qualifications, in hope of higher wages and recognition.²⁰

6.3. Higher level qualifications in VET

Advanced (ISCED 5B) level VET programmes [felsőfokú szakképzés, FSZ], running for 2-2.5 years and awarding advanced level VET qualifications, were first launched in Hungary in 1998. This specific type of VET programme was modelled upon the Higher National Diploma (HND) program in the United Kingdom and the Institut Universitaire de Technologie (IUT) in France. It is intended to be

- a modular training programme that is flexible enough to keep up with the changing demands of the labour market,
- prepares students for performing high quality professional work, and at the same time
- ensures that the acquired credits earned can be used toward their entry into higher education institutions.

That is, the goal of launching advanced level VET was twofold: in addition to strengthening the link between higher education and the economy, it also aimed at increasing the number of young people with higher education qualifications.

Advanced VET programmes can only be run by colleges or universities. However, training can be provided – and is in fact provided in a great number of cases – by secondary vocational schools as well, under the supervision of a higher education institution. Thus both the legal

¹⁹ Dalia, László: Egy jó szakma felér egy diplomával, vagy kettővel. 168 óra Online. <http://www.168ora.hu/buxa/egy-jo-szakma-feler-egy-diplomaval-vagy-kettovel-36061.html>

²⁰ Somogyi, Eszter: Egy jó szakma többet érhet a diplománál. Népszabadság Online. <http://nol.hu/archivum/archiv-490201>

status of training providers and the administration and financing of the training can vary, depending on the type of the institution where the training is actually organized. That is, some of the FSZ participants have student status at a higher education institution, while the legal status of those enrolled in secondary vocational schools is secondary school student. (see Annex 3, Figure 1).

Over the past few years the government has implemented several measures to support the expansion of FSZ, especially in higher education institutions, for example:

- the procedure by which FSZ qualifications are registered in the National Qualifications Register has been simplified and shortened, and the previously mandatory accreditation of advanced level VET programmes by the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (*Magyar Akkreditációs Bizottság*) has been discontinued at the same time the;
- the option of student contracts were introduced in order to promote practical training at the workplace (see 6.3.1);
- validation of credits: the vocational training programme allows for the validation of credits in Bachelor programmes belonging to the same field of training, and for the validation of knowledge acquired in the course of vocational training of identical contents;
- the number of credits that can be acknowledged should be thirty at least and sixty at most;
- in addition to full-time training with 80% of all FSZ participants, other forms of training (evening and correspondence training, distance learning courses) have been introduced;
- the number of students admissible to state-funded programmes has been gradually increased (see Table1), while the number of students admissible to state-funded undergraduate (Bachelor) programmes has been in decline since 2007;
- students enrolled in state-funded undergraduate programmes are entitled for double funding, that is they can obtain an advanced level VET qualification simultaneously with a Bachelor degree without having to pay tuition fee for the FSZ training;
- new FSZ qualifications in accordance with the restructured National Qualifications Register as well as new professional and examination requirements have been developed, with the involvement of representatives of the economic sector (it should be noted, however, that even though the professional and examination requirements of the four new occupations were developed based on findings of labour market studies, the already existing occupational structure of advanced vocational training was left untouched;
- the tools necessary to measure and evaluate the competences that are specified in the requirements are in the process of being developed within the framework of the Social Renewal Operative Program (TÁMOP).

Table 2: Number of students admissible to state-funded advanced vocational programmes, 2002-2009

Year	Number of students
2002	4 500
2003	5 500
2004	8 000
2005	11 000
2006	12 500
2007	12 500
2008	12 500
2009	12 500

Advanced VET programmes depend on the close cooperation between tertiary and vocational education institutions, as well as between ministries, chambers and professional organizations responsible for or involved in conducting training programmes. In addition to chambers, there is a non-profit organization, the Association for Accredited School-based Advanced Vocational Training [*ÁIFSZ Kollégium Egyesület*] that takes an active part in synchronizing the activities carried out by different institutions, in the development of training programmes as well as in publishing relevant research and development findings.

Since its introduction in 1998, FSZ has been dynamically expanding with regard to the number of vocational qualifications offered, the institutions providing advanced vocational programmes and the number of students as well (see Figure 1). Currently 74 different vocational qualifications can be acquired.

FSZ students by now constitute a sizeable body, approximately 13-14% in comparison with the total number of students in tertiary education. However, the maximum number of students admissible to state-funded programmes have not been reached until the school year 2009/2010. That was the first time when there was enough applicants to fill up the available quota. Over the past ten years, the number of higher education status students and that of those with secondary school status have been constantly changing. Now the two groups are almost equal, but the number of higher education status students is slightly higher and is increasing at a faster pace (see Annex 3, Figure 1).

However, advanced vocational programmes running for more than ten years are not without certain deficiencies as research has revealed (Albert et al., 2003; Györgyi, 2008; Reisz, 2009, Fehérvári 2009, Kardos, 2009). For one, the training programme has not yet gained enough publicity among employers and students; even those working in the field of career guidance are not sufficiently informed about it. Furthermore, the dual status of FSZ that leads to two distinct types of training programmes makes it difficult to understand what advanced vocational programmes are about. That is, depending on which type of institution FSZ is provided by, higher education institutions or secondary vocational schools, there are differences in almost every aspect of the training, including the entry requirements, the tools of evaluation, the quality and goals of the training, its content and structure, or legal status of the participants and the allowances they receive.

Even though an increasing number of FSZ graduates enter the labour market upon completion of the programme, the returns to advanced vocational qualifications are not as good as they could be because:

- the labour market prestige of and demand for the majority of FSZ qualifications are still low;
- the quality of practical training leaves a lot to be desired (see 6.3.1);
- due to the general lack of demand, and also because this form of training is not flexible enough and, by the standards of adult training, takes too long to complete, FSZ has not yet found its right place in adult training;
- the majority of FSZ students enter the programme with poorly developed competences and they are not particularly motivated, either: many of them end up in an FSZ programme not by choice but by circumstance, i.e. following their unsuccessful attempt(s) to be admitted into a higher education programme;
- most of them consider FSZ programmes just a springboard to higher education so much so that they switch to an undergraduate programme as soon as they can, even without completing their FSZ studies;
- consequently the dropout rate is excessively high (over 50%).

FSZ programmes share a number of similarities with BA and BSc (ISCED 5A) level undergraduate programmes which were introduced in 2006. In theory, credit validation is an available option and is meant to facilitate the transfer from FSZ to higher education programmes; in practice, however, the procedure is not uniform and far from being smooth.

On the basis of the issues outlined above, there are experts who call the very existence of FSZ into question, at least the cost-effectiveness of the rather generous state-funded operation of advanced vocational programmes that they enjoy at present (Fehérvári, 2009). For example, both undergraduate students and those with an ISCED 4 level qualification can learn for their first FSZ qualification without having to pay tuition fee. All things considered, the present system of FSZ funding, while certainly beneficial for educational institutions, may not exactly be called economically sound.

The most important goal of FSZ development is to map out the supply and demand dimensions of advanced vocation training. That is the first step on which subsequent developments should be based, such as the review of the occupational structure, the development of a more exact regulation of practical training, or the increased flexibility and credit validation and the transformation of FSZ into an independent educational goal.

6.3.1 Student contracts in advanced vocational training programmes

Even though an increasing number of training programmes in tertiary education providing ISCED 5A higher education degrees contain longer, uninterrupted periods of practical training, student contracts (called FSZ student contract) are only available in advanced vocational programmes for the time being. Student contracts were introduced in 2006, and are available on condition that the practical training is provided without interruption for at least 25% of the total duration of the training.

Because one of the original purposes behind the introduction of FSZ was to facilitate swift entry into the labour market, during the first years of its introduction the duration of practical training conducted on the premises of business organizations (companies) took up 50% of the whole length of the training (Jelentés, 2006).²¹ This criteria was lifted in 2001; at present, as

²¹ <http://www.ofi.hu/tudastar/jelentes-magyar/4-oktatasi-rendszer-090617>

set forth by the relevant statutory provision²², a 3-month long uninterrupted practical training is either mandatory – as is the case in a great number of vocations – or recommended (Sediviné, 2010).²³

According to the current statutory provision, practical training conducted on the premises of business organizations can be organized in two ways:

- the trainings institution signs a cooperation agreements with the host institution or
- an advanced vocational student contract is concluded between the student and the business organization.

Advanced vocational student contracts were developed to the analogy of student contracts typically used in VET, with basically the same rights and responsibilities applicable to both students and business organizations (see 4.4, and Bükki et al., 2009). In FSZ programmes where, due to the area of qualification (for example in case of legal assistants), practical training does not take place on the premises of business organizations (companies) but at public institutions or authorities, vocational practice can only be organized on the basis of cooperation agreements between the training institution and the host institution.

According to a recent survey, the majority of FSZ students do not take advantage of the opportunities provided by the current regulation, and complete their practical training without signing a student contract. This may be explained by the relatively short duration of practical training; the bureaucratic hassle involved is likely to outweigh the possible gains (Kardos, 2009).

A research study of institutional practices related to student contracts (Györgyi, 2008²⁴) has identified three ways by which the location of uninterrupted practical training is chosen, and described the corresponding three types of relationship that training institutions form with the host institutions of practical training, that is:

The majority of trainings institutions let the student find the host institution of practical training. They are willing to employ the students either because there is a personal relationship between the parties involved, or simply in the hope of cheap labour. In cases like this there is usually no relationship between the two institutions. This model has obvious disadvantages: students can find themselves being taken advantage of, and training institutions cannot benefit from any feedback regarding the performance of their students.

Other institutions have already developed a good working relationship with the business organization. In this case, however, their training experience is likely to relate to secondary or tertiary level training programmes, and they are unfamiliar with the peculiarities and specific requirements of FSZ.

A small group of training institutions develop practical training programmes in close cooperation with business organizations, relying on the experience and knowledge of experts who work as teachers at the training institution and at the same time are employed by a business company, that is who feel at home in both worlds.

²² Section (4) paragraph 3 of Government Decree No. 79/2006. (IV. 5.)

²³ Sediviné Balassa Ildikó: A felsőfokú szakképzés keretében folyó kurzusok képzési és kimeneti követelményeinek általános áttekintése, jellemzése [A general overview of the training and output requirements of advanced vocational programmes]. 2010. március <http://tamop413.ofi.hu/okkr-orszagos-kepесitesi/2-2-2-sedivine>

²⁴ Györgyi Zoltán: Képzés és munkaerőpiac [Training and the labour market]. Pécsi Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar, *Oktatóskutató* Központ, 2008 http://www.ofa.hu/index.php?WG_NODE=WebPageReader&WG_OID=PAGfa9959790d415b838

In conclusion, both the level of quality and the benefits of FSZ student contracts are uneven. There are no mechanisms that would make training institutions pay more attention to the demands of the labour market; nor are they pressured into becoming more involved in and exerting influence over practical trainings (Györgyi, 2008).

The administrative (recording, validation) and professional (examinations, supervision) duties regarding FSZ student contracts and cooperation agreements are coordinated by the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (*Magyar Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara MKIK*). In order to compensate for the deficiencies of practical training, the chamber – together with AIFSZ – has developed the framework of an improved system, covering several aspects of practical training (e.g. the locating of host institutions, contracts, implementation, evaluation, and accounting). In order to foster cooperation between training and host institutions, a methodological guide has also been published by MKIK (Cséfalvay és Sediviné, 2007).

6.4 Improving horizontal and vertical permeability of education and training systems

Harmonizing education and VET paths, together with opening and facilitating new opportunities, have been on the agenda of education policy since the 1990's. There have been efforts at making the process more flexible. At the same time, we see examples of the opposite as well, namely when the unintended side effects of certain VET policy accents and measures hinder or render it more difficult to make a change in training or vocation.

The most important investment in VET development in the service of permeability was the development of the modularized structure of the National Qualification Register (see 3.2.1.1).

Entry into vocational schools (Szakiskolai belépés)

Prior to 2006, the pre-condition of entry into VET had been the completion of 8 grades of basic education. The OM 14/2005, then the 1/2006 regulations enabled embarking on VET even for those people who may not have completed basic education but possessed the competences necessary for vocational education and training. In the framework of the Vocational School Development Programme (*Szakiskolai Fejlesztési Program, SZFP*) the training programmes elaborated serve the development of competences and the necessary input requirements were also developed (see 5.1). The development work carried out in 2006-2009 in the framework of the Programme, a number of vocational schools launched catching-up training programmes. However, the financing of these programmes has been discontinued, together with the closure of SZFP, and further financing is not ensured as of 2010.

Special vocational schools

The special vocational school system²⁵, which builds on special education in primary school, seems to represent a dead end road among training paths. Young people get into this system based on the decision of expert commissions examining learning ability, and usually 3% of each year's pupils are placed into such schools. The target group of segregated special schools with a reduced curriculum is, in principle, children with a mild intellectual disability, but

²⁵ Bővebben lásd: Bükki, E.; Mártonfi, Gy.; Vinczéné Fekete, L. (2009): VET in Europe - Country Report 2009, Hungary, 4.2. http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/eu/pub/cedefop/vetreport/2009_CR_HU.pdf

close to one fifth of Roma children are also placed into special schools on the basis of the commissions' decisions. Transition from this system into majority schooling (even to vocational schools) is only exceptional. The labour market integration of these pupils may be facilitated by the fact that since 2006 people may undertake training with the aim of attaining partial qualifications included in the new OKJ and there is a possibility to carry out training for certain OKJ vocations at special vocational schools during a period longer than what is customary.

Vocational schools

The „side effects” of certain characteristics of the education system run counter to the training paths that can be shaped in a flexible manner. For instance, the expansion of secondary education, otherwise deemed successful, with the possibility of open enrolment contributed to the differentiation of the vocational school system at the ISCED 3 level. VET graduates are now required to participate in longer training in order to attain the secondary school leaving certificate (*érettségi*), and other attractive training programmes, which means that they have become less accessible over the past years. The gap between the training programme of vocational schools and secondary vocational schools has increased as a result of the expanding of the potential timeframe for transferring VET content in the 9th-10th forms, while since September 2010 there is a possibility in as many as 80 vocations to complete so-called “early” vocational education and training, which may be started after the completion of the 8 grades of primary school. Such training does not require that the applicant be at least 16 years of age, and the three years of the training contains only 1000 classes of general competence development. Therefore the distance between the ISCED 3 level secondary school education and training in vocational schools is further increasing.

Vocational secondary schools

One manifestation of the draining off impact of the expansion of higher education is the decreasing enrolment rates into higher quality VET programmes which take place after the completion of the high school leaving examination. These paths are avoided by young people.

Although in principle it is possible for students in vocational schools and those in the 9th-10th grades of VET, which provide general training, to transfer to the high schools, the (*Országos Képzési Jegyzék, OKJ*) qualifications which may be attained in IVET no longer entitle students to enter higher education.

One measure of the VET Development Strategy, adopted by the government in 2005, aimed at the development of modular adult training programmes. To a limited degree it was carried out as part of the HEFOP 3.5.1.

Higher level vocational education and training

One of the most frequently used channels connecting VET and higher education is advanced level VET (*felsőfokú szakképzés*) (see 6.3). Although the OKJ qualifications that may be attained in the course of advanced level VET do not imply automatic admittance into higher education, VET policy uses various means to promote permeability between advanced level VET and BA courses.

Development areas

Two important preconditions of flexible individual career paths include career orientation services that are accessible and available in any life situation, as well as the services that assess individual competences and prove their existence.

In the area of career orientation, the most important step has been the establishment of the National Career Guidance Committee (*Nemzeti Pályaorientációs Tanács, NPT*) in 2008. The same year a TÁMOP Programme provided funding in the value of EUR 6,878 for the development of the integrated, national level career orientation system. The system will build on online and more traditional tools and integrate existing and newly developed career guidance, career orientation and career tracking systems with labour market information systems. The development is coordinated by the National Employment and Social Office (*Foglalkoztatási és Szociális Hivatal, FSZH*).²⁶

Among the steps taken to ensure the assessment and recognition of recompetences, the most important have been the development works carried out by the ECVET working group (e.g. competence descriptions, see 3.2)

6.4.1 The modular renewal of the National Qualification Register (2004-2006)

In principle the prospect of the individualization of learning paths and the planning of professional careers may be enhanced by the new, modularized National Qualification Register (*Országos Képzési Jegyzék, OKJ*). A sub-programme within the Human Resource Operational Programme (*Humán-erőforrás Operatív Program, HEFOP*), financed from the Structural Funds, provided the framework for the continuation of the renewal of the entire structure of OKJ, and its completion in 2006 with the launching of the new Register. The principles of the new system are supported by a wide range of experts and professionals but they are far more divided as to the content of the development work which had been concluded within a shorter timeframe than what would be justified in the case of a project of this volume/scale. Since 2008, the new structure has been introduced in school-based VET as well in a phasing out system but so far it is hard to see how the modular training, often requiring a new education administration, will be implemented on institutional level, whether the benefits of the new system could be felt.

The OKJ, first issued in 1994, was much criticized, and its renewal continues to be on the agenda. According to the criticism the number of qualifications had been too great (800-1000), the interrelationships between them had not been included in the OKJ, thus it was not entirely clear and made it more difficult to organise further/in-service training and make changes in occupation. Tasks requiring considerable resources were carried out between 2004-2006 financed from HEFOP. The Ministerial Decree (1/2006. OM) regulating the new qualification system was issued in February 2006. In addition to the system's restructuring and the decreasing number of qualifications, another goal was to renew the content of two occupational groups (machinery and commerce) corresponding to the modular structure.

The qualifications listed in the renewed VET are made up of modules – this represents the real novelty of the OKJ. The majority of the close to 3000 modules form part of several qualifications, and every qualification is made up of more modules. Beside the 416 qualifications, there are 436 so-called „partial qualifications” in the Register. In case someone was unsuccessful in completing all the modules for a particular qualification, he/she still has

²⁶ For more information on this, see Bükki-Mártonfi-Vinczéné: *VET in Hungary 2009. ReferNetCountry report*. http://www.observatory.org.hu/wp-content/uploads/TO7_hun.pdf

the opportunity to obtain a partial qualification. The education branches and the so-called cumulative qualifications (118), i.e. specialized qualifications complemented by additional, specialized qualifications provide the opportunity for more effective further and re-training programmes.

The renewal of the OKJ affects secondary level – and to a certain degree higher level – school-based VET, adult training, as well as all actors involved in VET.

In adult training the launching of VET according to the new OKJ and in compliance with the new professional and examination requirements (*szakmai és vizsgakövetelmények, SZVK*) had to be started as of 1 January 2007; in school-based VET the new regulations have to be adhered to starting from the 2008/2009 school year. The development and publication of the SZVK's, based on the new OKJ, took place from 2006 to 2008, they provided the framework for the development of framework curricula (central programmes).

Curriculum development of certain modules has been under way since 2009 within one sub-project of the programme TÁMOP 2.2.1. This builds on the module maps of the new OKJ and the central programmes elaborated on the basis of these. In the course of the project 3000 content elements of 247 modules have been developed. As a result of a large-scale IT development project an online database was developed, which allows access to, and the editing of, these modules; they can be freely used at the development of textbooks as well. Beside practising pedagogues, economic actors will also partake in the the development of curriculum content.

Official statements of VET policy makers reveal that this innovation has great impact on the entire VET system. Supply on the part of Vet institutions and education administration practices can often be implemented gradually.

It remains to be seen how quickly the opportunities (e.g. the attainment of a new qualification through the completion of few modules only, thanks to the cumulation of modules and the education branches will generate demand in the population. The increase in the demand may be held back by the fact that at the moment in Hungary only the first qualification may be attained free of charge. Completing modules that lead to a second qualification implies tuition fee, except in the case of groups of people in disadvantaged position. If this demand should nevertheless arise, then it is questionable to what extent the trainers will react to it, or if they will offer training with central programmes covering the entire modules that are required for the attainment of a qualification.

In order for the benefits of the new OKJ to be felt, it would be necessary to think through the regulation regarding free education towards the first qualification and free of charge education would be tied to modules (credits). Another measure that would also motivate people to attain further qualifications is if certain modules were provided through distance learning and an independent examination committee would be set up to assess the students' knowledge acquired this way. Furthermore it would be necessary to examine what incentives and professional services could be used to facilitate change in the supply of trainers and education administration, required by the new system.

6.5 Teachers and trainers

There are a number of reasons why issues related to vocational teacher training came into focus in Hungary between 2002 and 2009. The transition to the Bologna system (see 6.5.1) affected teacher training as a whole. However, the training of vocational teachers and

instructors has undergone greater changes than that of general subject teachers. In 2006 VET training the new, competence-based qualification framework was adopted which includes qualifications recognized by the state. The development of new professional and examination requirements, along with the development of central programmes based on them, has been ongoing since 2006. In the first years after the introduction of the new qualification framework VET teachers had to face the challenge of preparing students to meet the outcome requirements while lacking the necessary competences and curricula.

A rethinking of the training of vocational teachers was made prompted by the appearance of certain negative trends as well, such as:

- Key competences of VET students, especially those in vocational schools studying for the ISCED 2-3C qualification, lag behind the key competences of students in general education (see Annex 3, Figure 1.)
- A study aiming to explore the motivations behind career choices among teachers (Varga, 2007) found a contra-selection mechanism at work not only at the stage of applying to training institutions, but also in the course of job-seeking and later on when career choices are considered whether to leave the profession or not. This means that generally people with lower abilities get into teacher training programmes and remain in the teaching profession. Decisions are greatly affected by the low wages in VET. Another factor that makes the retaining of VET teachers difficult is the fact that with the qualifications they hold many of them could easily receive higher wages in professions other than teaching. A further demotivating factor lies in the fact that the salaries of teachers in general schools and in VET institutions are the same despite the fact that the latter usually have pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties in greater proportions than in the former types of schools.

These difficulties have prompted research to explore and redefine the aims of teacher training. A part of these studies were conducted in the framework of research projects of greater scope and volume seeking to formulate recommendations for policy and research also (e.g. Balogh, 2008; Falus, 2006; Kadocsa and Varga, 2007). Besides, there have been some studies with a more targeted focus on particular issues (e.g. Dudás, 2007; N. Kollár, 2008; Mayer, 2009). Analyses carried out on the basis of data from international, comparative surveys which aim to promote the adaptation of good practices, beside exploring problem areas (e.g. TALIS, 2008; Tóth, 2006; Nagy 2008).

The Roundtable on Education and Child Opportunities (*Oktatás és Gyermekesély Kerekasztal*), which was established by the Hungarian state, published a scientifically-grounded strategic document titled „Green book for the renewal of public education in Hungary” (*Zöld könyv a magyar közoktatás megújításáért*) (Fazekas et al., 2008). The publication, which came out in 2008, highlighted the improvement of the quality of teaching as an urging issue that requires immediate actions.

Some of the recommendations included in the above-mentioned studies and documents can be traced in measures launched recently. These include:

- The organisation of study visits within the framework of the Vocational School Development Programme (*Szakiskolai Fejlesztési Program, SZFP*), further training programmes and the development of curriculum and teaching aid;
- A project of the TÁMOP Sub-programme 2.2.1 provides the opportunity for vocational teachers and instructors, who have been teaching in VET school for an extended period of time, to develop their competences and language skills;

- One of the aims of a sub-programme of the TÁMOP Programme 2.2.3 is to ensure the professional development of teachers working in the regional integrated vocational training centres (*térségi integrált szakképző központ, TISZK*);
- Textbooks for teaching, methodological aids and curricula have been developed in the framework of the Human Resources Operational Programme (*Humán erőforrás-fejlesztési Operatív Program, HEFOP*) and have been made available electronically for all;
- Setting the competence-based training and outcome requirements for the teaching profession;
- Introduction of a full **semester** of compulsory **teaching practice** conducted at an independent school;
- Introduction of a three-year internship, which aims to support the integration of career starting teachers;
- A wage supplement, introduced in the framework of the New Knowledge Programme (*Új Tudás Program*), for headmasters and teachers working with children from disadvantaged background.

Also based on the recommendations from research on practical training and the experience of junior teachers, a supervised, uninterrupted six-month long teaching practice was introduced into teacher training (MA/MSc) programmes. In cooperation with an international team of members from 12 countries, domestic experts developed a training programme for mentors between 2006 and 2009, which takes into account both the current practice of mentoring and the consequent needs and demands for improvement.²⁷

A three-year induction period has been introduced to facilitate the integration of career starting teachers who are already employed. The details of the traineeship programme, which seeks to ease the burden on career starters and which includes mentoring, will be elaborated by the educational institutions according to their own needs and characteristics.

Some of the recommendations are yet to be implemented. These include:

- Screening of applicant to teacher training, especially with regard to personal competences which are hard to develop (Suplicz, 2006);
- A differentiated increase of teachers' wages;
- Introduction of a research or doctoral support programme to retain talented teachers in the profession (Balogh, 2008);
- Training vocational teachers and instructors for developing their students' key competences;
- Development and application of the measurement system of teachers' competences in the evaluation of their work.

6.5.1 *The impact of the Bologna process on the training of VET teachers and instructors*

The 2005 Higher Education Act, adopted in 2005 as a result of the introduction of the Bologna system in Hungary, transformed the structure of Hungarian higher education, along

²⁷ Teacher Induction: Supporting the Supporters of Novice Teachers in Europe (TISSNTE)
<http://www.tissnte.eu/?cmd=gsIndex>

with the government decrees regarding the training and outcome requirements. Prior to this, those who have graduated from high school had the opportunity to go on to study at colleges or universities. Teacher training began right at the outset of higher education studies and lasted for 8 or 10 semesters, simultaneous to training in one or two specific majors of the students' choice, within the same higher education institution.

Training at colleges entitled graduates to teach in education levels preceding the high school final examination (the higher grades of elementary school and the first two years in a high school, while a university degree made possible work in high schools that prepare students for taking the high school leaving examination (*érettségi*).

Some of the features of the new training structure, introduced as of 2006 in a phasing out system, include:

- Instead of the previous, 4-year college training, the training of **vocational trainers** now takes place on a BA, BSC level. The number of semesters necessary for this training has been reduced from 8 to 7;
- **Teacher training** can now be conducted on Master level only, and the number of semesters dedicated to teachers training has been decreased from 8 or 10 to 5 only; on BA level the training consists of 10 credits and serves to prepare students for teaching (previously the training of certain vocational teachers took place on college level);
- Practical training, on the other hand, has been complemented by a half-year “external” **teaching practice** to be conducted in a school other than a place of teaching practice (see 6.5.2).

The purpose of the transformation is to adapt the Hungarian higher education system to the European higher education system that is becoming increasingly integrated. This, however, gave a momentum to rethink the content and methods of the training. The legal regulation of the content of certain training programmes and majors has changed: instead of a focus on input, the new training and outcome requirements related to the teaching qualification (The 15/2006 ministerial decree on the training and outcome requirements of the bachelor and master courses) has laid emphasis on defining the outcome competences. In order to acquire these competences, it is inevitable that teacher training should be, among others, more practice-oriented, which required the transformation of the framework within which practical training takes place. Teacher training institutions had these requirements in mind when developing their programmes and applying for their accreditation.

Although the importance of these changes have been felt mostly by the institutions, their target group, teachers trainees, are obviously also affected. The motivations behind the changes include:

- to ensure that those who complete teacher training start their career having adequate skills and attitudes;
- to ensure that the transition between training and teaching is smooth;
- to ensure that only the most suitable candidates start working as teachers and remain in the vocation as well.

Given that the training on BA level began in 2006, and on MA level in 2009 only, what can be said about the impact of the restructuring on teacher training is based on the research, necessitated by the new expectations posed by the new outcomes. A significant part of the teacher surveys, conducted between 2004 and 2010, focused on teachers' competences.

One of the most important and most active research centres conducting research on the training of general subject teachers is the Faculty of Education and Psychology of the Eötvös Loránd University of Sciences (*Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Pedagógiai és Pszichológiai Kara, ELTE PPK*). The Centre has adapted international research in an effort to develop competence standards for teachers, which served as a basis for the government decree defining the training and outcome requirements of the teaching profession in the form of competences. Since, however, this institute does not carry out vocational teacher training; most of the research focusing on teachers and instructors in VET has been carried out in partnership with higher education institutions which do provide such training. The research, naturally, builds on the results of other studies focusing on general subject teacher training.

With respect to volume, one of the most significant projects of the Centre has been the one titled 'The State of the Art of VET Teachers and its Modernization'. The research was conducted by a consortium of eight higher education institutions conducting VET teacher training and a number of teacher training institutions. One of the most important goals of the project was to map the competences that are necessary for the training of vocational teachers either according to the existing training, or according to the new National Qualifications Framework (*Országos Képzési Jegyzék, OKJ*) (Kadocsa and Varga, 2007)

A part of the results from these research projects has been incorporated into the restructuring of teacher training, as well as its programmes, others, on the other hand, draw attention to new tasks related to research and development (R+D). These tasks include:

- measuring the efficiency of teacher training institutions;
- assessing the impact of training, wage and employment policies, implemented in recent years, on the quality of the teaching workforce;
- the above, however, would require the development of a system and methodology for measuring the competence requirements of teachers;
- training should include modules which prepare teachers for working in VET and adult training, as well as the task of developing the often lacking or deficient basic competences of VET students.

One of the challenges that have arisen as a result of the introduction of the new training system is that the duration of teacher training has been reduced from the previous 8-10 semesters to 5. Education policy experts are of the opinion (Fazekas et al., 2008) that the development and accreditation of teacher training programmes took place (or, in some cases, is taking place) within a very short timeframe, which jeopardizes a thorough and well thought-through renewal of training content.

Little attention has been paid to the training of those working in adult training. A study carried out in 2005, however, drew attention to this problem, as it concluded that the majority of adult trainers do not have qualifications in andragogy and most of them do not even feel that it would be necessary (Kraiciné 2008).

THEME 7: ENHANCING CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

7.1 Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in VET

The most important documents determining the provision of vocational education and training all make mention of the importance of developing creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. The Strategy for the development of vocational education and training until 2013 (*Szakképzés-fejlesztési Stratégia 2013-ig*), adopted in the summer of 2005, draws attention to the importance of support for training that foster job creation, technological change and entrepreneurship. The minister of social affairs and employment has been appointed responsible for the operationalization and implementation of the priority area. The National LLL Strategy (*Az egész életen át tartó tanulás stratégiája*), adopted in the fall 2005 mentions creativity as an important element of career orientation to be provided in public education. The National Core Curriculum (*Nemzeti Alaptanterv, NAT*) includes the ability to take initiative, together with entrepreneurship skills among the key competences, while creativity is referred to as an area that cuts across all competences.

A component (B) of the Vocational School Development Programme (*Szakiskolai Fejlesztési Program, SZFP*) that targets methodological development, highlights entrepreneurship skills as an important area that must be taken into consideration in the course of curriculum development.

With respect to the content of VET, the renewal of the National Qualifications Register (*Országos Képzési Jegyzék, OKJ*) including the state recognized vocational qualifications has brought the most important changes (6.4). The two-year development work, which was financed from the Human Resource Operational Programme (*Humán-erőforrás Operatív Program, HEFOP*), resulted in the introduction of the new OKJ in 2006. The main objectives of the programme included strengthening the links between education and training and the economy; promoting lifelong learning by adjusting the OKJ and VET outcome requirements to labour market demands; introducing a modular structure for qualifications, focusing on the development of professional and other (methodological, social and personal) competences. The development of key competences is central in the new OKJ and the related professional and examination requirements (*szakmai és vizsgakövetelmények, SZVK*). In addition, the National Core Curriculum (*Nemzeti Alaptanterv, NAT*) also defines certain priority areas that target the development of key competences. A competence-based and outcome-oriented approach is stronger in VET than in public education, as – drawing on an occupation analysis – the new OKJ and the related SZVK's define competence-based learning outcomes.

The programme “The development of the quality and content of VET”, financed in the framework of the Social Renewal Operational Programme 2.2.1 (*Társadalmi Megújulás Operatív Program, TÁMOP*) aims at the renewal and development of VET, which is implemented through the nine sub-programmes (See 6.4). The goal of the 4th sub-programme is to prepare content elements for certain

Other national programmes aiming to support the enhancement of innovation and creativity include Programme 4.1 of the Human Resources Operational Programme (*Humán Erőforrás Operatív Program, HEFOP*) focused specifically on VET in promoting innovation by supporting the organisational concentration of VET institutions and providing financing for equipping those centres with state-of-the-art technology. The so-called Regional Integrated Vocational Training Centres (*térségi integrált szakképző központ, TISZK*), which have been formed this way, provide IVET and CVET from 2007. Funding from EU sources made it

possible for VET pupils and those participating in adult training to learn the usage of state-of-the-art technology (see 7.3).

The subject of creativity received attention mainly as a result of the events organised in Hungary on the occasion of the European Year 2009. The Ministry of Education and Culture (*Oktatási és Kulturális Minisztérium, OKM*) commissioned Tempus Foundation to coordinate events related to the European Year in Hungary. At the beginning of the year as many as 109 organisations received funding to implement 180 projects including public events, as well as ones for professionals and experts.

Innovation in VET is also promoted through the Leonardo da Vinci Multilateral Projects 'Transfer of Innovation' (see 8.2.2), the aim of which is to improve the quality and attractiveness of the European VET system. Hungarian participation in this programme

7.1.1 VET and developing entrepreneurial skills and VET – Budapest Enterprise Centre (Budapesti Vállalkozói Központ, BIVÁK)

The Budapest Centre for Developing Youth Enterprises (*Budapesti Ifjúsági Vállalkozói Központ, BIVÁK*) was established in 1997 on the premises of the Economics Polytechnic (*Közgazdasági Politechnikum*), with support from a EU Phare Partnership Programme. The main goal of the initiative has been to foster and support the development of entrepreneurial skills of high school students, as well as youth of 18-30 years of age. BIVÁK was the first in Hungary and in Eastern Europe to develop a novel form of enterprise development and of teaching entrepreneurial skills, building on, and in close cooperation with training in secondary education. Since 1999 the Centre has been providing not only training and consultation but also space for offices and workshops for 21 enterprises. The complex service and partnership system helps young people to become successful entrepreneurs by supporting them in this direction starting from the beginning of their secondary studies. The training is unique in blending practical entrepreneurial training and active support for enterprises.

In the framework of the first programme, implemented between 1999 and 2002, BIVÁK provided support to János Neumann secondary school in Eger, North-East of Hungary, to set up a similar centre, in collaboration with other partners. Between 2007 and 2009 BIVÁK received support from the LLP Leonardo Programme in the amount of EUR 380,000 (approximately HUF 110 million) continued to collaborate with partners in an attempt to raise interest among secondary school pupils for setting up enterprises. Beside Hungary, the project was implemented in other countries of Eastern Europe as well, including Slovenia, Poland and Slovakia, where interested young people received support to set up their own enterprises. The goal of the programme has been the development of VET and students' skills development. In addition, emphasis is laid on coming up with practical solutions and supporting disadvantaged youth. More than 100 Hungarian, Slovakian and Romanian young people participated in the two-year project and as many as 50 new enterprises were set up. A prominent goal was to facilitate a fruitful relationship between cooperating partners and enterprises supported by partner organisations. Another goal is to foster regional cooperation by involving more partners into the programme.

BIVÁK has recently launched a project, supported from a budgetline of the Ministry of Economy allocated for small and medium-sized enterprises, to provide training for women entrepreneurs for free. The one-week training aims to help women who are long-term unemployed and have hardly any chances of finding employment, self-employed women, or those who would like to work as entrepreneurs in the future. Beside skills development, and

information on taxation and finances, participants can develop their IT skills as well. The Polytechnic of Economics provides HUF 16.6 million (approximately EUR 59000) as own source. So far there have been over 100 participants in the training sessions, 20% of whom have set up their own enterprises.

7.2 Improving quality of teaching

Beside the reform of teacher training, in process since 2000 (see 6.5.2), many efforts have been made to promote the professional development of already practicing teachers through providing various in-service training opportunities or via developing pedagogical/methodological materials that help self-training.

It is prescribed by law that teachers/trainers in public education institutions must participate in further training at least every 7 years, which can be completed in courses offered in adult training, higher education or by completing higher level OKJ courses.

The shortcomings of the system include:

- There is no quality assurance provided for further training programmes;
- Higher education programmes leading to teacher training diplomas and continuing training programmes for practicing teachers are not connected to one another, the latter not being built upon the former;
- Financing background of in-service teacher training is not adequately ensured;
- VET teachers over 50 (whose proportion in higher in VET is higher than in public education) are not required to participate in continuing training programmes;
- Participation rates in in-service training programmes are not related to the severity of the issues and challenges certain types of school have to face (Liskó, 2004)
- The topics further training programmes cover seldom relate to the actual problems of schools that the participants come from (Liskó, 2004).
- Further training programmes are very rarely in the focus of research or evaluation.

The "Sulinet" Digital Knowledge Base (*Sulinet Digitális Tudásbázis, SDT*), which has been under continuous development since 2002, complements the skills obtained during further training. The multimedia curriculum and tools provides help and ideas for teachers for a wide range of vocational and general subjects. According to a survey, carried out in 2008, the use of SDT in VET institutions is negligible compared to the use of other kinds of digital tools (Tankönyvkutató, 2008). In itself, the tool does not guarantee the usage of modern, versatile teaching tools which are tailored to the specific target groups. When used, however, it enables and, in many cases, necessitates applying cooperative or independent learning, as well as a rethinking or modification of pedagogical methods traditionally used.

Measure 2.2.1 of TÁMOP, titled 'The professional development of VET teachers, trainers and trainers in school workshops', uses new tools to support better alignment between VET and the labour market by providing in-service training for vocational teachers, vocational trainers and trainers in company-based training. One component of the project, to be implemented more extensively after a pilot phase, is to enable vocational teachers and trainers, in service for a longer period of time, to spend several months but maximum half a year in an enterprise where they have the possibility to learn about new technology and methods, relevant for their

profession, as well as the requirements for various positions and jobs. In addition, the sub-programme aims to develop the pedagogical skills of in-company trainers.

The methodological teaching aids for adult training, textbooks and curricula, developed in the framework of the Human Resources Operational Programme sub-programme 5.3.1, are gap-filling from the point of view of those who work in adult training, the majority of whom does not hold qualification in andragogy. The materials developed in the programme are available on the website of the National Institute of Vocational and Adult Education.²⁸

7.2.1 In-service training of teachers within the Vocational School Development Programme (Szakiskolai Fejlesztési Program, SZFP) (2003-2009)

Participating institutions of the programme, implemented in two rounds between 2003 and 2009, came from all over the country. Therefore altogether around one third of the Hungarian vocational schools have profited from the developments (as many as 90 VET institutions in the first round of the programme and 70 in the second one). In-service training programmes were open to teachers from the same schools. In developing the concept of the programme, the Ministry of Education in 2002 relied on previous development projects with the aim of continuing them, while also learning from the experience they had accumulated. The implementation of Vocational School Development Programme (*Szakiskolai Fejlesztési Program, SZFP*) was coordinated by the National Institute of Vocational and Adult Education.

The goal of the programme has been to prepare vocational schools for meeting the following challenges:

- Meeting the changed requirements with respect to the content and methodology of VET, which were brought about by the introduction of the new Qualifications Register in 2006;
- Providing catching-up programmes for disadvantaged students and those with behavioural difficulties, who make up the majority of the student pool in vocational schools;
- Tackling the absence of novel/alternative solutions and attitudes towards motivating these students;
- Employers' dissatisfaction with the competences of VET students;
- A low level of foreign language skills both among teachers and students;
- A low level of international cooperation.

The programme included several components which targeted different development areas. The primary target group was VET teachers, with the steps and measures taken reflecting the idea that the renewal of vocational education depended on them in the first place. This is because each component, regardless the subject, lays the greatest emphasis on supporting teachers. The curricula, teaching aids and methodological guides, developed in the frames of the programme, are available to everyone and all VET institutions – not only for those who participated in the programme – on the SZFP website.

Some fundamental features of SZFP:

²⁸ https://www.nive.hu/hefop351/hefop351_fo.htm

- Multifaceted developments: project work, co-operative techniques, consultations, debates, panels, peer learning, open space technology (OST), study visits to institutions and regional conferences besides traditional lectures.
- Horizontal learning and development: great importance has been given to expose and utilize participants' knowledge both during training, as well as when preparing methodological aids and databases.
- Practicality: the project products are useful during teaching, they help solving real and practical problems, and they are available on the Internet.
- Changing attitudes: one goal of language training and study visits to abroad is to expand the horizon of participants, as well as encouraging them to build contacts. Besides, in-service training sessions, related to the various components, often targeted changing attitudes as well. An interim survey of the programme in 2006 found that teachers who participated in study visits evaluated that these elements as the most useful ones.

In the framework of SZFP I 32 further training programmes were organised in Hungary, predominantly related to methodology. In this round as many as 4553 teachers participated in the visits. During the same period, 33 study visits and language training programmes were organised in 13 countries of Europe. In the framework of the IT projects 772 teachers completed an ECDL examination.

The two rounds of the programme have been assessed by external evaluators both every three months and also at the end. The results were published in monitoring reports available on-line. Feedback from the participants indicate that they were satisfied with the programme and have been able to use what they learned to a great degree.

The involvement of teachers into curricula development and methodological supporting materials has rendered these outcomes to be practice-oriented. However, evaluators concluded that the majority of materials do not reflect the effort at methodological renewal and they lack coherence with respect to their contents and forms. In order to better assess the success of language trainings, a more thorough preliminary assessment would have been needed and outcome requirements should have been set as well.

SZFP was discontinued in 2009, instead of 2011, as it had been originally planned. One of the main reasons behind this was the unfolding of the economic crisis, which demanded that more resources be allocated to employment boosting programmes. As a result of the untimely ending, „there was no sufficient time for widely disseminating the results and to work out a strategy of sustainability” (Papp, 2010). A part of the development work and training continues in the framework of the Social Renewal Operational Programme (see 6.1).

7.3 Innovation-friendly institutions

The extent to which institutions are able to renew themselves and adapt to changes is also crucial besides other factors affecting the quality of education in general and VET in particular (including for instance the skills level and motivation of teachers, a well-working quality assurance system, an adequate learning environment, including learning content and infrastructure as well).

On the institutional level the first successful institutional development programmes were launched in 1996 by the Soros Foundation (*Soros Alapítvány*) with the aim of establishing so-called "self-developing" schools. The association that these schools established is active to

this day and the scope of its professional impact is not limited to the institutions involved in the network.

Institutional reform has been an important element of national education policy for over a decade. The introduction of the National Core Curriculum (*Nemzeti Alaptanterv, NAT*) in 1998 prompted schools to take NAT as a basis for their particular pedagogical programmes, including their own curricula, which is then assessed and approved by the school maintainers. Schools are obliged to systematically renew their pedagogical programmes. Another obligation – administrative in nature but one that calls for the rethinking of institutional processes – is for schools to implement so-called institutional quality management programmes (*intézményi minőségirányítási programok, IMIP*). The operation of such programmes require the approval of school maintainers as well. Although the majority of the pedagogical and the quality management programmes are not operational in that they are not key to real processes, some schools make use of the obligation to renew them by reflecting on the demands that are raised towards schools via reviewing institutional processes.

The first national competence survey, covering students in every Hungarian school, took place in 2001, a year after the 2000 PISA survey. For the past few years, such surveys have been conducted on a yearly basis among students in the 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th grades. The results provide information about the competences and performance of students in reading comprehension and mathematics, which equally give information about the teachers' performance as well, with the socio-economic status variables of students known. Schools are obliged to publish the survey results on their websites in order to inform parents in search of a school for their child. Such education policy effort aims at motivating schools to improve their efficiency. Such efforts are supported by measures within the Human Resource Operational Programme (*Humán Erőforrás Operatív Program, HEFOP*), which has ended by now, and the Social Renewal Operational Programme (*Társadalmi Megújulás Operatív Program, TÁMOP*) that continues HEFOP.

The above-mentioned elements/components affect the entire school system, including VET institutions. The Vocational School Development Programme (*Szakiskolai Fejlesztési Program, SZFP*) (see 7.2.1) targeted the institutional development of VET institutions. Between 2003 and 2009, altogether 160 vocational schools participated in the programme. Component D of SZFP, compulsory for all participants, promoted self-development, institutional development and quality development for schools. This was the only domestic programme which – among many other tools – offered a one-week training opportunity not only for school management but also for representatives of the school maintainer local governments and in-company training instructors, thus allowing a discussion of institutional problems from several aspects.

VET schools participate in the institutional partnership programmes of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) (see 7.4.1). In addition, it was found during the evaluation of the Leonardo Programme that, unlike others, institutions successfully participating in the programme have the potential to embark on a path of institutional development and to flexibly adjust to changes.

The entire VET system is undergoing reform since 2005 through promoting the integration of school maintainers in the so-called regional integrated vocational training centres (*térségi integrált szakképző központ, TISZK*). This is expected to promote cooperation among institutions, as well as institutional reform. (see 7.3.1)

7.3.1 *The evolution of regional integrated vocational training centres*

By the beginning of the 2000's, the VET system in Hungary had become extremely fragmented. It included well over 1000 VET institutions, far more than its volume would merit, as the local governments of even very small settlements had the right to establish and maintain a VET institution. This fragmentation brought about problems with respect to efficiency and quality. A two thirds majority in the Parliament would have been necessary to change this structure, the political conditions of which had not been given before 2010 and had not been likely prior to 2009.

The policy ideas that emerged in 2002-2003 suggested that a large degree of centralization of institutions was necessary, which could be achieved – for want of legal regulations – via financial incentives. The financial background for setting up the regional integrated vocational training centres (*térségi integrált szakképző központ, TISZK*) was provided by the Structural Funds, as well as the vocational training contribution – which is kind of a VET tax amounting to 1.5% of the gross salary base. Starting from 2008 only those were entitled to apply for funding to these resources that came together into Associations for the Organisation of VET. Originally, the Dutch Regional Training Centres were taken as example.

In the 2004-2006 period, the National Development Plan supported the establishment of 16 TISZK's through a grant scheme. The call for proposals was announced in March 2005 and the same year saw the establishment of the first 16 regional integrated vocational training centres which was based on the consortium-like cooperation of 6-8 VET institutions. Each TISZK received close to HUF 1 billion (EUR 3.8 million) to be used until 2008 on setting up a central study workshop and for encouraging joint institutional processes.

An important criticism that arose with respect to the development process of the TISZK system between, is that in the first 3 years, between 2005 and 2008, there had been no encouragement as to institutional cooperation among participating schools, therefore their institutional cooperation, or the rationalization of their training and capacity is not possible. This led to the amendment of the relevant laws in the summer of 2007, following the setting up of the 2006 government, so that closer cooperation among institutions could be formed. This stipulates that only those institutions, i.e. TISZK's, have access to development funds, which train at least 1500 students and which accept the recommendations of the regional development and training committees (see 8.4) with respect to the occupations to be taught and the volume of training.

The regulation allows a variety of association forms and economic associations for the TISZK's which came to exist as a result of external pressure albeit voluntarily. Until the spring of 2010, as many as 84 regional vocational training centres had been established, which – with one or two exceptions – implement 5 markedly different organisational models, including:

- a VET-organisational association established exclusively by local governments as maintainers;
- a model based on separating basic/grounding education and vocational training (into sending and recipient institutions);
- Integrated institutions (usually as a result of the integration of schools);
- VET-organisation association (prominently public benefit non-profit organisation);

- TISZK operating on the basis of an agreement between a non-profit association established by maintainers which are not local governments and a VET-organisation association established by maintainers at local governments.

It is estimated that the 84 regional integrated vocational training centres that have thus evolved (which include the ones that were established in 2005 but in a transformed and renewed form) cover at least 90% of school-based VET. The only institutions that have stayed away from joining a TISZK are some of the private schools and those institutions where the maintainer is discontinuing the provision of VET. The size of TISZK's varies, only one fourth in them comprise 4 schools with fewer than 3000 students. Some others, on the other hand, incorporate more than 20 institutions which sometimes train more than 10,000 students. Typically VET associations or consortia comprise 5-10 schools with 3-6,000 students in each.

Since 2007 numerous tenders have been announced relying on the Structural Funds. Together with the 2005 round, the amount that has been made available for financing the TISZK system through tenders amounts to HUF 50 billion (approx. EUR 190 million), which institutions can use until 2011 for investing into and developing human infrastructure. From the point of view of institutional development, tenders within the TÁMOP Programme 2.2.3 are of particular importance, the winners of which may receive HUF 3-400 million (1.2-1.6 million EUR) for establishing joint institutional processes (such as career orientation, career tracking system, a company management system, content development, etc.), teacher and management training, i.e. for developing human resources in VET and synchronizing institutions' operations. Beside those 16 TISZK's which were set up in the first round, in 2005, and which have been supported since, additional 43 grant proposals were approved, thus altogether two thirds of the TISZK's have received substantial support. Efficiency assessment of how the resources have been used will be available in 2011 at the earliest.

Of course, the evolution of the TISZK system is not without problems and raises a host of questions as well, since in most of the cases the establishment of the associations was externally imposed. Some experts continue to be skeptical whether school maintainers' efforts at rationalization will lead to significant downsizing of capacities, with the regional development and training committees promoting better adjustment to the labour market needs, while not impeding the operation and innovation of the institutions. It is also unclear how the TISZK's would be financed and sustained after the TÁMOP grants are finished, how the joint processes could be encouraged and how the rationalization of capacities could be continued. The new government that will be established in May 2010 will need to make many new decisions to ensure that the investments are returned and that the renewal of the VET system continues.

7.4 Encouraging partnership

In the past years, the necessity of cooperation and partnership among various actors in VET arose as a result of critiques often voiced by employers to the effect that there is a mismatch between VET output and the demands of the labour market, and the opinion that the knowledge and skills of young VET graduates are not adequate. VET policy in recent years has laid great emphasis on creating a balance between VET and the economy. One tool of this has been greater involvement of economic actors into VET development and provision and into VET policy making (see 4.3). The institutionalized forms of this have included the following:

- Involvement of economic chambers into the implementation of the government's tasks related to VET (see 4.3.1)
- Establishment of the regional development and training committees (*regionális fejlesztési és képzési bizottságok*) in 2001 (8.4.1);
- Establishment of the Regional Integrated Vocational Training Centres (*térségi integrált szakképző központ, TISZK*) and setting up the Professional Advisory Bodies (*Szakmai Tanácsadó Testületeik, SZTT*) to help their operation (see 7.3);
- Operation of committees (2002-2006) for each qualification group specified in the National Qualifications Register (*Országos Képzési Jegyzék, OKJ*) (see 6.4).

Project 4.1.2 of the Social Renewal Operational Programme (*Társadalmi Mobilitás Operatív Program, TÁMOP*) within the New Hungary Development Plan (*Új Magyarország Fejlesztési Terv, ÚMFT*), implemented in 2009-2011, also provides the opportunity for partnership by supporting the establishment of regional research and service centres. The motivation behind their establishment has been to complement teacher training in higher education institutions by mediating between practice sites and students, as well as by selecting and training mentors helping teaching practice (see 7.2).

7.4.1 Leonardo da Vinci Partnerships Programme

Alike the Comenius and Grundtvig programmes, since 2008 the Leonardo da Vinci Programme of LLP has been providing funding for partnership projects. Relatively small budgets are available for two-year projects of multilateral cooperation with the aim of experience exchange. Activities that may receive funding include various products (a brief paper, a conference, CD, training material, website, etc.) or cooperation on a given subject (e.g. studying a particular training method) related to mobility (e.g. student, teacher exchange programmes, etc.). An important goal of the programme is to foster cooperation between various organisations, including secondary and higher level vocational schools, adult training institutions, SMEs, civil organisations, chambers. This strengthens the relationship between education and the world of work.

In 2009, as much as 38% of the Hungarian applicants were VET institutions, the rest included SMEs, economic chambers, professional and civil organisations. Many of the applicants were „new” in the sense that previously they had not received funding from the LdV Programme. This may be due to the fact that the applications process in the Partnerships Programme, along with the documentation and the financial reporting, is simpler than in other programme types. Projects supported in the first round come to a close in 2010 with the final reports submitted in June 2010, therefore information is not available about the results of the programme so far. Nevertheless, data on applicants indicate that the programme type is increasingly familiar among organisations relevant for VET: in 2010, there were 60% more applicants than in the previous year.

7.4.2 Cisco Network Academy

The Cisco Network Academy was established in 1997. It is a non-profit vocational training programme and network, which has been set up as a result of educational institutions and an IT company. The mission of the Cisco Network Academy is to alleviate the shortage of IT

network professionals by providing flexible training opportunities with the ultimate goal of improving Hungary's competitiveness. The basis of the Network Academy is the e-Learning curriculum and courses which are uniform in the global Cisco network. The curriculum is worked out by the company's experts, taking into account the latest technological developments, thus the courses ensure that the most recent knowledge is built into the curriculum. In addition, an important goal is to ensure that the curriculum is presented in the most up-to-date and user friendly form to help efficient learning.

The Cisco training is conducted within secondary and higher level educational institutions across the country. As many as 64 so-called local academies operate and there are 12 higher education institutions operating regional academies where the training of trainers is conducted as well. The training – which is open to everyone over 16 and for which education institutions decide about admissions – are adjusted to the VET system and to the National Qualifications Register, and also provide the opportunity to obtain certificates which correspond to international standards.

Over the past 10 years the Academy trained as many as 1500 people, students and trainers. The quality of training is ensured by the ongoing training of the trainers. One of the greatest obstacles to improving the efficiency of the training is the low level of English among participants, as well as trainers; in order to keep abreast of the latest technological developments, adequate knowledge would be needed. This is particularly important, as it is often heard that the IT curriculum used in VET schools is often outdated and, a rule, students do not have the opportunity to try new technology at the schools.

Qualifications related to information technology are among the most sought after and forecasts indicate that the expansion of the IT labour market is to be expected. This also means that the demand for qualified IT professionals will increase, therefore holding OKJ qualifications or special certificates issued by Cisco will ensure an advantageous position in the labour market.

THEME 8: FINANCING VET

8.1 improving efficiency, equity, levels of vet funding

Thanks largely to the substantial and increasing amount of the so-called “vocational training contribution” (*szakképzési hozzájárulás*, SZH, a kind of VET tax paid by enterprises in the value of 1.5% of their total wage costs) as well as the EU funds accessible from 2004, the total sum of financial resources available for VET - especially for development - has mostly been considered as adequate in the period since 2002. Improving the efficiency and equity of financing have, however, been primary policy objectives in all subsectors of VET. The most important problems included the extremely fragmented and thus not cost-effective institutional system of IVET, the weakness of the role of social partners and of territorial level decision-making, and the fact that the various financing structures did not adequately encourage training providers to take into account labour market needs.

In IVET (school-based VET) the primary policy goals were to increase cost-effectiveness as well as to improve the labour market relevance of VET. Education policy considered the key to cost-effective operation was to decrease the number and increase the size of VET schools, i.e., to create the system of Regional Integrated Vocational Training Centres (*Térségi Integrált Szakképző Központ*, TISZK, see 7.3.1), in order to rationalize operating costs, optimize capacity utilisation and ensure the concentrated use of resources available for development. The efficiency of IVET was intended to be improved by authorizing the Regional Development and Training Committees (*Regionális Fejlesztési és Képzési Bizottság*, RFKB), dominated by delegates from the economy, to decide about the distribution of development funds as well as to define the vocations to be taught in school-based VET and the number of classes the training should be provided in, effective from 2008 (see also 8.4.1). The institutional transformation of IVET was effectively encouraged by the 2007 legal amendments pursuant to which from September 2008 (with a few exceptions) only TISZKs are eligible to receive development funds (see below and 8.1.1). In addition, to reward schools providing VET in accordance with labour market needs a Quality Award was introduced, financed by 5% of the training sub-fund of Labour Market Fund (*Munkaerő-piaci Alap*, MPA, see below).

While the mechanisms for development funds distribution has thus been changed considerably, the per student capita funding of VET schools from the central budget financing their operation has only been modified to a small extent. Besides introducing performance-indicators (based on parameters determining the cost of education such as the average number of students per class as prescribed by the law, weekly mandatory teaching hours, etc.) to calculate the amount of state support for general and vocational theoretical education in 2007, the per capita grant for vocational practical training was differentiated by grade and the place of training from school year 2004/2005 (see 4.4) and the per capita funding of practical training provided in guidance and pre-vocational education in the general education grades was introduced from school year 2006/2007, in order to promote workplace learning and to enhance practical training. The per capita support system has, however, been criticized by many for a long time for several reasons: that it leads to territorial inequalities depending on the circumstances of the school-maintainers (on average, the state contribution covers only about 50-70% of their expenditure on public education); that the limited amount of state support endangers the sustainability of developments (when e.g. schools do not have resources to operate a newly installed expensive machinery or to buy the necessary raw materials); and above all, because the per capita grants are not differentiated by

vocations/qualification groups to take into account their often considerably varying training costs (the standard per capita grants are not differentiated in adult training either). A recent study (Szép, 2008) even recommends to use such differentiation to compensate for regional inequalities and to promote training in shortage-jobs – but not in the current system of distribution when school maintainers receive (most types of) per capita grants without an obligation to spend them on educational purposes and when it would only encourage them to launch the more expensive training programmes.

In CVET provided as adult training outside the school system the primary policy objectives were to increase the very low participation rates and to improve access to training for certain disadvantaged groups. The state has directly provided funding only for the training of unemployed people and other disadvantaged groups (including employees of micro and small enterprises) from national as well as EU funds, although for a short time there also existed a tax incentive targeting every participant of adult training (below a threshold of annual income). The personal income tax deduction opportunity in the amount of 30% of the training fee but at most HUF 60 000 (EUR 240) was introduced in 2003 but was abolished in 2006, primarily due to budget restraints.

Another short-lived measure, the per capita support of adult training financed from the central budget was also introduced in 2003, in order to support adults to obtain their first vocational qualification (one listed in the National Qualifications Register [*Országos Képzési Jegyzék, OKJ*]) and to assist people living with disabilities (and other target groups defined annually) to participate in general, language or VET adult training programmes. In 2006 such support became available also for the training of people aged over 50 to obtain a 2nd vocational qualification, but at the same time provision of full support was linked to the guaranteed subsequent employment of the participant (except for the training of disabled people, and 50% of the cost of trainings provided in shortage-jobs was reimbursed in any event) and to successful examination in at least 6 months after completing the training. This change of regulation resulted partly from the policy objective to increase the efficiency of the measure, but it was also necessitated by the fact that every year the support applied for by the training providers – it was them and not the participant who received the support – had considerably exceeded the available budget allocation. This was indeed a fundamental problem of the per capita support of adult training that while it could have been claimed for everyone in the target group it was impossible to estimate what proportion of the working-age population without a vocational qualification wished to participate in training annually. Thus this solution served primarily the interests of training providers. Finally, due to budget restraints, from 2007 the target group was restricted to disabled people, and following a drastic decrease of the budget allocation in 2006, in 2007 and 2008 it only provided funding for trainings commenced in the previous year, and there has been no budget allocation defined since then. Thus the per capita support of adult training has in effect been abolished.

Since 1997 CVET provided by employers has also been encouraged by the state through the opportunity of spending a part of SZH on the vocational or foreign language training of employees (in 2009 enterprises spent a total HUF 7.61 billion [EUR 27.1 million] from this source on the training of altogether 110 923 employees). In order to improve the efficiency of this measure the administrative procedures were simplified (since 2007 the approval of the local labour council [*munkaügyi tanács*] is no longer a precondition of writing off the costs of training programmes which do not award an OKJ qualification neither are accredited), and the part of SZH that micro and small enterprises (MSEs) can spend on the training of employees was raised from 33% to 60%. However, this could not have significantly increase the training activities of MSEs since besides the small amount of their SZH, their ability to make use of this opportunity is also limited by lack of information, the problem of substitution, the lack of

adequate, tailor-made training content and forms (alternative, e.g. e-learning, delivery modes), and the still considerable administrative burden (see Szép, 2009, Szalai-Varga, 2009). The latest change of regulations were introduced as a result of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 800/2008 since the deductibility of training costs from the SZH counts as state support. Accordingly, the new national legislation effective from 2009 differentiates between general and special training programmes and defines the maximum intensity of support for these in 60% and 25%, respectively. These numbers can be increased by 10% in the case of training provided to people living with disabilities and to disadvantaged people, and another 10% or 20% in the case of middle enterprises or SMEs, but at least 20% of the training costs must be ensured by the enterprise at all events. This latter fact will probably keep away even more MSEs from making use of this opportunity, while even up to now this measure has significantly favoured larger companies (see below) and it has also resulted in substantial regional inequalities (see Table 1; Szép, 2008 pp. 120-121, Szép, 2009 pp. 16-17.).

Table 1: Distribution of SZH spent on the training of employees by region in 2009

Regions	SZH spent on the training of employees	Number of employees
Central Hungary	63.64%	32.77%
Central Transdanubia	11.69%	11.50%
Western Transdanubia	7.79%	10.80%
Southern Transdanubia	3.90%	8.93%
Northern Hungary	5.19%	10.49%
Northern Great Plain	3.90%	12.93%
Southern Great Plain	3.90%	12.57%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

Source: SZMM, KSH StADAT táblák (http://portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_eves/i_qlf021.html)

Significant changes have taken place also regarding the other possible uses of SZH (enterprises can more or less freely choose to spend their SZH on providing practical training for IVET students, for providing development subsidies, see section 8.1.1, for providing training for their employees, or for paying it into the MPA training sub-fund; for absolute numbers and shares see Tables 2 and 3). The general objective of education policy was to make the use of this source (the amount of which increases in line with the development of the economy) more efficient and decision-making more regulated and decentralized. Modifications of the regulation intended primarily to encourage enterprises to organize practical training, especially training based on a student contract and provided in shortage-jobs (see 5.3.2.), and to secure the necessary resources for central and regional development needs (since 2003 enterprises not providing practical training are obliged to pay at least 20%, since 2007 30%, and since 2009 40% of their SZH into the MPA).

Table 2: The amount of SZH by the purpose of its allocation 1998-2009 (billion HUF)

Year	Practical training provision	Development subsidy for		Training provision for employees	Payment into the MPA training sub-fund	Total
		vocational training schools	higher education institutions			
1998	5,7	n/a	-	n/a	8,7	14,4
1999	5,6	n/a	-	n/a	11,0	16,6
2000	5,5	n/a	-	1,0	13,3	19,8
2001	6,2	11,9	0,9	2,4	16,0	37,4
2002	6,9	12,5	2,3	3,4	18,6	43,7
2003	7,6	13,3	3,0	4,8	20,8	49,5
2004	8,0	12,4	3,3	5,4	24,0	53,1
2005	9,2	12,8	4,1	7,0	28,5	61,6
2006	11,0	12,3	4,4	7,8	32,3	67,8
2007	13,6	10,4	4,4	7,3	36,7	72,4
2008	16,1	10,7	4,5	7,8	42,1	81,3
2009	18,7	7,4	4,9	7,6	45,0	83,6

Source: SZMM

Table 3: The distribution of the amount of SZH by the purpose of its allocation 1998-2009 (%)

Year	Practical training provision	Development subsidy for		Training provision for employees	Payment into the MPA training sub-fund	Total
		vocational training schools	higher education institutions			
2001	16.58	31.82	2.41	6.42	42.78	100.00
2002	15.79	28.60	5.26	7.78	42.56	100.00
2003	15.35	26.87	6.06	9.70	42.02	100.00
2004	15.07	23.35	6.21	10.17	45.20	100.00
2005	14.94	20.78	6.66	11.36	46.27	100.00
2006	16.22	18.14	6.49	11.50	47.64	100.00
2007	18.78	14.36	6.08	10.08	50.69	100.00
2008	19.80	13.16	5.54	9.59	51.78	100.00
2009	22.37	8.85	5.86	9.09	53.83	100.00

Source: SZMM

The MPA training sub-fund provides resources for the technological and (since 2008) the content (curriculum and learning tools) development of IVET as well as adult training. The most important changes concerning the mechanisms of funds distribution aimed at strengthening regional decision-making and ensuring the concentrated use of available resources. To reach the former goal, first the decentralized section of the sub-fund was defined by law and its proportion was increased in 2003, then in 2007 the formerly consultative bodies, the RFKBs were authorized to decide on the distribution of development support from this sub-fund (see 8.4.1). In order to make the use of development funds concentrated, from 2008 only special and skill developing vocational schools, the maintainers of TISZKs and VET-organization associations, higher education institutions joining such partnerships, and enterprises providing practical training for the students of these institutions can receive investment support. Furthermore, in 2008 the National Institute of Vocational and

Adult Education (*Nemzeti Szakképzési és Felnőttképzési Intézet, NSZFI*) launched a monitoring system regarding the use of funds from the decentralized section of the MPA training sub-fund and the central tenders offered to higher education.

In spite of the above developments and the fact that about one third of all state support derives from this source, the most critical problem with the system of SZH is still that its use is not transparent enough, neither it is regularly monitored, thus its efficiency in fact cannot be assessed. Furthermore, the analyses of available statistics (see Szép, 2008, 2009) show significant inequalities among the regions (their share of all resources from SZH is GDP-proportionate, thus the current system is unfavourable for the poorer, disadvantaged regions) and that the opportunity to use the SZH for various goals in fact favours only large enterprises (see Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4: Distribution of the amount of SZH by wage costs in 2007

Enterprises by wage costs (1000 HUF/ 4 EUR)	Training provision for employees	Development subsidy	Practical training provision	Payment into the MPA training sub-fund	Total
0 - 1.000	0.2%	0.5%	0.4%	98.9%	100.0%
1.001 - 10.000	0.8%	3.5%	1.3%	94.4%	100.0%
10.001 - 50.000	3.5%	13.5%	3.3%	79.8%	100.0%
50.001 - 100.000	7.0%	20.6%	6.8%	65.6%	100.0%
100.001 -	11.8%	23.8%	17.0%	47.4%	100.0%
Total	9.5%	20.4%	13.4%	56.8%	100.0%

Source: Szép, 2008, p.118

Table 5: Relative share of the various forms of allocation of SZH by wage costs in 2007

Enterprises by wage costs (1000 HUF/ 4 EUR)	Training provision for employees	Development subsidy	Practical training provision	Payment into the MPA training sub-fund
0 - 1.000	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%
1.001 - 10.000	0.8%	1.6%	0.9%	15.6%
10.001 - 50.000	3.9%	7.0%	2.6%	14.9%
50.001 - 100.000	4.0%	5.6%	2.8%	6.4%
100.001 -	91.3%	85.8%	93.6%	61.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Szép, 2008, p.121

The lack of transparency and of regular efficiency assessments are serious problems also concerning the whole of VET financing. In fact, the currently available statistics do not let us know the various costs of VET since these are not separated in the budget of schools which usually provide general programmes as well, maintainers are not obliged to spend most types of per capita support on educational purposes, financial data from the central budget accounts cannot even show the total cost of VET, and we do not know the spending of the private sphere and individuals either (Szép, 2009). The various kinds of state supports do not make a coherent system and their records are not even summarized which leads to geographical and sectoral inequalities and does not allow to make well-founded development plans.

8.1.1 Changing regulations for development subsidy (2008)

The development subsidy (*fejlesztési támogatás*) is one form of paying the vocational training contribution (*szakképzési hozzájárulás*, SZH, see 8.1), when the enterprise gives money or equipment to VET institutions for developing the infrastructure of vocational practical training. This support can be used for the development of practical education and training in VET schools, the development of the practical training of VET school students at a TISZK training centre, and the development of practical training in higher education institutions, to purchase equipment or (in at most 15%) to cover its operational costs. Development subsidy is an important source of VET development, but its availability had varied greatly between schools and regions (in order to eliminate extremities of distribution, the amount of subsidy – except for the case of providing equipment – was maximized in 2006 in triple the per student capita support of vocational practical training as defined in the budget act per student), and in lack of adequate monitoring and sanctions, the subsidy had not always been used for the goals defined in the law.

The main objective of modifying the regulation as defined by education policy was to encourage institutional transformation which ensures more efficient and concentrated training provision in IVET (primarily at upper and post secondary level), by creating a support system in which (with a few exceptions) only regional integrated vocational training centres (*térségi integrált szakképző központok*, TISZKs, see 7.3.1) can receive development funds (including also support from the MPA training sub-fund, see 8.1).

Amendment of the *Act LXXXVI of 2003 on the Vocational Training Contribution and Support for the Development of Training* (VTC Act) effective from 1 September 2008 restricted the group of beneficiaries so that development subsidy would serve the development of the infrastructure of practical education and practical training organized in an institution providing school-based VET as part of a TISZK or in a special or skill developing vocational school, or the development of practical training provided in a higher education institution in an advanced level VET or a practice-demanding bachelor level programme. Furthermore, the subsidy is given by the enterprise – which from 1 January 2008 could write off the amount of subsidy given to a higher education institution in at most 35% of its SZH and in 70% in all other cases, instead of the former 37.5% and 75% - to the maintainer of the TISZK or the Association for the organisation of VET (so not directly to the institution), but only if the number of full time VET school students of its member institution(s) is at least 1500.

In addition, the legal amendment has widened the range of possible uses of the development subsidy, so that besides the purchase of equipment and operational costs, it can also cover the cost of licenses and products (software) required for these equipments, and 5% of the subsidy can be used for developing curriculum and learning materials necessary for the modernization of VET as well as for the accredited in-service training of teachers of vocational theory and practice, trainers of school workshops and in-company trainers. From 1 September 2008 the amount of development subsidy per student was maximized only for higher education institutions.

In order to ensure the adequate monitoring of the lawful and appropriate use of the development subsidy, since 1 January 2008 the content of development contract between the enterprise providing the subsidy and the beneficiary has been regulated by the law, and the amendment of the decree on the execution of the VTC act provides for repayment and payment of interest in case of breach of contract or the unlawful use of the subsidy.

The availability of development resources has indeed been an effective incentive for VET school maintainers to form TISZKs which by 2010 have covered about 90% of school-based

VET (see section 7.3.1). However, initially there was much uncertainty among the schools as to who in fact will decide about the use and distribution of the received development subsidies (the consulting boards of TISZKs, or the maintainer?), they felt that the new regulation would only increase the administrative burden and will ultimately be only a formality (Szép, 2008). Indeed, as a 2009 research (Mártonfi, 2009a, 2009b), found, in 2008-2009 in most places the development subsidies were simply passed on to the schools whose existing relations had provided them, although in a few TISZKs a certain proportion (5-15%) was retained for central developments that would benefit all members, decided on by the decision-making body of the TISZK. Several more TISZKs planned to do the same in the future, some even to use all such resources on a central level, but in general it seems that the internal distribution of the funds within the TISZK always depends on the particular TISZK-model and the local ambitions and interests.

In order to help beneficiaries with the administrative burden, the latest legal amendment effective from 1 July 2009 made it possible to use 3% of the development subsidy for the related administrative costs. At the same time, the proportion of SZH that enterprises can spend on this objective was again reduced, to 60% and 30%, and the amount of development subsidy was maximized again for every institutions in at most double the per student capita support of vocational practical training as defined in the budget act per student (currently HUF 106.000/EUR 378). This will probably reduce the still considerable differences in its distribution across schools and regions, but will not change that fact that the “collection” of development subsidies depends primarily on personal connections rather than real professional relations between schools and enterprises. Further remaining problems include the sustainability of developments (the amount of development subsidy received often does not cover operational costs, or the 15% that can be spent on this purpose is too little), and the transparency and adequate monitoring of its use. On the other hand, it seems that in the past years there was a considerable decrease in the amount of development subsidies provided by enterprises, although it is not possible to tell whether this resulted from the establishment of TISZKs or the economic crisis.

8.2 Use of Lifelong Learning Programme funds

In 1997 Hungary joined the programmes which had preceded the Lifelong Learning Programme. Since 1999 tenders have been managed by the same national agency, the Tempus Public Foundation. As a result of the high quality of the agency’s work, as well as the widespread satisfaction expressed by all parties concerned (applicants, training and other institutions involved in VET, experts of maintenance and management), the Ministry of Education has consistently been able to rely on the national agency in implementing its policies in the fields of EU co-operation and mobility.

Due to the fact that the Lifelong Learning Program has been identified as a high priority tool by the Copenhagen and the Lisbon Processes, the policy weight it carries has substantially increased. The LLP plays a significant role in advancing the internationalization of VET through supporting mobility and partnership cooperation. Mobility as a special educational tool has been established as a priority in the European Union.

The Leonardo da Vinci programme that funds VET projects has been operating in a relatively stable fashion; adaptation to the changes that followed the 2007 launching of the LLP (e.g. introduction of new grant types, the shifting of some of the mobility programmes into the Erasmus programme) has been smooth. In 2007 the Leonardo da Vinci programme had a

budget of EUR 4.9 M; that was raised to 5.2 million the following year, and to 5,5 in 2009. The number of successful applications has been rising simultaneously: it was 163 and 167 in the first two years, and by 2009 it reached 207.

According to expert evaluations, the most successful projects in LdV are related to mobility goals in Hungary (such as practical training abroad, study visits, exchange programmes). As a result, there is now a great number of institutions for which international cooperation and project-based work have become part of their routine activities, and which support practice-oriented language teaching and, in some cases, methodological modernization. This seems to be in line with the European experience. In Hungary, development programmes are funded for the most part from the Structural Funds; in this regard, the international experience and network capital that the Leonardo programme could offer remain relatively scarcely utilized

Statistical data confirm the relative dominance of mobility projects within the Leonardo programme: most of the applications are submitted in this area, and approximately three quarters of the successful applications receive funding for mobility-related projects. A substantial amount of the total LdV budget is spent on mobility programmes (60, 52 and 68% between 2007 and 2009).

Table 6: Number of applications and LdV funding distributed 2007-2009

Programme type		Applications submitted			Applications approved			Funding (EUR)		
		2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009
Leonardo / TOTAL		235	247	293	163	166	207	4,948,407	5,203,687	5,491,301
Leonardo Mobility		197	150	192	141	122	149	2,991,570	2,721,917	3,729,568
<i>IVET students</i>	<i>for practical training abroad</i>	124	97	122	93	81	94	2,185,516	2,082,230	2,623,239
<i>Employees Unemployed</i>		27	30	31	17	22	24	544,422	388,800	662,571
<i>VET experts</i>		46	23	39	31	19	31	261,632	250,887	443,758
Leonardo Partnership		-	51	56	-	18	24	-	297,000	360,000
Leonardo Transfer of Innovation		19	26	11	8	10	6	1,950,123	2,168,039	1,362,669
Leonardo Preparatory Visits		19	20	34	14	16	28	6,714	16,731	39,064

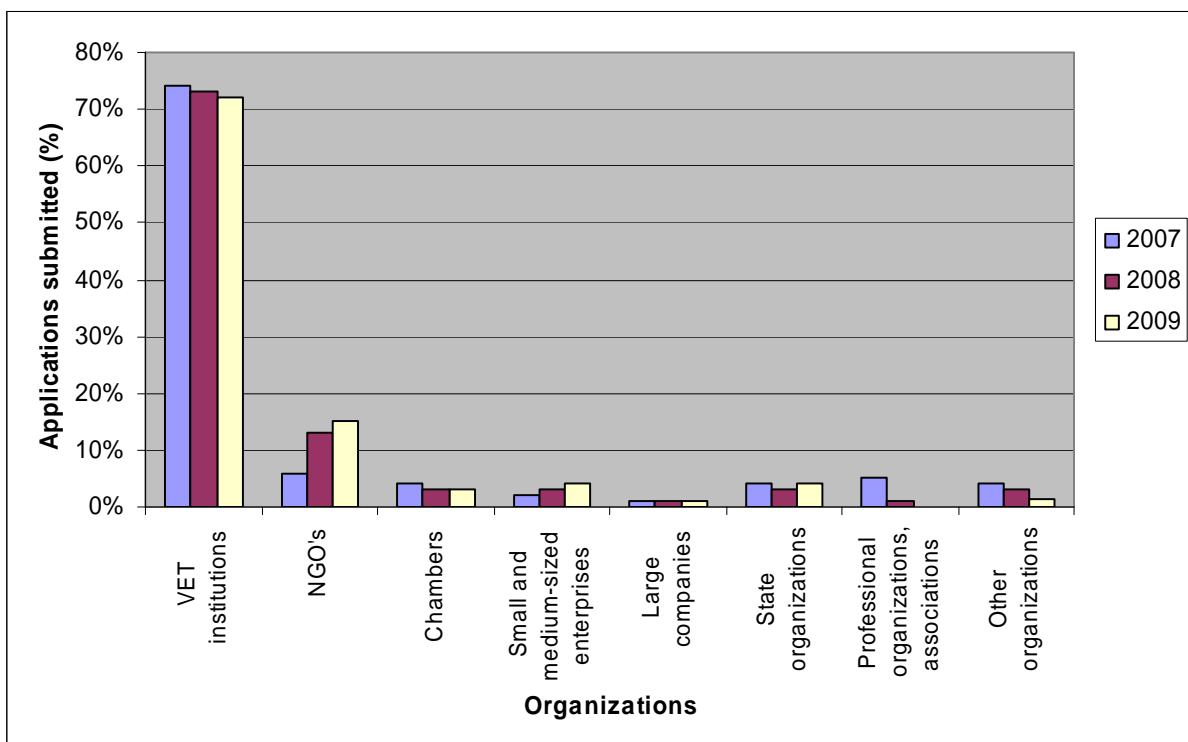
Mobility programmes are meant to promote European cooperation in IVET and CVET, and to facilitate the development of both academic and practical knowledge and professional

language skills. The programme supports two types of mobility: in addition to that of VET students, the competence development of VET professionals and cooperation with companies and enterprises are also given top priority.

Since 2007 applications are accepted in three categories. The majority of (successful) applications are submitted by IVET students. The other two groups are comprised of employees (including the unemployed) and VET professionals (teachers/trainers and experts).

The composition of applicants (see figure 1.) has not changed with the launching of the LLP; just as they did prior to 2007, IVET institutions – especially vocational schools – constitute the majority of applicants. Approximately three quarters of all applications for the Leonardo mobility programmes come from VET schools every year (74, 73, 72%). Also among the participants are higher education institutions, large companies, small and medium-sized enterprises, chambers, social partners and NGOs, albeit on a much smaller scale. It should be noted, however, the participation of NGOs is dynamically growing: over a period of three years their proportion rose by 2.5 times from 6% in 2007 to 15% in 2009. Most of their project proposals were submitted within the categories of employees/unemployed and VET professionals. The economic sector is largely underrepresented in LdV programmes. According to the national agency responsible for the management of LLP programmes, they are difficult to reach and not particularly mobile. Furthermore, even though the opportunities offered by the Leonardo programme could be productively integrated into adult training, companies do not actively seek calls for application in the area of VET.

Figure 1: Compositions of applicants for Leonardo Mobility 2007-2009



From the very beginning, applicants in every field had the same chance to have their proposals accepted; no particular field was given preferential treatment over the rest. Thus successful applications can be found in every occupational group. However, statistics reveal

that the fields of hotel and tourist industry as well as agriculture have been overrepresented, while technical fields score very low. From 2010 onward project proposals that aim to support the practical training of students who are learning for shortage occupations will be given special priority.

In 2007 almost 30% of all successful applications were submitted by institutions which had never before won any funding. That is, no previous experience is required to apply for LdV mobility funding, new applicants have a good chance of succeeding.

Approximately 1800 disadvantaged young people have participated in the LdV mobility programme so far; that figure corresponds to 27-29% of all mobility participants. At the same time, however, there are experts who give voice to their doubts with regard to the impact LdV programmes may or may not have on the excessively polarized school system in Hungary. It is not clear yet whether LdV will help narrowing the gap, or, on the contrary, make it even wider. It seems that the pool of schools that can and do take advantage of the opportunities offered by the programme is getting smaller, while no compensation mechanisms have been yet developed to assist the integration of schools with little or no chance to apply for funding on their own (Tót 2010).

Specific components of the Leonardo da Vinci programme have been directly integrated into the Hungarian school system. Mobility and development projects now play a significant role in the further training programmes for teachers. Teachers employed by public education institutions are obliged by law to attend further training programmes on a regular basis, and participation in LdV programmes can be used toward meeting that requirement. With regard to the evaluation of applications, priorities have somewhat shifted over the course of the past few years: previously it was the development of foreign language skills and the widening of the horizon of teachers that were identified as the main objectives; today the emphasis is on learning competence-based teaching methods and on methodology in general.

Furthermore, the Lifelong Learning Programme, particularly the Leonardo mobility programmes also have an indirect effect on the development process in VET in Hungary. The popularity and recognition of LdV mobility programmes led to the announcement of calls for applications for domestic mobility programmes within the Vocational School Development Programme in 2007 and in 2008 as well. The calls, as well as the applications, were modelled largely upon those in the Leonardo programme (see 3.2.3 and 7.2.1).

8.2.1 New types of funding in the Leonardo programme

As confirmed by programme evaluations, institutions that have already become part of an international network of other institutions are likely to seek contact with new partners on their own. In other words, it is always the first step that is the hardest to take. In order to increase the number of applicants, the Leonardo preparatory visits grant was launched in 2007. Prior to that, preparatory visits had to be funded from the training sub-fund of the Labour Market Fund. All institutions involved in VET are eligible to apply for preparatory visits. The maximum amount of support is 1,000 euro.

Following the first introductory year of 2007, procedures for grant programmes already in place (mobility, innovation transfer, preparatory visits) were further refined, and a new on-line form was introduced. The Leonardo Partnership programme was launched in 2008 to support the relatively small-scale cooperation of organisations involved in VET. The focus of these multilateral partnerships is on the exchange of ideas and experience; participants are not expected to carry out any major development project. The opportunities offered by mobility

and innovation transfer projects are well complemented by the Partnership programme. Even though there is not much experience to draw on, Partnership grants are becoming increasingly popular. Their success confirms that professional cooperation and joint activities on an institutional level are as much needed by organisations in VET as in other areas.

The introduction of the Leonardo Mobility Certificate was the novelty of 2008. By awarding a LdV Mobility Certificate, the national agency recognises the capacity of an institution to implement a Leonardo da Vinci mobility project of excellent quality. The certificate is valid for four years and allows the institution to submit a simplified application form – indicating the number of prospective participants in practical training – during that period. With making that kind of stability in planning available to them, the certificate is meant to support organisations to integrate mobility into their training, to develop their own strategy for mobility, and to improve their standards of quality.

Introduction of the Leonardo Mobility Certificate was not mandatory, rather it was left to each individual country to decide whether they want to try it or not. Since the Hungarian national agency was involved in the development of the certificate from the very beginning, it was an obvious choice to launch the certificate programme in 2009. The European Commission has defined a minimum framework for the programme, and left it to the national agencies to adjust the criteria to the local characteristics of the mobility programme, the performance and standards expected from the applicants. In the first year of its introduction, the certificate was awarded to 16 projects submitted by 12 organisations; that accounts for 10% of all mobility projects funded by LdV.

8.2.2 Transfer of Innovation multilateral projects

The aim of the Transfer of Innovation projects is to improve the quality and attractiveness of the European VET system by adapting and integrating innovative content or results from previous Leonardo da Vinci projects, or from other innovative projects into public and/or private vocational training systems and companies at the national, local, regional, or sectoral level. In a broader sense, it aims to promote the integration of VET schools and national VET contents with the European framework by improving the quality and the content of training. Projects are implemented in international partnerships.

The table below shows the number of projects supported in Hungary within the framework of the Innovation Transfer Programme. In 2010 high priority is given to project proposals that focus on increasing the competence level of disadvantaged groups and to promote equal opportunities through innovation transfer projects. It involves the use of ICT and eLearning tools, as well as promoting the improvement of specialized and content-based language training.

The evaluation of innovation transfer projects points to rather controversial results, especially when compared to the mobility programmes, for the latter are held to be highly successful within LLP. The difficulties have been identified as follows:

- The themes of the projects were adjusted to national priorities only in a general – and in most cases formal – way; the submission of the projects was motivated by institutional, rather than system-wide interests.

- Project products have primarily been incorporated into the training practice of the organisation/institutions that submitted the proposal, examples of wider use are sporadic.
- Relatively few projects were implemented in the period between 2007-2009, as opposed to the large number of mobility projects (see Table 1. above for comparison), so their impact has been limited merely on account of their small scale.
- There has been virtually no synergy with projects that have been supported from the Structural Funds, as institutions/organisations that received funding from those sources and which played an important role in development projects generally refrained from participating in Innovation Transfer projects.
- Hungarian VET policy has failed to recognise the opportunities the Innovation Transfer projects may offer, which is in contrast with the increasing significance of the project and its results in other EU countries.
- Due to the compromises that the EU was compelled to make, the budget of the Lifelong Learning Programme has been halved for the period 2007-2013, which represents substantial constraint on meeting the ambitious goals set out for the Lifelong Learning Programme.

8.3 Use of other EU funds

Since the change of the regime in 1989, support from EU or other foreign sources has played a fundamental role in the reform of the Hungarian vocational education and training system. Between 1991 and 2011 Hungary received support from the World Bank for VET development programmes, in the framework of which the current structure of school-based VET was developed, together with the network of training centres focusing primarily on the training of disadvantaged adults, and included the development of competence-based, modular VET curricula.

Following the EU accession in 2004, Hungary became entitled to use the Structural Funds for development projects. During 2004-2006, the guidelines for using these sources were laid down in the National Development Plan (*Nemzeti Fejlesztési Terv, NFT*), while for the period 2007-2013 the New Hungary Development Plan (*Új Magyarország Fejlesztési Terv, ÚMFT*) regulated the use of EU funding. The approval of both strategies and the corresponding operational programmes was preceded by a long and extensive social debate.

Of the five operational programmes of the National Development Agency (*Nemzeti Fejlesztési Ügynökség, NFÜ*) it is the Human Resource Development Programme (*Humán erőforrás-fejlesztési Operatív Program, HEFOP*) which provided the framework for the implementation of measures which bear the greatest impact on VET. One of these measures aimed at the renewing of the National Qualification Register (*Országos Képzési Jegyzék, OKJ*) based on the principle of modularity, while another established the regional vocational training centres (*térségi integrált szakképző központok, TISZK*) (see 7.3)

Out of the 8 sectoral operational programmes of ÚMFT, the Social Renewal Operational Programme (*Társadalmi Megújulás Operatív Program, TÁMOP*) and the Social Infrastructure Operational Programme (*Társadalmi Infrastruktúra Operatív Program, TIOP*) are concerned most directly with VET, but the majority of development work carried out in the framework of other operational programmes also include important training elements.

Below are the main differences/similarities and interrelationships between the two periods in which ÚMFT and NFT regulated the use of EU funds:

- Since 2007 Hungary has had access to more substantial funds than in the previous period: while between 2004-2006 the amount of available funds was EUR 2.8 billion in the following period of 2007-2013 as much as EUR 22.6 billion can be drawn for development purposes through the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund.
- While before 2006 the implementation of the funds of the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund took place within the same operational programme, the ÚMFT does not make this possible. This is the reason why human resource development and infrastructure development were handled simultaneously in the framework of NFT's HEFOP, while in the ÚMFT they are dealt with separately, though in a coordinated way, in the framework of two operational programmes, TÁMOP and TIOP.
- During the planning of ÚMFT, more efforts were made to involve stakeholders (social and civil organisations, local governments, representatives of the economy and science, etc.) into the development of strategic and operational programmes. In addition, NFÜ, which coordinates the development work detailed in the ÚMFT, also relied on the recommendations formulated by the professional organisations representing potential tenderers when working out the tender announcements for certain operational programmes.

- The goal of the NFÜ is to create transparent, simple and fast tender procedures, since the unreasonably high bureaucratic costs and the delays in payment have posed many serious problems in the implementation of NFT.

Many development projects, launched under HEFOP, are continued in the framework of TÁMOP and TIOP, the following are most directly related to VET:

- the establishment of more TISZK's (see 7.3);
- curriculum development and in-service training of teachers in compliance with the requirements laid down in the framework of HEFOP (see 6.4);
- Step One Forward Programme II. (*Lépj Egyet Előre II.*)(See 5.1)

Further substantial development within ÚMFT relevant for VET has focused on the following:

- the development of the national system and database of career orientation (see 6.4);
- the devising of a comprehensive project which is directed at the quality and content development of VET (see 8.3.1). (See 5.1).

Since neither HEFOP, nor the TÁMOP/TIOP have been closed (the delivery of the projects launched under the former operational programme is still in progress in 2010), no comprehensive study has been conducted on either of the programmes. Interim reports and ex ante evaluations, however, draw attention to the following deficiencies:

- territorial and regional inequalities did not receive adequate attention (applicants from disadvantaged regions are less likely to submit successful bids), as a result of which the tenders do not contribute to decreasing inequalities, on the contrary;
- the programmes within HEFOP failed to adequately address one of the most vulnerable groups, the Roma;
- beside projects aiming to strengthen and support the existing institutional structure (which on the long run imply state budgetary risks), it would be important to focus on priority development projects which are aimed at further development;
- investments into human resources should receive more emphasis than they do currently, while infrastructure development should receive less.

All the payments made in the framework of ÚMFT may be monitored on the NFÜ website through the IT system, developed by the organisation, which allows a detailed overview and comparison of data. It indicates that in the framework of HEFOP, up to June 2010, as much as HUF 200 billion (EUR 0.75 billion EUR) has been spent on 3,000 programmes. Within TÁMOP, on the other hand, over HUF 136 billion (EUR 0.5 billion) was granted to 3,674 projects until the same date.

8.3.1. Developing the quality and content of training

The TÁMOP Programme 2.2.1., "Developing the quality and content of VET" (*"A képzés minőségének és tartalmának fejlesztése"*) aims primarily at the coordinated and comprehensive development of VET and adult training. VET-related development of major volume implemented in the years ahead will most certainly take place in the framework of this programme. The ultimate goal of development is to ensure that young people graduating from VET schools possess competences which help them adapt to the labour market both on the short, as well as on the long term. The development of vocational education and training,

and in-service training of those working in VET, is implemented in the following nine sub-programmes with the following aims:

1. Career tracking: the development of an IT-based career tracking system, which provides up-to-date information for training institutions, decision makers and for individuals on the labour market assessment of various elements and actors of the labour market;
2. Quality assurance: the development of a Unified Quality Management Framework which unifies and integrates the quality management systems currently used in VET and adult training;
3. Examination system: the development of a unified methodology for supervising professional examinations and institutions that organise examinations, as well as the development of tools which allow the measurement and assessment of input competences;
4. Curriculum development: preparing textbook content elements for certain (professional) modules of qualifications listed in the OKJ and their publication on the Internet;
5. Measurement-assessment: creating an open exercise bank, accessible from the Internet, which contains exercises based on a detailed list of competences necessary for the occupations;
6. Development of the professional knowledge of vocational teachers, instructors, vocational instructors: the development and testing of a teacher in-service training scheme, which allows for vocational teachers, vocational instructors to attain up-to-date practical knowledge in a workplace environment;
7. Development of foreign language competence of vocational teachers and instructors in VET in the framework of language courses organised in Hungary and abroad, and the development of teaching aid for language teaching;
8. Modernization and promotion of practical training in a workplace setting, identifying new training forms, and the development of innovative training materials and content;
9. Increasing training demand: information dissemination related to development results, the goal of which is, beyond promoting the results of the project, to promote VET.

Some of the sub-projects continue the work launched in the Vocational School Development Programme (*Szakiskolai Fejlesztési Program, SZFP*), others, such as sub-programmes 1 and 8, have been launched in new areas.

The Programme is coordinated by the National Institute for VET and Adult Training (*Nemzeti Szakképzési és Felnőttképzési Intézet, NSZFI*) but other bodies are also involved in setting the development goals, including the Supervisory Committee (*Felügyelő Tanács*), consisting of actors in VET, and the Consultative Body (*Tanácsadó Testület*) comprising three professional organisations and institutions.

The expected framework budget for the Programme, to be implemented between 2007 and 2014, is HUF 16, 042 billion (EUR 64 million). Of the amount available in the first two-year period, 7.8 billion HUF, so far 3.2 billion has been spent on development. All the products, prepared during the project, and all related information are available on www.kepzesevolucioja.hu.

8.4 Improving VET governance

In 2002 adult training was placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Employment and Labour, then – after the 2006 parliamentary elections and the subsequent transformation of governmental structure – VET was also brought under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour. Simultaneously, the administration of VET and adult training was demoted from the level of deputy state secretary to that of head of department. With regard to matters of school-based VET, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour share responsibilities. Since the political regime change in 1989 VET and/or adult training were moved around between ministries after almost every election, depending on how it fitted the new governmental structure. These shifts and changes do not add up to a trend. Nevertheless, the current situation in which VET, adult training, employment policy and social policy all belong to one ministry, may – at least theoretically speaking – favour efforts to integrate policies. However, co-operation between the different ministries has not been particularly smooth; as a result, the opportunity remains largely unexploited. What the most recent change of government in 2010 will bring about for VET remains to be seen.

Continuous and determined policy efforts have been made since 2002 to make the institutional system of IVET more concentrated. The fairly liberal law on local governments, passed in 1990, provides strong entitlements for local governments, and that applies to the maintenance of VET institutions as well. School maintainers include the local governments of great number of small towns, in addition to those of all the counties and larger settlements. As a result, the maintenance and institutional structure of school-based VET is very fragmented: up until recently VET was provided in more than 1000 institutions. That, obviously, resulted in severe deficiencies in both the effectiveness and quality of teaching. Given that political conditions had hindered the modification of the local government act, as it would require the unanimous votes of two thirds of the MPs present, the government decided in 2003 – during the preparation of the Human Resource Development Operational Programme (*Humánerőforrás-fejlesztési Operatív Program, HEFOP*) – to find another way to concentrate the institutional system and the financing (i.e. the distribution of available resources) of VET. Regional integrated vocational training centres (*Térségi Integrált Szakképző Központ, TISZK*) were set up to this end (see 7.3). The process began in 2005 but gained real impetus in 2007.

The structure of VET financing has hardly changed in the past period (see 8.1), although the 2005 Strategy for VET Development set the objective of reviewing the issue. As it is, this task is to be carried out by the new government to take office in 2010. The ongoing institutional restructuring will also have implications for the financing of VET, with preference being given to larger institutions (above 1500 students). The legal amendments of the past 5 years introduced significant changes into the use of vocational training contribution – which is basically a VET tax, amounting to 1.5% of the gross wage bill – by extending the scope of opportunities for economic actors and putting an end to anomalies in this area.

The active involvement of economic actors in shaping VET policy has become a tradition by now, even though social partners have their chance to voice their opinion in various bodies and commissions which change from time to time. However, there is a disagreement with regard to the actual influence they play. Social partners also play a role in allocating funds both on national and local levels. There is a strong desire to involve economic actors locally as well, with the expectation of strengthening the labour market orientation of VET.

On the one hand, economic actors are strongly represented in regional development and training committees (*Regionális Fejlesztési és Képzési Bizottság, RFKB*) which make decisions regarding training profiles (see 8.4.1). From autumn 2009 development funds necessary for the permanent operation of VET are available to VET institutions on condition that they accept the recommendations of RFKBs regarding how many students, in which institutions and where should be enrolled. Thus RFKBs, in a sense, belong to the management structure. On the other hand, the newly established regional integrated vocational training centres (7.3) must set up consultative boards in which the majority is comprised of representatives of the economic sector. The board shall review, among other things, the vocational programmes (curricula) of the VET schools and the higher education institution constituting the TISZK and the training plan of the central training location, and can make recommendations for the modification of the training offer of the schools and the central training location, or the use of development subsidy.

Strengthening regional management, along with the establishment of TISZKs and making the operation of professional consultative boards compulsory, have resulted in bringing training closer to the everyday needs of the economy. Through the national and regional institutional structure of social partnership, economic actors have taken part in shaping VET policy since 1991. In addition, in recent years they have gained increasing influence on specific decisions and the everyday operation VET schools as well. Chambers, for instance, have been increasingly taking over an increasing number of tasks which were previously performed by the state (see chapter 4.3.1). This shows a trend which has been produced by the governmental policies carried out since 2002. As for the consequences, some experts, however, are worried about a potential shrinking in the scope of the government's responsibility. The transformation is in a phase where it is too early to tell the advantages and disadvantages of apart.

8.4.1 Establishment of the Regional Development and Training Committees (Regionális Fejlesztési és Képzési Bizottság, RFKB)

County-based VET committees, operating since the second half of the 1990s, were consultative bodies consisting of members delegated by school maintainers and economic actors. They also handled development tenders financed from the decentralised parts of the VET Fund. In the years prior to joining the EU, attempts were made to strengthen the institutions of regional planning vis-à-vis county level institutions. Thus in 2001 county VET committees were replaced by regional development and training committees (RFKB) as their legal successors. From then on quotas of development funds were defined by regions. (Aside from Budapest and its agglomeration, every three counties make up all in all a further six regions.)

RFKBs were restructured in 2003 after the passing of the VTC act²⁹. School maintainers and the educational sector became entitled to delegate 50% of the 28 members, while the other 50% was delegated by actors of the economy whose role thus has increased. With respect to members representing the economic sector in all the seven regions of the country, 45 were nominated by employers, 37 by trade unions and 16 by chambers. 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 classified as shortage

²⁹ Act LXXXVI of 2003 on Vocational training contribution and the support of the development of training.

occupations; training in these jobs accorded training providers special financial advantages, and entitled students to additional financial allowance.

Act CII of 2007 once again amended the composition, the tasks and entitlements of the committees. According to the grounds of the law, the legislative intention had been to expand the purview of RFKBs, improve their status and strengthen their role in communicating the demands of the economy. The new, 26-member committees, with the majority of members representing the economic sector, were to be set up starting from January 2008. Co-presidents are delegated by the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The purview of the seven regional development and training committees, dominated by representatives of the economy, was considerably expanded in order to ensure the coordinated development and provision of IVET in line with the demands of the regional labour market. In addition to preparing regional strategies for VET development, tendering development funds and establishing the regional lists of shortage jobs, since 2008 the RFKBs:

- decide on the goals of regional VET development and development support from the decentralised section of the MPA training sub-fund;³⁰
- decide on the regional demands of VET and the vocational programme offers and appropriate shares of student enrolment; and
- make proposals concerning the distribution of development subsidy among schools/qualifications and on the regional volume of development funds as well (for further details see 4.1.1).

From supporting role the seven RFKBS moved to centre stage, especially because they can to a large extent influence what IVET has to offer. In order to support their increased responsibilities, the National Vocational and Adult Training Council provided HUF 900-900 million (EUR 3.6 million) in both 2008 and 2009 for the RFKBs, primarily to assist them with gathering information about the regional labour market so that their decisions would be well-founded. Furthermore, through establishing the list of shortage jobs in every region, RFKBs also play a role in setting up the criteria of eligibility for the recently launched scholarship for vocational school students training in occupations high in demand (see 4.2.1).

Up until now, RFKBs had the opportunity to determine regional VET programme offers and student enrolment figures in two consecutive years (2008 and 2009). Vocations to be taught were divided into three categories: prominently supported (i.e. shortage occupations), supported and not supported. Decisions made in 2008 and affecting enrolment for the school year 2009/2010 had little or no impact in most regions. However, according to a survey carried out in November 2009³¹, approximately one-fifth of all schools were already restricted both in terms of realizing their enrolment plans and also in the use of development funds.

In addition to the categorization of vocations, in 2009 the number of classes per vocation that the TISZKs (see 7.3) could start was also regulated by the RFKBs in the majority of the seven regions. This decision had a favourable effect on one quarter of all schools, while one third of them found it unfavourable, with no consequence for the rest.

These changes point to a trend of increasing the involvement of economic actors in specific IVET matters, with the expectation being that it would contribute to narrowing the gap

³⁰ The decentralised section of the MPA training sub-fund increased significantly in a decade, it grew from 3.451 (2001) to 7.113 billion (2008). In 2009 the distribution of development funds was suspended temporarily, but in 2010 tenders were announced again.

³¹ The survey cited above was part of a research on VET institutions, entitled „Odds of Employment”, conducted by the Institute for Educational Development and Research (*Oktatáskutató és Fejlesztő Intézet, OFI*).

between labour market supply and demand. VET policy-makers have high hopes for the RFKBs. However, those in the education system, including institutions and maintainers, give voice to their misgivings on occasion; they fear that RFKB members – not having the appropriate experience in training provision and education, and being committed to short-term interests at the same time – may as well make decisions that are detrimental to training capacities and the quality of VET. For example, in the survey cited above the majority of school principals did not agree with the statement that “The decisions made by the RFKBs will result in a better adjustment between VET and the demands of the labour market.” To be exact, four-fifth of those who were unfavoured by the aforementioned decisions, and half of the unaffected were sceptical; and even one quarter of those who have benefited from the increased involvement of the RFKBs in VET matters sided with the former two groups.

THEME 9: PROGRESS IN MODERNISING EUROPEAN VET SYSTEMS IN THE COPENHAGEN PROCESS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE COOPERATION

9.1 Impact of European cooperation in VET on development of national VET policies

Hungarian education and VET policy began to follow the relevant policy priorities set in the European Union in the second half of the 1990's, i.e. way before the country's EU Accession in 2004. These priorities were emphasized in Hungarian policy documents (including strategies or government programmes) and displayed two distinct features. Some of the decision makers were familiar with the EU documents and not only did they have a good understanding of them but they were able to interpret them in the local context as well; they regarded the EU priority setting as a tool to promote the modernization of VET. They recognized that, if correctly interpreted, all the EU priorities are relevant for the efforts at adapting Hungarian VET to the changing economic and social conditions and improving the quality of VET. Others, however, were less experienced with respect to the global context and with EU policy, nor did they have an up-to-date understanding of VET, and interpreted EU Directives as expectations rather and lay emphasis on a more formal meeting of requirements. They strove to make sure that key terms and documents appear in key documents, while they were not necessarily or directly connected to the actual policy objectives. This duality persists to this day. All the official documents bear the marks of European VET policy in terms of themes and terminology, on the level of real processes, however, EU impact is not as clear-cut.

If we consider various forms of EU level cooperation and the priorities laid out in the Copenhagen process, then we can conclude that in some areas Hungary has made substantial progress, that is, the process has greatly impacted upon Hungarian VET management; in other areas, however, development and implementation has not even begun with only the preparatory activities dominating the work (see chapter 3).

Various actors of vocational education and training have been actively participating in the Leonardo Programme ever since Hungary joined in (see 7.1.1). The management of LdV Programme is carried out by the National Agency and the Programme enjoys the appreciation of both VET policy makers and those participating in VET. Assessment shows that participants of the LdV Programme have greatly benefited from it, whereas a larger scale integration of developments into the VET system is not resolved. The introduction of Europass in Hungary was carried out within a short time and can be considered a success story (see also 3.1.1).

The importance of the European Qualification Framework was immediately recognized by professionals, and VET policy makers were also quick to act upon it, so related developments began following the 2008 government order (see also 9.1.1). The situation was similar with respect to quality assurance. The majority of VET institutions had already had some kind of quality assurance system in place and harmonization with the EU priorities have also been in progress for a number of years (see also 9.1.2).

Professional and VET policy management were less open to the concept of ECVET but preliminary works have begun in this domain as well. A web of interests impede the recognition and validation of skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning. Although the establishment of the legal framework began already back in

2001, and a couple of pilot programmes have been also launched, systematic grounding work is still left to be carried out.

Hungary has made an effort to participate, among others, in European partnership, research and development programmes (so-called clusters) and has been active in cooperating in measurement, assessment and statistical cooperation programmes, organised by OECD, such as PISA, TALIS, PIAAC, Education or Glance.

One criticism that can be formulated in this respect is that only a fraction of Hungarian VET professionals benefits from such cooperation and the wider professional community has little information about the outcome of this cooperation, furthermore, a practical adaptation of the results is slow. At the same time, these results are integrated into the developments implemented in Hungary (including the competence assessment, organised every year), therefore their approach is indirectly built into the aggregate knowledge of the sphere.

9.1.1 The National Qualification Framework (NQF)

In connection with the national adaptation of the European Qualification Framework (EQF), an extensive professional consultation process has begun involving the representatives of public and higher education and VET, interest representation organisations, professional organisations, sectoral partners, development professionals and experts, ministries responsible for qualifications and their partner organisations, and civil organisations. Participants unequivocally supported the establishment of EQF, as well as a national qualification framework compatible with it.

Based on the recommendations made during the consultation process, the Ministry of Education had prepared, by the spring of 2008, a concept for developing a national qualification framework, which was approved by the government in May 2008 (2069./2008. (VI.6.). The government order stipulated that, under the coordination of the Minister for Culture and Education (*Oktatási és Kulturális Minisztérium, OKM*), and the Minister for Labour and Social Affairs (*Szociális és Munkaügyi Minisztérium, SZMM*), a proposal should be submitted by 31 December 2010 to the government about the legal, policy and budgetary requirements of joining EQF. The deadline set for introducing the unified NQF is 2013, which corresponds to the 2007-2013 planning period of the Structural Funds providing financing for the employers.

According to the section of OKM's website³², dedicated to National Qualification Framework (NQF), the main objectives and the expected outcomes of the introduction of the NQF are as follows:

The overall goal is to integrate the various levels and forms of education and training into a unified frame, which corresponds to the structure of, and is compatible with the principles of the EQF, and to create the conditions for realising in practice the idea of lifelong learning.

Direct goals include:

- standardizing/systemizing the outcome requirements of various levels of education and training, facilitating the harmonization of the output regulations;
- enhancing the quality assurance systems of education and training and supporting synergy between them;

³² http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44_en.htm , 2009. augusztus 6.

- recognition of knowledge and skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning;
- coordination of VET policies within the fields of education and training, strengthening cooperation with social partners;
- ensuring better guidance for the planning and development of education and training programmes, facilitating more efficient operation of career guidance and consultation services;
- promoting more efficient operation of the career guidance and consultation structures to provide support in individuals' career choices;
- for the enterprises (employers) to provide systematized information, which can be interpreted in European context as well, about the qualifications.

The most important results expected from the introduction of NQF and its operation are as follows:

1. Enhanced transparency in education and training systems, which
 - provides guidance for the individual, as well as all the actors of education and the labour market, about the content and practical use of the qualifications;
 - contributes to enhancing the efficiency, success and labour market relevance of education and training.
2. Enhanced transferability between education and training systems, as well as the formal and non-formal ways of learning. This, in turn, is expected to lead to
 - increasing the attractiveness of learning in society;
 - enhancing equity in education and access to various forms of learning;
 - improving the chances of social mobility.
3. Professional and legal conditions of joining the EQF created, the results of which include:
 - Within the foreseeable future Hungary becomes an active actor in the emerging European Education Area;
 - Increased confidence in Hungarian qualifications, which, internationally, enhances the recognition and attraction of Hungarian education systems, especially that of higher education;
 - improved competitiveness of the labour force with Hungarian qualifications in the European labour market.

The development of the NQF, overseen by the Ministry of Education, is carried out in the framework of the Social Renewal Operational Programme (*Társadalmi Megújulás Operatív Program, TÁMOP*) of the New Hungary Development Plan (*Új Magyarország Fejlesztési Terv, ÚMFT*), and in the framework of a priority project coordinated by the Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development (*Oktatáskutató és Fejlesztő Intézet, OFI*). 2009 saw the publication of analytical reports on various sectors of education (public education, VET, higher education and adult training), which cover legal regulations, management, the relationship between sectors and the various forms of training outcomes, thus alluding to ways of harmonization with the EQF levels. An outcome of the project, lasting until the fall of 2010, was the forging of close cooperation of experts from various sectors of education.

A problem that arose in the course of the development work was that in some sectors outcome-centered approach was interpreted in a variety of ways and to various degrees. During the development progress various sectors did not necessarily use the same terminology. In VET, for instance, where by 2006 the modular qualification system had been developed, competence-based outcome has been defined. In higher education during the Bologna process new outcome requirements were determined which correspond to the new structure and which focus on learning outcome. However, it is necessary to interpret the two approaches in a common framework because of the overlaps in their scopes, but the difference in the approaches prevent the introduction of a unified approach within the near future. Advanced level VET is the most obvious connection between the two sectors, however, the shaping of individual learning paths can take place only if the approach taken throughout the development is based on shared output requirements.

There is only limited chance to carry out development work that both conforms to the government order and also complies with the tight timeframe set in the project, while ensures a reconciliation and synergy of approaches. One of the most important achievements so far is that by the spring of 2010 the first proposal had been prepared about the organisational, legal and financial settlement of the introduction of the National Qualification Framework. A declared objective of the document is to serve as a basis for a new government decree. The introductory chapter lays out in detail the above-mentioned objectives, formulated by the government, and the expected outcomes. It sorts thematically the tasks necessary for achieving the set goals, including the setting of vertical and horizontal levels within the sectors, which must precede categorization.

In accordance with the material prepared as a basis for the 2008 government order, the new paper proposes that a National Qualification Committee (Országos Képesítési Tanács) be set up, and outlines its tasks related to the NQF. It separates professional-service roles, and those related to authority, as well as ones that need to be performed in an international framework. Naturally, the establishment of the Committee affects those bodies of various sectors, which are already functioning, as it may imply their reorganisation or discontinuation.

The proposal stresses that a legal framework must be set up, which must regulate the relevant procedures as well. It is considered necessary that the operation of the NQF be laid down in high level legislation (in an act or government order), all the more so because this is typically a cross-ministry area. This legislation may be adopted already in 2010, as thorough professional background work has been carried out. Additional work, focusing on the elaboration and introduction of the NQF, will most probably be carried out between 2011-2013 in the framework of a TÁMOP Programme, although the document suggest that financing shall rely on multiple sources.

It has become clear during the development work carried out thus far that putting in place a national qualification framework that covers all forms and levels of education is a long term investment, which possibly requires a longer than expected, coordinated preparation, with a gradual implementation only.

9.1.2 Establishing a quality assurance system unified via CQAF-EQARF

Creating a unified quality assurance system, influenced by EU documents, cannot be tied to one measure only. Instead, such process must imply a series of actions on the part of VET policy makers that has consistently focused the issue. One of these measures is 'The

introduction of a Unified Quality Management Framework (*Az Egységes Minőségirányítási Keretrendszer, EMK*) that has been implemented since 2008 in the framework of a TÁMOP Programme, which can lead to quality assurance with a unified approach and at a consistent quality.

Quality assurance in VET began to spread in the second half of the 1990's. The process accelerated by the actions implemented in the framework of the Comenius 2000 Public Education Quality Development Programme. Throughout the years, close to one quarter of the VET institutions acquired ISO certification and the majority of them keeps renewing it. In addition to the above, EFQM and other models, developed in connection with domestic development programmes, have also spread among VET institutions, the most important being the Vocational School Development Programme (*Szakiskolai Fejlesztési Program, SZFP*), implemented in two stages between 2003-2009, which resulted in the introduction of the so-called Vocational School Self-Assessment Model (*Szakiskolai Önértékelési Modell, SZÖM*) in 160 institutions. Besides self-assessment, the model includes external evaluation as well. It was developed by experts in the spirit of CQAF recommendations. Even though the reception of the model was positive, not all schools continued to implement it.

Since 2003 it has been mandatory for all public education institutions to prepare a so-called institutional quality management programme (intézményi minőségirányítási program, IMIP) as well, which must be renewed every three years. While the documents have been prepared as prescribed, in many schools they have had little influence on the real processes of self-assessment and quality assurance. Representatives of schools and their maintainers believe that the main reason behind this is that they did not receive additional funds for performing IMIP related tasks, which are not only perceived as additional/extra ones but their importance is also contested among institutions. The IMIP system continues to be a part of the public education regulation.

The VET Development Strategy, adopted by the government in May 2005, placed particular emphasis on the issue and set as a goal that by the end of 2008 all VET institutions shall have CQAF-compatible quality assurance in place. Although this goal was not met but by 2006 the VET Quality Assurance Framework (*Szakképzési Minőségbiztosítási Keretrendszer, SZMBK*) had been worked out. SZMBK has an integrative function as well among various quality development approaches. The expansion of CQAF in Hungary was facilitated by the fact that Hungary was entitled to delegate a member to the board of the ENQA-VET Network.

Thus it can be concluded that the culture of quality assurance has been gradually taking ground in Hungary, its quality has improved, however, the forms it takes are diverse and the level of penetration is also uneven. It is therefore understandable that VET policy has repeatedly set as a goal to ensure consistency in quality assurance. For this a logical framework was provided by EU recommendations the development of which took place with the involvement of Hungarian experts as well and which were not countered by any professional alternatives.

A shortage of funds explains why it is that up to the second half of the decade only few of the dominant VET institutions were targeted by measures aiming at the integration of quality assurance programmes and ensuring their synergies with EU recommendations. These institutions were involved as participants in priority development programmes. Since 2007 substantial funds have been allocated from the TÁMOP Programme to support the design of quality management systems in the emerging VET development associations and consortia (see 7.3).

The goal now is to have virtually all (as was specified in the programme „The Introduction of a Unified Quality Management Framework: 95% of) the VET institutions use systems

developed on the basis of European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF). A declared objective that has been formulated in recent years is to expand it to institutions carrying out adult training as well. The implementation of the Programme has been ongoing since 2008.

Since 2008 the following activities have been implemented within the EMK project, which is coordinated by the National Institute of Vocational and Adult Education³³:

- Laying the foundations of a quality management framework, and designing and specifying the system's procedures and the integration of its processes, with the aim of developing and implementing the system;
- Defining the quality elements which cannot be excluded when building the system. The basis of this work is the quality management systems and self-assessment models already in use, which are informed by the specificities of VET institutions;
- Collecting the list of key indicators, recommended key indicators and benchmarking indicators, necessary for developing the framework, in order to ensure output results and comparability;
- Defining the system of expectations, responsibilities and competencies, related to the framework, and developing the processes/regulations (planning, introduction, probing and trial), based on the setting up and operation of quality areas;
- In order to facilitate the introduction of the framework, compiling a methodological manual, and training at least 1000 people (1 person per institution) on how to use it;
- Coordination and assistance for the institutions provided by a 60-strong network of mentors, operating all over the country, therefore a uniform framework can be extended to institutions providing vocational education and training;
- Creating a quality assurance database for the users to facilitate better access and easier processing. Through the analysis and help of the database, the institution heads can get a more precise picture of the quality of the activity performed, as well as about the development directions;
- A part of the programme involves (in service) training as well, in the framework of which a two-day training is provided for around 1000 teachers, i.e. at least one person per institution.

National Institute of Vocational and Adult Education, (*Nemzeti Szakképzési és Felnőttképzési Intézet, NSZFI*) the institution in charge of implementation, serves as a National Reference Centre for Quality in VET³⁴. Judging from its website, however, it is not active in this quality. The EMK project is being implemented in the framework of the TÁMOP 2007-2008 Action Plan by the end of 2010. In institutions with a well-working quality assurance in place, complying with the EMK will most probably not be a problem. However, there is still no information about the reaction of VET schools, where there had been no quality assurance activity previously, to their involvement in the programme, and if they had received a sufficient level of assistance to launch the operation. Nevertheless, the 2009-2010 Action Plan will provide the opportunity to continue the work, although detailed plans have not been made yet.

³³ <http://www.kepzesevolucioja.hu/index.php/minosegbiztositas>

³⁴ http://cqaf.nive.hu/szakkepzesi_minosegbiztosita/

9.2 Governance, cooperation and ownership of the different actors in the Copenhagen process at European level

The Copenhagen process serves as a reference point not only for VET policy documents but it also implied the participation of many Hungarian experts in development and cooperation programmes. VET policy has appreciated the benefits (e.g. having up-to-date information about the most recent developments) which derive from such cooperation. This prompted Hungary to delegate experts to the working group developing the framework of Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) - European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF), then later one member to the board of the European Network on Quality Assurance in VET (ENQA-VET) network. This network has a website in Hungarian as well.

The government was quick to approve the introduction of Europass in Hungary, as well as the joining of the European Qualification Framework (*Európai Képesítési Keretrendszer, EKK*). The implementation of these measures was enhanced by the European level communication on the issues.

Although we do not have information about the Hungarian contribution to the development of European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), there was widespread dissemination about the content of the workshop both electronically and on paper.

The Study visit Programme of Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) is particularly popular among Hungarian experts. Local institutions have organised a number of such visits with some of them being very successful.

Hungary has been actively participating in the work of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network as well, which includes the head of the career guidance programmes regularly attending related meetings and conferences.

Hungary has taken part in the work of five clusters, including:

- The modernization of higher education
- Key competences in the service of lifelong learning
- Teachers and instructors
- Recognition of learning outcome
- Access and inclusion in the framework of lifelong learning.

The activities were complemented by wide-ranging countrywide dissemination activities. The Tempus Foundation organised workshops to discuss the topics, the related materials and a summary of the experience of the work in the clusters were published in a separate publication.

The peer learning event “The recognition of learning outcome” (*„A tanulási eredmények elismerése”*) was organised in the autumn of 2007, which was related to the EQF process. This issue has always been given great importance in Hungarian VET policy.

The Agency managing the LLP in Hungary is very active in those cooperation projects as well which are not prescribed, and it organises dissemination events related to this. On two occasions Hungary has participated successfully in the competition for the European Quality Award for Mobility.

The Hungarian participation rate at the Euroskills and Worldskills competitions has sharply increased over the years, and the qualifiers for these competitions, which are now considered as media events, are modelled after them (see 6.2)

Reports were prepared every two years (in 2005, 2007 and 2009) for the Commission about measures taken in the framework of the Education and Training 2010 work programme. They were supported each time by analyses related to the various topics, which sought to support the learning process. These papers were published, and subsequently discussed at dissemination events.

9.3 External dimension of European cooperation in VET

Hungary, a medium size country, has only been an EU member state for six years. The country's level of development lags behind the European average. Hungary is located on the border of the European Union and there is a large number of ethnic Hungarians living beyond its borders. As a result of historical ties, between 1950 and 1990, the country maintained more intense relations with countries located to the East of its borders. This is what influences Hungary's relations outside the EU.

Hungary is bordered by a number of non EU countries (Croatia, Serbia and Ukraine). In these directions it is mostly in the border regions where there is cooperation between institutions, making use of geographical proximity and tenders³⁵ aiming to promote cross-border cooperation. We have no information about joint programmes between the states but those between institutions are frequent.

The Agricultural Vocational School in Sellye has ties with institutions in Croatia. Beside the cooperation with the agricultural secondary school in Eszék, which has been actively maintained since 1993, it is now in the process of establishing cooperation in forestry, which includes both student and teacher exchange as well.

The Lámfalussy Sándor Secondary School in Lenti, in Zala county, Southern Hungary, participates in a trilateral (Croatian-Slovenian-Hungarian) cooperation, which is based on an international letter of interest ("*VET Without Borders*") signed in 2007. The Croatian partner is a secondary school in Prelog and the content of the cooperation is catering and tourism.

The Zsigmondy Vilmos and Széchenyi István Vocational School in Nagykanizsa cooperates with vocational schools in Csáktornya, Croatia, in the area of renewable energy and handicrafts.

The dual language high school in Pécs, Southern Hungary, initiated the establishment of the Cooperation Network of Secondary Schools, involving Croatian and Hungarian institutions. Beside high schools, there are 3-3 VET schools from Pécs and Eszék have participated as well. The subject of the cooperation was VET related to arts, commerce, informatics, electronics and catering.

In addition to the above-mentioned ties with Croatian institutions, the domestically financed vocational schools mobility programmes also include a project targeting Croatia.

³⁵ The above-mentioned cooperation projects were included in the report of the research, carried out at the Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development (Oktatókutató és Fejlesztő Intézetben, OFI) under the leadership of Tamás Híves, on education in the border regions. The research programme was implemented in 2009-2010 and was financed from TÁMOP 3.1.1.

The secondary school in Vásárosnamény, a town in the North-East of Hungary, cooperates with schools in all the neighbouring countries (Slovakia, Romania and Ukraine) in the area of environmental protection. This school, along with others in the region, including the economics secondary school in Fehérgyarmat, has ethnic Hungarian students from Ukraine, whose mother tongue is Hungarian, even though this trend is decreasing, which means that there are fewer and fewer foreign students in these schools. These schools have established many cultural ties as well with Ukrainian institutions, which may not be related to VET, but contribute to the development of the key competences of VET participants.

The cooperation between the Bányai Júlia Vocational School in Baja, a Hungarian town close to the Southern borders, and the Economics Secondary High School in Zombor in Serbia, looks back on many years. The cooperation consists in activities related to vocational education and training related to catering. In 2005 and 2006, these two institutions submitted their bids to an INTERREG tender respectively with the aim of enhancing the intensity of cross-border cooperation, as well as professional and personal ties between the participating organisations. A declared objective of the project is to assist the Serbian institutions in preparing for their countries' EU accession. Since the closing of the project cooperation between the organisations has continued in the framework of school twinning projects. Another secondary school is Baja, Jelky András Vocational School, has developed similar twinning project with Srednja Tehnika Skola, located also in the Serbian town of Zombor. As a result of geographical proximity, schools in Baja also plan the development of cooperation with schools in Croatia.

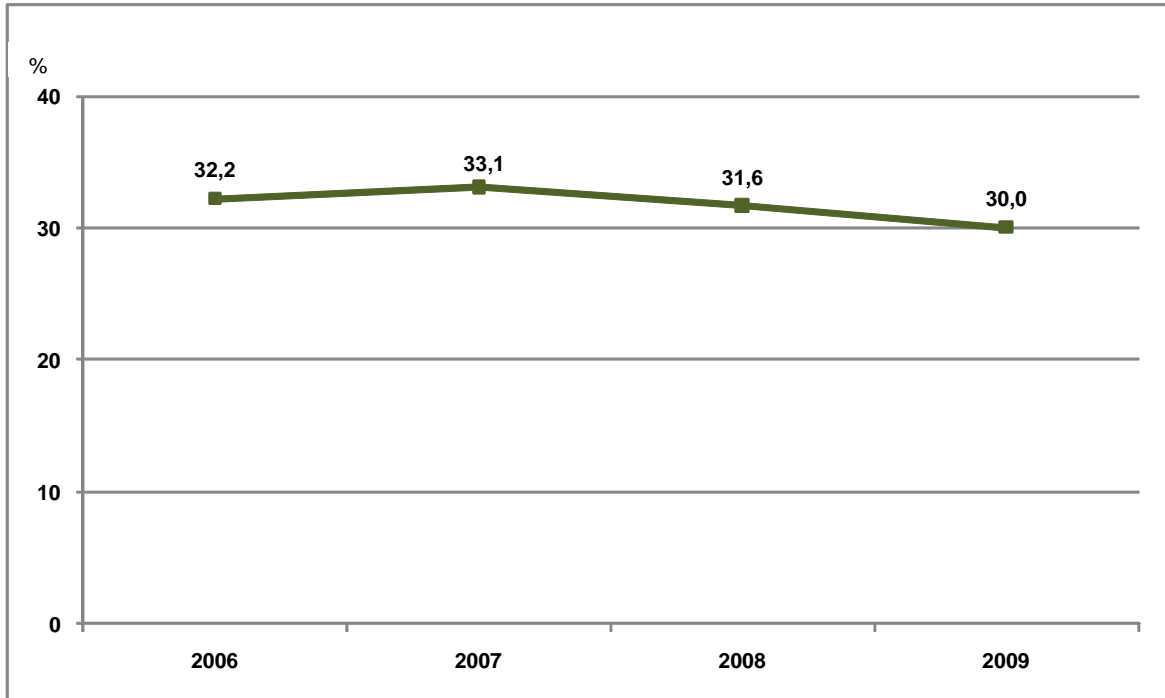
In the framework of the Leonardo Programme, there has been opportunity to cooperate with Turkish institutions, which is popular in both countries. Eleven projects of the ongoing ones include partnership with Turkey. Of these four support the mobility of teachers, 5 aim at student mobility, while two are for employees/unemployed skilled workers. Among the projects which have been concluded since 2008, two additional were directed towards Turkey.

We have no information of cooperation in the domain of VET with countries located in other continents but intergovernmental cooperation and cooperation between institutions are more widespread in these relations.

10. ANNEXES

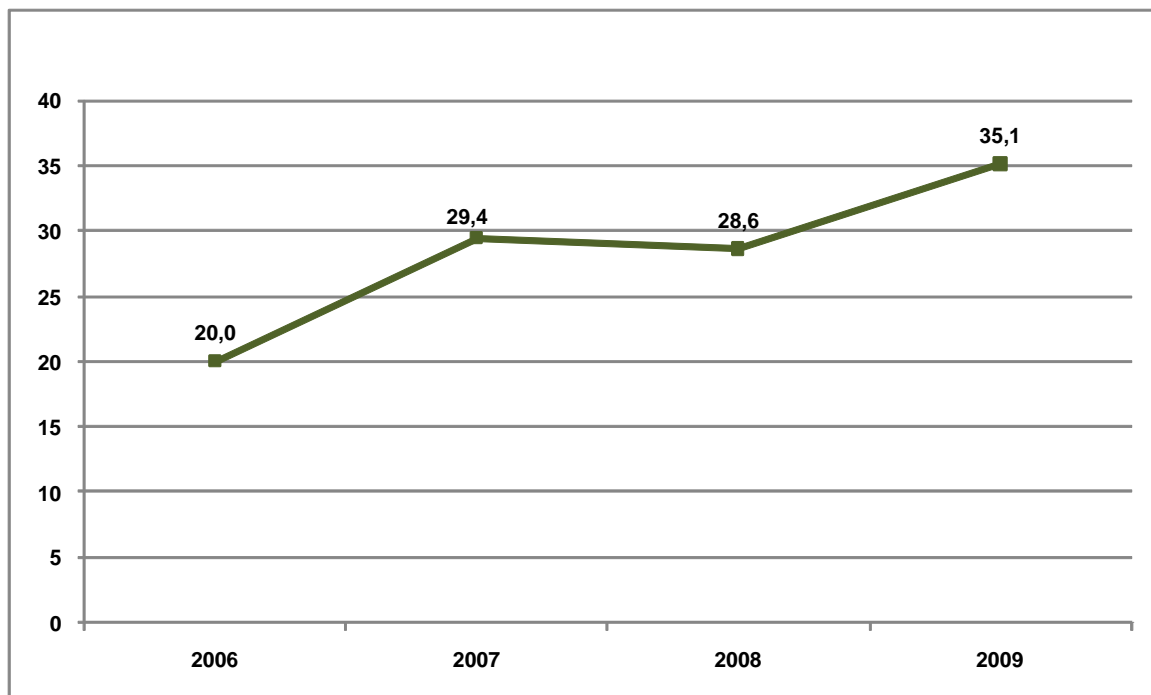
Annex 1.

Figure 1: Changes in the proportion of enterprises providing training, 2006-2009



*Note: The percentages in the figure indicate the proportion of enterprises providing training
Figures: N2006:6046, N2007:7247, N2008:7245, N2009:7151 Source: AFSZ-GVI*

Figure 2: Changes in the number of enterprises providing practical training – national average, 2006-2009



*Note: The percentages in the figure indicate the proportion of enterprises providing training
Numbers: N2006:6046, N2007:7247, N2008:7245, N2009:7151
Source: ÁFSZ-GVI*

ANNEX 2.

Table 1. Number of students participating in student contract-based practical training

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6616	7970	8312	10155	12703	14829	16403	21306	35000	38000	44000	46000	48000

Source: MKIK

Table 2. Number and distribution of full time students in VET grades by school type and the legal form of practical training in school years 2001/2002 and 2007/2008

School type	2001/2002						2007/2008					
	cooperation agreement (együtműködési megállapodás)		student contract (tanulószerződés)		total		cooperation agreement (együtműködési megállapodás)		student contract (tanulószerződés)		total	
	Number	%	number	%	number	%	fő	%	fő	%	fő	%
Vocational school	31 282	78,28	8 682	21,72	39 964	100	6 738	15,85	35 771	84,15	42 509	100
Special vocational school	784	61,68	487	38,32	1 271	100	399	27,46	1054	72,54	1 453	100
Secondary vocational school	13 109	89,6	1 521	10,4	14 630	100	11 808	66,76	5 880	33,24	17 688	100
Összesen	45 175	-	10 690	-	55 865	-	18 945	-	42 705	-	61 650	-

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture

Table 3. Number of enterprises providing student contract-based training 2004 - 2010

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1458	3204	6403	9000	8819	9075	8695

Source: MKIK

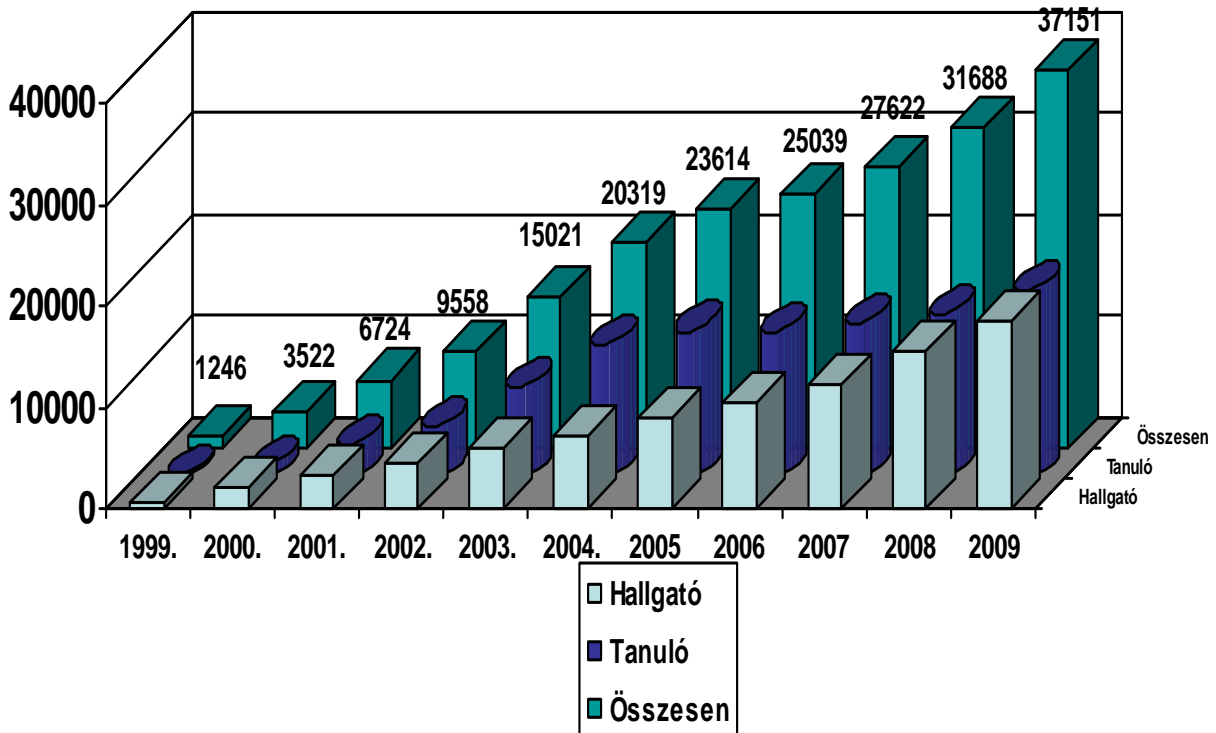
Table 4. Number of student contracts in a few shortage-jobs 2005 - 2009

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Joiner-rigger	183	266	311	546	425
Joiner-rigger, new OKJ				189	403
Tinsmith and construction tinsmith	10	25	43	38	101
Metal cutter	251	444	584	740	1287
Engine fitter	229	382	514	317	594
Welder	194	276	356	374	969
Structure locksmith	234	538	589	442	840
Toolmaker	22	100	105	46	100
Roofer	47	75	74	33	82

Source: MKIK

Annex 3.

Figure 1: Number of students in advanced vocational programmes, 1999–2009



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- Zöld Magyarország fejlesztési modell http://olajospeter.hu/fileadmin/Zold_Magyarország_fejlesztési_Modell_Olajos_Peter.pdf

Useful websites

- 3K Consens Ltd. (*3K Consens Iroda*): www.3kconsens.hu
- Apáczai Public Foundation (*Apáczai Közalapítvány*): <http://www.apalap.hu/>
- Budapest Centre for Developing Youth Enterprises (*Budapesti Ifjúsági Vállalkozói Központ, BIVÁK*): <http://www.bivak.hu/site/>
- Cisco Network Academy (*Cisco Hálózati Akadémia*): <http://www.cisco.com/web/HU/netacad/index.html>
- “Developing the quality and content of VET, TÁMOP 2.2.1 (“A képzés evolúciója”. TÁMOP 2.2.1.) <http://www.kepzesevolucioja.hu/index.php>
- Educational Research and Development Institute (*Oktatóskutató és Fejlesztő Intézet, OFI*): www.ofi.hu
- Energia Club (*Energia Klub*): <http://energiaklub.hu/hu>
- Foundation for Democratic Youth (*Demokratikus Ifjúságért Alapítvány, DIA*): <http://www.i-dia.org/>
- Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (*Magyar Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara, MKIK*): <http://www.mkik.hu/>
- Hungarian Labour Force Forecast Survey (*Magyar Munkaerőpiaci Prognózis*): <http://www.mmpp.hu>
- Information on a conference on the Implementation of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme in Hungary 2000-2006 („A Leonardo da Vinci program megvalósítása Magyarországon 2000-2006” konferencia): http://www.tpf.hu/pages/event/index.php?page_id=321

- Information on the European Credit (Transfer) System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) (*Kreditátviteli, kredit beszámítási rendszer a szakképzésben*):
http://www.tpf.hu/upload/docs/palyazatok/leonardo/Segedanyagok/2007-es_prioritasok/szovegek/kredittranszfer.pdf
- Information on the new integrated Europass-diploma module of the student registration system (“*Elkészült az ETN hallgatói nyilvántartó rendszer integrált - Europass-Oklevélmellékletet (és oklevelet) előállító – modulja*”):
<http://www.okm.gov.hu/oklevelmelleklet/elkeszult-etn-hallgatoi>
- Kormányzóvívó: Válságkezelés <http://www.kormanysovivo.hu/?lang=hu>
- National Development Agency (*Nemzeti Fejlesztési Ügynökség, NFÜ*)
<http://www.nfu.hu/?lang=hu>
- National Employment Service (*Állami Foglalkoztatási Szolgálat, ÁFSZ*): www.afsz.hu
- Outstanding VET Student Competition (*Szakma Kiváló Tanulója Verseny*)
<http://www.szakmasztar.hu/>
- Research Institute of Economics and Enterprises of the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (*Magyar Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara, Gazdaság- és Vállalkozáskutató Intézet, MKIK GVI*): www.gvi.hu
- Round Table for Education and Child Opportunities (*Oktatás és Gyermekesély Kerekasztal*)
http://oktatas.magyarorszagholnap.hu/wiki/A_Kerekasztal
- SkillsHungary: <http://www.skillshungary.hu/>
- Social Renewal Operational Programme (*Társadalmi Megújulás Operatív Program, TÁMOP*): <http://www.nfu.hu/doc/924>
- Statistics on the visits to the Europass portal, by country:
http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/hornav/Statistics.csp;jsessionid=CA8DEBD B22403889387F2ADCE57EDC25.worker_portal_cms
- Sulinet Digital Knowledge Base (*Sulinet Digitális Tudásbázis*):
<http://sdt.sulinet.hu/Default.aspx?cid=21445134-81ef-4d4c-a59a-bde1c71b525b>
- Tempus Public Foundation (*Tempus Közalapítvány*): www.tka.hu
- “Unwavering popularity of the Europass” (“*Töretlen az Europass népszerűsége*”):
http://www.europass.hu/munka/munkahirek/toretlen_nepszeruseg
- Vocational School Development Programme (*Szakiskolai Fejlesztési Program, SZFP*)
www.szakma.hu

11.3 Abbreviations

ÁFSZ	Állami Foglalkoztatási Szolgálat (<i>National Employment Service</i>)
CQAF	Common Quality Assurance Framework
CVET	continuing vocational education and training (<i>szakmai továbbképzés, SZT</i>)
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System (<i>európai kreditátviteli rendszer</i>)
ECVET	European Credit Transfer for VET
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management (<i>Európai Alapítvány a Minőségmenedzsmentért</i>)
ELGPN	European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network
EQARF	European Quality Assurance Reference Framework
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESZMK	Egységes Szakképzési Minőségirányítási Keretrendszer (<i>Unified VET Quality Management System</i>)
FAT	Felnőttképzési Akkreditáló Testület (<i>Adult Training Accreditation Body</i>)
FEOR	foglalkozások egységes osztályozási rendszere (<i>unified job classification system</i>)
FIT	Foglalkozási Információs Tanácsadó (szervezetek és bázisok) (<i>Employment Information Counselling organisations and bases</i>)
FTT	Felsőoktatási és Tudományos Tanács (<i>Higher Education and Scientific Council</i>)
FVM	Földművelésügyi és Vidékfejlesztési Minisztérium (<i>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</i>)
HEFOP	Humán erőforrás-fejlesztési Operatív Program (<i>Human Resources Development Operational Programme</i>)
HÖÖK	Hallgatói Önkormányzatok Országos Konferenciája (National Union of Students in Hungary)
ICT	information and communication technology (<i>információs és kommunikációs technológiák, IKT</i>)
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education (<i>az oktatási egységes nemzetközi osztályozási rendszere</i>)
IVET	initial vocational education and training (<i>szakmai alapképzés avagy az első szakképesítés megszerzésére irányuló szakképzés</i>)
KSH	Központi Statisztikai Hivatal (<i>Central Statistical Office</i>)
KVVM	Környezetvédelmi és Vízügyi Minisztérium (<i>Ministry of Environment and Water</i>)
LLL	lifelong learning (<i>élethosszig tartó tanulás</i>)
LLP	Lifelong Learning Programme
MA	Magyar Agrárkamara (<i>Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture</i>)
MAB	Magyar Felsőoktatási Akkreditációs Bizottság (<i>Hungarian Higher Education Accreditation Committee</i>)
MKIK	Magyar Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara (<i>Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry</i>)
MPA	Munkaerő-piaci Alap (<i>Labour Market Fund</i>)
NAT	Nemzeti Alaptanterv (<i>National Core Curriculum</i>)
NFI	Nemzeti Felnőttképzési Intézet (<i>National Institute for Adult Education, predecessor of NSZFI</i>)
NFT	Nemzeti Fejlesztési Terv (<i>National Development Plan</i>)
NPK	Nemzeti Pályainformációs Központ (<i>National Career Information Centre</i>)
NPT	Nemzeti Pályaorientációs Tanács (<i>National Career Guidance Committee</i>)

NQF	national qualification framework
NSZFI	Nemzeti Szakképzési és Felnőttképzési Intézet (<i>National Institute of Vocational and Adult Education</i>)
NSZFT	Nemzeti Szakképzési és Felnőttképzési Tanács (<i>National Vocational and Adult Training Council</i>)
NSZI	Nemzeti Szakképzési Intézet (<i>National Institute of Vocational Education, predecessor of NSZFI</i>)
OÉT	Országos Érdekegyeztető Tanács (<i>National Interest Reconciliation Council</i>)
OFA	Országos Foglalkoztatási Közalapítvány (<i>National Employment Foundation</i>)
OFI	Oktatáskutató és Fejlesztő Intézet (<i>Institute for Educational Research and Development</i>)
OH	Oktatási Hivatal (<i>Education Office</i>)
OKJ	Országos Képzési Jegyzék (<i>National Qualifications Register</i>)
OKM	Oktatási és Kulturális Minisztérium (<i>Ministry of Education and Culture</i>)
PAT	Pedagógus-továbbképzési Akkreditációs Testületet (<i>In-service Teacher Training Accreditation Body</i>)
PKR	szakképzési pályakövetési rendszer (<i>VET monitoring system</i>)
RFKB	regional development and training committee (<i>regionális fejlesztési és képzési bizottság</i>)
SZFP	Szakiskola Fejlesztési Program (<i>Vocational School Development Programme</i>)
SZH	szakképzési hozzájárulás (<i>vocational training contribution</i>)
SZMBK	Szakképzési Minőségbiztosítási Keretrendszer (<i>VET Quality Assurance Framework</i>)
SZMM	Szociális és Munkaügyi Minisztérium (<i>Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour</i>)
SZÖM	Szakiskolai Önértékelési Modell (<i>Vocational school self-assessment model</i>)
SZTT	Szakmai Tanácsadó Testület (<i>Professional Consultation Committees</i>)
SZVK	szakmai és vizsgakövetelmények (<i>professional and examination requirements</i>)
TÁMOP	Társadalmi Megújulás Operatív Program (<i>Social Renewal Operational Programme</i>)
TISZK	térségi integrált szakképző központ (<i>regional integrated vocational training centres</i>)
VET	vocational education and training (<i>szakképzés, szakmai képzés</i>)

11.4 Legislative documents

- 138/1992. Kormányrendelet a közalkalmazottakról szóló 1992. évi XXXIII. törvény végrehajtásáról a közoktatási intézményekben [Government decree No. 138/1992 on the implementation of Act 33/1992 on public servants' legal status in the field of public education]
- 1992. évi XXXIII. törvény a közalkalmazottak jogállásáról [Act 33 of 1992 on the Legal Status of public employees]
- 1993. évi LXXIX. törvény. a közoktatásról [Act LXXIX of 1993 on Public education]

- 111/1997. (VI.27.) Kormányrendelet a tanári képesítés követelményeiről [Government Decree 111/1997 (27. 06) on the Qualification Requirements of Teachers]
- 2001. évi CI. Törvény a felnőttképzésről [Act CI of 2001 on Adult Training]
- 3/2002. (II. 15.) OM rendelet a közoktatás minőségbiztosításáról és minőségfejlesztéséről
- 2003. évi LXXXVI. törvény a szakképzési hozzájárulásról és a képzés fejlesztésének támogatásáról [Act LXXXVI of 2003 on Vocational training contribution and the support of the development of training (VTC Act)]
- 2003. évi LXI. törvény. a közoktatásról szóló 1993. évi LXXIX. törvény módosításáról [2003 amendment of Act LXXIX of 1993 on Public Education]
- 2005. évi CXXXIX. törvény a felsőoktatásról [Act CXXXIX of 2005 on Higher education]
- 15/2006. (IV. 3.) OM rendelet az alap- és mesterképzési szakok képzési és kimeneti követelményeiről [Government Decree 111/1997 (27. 06) on the Qualification Requirements of first degree and masters courses]
- 2007. évi CII. törvény a szak- és felnőttképzést érintő reformprogram végrehajtásához szükséges törvények módosításáról [Act CII of 2007 on the Amendment of Acts regulating the Reform of VET and Adult Training]
- 81/2009. (X. 2.) OGY határozat az Idősügyi Nemzeti Stratégiáról.
- 2009. évi XLIX. törvény a közoktatásról szóló 1993. évi LXXIX. törvény módosításáról [2009 amendment of Act LXXIX of 1993 on Public Education]