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Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2002.

ISBN 92-9157-300-0

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Printed in Italy

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1. SLOVENIA'S EMPLOYMENT POLICY OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Accession Partnership with the European Union pledges Slovenia to prepare a joint employment policy overview to prepare for harmonisation with EU policies. The National Plan for the Adoption of the Acquis requires Slovenia to take the responsibility to prepare a long-term employment strategy.

Slovenia is already facing, like other countries in Europe, the challenges of globalisation, liberalisation, adoption of "European" rules and – in addition to the transition to a market economy – the transition from an industrial society to a knowledge-based society. All of this requires investment in the country's human resources. Slovenia also faces the problem of an ageing population which not only burdens the financing of the existing system of social security, but also brings with it the need to develop and promote learning on a lifelong basis and will require

an increased flexibility of the education system.

In order to complete the transition process and to fulfil conditions for a successful EU accession, Slovenia will have to intensify the restructuring of its economy and to reallocate resources in the next few years. The promotion of human resources will ease the restructuring of the economy and the institutional adaptation of EU rules. Labour market flexibility will, along with a unified monetary policy, become an even more important factor for securing the competitiveness and adaptability of the economy.

In line with the European model, human resource development asks for a comprehensive approach towards reducing unemployment and promoting employment. This implies above all an active and harmonised cooperation among various ministries (such as those of economy, finance, labour and social affairs,

education, science and technology) for implementing the agreed employment policy objectives. The strategy agreed in Slovenia also foresees active involvement of the social partners at different levels, reflected in the planning, implementation and financing of employment policy, which is focused on the four pillars of the European Employment Strategy:

- increase the population's employability;
- promote entrepreneurship;
- increase adaptability of enterprises and employees; and
- assure equal employment opportunities.

In order to ensure harmonised strategic guidelines during the period 2000 - 2006, the employment strategy will build on the Strategy for Slovene Economic Development. Furthermore, the employment strategy also takes into consideration the orientations of all the adopted development programmes in related policy areas (such as in education and regional development). The proposals and suggested measures also reflect the findings and conclusions from the Joint Assessment Paper (JAP) on the labour market situation in Slovenia, prepared in cooperation with the European Commission.

Thus, an efficient implementation of the employment strategy will be ensured by:

- integration of policies of economic and other line – ministries with the employment policy;
- development of measures and guidelines for active employment policy aimed at increasing the population's employability, especially under the conditions of an ageing society;
- upgrading and improving the infrastructure of institutions implementing labour market programmes at the national, regional and local level;
- establishing a permanent monitoring system and undertaking progress reviews and evaluations.

1.2 STRATEGIC GOALS OF THE LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT UP TO 2006

The agreed strategic goals of the labour market and employment policy are to:

- increase the level of education and competence of the labour force;
- reduce the share of long-term unemployed (to around 40%) and of the share of unskilled unemployed persons (to around 25%);
- ensure the participation in active employment programmes of all unemployed young people who within six months of becoming unemployed have not found new employment, and for adults who within 12 months of becoming unemployed have not found new employment;
- reduce regional discrepancies on the labour market:
- create over 1% growth in employment in the 2000 - 2006 period which will help to reduce the unemployment rate (LMS definition) to around 5% or – alternatively – the registered unemployment rate to around 8% by 2006; and
- further develop social partnership.

The key guidelines for reaching the strategic objectives follow the guidelines agreed by the common EU employment policy, and will focus more particularly on:

- actively solving the problem of unemployment;
- developing a culture of lifelong learning;
- raising educational levels and reducing labour market structural discrepancies;
- reducing the drop-out rate;
- improving the position of young people on the labour market;
- developing an entrepreneurial culture;
- improving conditions for the creation of new jobs in enterprises;
- promoting partnerships for ensuring sustainable development and the creation of new jobs within local employment initiatives;
- monitoring constantly the impact of tax levies and incentives on employment;

- increasing the flexibility and competitiveness of the economy; and
- ensuring equal labour market access.

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs is responsible for the human resource development and employment priorities from the National Development Plan for 2001 - 2006. This includes responsibility for European Social Fund preparations. The main programmes follow the strategic goals and the Joint Assessment Paper (JAP) conclusions. For the implementation of the programmes, the Ministry of Labour has established close links with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and also with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Culture.¹

In order to ensure efficient implementation of the employment strategy a special Steering Group of the government and social partners was set up, whose duty is to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the goals of the national employment action programmes for individual planning periods. The tasks of the steering group also include the harmonisation of the policies and objectives with EU orientations and regulations and the cooperation of its representatives with the corresponding European Commission bodies.

1.3 CONCLUSIONS

The combination of economic growth in the past two years and the effects of active employment programmes have led to a reduction of the unemployment rate and an increase of persons in employment. The figures of the number of persons involved in employment programmes and the expenditures for the programmes indicate that the main focus of the employment policy has been given to stimulating

employability. In particular, education and training programmes and public works also have of course a direct positive effect on reducing the number of registered unemployed people, as people involved in these programmes are registered to be in education and employment. This is partially a statistical effect and the real effectiveness of active labour market programmes still needs to be determined. Employability together with lifelong learning will also in the future be the main goals of the programmes. This will include the promotion of self-employment.

But in the future the programmes are likely to be more oriented on investment in human resources for employees and employers. There is also still a problem of structure of unemployment (about 60% of long-term unemployed people, of whom 47% without education, and 50% of unemployed older people). Through the years structure of unemployment has remained almost the same.

For the successful fulfilment of the objectives, indicators must be developed to monitor their implementation. An information system will have to be established to allow such monitoring. That system should be based on links with existing information systems in research institutes, the statistical office and the employment service.

The chapters that follow will analyse the capacity of the Slovene initial and continuing vocational education system to support the national employment policy objectives (chapters 2 and 3). In chapter 4 the capacities of the public and private employment services to do so wil be reviewed. In chapter 5, overall conclusions will be drawn on the basis of the preceding analysis.

¹ See Annex 1 for a detailed overview of the various labour market programmes according to the four pillars.

2

2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

2.1.1 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia (1991) in Article 57 guarantees equal rights to education to all citizens by stipulating that: "Education shall be free. Basic education shall be compulsory and shall be financed from public revenues. The State shall provide the opportunity for all citizens to obtain proper education."²

The legal regulation of the present education system was adopted in 1996, the result of national debates and preparation that had already started at the end of the 1980s.³ Legislation has been based on a critical review of the legal framework inherited from the former times and has sought to restore a genuine Slovene education system compatible with those of developed European countries. It includes a set of six acts: the Organisation and Funding of Education Act, the Pre-school Institutions Act, the Elementary Schools Act, the Gymnasiums Act, the Vocational and Technical Education Act and the Adult

² Much of the descriptive information from this chapter comes from the annual VET Developments reports produced by the National Observatory of Slovenia.

The main concepts for education policy have been published in the White Book on Education in 1995. Legislation has followed closely the policy thinking presented in the White Book favoured by the fact that responsible education policymakers of the early 1990s have themselves been the principal authors of the White Book.

Education Act, all adopted in February 1996.⁴ A special characteristic of the new legislation was that it provided for a gradual implementation of changes based on availability of material, staffing and financial resources. Slovene education reform has not gone through major upheavals and has been characterised by a high degree of continuity and consistency from the early 1990s up to today. Subsequent legislation has further built on the legal fundaments laid by the first set of laws.

In 2000, three new acts were adopted: the National Occupational Qualifications Act, the Act on Guiding Children with Special Needs, and the Act on Music Schools. In the same year also, a thorough assessment of progress in vocational education and training reform has been undertaken within the framework of the Phare MOCCA programme which has resulted in a basic consensus on a series of urgent policy issues with eventual legal implications.5 Translation into policy implementation of these measures has been hindered by the recent changes in government, including the internal restructuring of the Ministry of Education and Science (MOES), but is driven forward by the National Council of Experts for Vocational Education and will be described in a later paragraph in more detail.

In the area of initial vocational education and training, the most important legislative acts are the Organisation and Funding of Education Act, the Vocational and Technical Education Act and the Act on National Occupational Qualifications.

The Organisation and Funding of Education Act (1996) is an "umbrella act" for all educational areas. It defines the aims of the education system and the ways of its organisation and financing; it regulates the development, accreditation and implementation of providers (public and private), programmes and textbooks and defines roles and responsibilities of consultation and support bodies. It also regulates the financing mechanisms, including qualifications, salaries and careers of teaching and non-teaching staff.

The Vocational and Technical Education Act (VTE) (1996) regulates the acquisition of publicly recognised qualifications through vocational and technical education at (upper) secondary and post-secondary levels in the formal education system. It stipulates education programmes, conditions of enrolment, the status of apprentices and students, as well as the training of adults. This act covers the whole vertical vocational education and training structure.

Among the acts in the field of education adopted in 2000, the Act on National Occupational Qualifications is an important milestone for the further development of vocational education and training. It was initially intended to regulate the acquisition of a limited number of qualifications for which the formal education system did not provide education programmes and for which the legal basis had disappeared with the introduction of the 1996 VTE Act. In its final version, it now regulates more generally

- 4 Other acts covering the area of initial education of youth are:
 - Higher Education Act (1993). Note that this has been the first piece of new legislation to be introduced. At the end of 1999, the Act on Changes and Amendments to the Higher Education Act was passed by the parliament. The majority of these changes were put into force in 2000.
 - School Inspection Act (1996).
 - Act on Implementation of Special Rights of Members of the Italian and Hungarian Nationalities in the Area of Education (1982), the only legislation taken over from the earlier period. This is in force in both ethnically mixed regions (Slovenian-Hungarian and Slovenian-Italian).
 - The Act on Maturity Exam has already been prepared but is still to be passed by the parliament.
- The Phare MOCCA programme (modernisation of curricula, certification and assessment of vocational education and training for youth and adults) was the second vocational education and training reform programme in Slovenia supported by Phare. The first Phare programme has supported the modernisation of curricula for existing and new types of vocational programmes. The Phare MOCCA programme has concentrated on vocational education and training reform in non-curricula related issues such as teacher training, financing, regionalisation, quality assessment and preparation for EU accession and the European Social Fund (ESF). It has also contributed to developing the certification system for the assessment and recognition of non-formal qualifications. The overall conclusions of the programme have been formulated in a memorandum for further vocational education and training development drafted by all main stakeholders and adopted by the Council of Experts for vocational education and training.

the procedures, bodies and organisations competent for approving standards for selected qualifications as the basis for assessment and recognition of prior and non-formal learning.⁶

Current legislation gives a prominent role to national ministries and reflects a rather centralised and regulated notion of a national education system which tends to fortify the priority position of formal education. Slovene educational traditions give high value to formal educational diplomas, as indicated for example in the importance given to academic titles in society. On the other hand, however, the present legislative situation is also a reaction to the many education reforms that have been introduced during the Yugoslav times and which have been considered by Slovene educationists as increasingly detrimental to the quality of education. After independence, recentralisation of the system within the confines of the new state of Slovenia has been used to control a balanced and gradual modernisation of the overall education system. Control remained in the hands of national authorities but has been deliberately shared at the national level – at least as far as vocational education and training is concerned - with the social partners. It has been a conscious policy during the 1990s to make social partners coresponsible for vocational education and training. In practice - and in legislation this has mainly referred to the chambers (as the traditional representative organisations of enterprises) that at national level actively cooperate in policy and programme development. Employers at company level are also engaged in the delivery and examination of vocational education and training.

Involvement of trade unions, social partnership at the regional level and financial involvement of employers are still

critical unsolved issues. One of the biggest obstacles appears to be the limited capacities and resources on the side of social partners. As a result, and more by force than by design, the Ministry of Education has retained a key role. However, advisory councils of national experts have been established at the national level for all subsectors of education, including vocational education and training and adult education. The Council of Experts for vocational education and training includes social partners, representatives of the MOESS, the MOLFSA, the employment service, and of the main support institutions and is chaired by a labour market specialist from Ljubljana University. As the role and status of these councils have been defined by law they have remained untouched by government and political changes and have thus secured additional continuity of education reform.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MOESS)⁷ has the overall responsibility for the entire school system from pre-school education through basic, (upper) secondary, post-secondary to higher education. It is responsible for both initial and adult education, while some responsibilities for labour market-related adult education are shared with the Ministry of Labour. Prime responsibilities of the MOESS relate to the structuring and funding of the system, the management of public institutions, inspection procedures and financial assistance to students. It prepares legislation and is responsible for implementing education acts and all associated administrative decisions.

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (MOLFSA) is responsible for approving occupational standards that form the basis for the officially recognised vocational and technical education and training programmes delivered by the

⁶ The "nomenclatura" contains a list of all publicly recognised professional qualifications for which formal educational programmes are offered by the education system.

⁷ The Ministries of Education and Sports and of Science and Technology were merged in 2001 into a single Ministry of Education, Science and Sports. A dedicated labour market research institute has not been established despite several attempts to do so by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (MOLFSA). Labour market and employment research is currently undertaken by several university institutes and by the employment service. The absence of structured policy-oriented labour market and vocational education and training analysis has only recently been addressed. Capacities of the National Observatory have been insufficient to fill this gap.

formal education system and for the inclusion of new occupational titles in the nomenclatura. Proposals for inclusion of new occupational titles and definition of standards are prepared by the chambers, with technical assistance from the educational support institutes, who present them for a final opinion to the Council of Experts. MOLFSA normally follows the advice of the council but is formally responsible for acceptance of any changes in occupational profiles and their standards. MOLFSA is also the leading ministry with regard to labour market-related continuing vocational education and training (see chapter 4).

This particular division of responsibilities between the two ministries is still a heritage from the former times during which the nomenclatura also formed the basis for the recognition of occupational titles and more in particular for classification in the national wage and salary system, for which the MOLFSA was responsible. In practice cooperation appears to work quite smoothly with the MOESS typically stressing the importance of the formal education system and MOLFSA being more inclined to also recognise non-formal and informal learning.

Both ministries are supported by research and development institutes that have been established for each of the educational subsectors. For the area of vocational education, the two support institutes are: the Centre for Vocational Education and Training (CPI) and the Institute for Adult Education (ACS). The CPI was established in 1995 by the social partners (both ministries – MOESS and MOLFSA – and both chambers – of Crafts and of

Commerce and Industry) and is financed by all founding parties, with by far the highest share of the MOESS. The main activity of the centre is the development and modernisation of curricula in vocational education and training and all activities connected to this: technical work on standards development, in-service teacher training for vocational education and training teachers and trainers, defining teaching equipment of schools, and development of learning and training materials. Most of the staff are former teachers from the vocational education and training system. More details on ACS will be provided in chapter 4.

The main institutions representing employers in the field of vocational education and training are the two chambers.9 According to the Vocational and Technical Education Act, the main responsibilities of the chambers in the vocational education and training area are to propose those occupations for which programmes of vocational and technical education should be prepared and to organise and monitor practical training (in enterprises) as part of vocational education.¹⁰ While membership in the chambers is obligatory, these institutions also tend to try to regulate, on behalf of their members, access to specific occupational domains which from time to time leads to some discussions with the MOESS on the issue of enrolment to vocational education and training.

The role of trade unions is, as in many other European countries, very limited. Their main responsibility is basically to assure that the rights of apprentices guaranteed by the Act, apprenticeship

- 9 The Chamber for Commerce and Industry and the Craft Chamber.
- 10 More particularly, the chambers are required to:
 - propose (define) the standards of practical knowledge and skills;
 - propose additional (further) training programmes to the competent expert council;
 - organise the practical part of final exams for apprentices and organise master craftsmen, foremen and managerial exams;
 - appoint their members to final exam committees at short-term and secondary vocational schools;
 - control the training places for apprentices in enterprises, maintain a register of apprenticeship places and of concluded apprenticeship contracts;
 - organise the implementation of the practical component of vocational education in enterprises;
 - offer advice to employers regarding practical training of apprentices and monitor the performance of such training; and
 - organise partial exams to establish if the practical training of apprentices is proceeding well.

⁸ They also cooperate with other national institutions such as the National Examination Centre (on secondary school exams), the Statistical Office (on classifications and statistics) and the employment service (on labour market training).

contracts and collective agreements, are not violated. The unions also propose their representatives to the exam committees of vocational schools (for the school part of exams) and to exam committees of chambers (for the practical part of exams).

Decisions on technical matters are taken by the Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education, of which the members are appointed by the government. The council also provides assistance in preparing legislation in the field of vocational education and training, defines educational standards for vocational education and training, approves new or modernised standards before confirmation by MOLFSA, and approves new or modernised vocational education and training programmes and proposes them for confirmation to the MOESS.

From this overview of the legislative and institutional framework for vocational education and training it is obvious that the system of education in Slovenia is currently strongly centralised, although legal opportunities for less centralisation are indeed available. According to the Organisation and Funding of Education Act (Articles 30-32), 14 regional school boards are to be established (as part of the MOESS) to act as regional school administrative bodies. They would take decisions on administrative matters and perform tasks concerning personnel, finances and organisation of education. However, none of these have been implemented yet, pending both overall decisions concerning the decentralisation of public administration and the internal reorganisation of the MOESS itself.11 The discussions on this last point have only been recently started, while regionalisation is now pushed forward by pressing requirements to prepare for EU accession, and more in particular to implement structures needed for access to the

European Social Fund. The fundamental issue here is one of coordination with other initiatives to establish regional human resource development institutions. ¹²

A second typical characteristic of the institutional set-up is the organisation along educational subsectors. 13 This vertical column-like organisation links individual departments of the MOESS with their own expert councils, support institutes and education providers. The structure creates from time to time serious policy coordination problems as the columns have developed their own institutional policies and interests. This can be illustrated by the ongoing discussion about curriculum reform in vocational education and training. The general subjects from vocational education and training curricula are still defined by the general education column. They are more or less similar for general education and vocational education and training and have remained subject and knowledge-based in a classical academic tradition. This has been the result of a view, still shared by many educationists in the country, that a broad-based initial vocational education programme can only be achieved by the inclusion of general subjects. Vocational education and training curricula have so far been very difficult to change in terms of modern problem and competence-oriented vocational education developed by the vocational education and training column as part of their efforts to make vocational education and training more relevant for individual learners and companies. A second example is the relationship between initial vocational education and training and continuing vocational education and training, where the latter has been occupied mainly by the adult education column. The current debate about lifelong learning asks for a strong systemic approach to education and may therefore also have implications for the present institutional organisation. The

¹¹ From May 2001, MOESS has one state secretary responsible especially for vocational education and training and adult education.

¹² An initiative from the Phare vocational education and training reform programme to pilot regional tripartite vocational education and training councils has been more or less aborted because of lack of political and financial follow-up support.

¹³ Although vocational education is not managed by a separate department in MOESS but integrated in the departments for secondary education and higher education. The columns cover general, vocational higher and adult education.

awareness for better coordination between the columns has increased and is effectively already taking place within the present institutional setting.

2.1.2 POLICY FRAMEWORK

Overall, Slovenia recognises that its economic and social welfare in a competitive and globalised world economy can only be secured by a high-qualified and flexible labour force.¹⁴ The strategic goals for education and training for the period 2000 - 2006 form an integrated part of the national employment strategy and these strategic goals are very much in line with employment strategies currently being implemented by EU member states. They also cover vocational education and training reform priorities agreed in the Joint Assessment Paper of 2000. 15 The reform of the vocational education and training system has been conceived as an integral part of overall education reform aimed at improving and increasing educational levels of the population. The nature of the strategic goals asks for a comprehensive vocational education and training reform policy that integrates initial vocational education with continuing vocational education and training. Such a comprehensive perspective is not much different from what is currently being discussed under lifelong learning but is only gradually being developed. The conceptual and institutional obstacles for its implementation cannot be underestimated for an educational system that is still coping with the need to adopt to market economic conditions and learner needs

The main vehicle used by Slovene education decisionmakers to change the system of education has been the liberalisation of enrolment to secondary and higher education and to abandon the system where enrolment was directly defined by the needs of individual enterprises. This has forced schools to adapt to educational aspirations of

students and has led to a considerable shift in the structure of secondary education. At present the enrolment structures seem to have been stabilised with about 70% of primary school-leavers choosing for some form of vocational education and training, as opposed to the 85% who did so before. This indicates that there remains considerable interest among the population for choosing vocational education pathways. In parallel to liberalising enrolments, other structural changes have been introduced, such as the re-establishment of an apprenticeship system, and the creation of a variety of vocational education and training pathways at post-secondary and tertiary level. Overall, the result has been a rather flexible and open structure, allowing at each level for either the acquisition of recognised vocational qualifications, or continuation of studies at the next higher level. Horizontal transfer pathways have also been improved.

Centralised and input-based quality control instruments (centralised curricula and funding system, accreditation procedures and teacher qualification requirements) have initially been complemented by attempts to modernise already existing output standards (through standards of knowledge and skills based on occupational standards). Only towards the end of the 1990s, under pressure of actual developments on the labour market, high school drop-out rates in vocational education and internal continuing vocational training needs from successful enterprises, attempts have started to decentralise and deregulate the education system. While during the 1970s and 1980s the education system was much more decentralised (in the framework of the self-management communities of interests for education) with more say of regional partners and local communities with respect to programmes and financing (at least of infrastructures), during the early 1990s a shift back to centralisation has occurred in Slovenia based first of all on allowing a gradual and well-organised

¹⁴ See chapter 1.

¹⁵ It should be remembered that the JAP while signed in October 2000 was already drafted in 1999. Much of the agreed actions therefore have in the meantime already been taken up by policy intentions. The matter is now rather one of policy implementation than of formulation.

reform of the system. Against this background recent decentralising developments are still met by some degree of reluctance, both from the side of educational experts and policymakers as well as by their colleagues from the social partners. The search is now to find a new balance between further developing a sustainable and quality securing national framework with decentralising decisions regarding delivery and contents.

The challenge for policymakers is to find the ways to further improve the responsiveness of vocational education and training to needs of learners and enterprises while at the same time securing a high level of educational quality and impact from the formal education system. There remains a strong conviction that high-quality education can only be provided by schools and teachers. But there is at the same time growing concern that this can only be done when the quality of the teaching process in schools is improved. There is also growing understanding that learning not only takes place in the formal school system and that it will become important to be able to assess and recognise alternative learning sites and learning routes against agreed quality standards.

In this context, three approaches are now being developed that are of major importance for improving the relevance of vocational education and training for individuals and companies. If implemented seriously they will also contribute to further developing a lifelong learning system.¹⁶

Greater attention to quality of learning processes (by reformulating roles and qualifications of teachers, changing preand in-service teacher training, giving greater attention to individual learner needs, and facilitating schools to experiment with educational innovations).

More autonomy for schools allowing them to better respond to local and regional developments (by flexibilisation of the national curriculum framework and modularisation of education programmes, the introduction of school-based quality-control mechanisms, strengthening the innovative capacities in schools, as well as changing financing mechanisms from itemised funding to providing schools with budgets).

Attempts to improve quality and capacities for practical learning (better integration of theory and practice and development of Inter-Company Training Centres) and to link up the recognition of non-formal and informal learning made possible by the recent Law on National Occupational Qualifications with diplomas from the formal school system. This will further improve the integration of initial and continuing training.

2.1.3 RESOURCES

In 1995, the share of public funds for education of all public expenditures in Slovenia was 12.64% (calculated by the MOESS, following the UNESCO method). All public funds for education accounted for 5.55% of the Slovenian GDP in 1994 and 5.85% of the GDP in 1995. In 1996, all public funds for education accounted for 5.68% of the GDP. In 1998 the share of the GDP allocated to education increased to 6% and it was foreseen to remain at this level also in 1999 and 2000. The public funds for vocational and technical education accounted for 0.64% of the GDP in 1996. ¹⁷

With the introduction of the dual system, employers are obliged to financially contribute to organisation and provision of practical training. Employers' financial responsibility includes the preparation of practical placements for apprentices, delivery of practical training (including salaries for trainers) and the payment of some kind of pocket money to the

See for the most recent reviews and policy documents, Slavko Gaber a.o., Accession strategy of the Republic of Slovenia in the field of human resource development, Phare MOCCA Ljubljana 2000; and Bostjan Zgonc a.o., Memorandum on further development of vocational education and training, Phare MOCCA, Ljubljana 2000.

¹⁷ These are the latest data for financing of vocational education and training and the situation indicates the absence of a proper management information system for the sector.

apprentices for the duration of their apprenticeship contracts.¹⁸

Employers have constantly been arguing for the introduction of special funds to cover some of their costs for the dual system training, since the costs of apprentices' practical training can be quite high, in particular for small companies. 19 Also municipalities and enterprises are expected to jointly participate in the establishment and funding of schools, in particular with regard to investments in school buildings and training equipment. All in all, however, vocational education and training of young people is currently mainly financed from the state budget (through the MOESS) and an acceptable organisation of employers and employees contribution is still pending.

The existing school network, inherited from the previous times and the structure of the teaching force present delicate political issues. The education system has inherited a wide network of schools well distributed over the country with schools that are generally well-equipped. Primary schools are considered to fulfil a social function in local communities and vocational schools used to be specialised in line with the major local enterprises. Because of demographic decline on the one hand and industrial restructuring on the other, the network of primary and secondary schools is gradually becoming unsustainable. Discussions about a reorganisation of the school network have only just begun with different options on the table ranging from reducing the number of schools to creating local or subregional school networks. This discussion, obviously, will have implications for the teaching force as well.

2.1.4 STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION OF INITIAL TRAINING

The system of education in Slovenia includes preschool education, basic education (single structure of primary and lower secondary education), upper secondary education, post-secondary vocational and higher education. During the 1990s much effort has been undertaken to secure open horizontal and vertical pathways by introducing new types of education programmes, especially at post-secondary and higher education level in vocational education. Bridging programmes and exams enable transition between general and vocational pathways at practically all levels. In addition, the dead-end nature of lower levels of vocational education has been cured and the establishment of a dual system has reintroduced an alternative to the school-based secondary vocational path, with openings to the "master craftsman" degree and higher education. The intention has been to establish a varied and flexible system of secondary and tertiary education enabling to achieve similar qualifications through different routes. In the following we shall concentrate only on secondary and post-secondary education. (See Annex 4 for a schematic overview of the education system.)

Upper secondary general education

Upper secondary education follows nine years of compulsory general education. It is provided by general-education secondary schools (gymnasiums), lasting for four years, and vocational-oriented schools, offering two and a half, three or four-year programmes.

Secondary general schools -

gymnasiums were re-established at the beginning of the 1990s. All general education programmes last for four years

Apprentices are also socially insured (health and pension insurance) for the duration of their apprenticeship contracts. The state covers the social insurance of apprentices for the first year of apprenticeship contracts and 50% for the following years (while the other 50% is covered by employers).

¹⁹ According to estimations, prepared by the chambers, three-year practical education per apprentice costs the employer approx. €20,000 and for the chambers an additional €550.

and are completed by an external maturity exam.²⁰

The *professionally-oriented gymnasium programme* is a general secondary school programme incorporating a professional field module, ending with the maturity exam and leading directly to university studies. It is designed as part of the general educational stream and introduces theoretical professional subjects into general education. Around 70% of the curriculum of professionally-oriented gymnasium programmes is the same as the general gymnasium programme.

After passing the maturity exam, students can directly enrol in higher education studies. General secondary school graduates have also an option to enrol in a post-secondary vocational course. Vocational courses represent a transfer possibility from the general education stream to vocational education and training and have been introduced to provide secondary school graduates who do not want (or in most cases have no direct access to) university education with a professional qualification. In the 1999/2000 and 2000/01 school years only three education institutions delivered vocational courses in the fields of tourism and economics, for less than 100 students. In addition, the success rate each year is less than 50%.

Upper secondary vocational and technical education and training

The duration of vocational and technical programmes at secondary level differs according to the programme requirements, which in turn depend on the skill level of a particular occupational profile. The following programmes are offered within the vocational education and training stream at the secondary level of education:

 two and a half-year vocational education programmes (short-term vocational education);

- three-year vocational education programmes;
- two-year vocational-technical programmes of upgrading the three-year vocational education programmes; and
- four-year technical education programmes.

Lower vocational education programmes

These programmes finish with a final exam, consisting of theoretical and practical parts and provide for a semi-skilled workers qualification. Pupils can enrol in short-term vocational programmes after finishing elementary school. However, also those pupils who did not manage to complete elementary school can enrol (if they successfully completed at least six classes of elementary schooling and thus fulfil the basic legally compulsory education requirement). After completing a short-term vocational programme, pupils can enter the labour market or enter the first year at any other (upper) secondary school.

Three-year secondary vocational programmes

The three-year vocational programmes are intended to provide qualifications at skilled worker level for work in the industrial, crafts and service sectors. These programmes can be provided by vocational schools or in cooperation with employers in the apprenticeship system.

The introduction of a dual system is often stressed as one of the most important reform changes in vocational education and training at secondary level, especially in the light of linking the education and work systems. However, some form of apprenticeship system already existed in Slovenia in the past, but was abolished (together with the gymnasium) at the beginning of the 1980s with the introduction of career-oriented education. At the end of the 1980s, employers from the craft sector initiated more

²⁰ Matura (the maturity exam) is an external (state) certification exam for all students finishing gymnasiums. The maturity exam is run and controlled by the State Examination Centre. It consists of five subjects: three subjects are compulsory (the mother tongue, mathematics and the first foreign language) and two are elective.

practice-oriented vocational programmes, the so-called "craft programmes". The (re-) introduction of a "real" apprenticeship system is designed to gradually replace these craft programmes and some of the school-based three-year vocational programmes.

In the dual system, the weight of theoretical (school-based) knowledge and practical training is 40% and 60% respectively. Theoretical education is provided by schools, whilst the majority of practical training is provided by trainers in enterprises. With the introduction of the dual system, the existing school-based three-year vocational programmes have not been abolished. They continue to exist as a parallel alternative. In many cases, both dual system and school-based programmes are available. In both cases, the dual system and school-based programmes end with a final exam testing both theoretical and practical knowledge. The practical part of the final examination is the responsibility of the chambers. For monitoring both parts of the final exam, special exam commissions are appointed, consisting of representatives of social partners, schools and some other key institutions.

Vocational-technical programmes

A graduate of a three-year vocational education programme can enter the two-year vocational-technical programmes, which end with a vocational maturity. These programmes lead to a qualification at the level of a secondary technical school. They also provide the possibility of continuing studies at post-secondary vocational colleges or at higher professional schools. In fact, vocational-technical programmes are an alternative to four-year technical programmes.

Four-year technical education programmes

Secondary technical education programmes last four years. Technical programmes, leading to technician and middle management positions in engineering and other fields, are designed

primarily as preparation for vocational and professional colleges. Secondary-school graduates can enrol directly after passing the final examination or, more recently, the vocational maturity. However, they often find jobs with a broad profile also requiring theoretical knowledge of a specific field.

A *maturity course* has been designed for graduates who have passed a final examination but who wish to enrol in more demanding academic programmes. This course prepares them for sitting the maturity examination. Also some amendments to the Higher Education Act will make transfers between professional and academic studies considerably easier.

Master craftsmen, foremen and managerial examinations

Another innovation in the vocational education and training system is the master craftsmen, foremen and managerial preparatory courses and examinations. These programmes provide a vertical progression route within the dual system. The examinations are the responsibility of the chambers (Chamber of Crafts for master craftsmen examinations and Chamber of Commerce and Industry for foremen and managerial examinations). According to the legislation on crafts, any person wanting to run his/her own craft business must pass the master craftsmen examination. Also the tutors of apprentices will have to pass these exams. As a condition for applying for master craftsmen and foremen examinations, one first has to complete a three-year vocational school and must have a minimum of three-year work experience or a degree of post-secondary vocational college with at least one year of work experience.

Post-secondary vocational education

Post-secondary vocational education was introduced by the Vocational and Technical Education Act in 1996. It is provided by post-secondary vocational colleges, which are considered as separate from higher education.²¹ Post-secondary vocational programmes are designed as a special

²¹ The first post-secondary vocational colleges were established in October 1996 and curricula have been developed with support from the Phare vocational education and training reform programme.

form of tertiary education with a markedly practical character. Practical training represents around 40% of the programme and is carried out within enterprises. These programmes last for two years.

One of the following admission requirements has to be met for enrolment in vocational colleges: maturity exam, vocational maturity exam or final examination, respectively, or the general part of the vocational maturity exam in combination with the master craftsmen examination.

Post-secondary vocational education ends with a diploma exam. A student who has successfully passed the exam receives a diploma with the name of the programme and the title of the vocational qualification. A post-secondary vocational diploma enables students to start work in specific occupations. Since the academic year 1998/99, vocational college graduates have had the possibility to enrol in the second year of professional types of higher education programmes if the higher education institution providing this type of studies makes such an arrangement possible.

In the 1999/2000 academic year there were nine post-secondary vocational colleges operating in Slovenia. They had 2,447 students, which was 65.5% more than in the previous academic year. Besides the rapidly increasing numbers of students, the number of public and private vocational colleges has been increasing as well. The first provisional data for the 2000/01 academic year show that there are over 5,000 students taking part in education programmes at 18 post-secondary vocational colleges.²² Although the number of students enrolled in post-secondary vocational colleges (3%) is still negligible in comparison with the number of students enrolled in higher education institutions, it seems that these programmes will successfully fill the gap between secondary and higher education. This is particularly relevant for higher education programmes in the field of technical sciences, where the interest of

students has been decreasing or stagnating.

2.1.5 STRUCTURE OF ENROLMENT IN UPPER-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Of all pupils in upper secondary education, in the 1999/2000 school year, 70% were enrolled in vocational and technical education programmes and 30% in general secondary education programmes. These figures are the result of considerable shifts in student choices over the past ten years and it is expected that the balance will further change in favour of secondary general education.

School-based programmes

In general, in recent years in Slovenia a trend of increasing enrolment in secondary general education programmes and vocational-technical programmes has been noticed (from respectively 24% and 0.8% in 1993/94 to 29.6% and 6.9% in 1999/2000). On the other hand, the interest of young people for short-term (from 3.6% to 2.6%), secondary vocational programmes (from 30.6% to 26.4%) and technical programmes (from 41.1% to 34.2%) has been declining. Half of all students enrol in the general gymnasium and in programmes in the field of economics. In both programmes girls are overrepresented with almost 70% in gymnasium and more than 60% in economic schools. Boys normally choose for industrial and technical programmes.

The projection of the MOESS on enrolment in upper-secondary education until 2005 shows that enrolments between 2001 to 2005 will decrease by 11%. The number of students and apprentices enrolled in the first grade will go down as a consequence of a decreasing elementary school population. But due to the longer duration of schooling, the total number of secondary school students will not decline rapidly though internal shifts are expected to occur. Actually, the demographic trend has

²² Among them there are 12 public post-secondary vocational colleges and six private colleges and colleges established by an enterprise or the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia.

enabled to extend the schooling age without much additional costs.

The ministry also expects that the proportion of students in dual programmes will increase from 15% in 2001 to 36% in 2005. Consequently, enrolment in school-based secondary vocational programmes will decline from 85% in 2001 to 64% in 2005. A drop of enrolment in secondary technical and vocational-technical education will also result from an expected increase in the number of students in professionally oriented gymnasiums. About 30% of all students are expected to enrol in secondary technical education programmes in the period between 2001 and 2005. About one-third of all students are expected to enrol in gymnasiums.

All figures taken together will result in an increase of the educational levels of the new generations of school-leavers, in line with the strategic goals of increasing the overall educational levels of the labour force. However, given present problems with the apprenticeship system expected figures may be not very realistic.

Dual system programmes

Overall, the development of the dual system has been somewhat disappointing. In the period 1996 - 2000 altogether 29 dual programmes have been prepared but only 19 different dual programmes had delivered until the 1999/2000 school year. There has been insufficient demand from potential students and employers for the remaining ten programmes. The number of apprentices has been slowly increasing, but not as much as expected. The supply of training places and interest of students for certain occupations do not follow the development and supply of programmes. In many cases there have even been more training places available than interested students. Thus, in the 1999/2000 school year apprentices (2,549) accounted for less than 10% of students enrolled in three-year secondary vocational programmes and an average occupancy rate of only 54% has been achieved, resulting mainly from a

relatively large number of apprentices in the first year of introduction. The situation indicates that the development of dual programmes has been rather supply-led so far creating a certain oversupply of programmes beyond what is currently demanded by both students and firms.

Against the background of these developments, analysts are now calling for an overall development strategy for the dual system of vocational education, which should be aimed at:

- better anticipating demographic developments;
- introducing new dual programmes, particularly in the field of services;
- defining in which areas the school-based vocational education will have priority, where school-based and dual systems will be carried out in parallel and where only dual programmes will be offered;
- developing incentives for employers;
- ensuring establishment of inter-company training centres; and
- encouraging young people and adults to enrol in dual system programmes (such as through scholarships).²³

Until the end of 2000, the Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education had approved the exam catalogues for altogether 48 master craftsmen, two foremen and three managerial exams. In the same year, the MOESS, the Ministry of Small Business and Tourism, and the Ministry of Economic Relations and Development have adopted the regulations on conditions and methods for the implementation of master craftsmen exams. The Chamber of Crafts is responsible for carrying out master craftsmen exams and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry for foremen and managerial exams.

Drop-outs from secondary vocational and technical education

A high drop-out rate is one of the main problems in the field of vocational and technical education and training in

²³ Zdenko Medves a.o., Evaluation of the vocational and technical education reform and proposal for future development, Phare MOCCA, Ljubljana 2000.

Slovenia. There is already a considerable drop-out in elementary school. In the past ten years there have been around 2,000 to 3,000 pupils each year leaving elementary school before the final year, which accounts for approximately 10% of the elementary school leaving generation. As a rule, these pupils are young, aged 15 to 16 years, having learning difficulties, with insufficient knowledge obtained in elementary school, living in bad social conditions and lacking any motivation for school-based education. A large number enrol afterwards in second-chance elementary school programmes for adults, but not all do so.

A second large group are those who drop out from secondary education. For the last five generations of young people in secondary education, the drop-out rate was 13% to 18%. However, in recent years it has been decreasing. The latest data concerning Generation 93 (pupils who enrolled secondary education for the first time in the 1993/94 school year) show that in a five-year monitoring period, altogether 13% of students failed to complete the study programmes. The drop-out rate is the highest in short-term vocational education (31.9% for Generation 93) and this proportion has even been increasing in recent years. In absolute terms there may not be high numbers involved but this group has to be added to the one of elementary school drop-outs mentioned before. These are clear signals that basic education is not reaching large numbers of young people.

A high drop-out rate (16.6%) is characteristic also for secondary vocational education; although also here it has been slightly decreasing in recent years. The drop-out rate in secondary technical and vocational-technical programmes is below the total average (11.9%). The drop-out rate for Generation 93 from all vocational and technical education programmes was 15%, while the drop-out rate in

gymnasiums was considerably lower (6.5%). Analyses done by the Employment Service of Slovenia show that the majority of students drop out already after the first year (40% to 50% of all drop-outs). Those who leave after the second year account for about 30% and those who drop out after the third year account for the remaining 20%. Only very few students drop out in the last year. This trend is characteristic for all types of secondary education.

Overall, the number of students who failed to complete their study in the regular prescribed period, is much higher, ranging from 50% in short-term vocational education, to 37% in secondary vocational education, and 30.5% in secondary technical and vocational-technical education.

To some extent, the vocational education and training drop-out phenomenon can be explained by a gap between the aspirations and the motivation of students for certain occupations and the real possibilities they have for enrolling into different programmes. Apparently this gap has not been completely closed by the liberalisation of enrolment policy. But apart from restricted access to preferred programmes there is increasing evidence that the quality of the learning process is not adequate learning needs and abilities of too many students. Despite the lack of a detailed analysis, available data show that pupils in vocational and technical-education programmes mostly have problems with general education subjects (for example, mathematics and the mother tongue), the content of which is still very much based on a classical academic approach. Many teachers also do seem not to be able to adopt more student-oriented learning approaches. The drop-out phenomenon has also received more prominence in the light of strategic policy declarations aimed at providing more school-leavers with at least full secondary education.

2.2 RESPONSIVENESS OF THE INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM TO THE NEEDS OF THE LABOUR MARKET/EMPLOYERS

2.2.1 PLANNING/ PROGRAMMING

An essential element of vocational education and training reform policies has from the beginning been to increase the relevancy of vocational education and training for the labour market. Social partners, by law, have a considerable role to play in policy development, programme development and delivery, though capacity and financial problems hinder chambers and unions to fully take on board their legal roles. As a result the MOESS, more by force than by design or desire, has still a central role to play. The absence of a structured labour market intelligence system that can provide vocational education and training relevant labour market information to policymakers creates additional obstacles for addressing labour market needs. Technical support institutions tend to focus their work on educational dimensions of vocational education and training reform and modernisation. However, since the focus of curriculum modernisation has also been on the updating of occupational and educational standards, this work has been influenced by perceived labour market developments.

Raising the educational level of the labour force has been a second policy priority for vocational education and training reforms and education reforms in general. This objective has been mainly addressed by structural changes in the education system such as the prolongation of elementary education, the elimination of dead-end tracks, the introduction of a dual pathway covering the complete vertical qualification structure, the establishment of open horizontal and vertical pathways, the introduction of post secondary vocational streams and of bridging courses to allow transfer from general to vocational education at various levels. A gradual

increase of educational attainment levels has also been the result of students changing education choices as they have effectively made use of opportunities offered by an open secondary and higher education system. Downwards demographic trends have made it possible to extend educational opportunities at a non-additional cost basis. However, the initial intention to share costs of vocational education and training with social partners has not yet been achieved.

2.2.2 CURRICULUM DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT

The renewal of education programmes in the field of vocational and technical education, based on the new educational legislation (1996), has been going on for more than four years, and has profited much from the first Phare vocational education and training reform programme. Before the new educational legislation was put into force, under the career-oriented education system, a vocation could be acquired only through a single programme and a single educational path in the education system. All vocational profiles of the same type were acquired through a uniform model determining the duration of education, the relation between general and technical knowledge, the relation between practical and theoretical education, the organisation of the lessons and the cooperation between schools and companies. From the foregoing analysis it is clear that a more flexible and varied system is now in place providing for alternative routes to achieve similar qualifications. However, with the initial focus on structural changes, the modernisation of curricula contents (in terms of increasing their attractiveness and relevance for both individual learners and companies) has only recently reached the policy agendas, above all in response to high drop-out rates.

A review of school programmes undertaken in the framework of the Phare MOCCA programme has indicated that knowledge catalogues for general-education subjects are too demanding and too comprehensive for

vocational education students.²⁴ They are not yet adjusted to individual vocations and learning abilities of students and include too many theoretical and too few applied contents. This is even the case in the dual system. Apprentices fail to see a proper sense for their work and life in the learning contents offered to them, which reduces their motivation for learning. Although considerable energy has been invested in the preparation of new education programmes, a lot is yet to be done in this field, also in the development of educational programmes for new types of occupations, especially in the developing service sector.

Apart from the more narrow programmes destined for early elementary school leavers, Slovene vocational education and training has emphasised the need for broad-based programmes preparing for a number of vocations based on the principle of gradual specialisation. However, some problems remain unsolved. These include the relationship between general and vocational subjects, the subject- and year-based structure of curricula as against the need for problem-oriented and modularised ones, the lack of high-quality practical learning facilities, the problem of guaranteeing a broad practical training within a small enterprise structure characterised by specialised companies and the provision of programmes for occupations that only need a very few entrants. The policy implications of these issues are rather clear but are still waiting for effective implementation of measures.

2.2.3 TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

It is generally recognised that teachers in the vocational education and training system very often lack knowledge, experience and understanding of the world of work. This is not only true for teachers of general subjects but also for those for vocational subjects. Attempts to engage, on a part-time basis, experience employees for teaching positions have only

marginally contributed to solving this structural problem. However, there is considerable resistance among the key persons within the university system involved in teacher training to substantially change the present set-up. Nevertheless, it has been recognised that in order to improve the quality of learning processes vocational education and training teachers should receive more than only a general pedagogical course and that general subject teachers should be better prepared for the particular student population that they will be teaching. So far this has only led to the proposal to add a fifth module on special didactics on top of the pedagogical course obligatory for vocational subject teachers.²⁵ Clearly, the present structure of preservice teacher training and the particular teacher profiles produced by the system creates some barriers for a fundamental reorganisation of the vocational education and training curriculum, such as its modularisation, making it problem oriented and less academic, and improving the relation between theory and practice.

In-service training is encouraged and rewarded. In-service training is in fact one of the prerequisites for promotion. Schools must provide a study leave, with a minimum of five days per year or 15 days every three years, for this purpose and must also cover the expenses: salary compensation, travel expenses, participation fee and accommodation costs. Teachers choose the programmes and forms of in-service training at their own discretion. When training is required due to reforms or substantial changes in curricula, participation in so-called commissioned and priority programmes of in-service training is compulsory or recommended.

In-service training is well developed but tends to be supply driven, with topics set by the ministry and/or support institutions and programmes proposed by a well-established body of training providers. Since in-service training is integrated with career and promotion procedures interest among individual teachers is high – but

²⁴ Zdenko Medves a.o. Evaluation of the vocational and technical education reform and proposal for future development, Phare MOCCA, Ljubljana 2000.

²⁵ Mursak a.o. ibid, Phare MOCCA, Ljubljana, 2000.

usually only until the highest career grade has been achieved – and there are few signs that in-service training is used in the frame of school development programmes.

2.3 RESPONSIVENESS OF THE INITIAL TRAINING SYSTEM TO THE NEEDS OF THE INDIVIDUAL ²⁶

2.3.1 EQUAL ACCESS

The structure of the education system with its flexible pathways and bridges enables in theory equal access for everybody. The basic selection criterion is educational achievement. But as in practice school-based education programmes are still very academic in nature, the system is rather selective already from the elementary school on despite a well-established system of school councillors for children with learning difficulties. The dual system, introduced also to cater for more practical oriented young people has not really expanded as was hoped for reasons described earlier. Although most elementary school-leavers do enter secondary education, about 10% do not and in addition there is a relatively high drop-out rate in lower vocational streams. This problem has become one of the priorities for education policymakers and has prompted them to pay more attention to the quality of learning processes and meeting individual learner needs. Discussions have started about the need for developing more specific vocational didactics and to improve occupational guidance in schools.

2.3.2 GENDER ISSUES IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Obviously, although equal access exists, there is considerable streaming of educational choice along gender lines, much as is the case in other European countries. In the dual system, girls prefer hairdresser qualifications while boys choose car mechanics and technical qualifications. In secondary and tertiary education, the majority of girls choose economic, social, and health educational paths. There is little information available if and to what extend school counselling and guidance activities are aiming at breaking such gender-specific patterns.

2.3.3 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Slovenia has a relatively long experience with the integration of minority groups and groups with special needs in primary education and in vocational education and training²⁷.

- The two ethnic minorities (Italian and Hungarian) have well-organised primary and some secondary schools in the regions where they live, with cultural and historical specifics incorporated in the curricula provided in bilingual programmes.
- For the Roma population there are additional classes organised but the policy is integration in normal school classes. However, the drop-out of Roma pupils from primary schools is very high, as is the drop-out in the transition to secondary education.
- For handicapped persons with severe problems there are special primary schools organised. But at the secondary level there are only a few special schools (and even very few vocational education and training options). The policy is to integrate pupils who do not have too severe handicaps in the regular classes (at primary and at secondary level), but this in each individual case depends on the decision of parents (and the pupil) in agreement with doctors and school management.
- Large numbers of young refugees from Bosnia were integrated in Slovenian schools during the second half of the

²⁶ There is no specific information available about promoting entrepreneurship in initial vocational education and training. This is mainly covered by programmes of the employment service and the non-formal adult education sector.

²⁷ Martina Trbanc, Training against social exclusion, Country report - Slovenia. ETF 2001.

1990s. Often special classes (which were formally departments of local schools) were organised in the refugee centres, with teachers coming from Slovenian schools or Bosnian teachers from among the refugees.

Concern for preventing social exclusion of youth in education and employment is quite strongly present. Until recently policy in this area has very much focused on bringing young people without or with low qualifications back into the school system in order for them to acquire a formally recognise qualification. This has become a priority measure for active labour-market policy and will be dealt with more extensively in the following chapters. Only recently, greater concern for improving the quality of education in the formal system has reached the policy agendas. This is now gradually being followed up by attempts to further flexibilise curricula and improve teacher training.

2.4 CONCLUSIONS

The modernisation and reform of the Slovene vocational education and training system has progressed steadily since its initial conceptualisation at the end of the 1980s. Conceived as an integral part of a reform of the overall education system, a genuine vocational education and training system has been established, with the appropriate legislation for that passed in 1996, built on the principles of social partnership and diversity of pathways. The principle of social partnership was considered to secure labour market relevancy of vocational education and training (through involvement of social partners in policy development and implementation, and the modernisation of curricula against occupational standards), while open pathways (including a complete vertical structure for vocational education and training and the development of a dual pathway) would respond to individual learners needs.

A sound fundament has been laid for the further development of the vocational

education and training system and a series of recent critical reviews have enabled the identification of issues still to be addressed. including new issues that have to be taken on board in view of persisting high drop-out rates, ongoing changes in the economy and preparations for EU accession. It has become clear that more investments have to be made in terms of further flexibilisation of curricula, implementing didactical and pedagogical innovative approaches of delivery, including an overhaul of teacher training in vocational education and training. The review of progress in vocational education and training development and priority setting for future policymaking has increasingly become framed by the development of national development and employment strategies. The further development of vocational education, therefore, is no longer considered only as a refinement of the vocational education and training system as such but also defined in function of the contribution that vocational education and training can provide for the achievement of these wider development goals.

Thus, all vocational education and training-related issues mentioned in the JAP are already being addressed within a mid-term perspective. However, while stakeholders are very well aware of what needs to be done, there is a serious problem of implementation. Amongst others, this is caused by the absence of professional research and development capacities to provide: (a) the necessary labour market and vocational education and training data and analyses that policymakers would need; and (b) develop, manage, monitor and assess vocational education and training change programmes.²⁸ Initiatives to improve readiness and capacities within schools to develop and implement innovations which are certainly present - have only recently been initiated. There is also some scope for further developing capacities to track, monitor and make better use of experiences in EU and other future member states. Phare has been the main and most successful vehicle for this in the

²⁸ See also: Zdenko Medves, *Memorandum on further development of vocational education and training*, Phare MOCCA, Ljubljana 2000, p. 36.

recent years but does not provide any opportunities anymore.

The policy agenda proposed in the conclusions of the memorandum on further development of vocational education and training summarises well the main points that vocational education and training reform policy will have to look at in the mid-term. ²⁹ These priorities clearly seek to integrate initial vocational education and training for young people and continuing vocational training for adults within a lifelong learning perspective.

- Deregulation and decentralisation of education programmes through the establishment of national framework curricula that can be adapted to local and regional conditions.
- Development of regional human resource development coalitions in order to strengthen social partnership at the regional level.
- Development of a school-based quality assessment system parallel to the external examination system.

- Modularisation of vocational education and training curricula and development of vocational education and training specific didactics to better respond to individual learner needs.
- Adaptation of the financing system to allow more autonomy to schools. This will imply further changes to legislation.
- Development of a system of national vocational standards to follow up the new Law on National Occupational Qualifications. This would be a step towards developing an overall framework for formal school diplomas and non-formal certificates.
- Development, in close cooperation between the MOESS, the MOLFSA and the chambers, of an infrastructure for assessment of prior learning and work experience.

The last two priorities link initial vocational education and training with adult and continuing vocational education and training. The capacity of continuing vocational training to support the national employment strategy will be analysed in detail in the next chapter.

²⁹ Bostjan Zgonc, ibid, p. 51.

3. CAPACITY OF
CONTINUING VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION AND TRAINING
TO SUPPORT NATIONAL
EMPLOYMENT POLICY
OBJECTIVES

3

3.1 OVERVIEW OF CONTINUING TRAINING PROVISION

Continuing vocational training (CVT) in Slovenia since the mid-1990s is characterised by a strong legal basis which defines roles and responsibilities of public authorities, national support institutions, the social partners (but mainly at the national level) and training providers, both public and private. As its development is closely related to developments in the labour market the Employment Service of Slovenia is playing a significant role³⁰. A

dedicated research and development institution for adult education (the Slovene Institute for Adult Education)³¹ was established in the early 1990s, which is also increasingly active in the field of continuing vocational education and training proper. The Centre for Vocational Education³² provides professional assistance to the social partners in developing occupational standards, and standards of knowledge and skills in the certification system.

Since the late 1990s, developments have concentrated on expanding the area of

³⁰ CVT as an element of active labour market policy will be analysed in chapter 4.

³¹ The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education was established by the government of the Republic of Slovenia in October 1991. Its mission is to foster the development of a culture of lifelong learning in Slovenia by research, development, counselling and educational activities, all supported by AE information system. Its staff currently amounts to 34 persons. Of these, 27 are working on research and developmental projects. Of the institute's budget, 60% is financed by the government while the remaining 40% is obtained from the market, mostly on public tenders.

³² For more information on the Centre for Vocational Education, see chapter 2.

continuing vocational training, increasing the involvement of social partners, developing social partnership at regional level and relating continuing vocational training to regional development policies, integrating continuing vocational training for adults and initial vocational education for young people (through the development of the certification system), and most recently on aligning continuing vocational training as part of a lifelong learning system.

3.1.1 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The field of continuing vocational training may be divided into two parts:

- state-regulated and financed continuing vocational training which encompasses education and training programmes leading to a recognised title of vocational/professional education, and regulated training not financed by the state but leading to publicly recognised certificates for vocational qualifications; and
- non-state regulated training which does not provide publicly recognised certificates (which in Slovenia is called "non-verified training").

Continuing vocational training providing publicly recognised diplomas and certificates is regulated at the national level while other types of continuing vocational training are more or less adjusted to individual users and are either under the jurisdiction of partners on the labour market or are regulated by market principles of supply and demand.

The main acts regulating formal continuing vocational training and non-formal training are the three education acts, adopted in 1996: the Act on Organisation and Financing of Education, the Act on Vocational and Technical Education and Training, and the Act on Adult Education. In 2000, the Act on National Vocational Qualifications was adopted. It provides a formal basis for the acquisition of nationally recognised vocational qualifications based on assessment and certification of knowledge and skills acquired outside the

formal school system. Similar to initial vocational education and training (IVET) the regulation of continuing vocational training is also centralised, and regional regulating mechanisms are legally not even foreseen. However, the Act on Adult Education gives local communities the possibility to prepare local annual plans for adult education. Recently, there have also been attempts of transferring some competencies in the field of human resource development in general to recently established regional developmental agencies.

According to these legal acts the responsibility for the development and implementation of vocational education and training - continuing vocational training included – is shared by the state and the business sector. At the state level, the main competencies are assigned to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour. However, other ministries are also given certain responsibilities. Formal continuing vocational training providing a recognised diploma of vocational/professional education as regulated by the Act on TVET is under the authority of the Ministry of Education; non-formal regulated training and the national vocational qualifications (vocational certificates) as regulated by the Act on National Vocational Qualifications are under the authority of the Ministry of Labour.

Each of the two ministries bears the general responsibility for the type of training under its authority. They propose and adopt respective laws and bylaws, take care of the development and implementation of training policy, and of the allocation of public funds earmarked for training. Moreover, they are competent for the adoption of training programmes, as well as for the supervision of the quality of these programmes. The Ministry of Education is also responsible for the management of public training providers, for the school inspectorate and for funding public schools and public adult education providers. Providers of programmes of regulated continuing vocational training must register with the Ministry of Education. On the other hand, organisers of assessment and Vocational certification

procedures in the certificate system must register with the Ministry of Labour.

The Act on Technical and Vocational Education and Training authorises the Ministry of Labour for the coordination of the involvement of social partners in the field of continuing vocational training. Furthermore, it proposes the methodology for the development of occupational standards in formal education and training and of standards of knowledge and skills in the certification system. The essence of the certification system lies in the provision of access to publicly valid certificates for a vocational qualification regardless of the way of acquisition of knowledge and skills, thus it enables recognition of prior learning and experiences of adults.

The role of the employers in regulated forms of continuing vocational training is defined by the Act on Vocational and Technical Education and Training. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Crafts, as umbrella employers' organisations, are authorised to carry out a range of tasks. Besides their roles in initial vocational education and training they also propose members of examination boards for final examinations in formal continuing vocational training, and propose members of the assessment and certification commissions in the certification system.

In comparison, the role of trade unions is more limited and basically restricted to taking care of the protection of rights of apprentices in the dual system and to participation in the final examination procedures. As a reflection of increasing awareness of the importance of involving trade unions fully, the Law on National Qualifications of 2000 gives the unions a role equal to that of the chambers. There is some discussion ongoing about the possible role of employer organisations as opposed to the role given to the chambers but for the moment the latter remain the responsible representative organisations on the employers' side.

The Act on Organisation and Financing of Education has also established the national institutions for social dialogue in vocational education and training. The Council of Experts for Vocational and Professional Education and the Council of Experts for Adult Education founded by the government are assuming this function. The councils are composed of experts in respective fields of education and training proposed by the state, social partners and the professional community. The work of the Council of Experts for Vocational Education and Training is mostly focused on formal continuing vocational training and publicly recognised qualifications and training programmes. Its tasks include approval of occupational standards in formal vocational education and training and standards of knowledge and skills in the certification system; approval of training programmes (formal and regulated non-formal) and submitting these to the competent ministry for adoption. The Council of Experts for Adult Education gives an opinion on regulated continuing vocational training, mostly from the point of view of appropriateness of organisation and implementation of the teaching process for adults. Through participation in the preparation of the national programme of adult education and in the annual plans of adult education, it also exercises its advisory role in the field of non-regulated continuing vocational training. Social partners also collaborate in ad-hoc working bodies established by the competent ministries or the councils of experts.

Despite a high level of involvement of social partners and the existence of elaborate legislation on which that involvement is founded, it should be mentioned that the social dialogue with the state is taking place only at the national level. Recently, attempts have been made with Phare support to introduce, on a pilot scale, regional councils of the main stakeholders in vocational education and training. Despite the relatively positive experience during the pilot phase these bodies have so far neither obtained a legal basis nor secured financial resources for their functioning. ³³

In addition to educational legislation, there is also a whole body of laws from employment, social policy and industrial relations relevant for continuing vocational training.

³³ Dekleva et al., 2000. One factor which has caused this situation has been the fact that different public institutions have simultaneously developed initiatives to set up regional institutions (employment service, regional development agencies, public administration etc.) and no coherent policy has so far been developed to ensure that there would not be a multiplication of such institutions. See also chapter 4.

Rights and duties of individual social groups related to continuing vocational training are mostly regulated by legislation in the field of employment and social welfare. The Labour Relations Code defines the right to training of employed and redundant workers as well as the role of collective agreements in implementing this right in enterprises. The Act on Pension and Disability Insurance lays down the right to vocational rehabilitation of the disabled, while the Act on Employment and Insurance in Case of Unemployment regulates the rights of the unemployed to education and training and their respective obligations concerning these rights. This last act also defines the basic principles of active employment policy and the status of different actors. An important role is played finally by the legislative documents, which regulate individual economic activities. These define conditions for the execution of an activity or profession, among which the most frequent are requirements for professional upgrading.³⁴ For example, most of the regulated training in the craft sector is defined by the Law on Crafts.

The Act on Workers' Co-determination has established Workers' Councils (in companies with more than 20 workers) which deal with all issues relating to conditions of work and give their opinions to the employer. Unfortunately, this kind of social dialogue between the employer and the employees is usually neglected when the realisation of the right of workers to training is concerned. Moreover, workers' councils are not compulsory and therefore only few companies have established them.

3.1.2 POLICY FRAMEWORK

Although the regulatory framework is largely defined by educational legislation, continuing vocational education and training policy itself is basically developed as an integral part of labour market and employment policy. The strategic labour

market and employment policy documents are all based on the four pillars of the European Employment Strategy³⁵ and actual policy development has generally become very much steered by EU accession discussions. The employment policy documents that have recently been agreed all underline the need for investments in formal education for youth and in all kinds of continuing vocational training. They all accept the principles of lifelong learning and also define conditions for their realisation as described in previous chapters.

The main initiator for continuing vocational training policy development is the Ministry of Labour. The ministry also acts as the coordinator of all other partners involved in labour market policy and human resource development.36 On the other hand, it is the Ministry of Education, which is legally authorised for the preparation of the National Programme of Adult Education and for presenting a proposal for adoption in the parliament. Also these documents are prepared in collaboration with other ministries, social partners and relevant support institutions. The National Programme of Adult Education defines the main long-term goals and priorities of adult education, directions of its future development and measures for the realisation. Continuing vocational training occupies an important position in the programme.37

Given current trends in employment, continuing vocational training policy is presently mainly focused on the improvement of educational levels and qualifications of long-term unemployed young adults who do not have appropriate qualifications. This group is defined as the priority target group. It is expected that demographic developments in the near future may substantially reduce the needs for educational provisions for young people and schools could and should therefore

³⁴ Ivančič, 1998.

³⁵ See chapter 1.

Other competent ministries, employers' representatives, representatives of trade unions, and support institutions in the field of education and the labour market (the Centre for Vocational Education of the Republic of Slovenia, the Centre for Adult Education of Slovenia) and the Employment Service of Slovenia. Most recently also some regional developmental institutions have been invited to participate.

³⁷ Drofenik et al, 1999.

Table 1. Projection of de jure population (persons who have worked abroad excluded), by age groups for years 2001, 2011, and 2020 – medium adjusted fertility

Age groups	2001	2011	% increase ¹	2020	% increase ²	
0-6	143,268	158,849	110.9	148,285	93.3	
7-14	182,241	169,853	93.2	182,423	107.4	
0-14	325,509	328,702	101.0	330,708	100.6	
15-49	1,028,703	950,891	92.4	888,070	93.4	
15-59	1,262,430	1,242,917	98.4	1,168,484	94.0	
5-year age groups						
5-9	102,207	110,872	108.5	112,325	101.3	
10-14	119,973	104,031	86.7	114,321	109.9	
15-19	135,578	103,084	76.0	110,448	107.1	
20-24	150,430	123,241	81.9	106,159	0.86	
45-49	154,016	147,825	96.0	137,645	93.1	
50-54	130,566	146,657	112.3	140,269	95.6	
55-59	103,164	145,369	140.9	140,145	96.4	
60-64	102,010	119,524	117.2	137,549	115.1	
65-69	95,178	90,165	94.7	128,036	142.0	

Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Slovenia 2000, p. 89, table 4.10. Note: ¹ 2001 is the basis for calculation; ² 2011 is the basis for calculation.

redirect their resources to adult education (see table 1).

Lower numbers of young people entering the labour market will also require an increased investment in training of the adult population. These developments are reflected in a number of recently developed national education and training policy documents such as the National Programme for Higher Education and the National Programme for Adult Education. They are also at the root of recent measures that aim at increasing the participation of adults in education and training, such as assessment and certification of prior learning, and the development of new forms and methods of learning and teaching.³⁸ However, the existing training facilities in initial vocational education and training are far from being ready and equipped for such shifts. This especially holds for the teaching staff in schools who have insufficient skills and competencies to teach adults.

3.1.3 RESOURCES

Financial resources

State financial resources spent on continuing vocational training are not monitored separately and reliable data on the amount of public spending on continuing vocational training are therefore not available. Information is also difficult to collect because different ministries are involved. In the national budget 0.1% of GNP is earmarked for adult education. These funds are allocated by the Ministry of Education on the basis of public tenders. Public funds for education and training in the framework of the Programme of Active Employment Policy, however, are allocated by the Ministry of Labour through financing of measures of the Employment Service of Slovenia.³⁹ Also, a certain amount of funding is earmarked for training by other ministries (Ministry of Economy – primarily for the development of small businesses related to craft, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Interior).

³⁸ Muršak et al, 2000.

³⁹ See chapter 4.

Employers are, by collective agreements required to cover the costs of education and training of their employees when they attend training on their request. The employers are obliged to cover direct costs (tuition fee, learning materials, travelling costs) and indirect costs (remuneration of wages and salaries for the time of absence from work due to the training). Individuals finance training themselves mainly when training is not initiated by the employer; sometimes they also co-finance training when they need upgrading of knowledge and skills for their work. Research indicates however that funds of employers are by far the most important source of direct financing of participation in training. Employers (co-) finance 65% of training of employees while individual employees themselves cover about 25% of the costs.40 According to these data the scope of training (co-) financed by the employers is increasing with the size of enterprises. In organisations with up to 20 employees, the employer (co-) funds approximately 50% of the training of the employed and in large organisations (500 and more employees) about 80%.

Statistical data indicate that in 1998 employers invested in education and training on average 27,548.00 SIT (US\$166) per employee. But the amount of money spent per employee differs considerably between individual industries. The worst off were persons employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing industry with 6% of the average (1,696.0 SIT or US\$10) per employee and in manufacturing and construction industry with 13% of the average amount (3,543.00 SIT or US\$21). On the other hand, in financial and business services and real estate employers spent 259% of the average sum per employee (71,713.00 SIT or US\$432).41

There are no joint funds of social partners dedicated for education and training of the employed. At the moment, a private fund, which is financed exclusively by the

employers, exists only in the crafts sector where 1% of gross salaries is accumulated in a training fund. At the regional level, the fund for the development of human resources for the region of Podravje was supposed to be financed by social partners but currently remains mainly financed from public resources. Apart from such and similar initiatives to set up regional development funds, no training funds for branch and/or national level are presently under discussion.

Human resources

Qualifications of staff delivering continuing vocational education and training are defined by legislation. Basically, teachers and trainers engaged in state-regulated continuing vocational training are the same as the ones delivering initial education and training. Detailed qualification requirements for the delivery of individual training programmes are issued by the competent sectoral minister. Special requirements for staff in organisations carrying out publicly recognised adult education programmes and programmes financed from public funds are additionally specified in the Act on Adult Education. Teaching staff who have not achieved an initial teacher training must complete a one-year pedagogic-andragogic course offered by a licensed provider. Most teachers and trainers in continuing vocational training work on a part-time basis.42

The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education has a key role in the development of in-service training of managers, trainers and organisers of adult education and training. Its activities in this area are divided in basic andragogic training, 43 specialised training for obtaining international certificates, and training related to implementation of innovations in the field of methods and forms of adult education developed by the institute. The lack of high quality trainers represents an important limitation in the efforts of the

⁴⁰ Mirčeva et al, 2000.

⁴¹ Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 1998, own calculation.

⁴² According to statistical data for 1997/98 of all 6,499 teachers and trainers in non-formal adult education, 87% had irregular contracts. Rapid reports No 169/2000.

⁴³ Basic andragogic training encompasses: communication skills; effective methods and techniques of teaching and learning in adult education; assessment and accreditation in adult education; programming in adult education; changing role of teacher in adult education; counselling in adult education.

institute to meet the needs of adult education and training staff.

Network of continuing vocational training providers

The available data on training programmes and providers confirm that an uneven regional distribution continues to exist. In the school year 2000/01, of all providers 75% are located in industrially more developed and thus most populated regions (41% in the central Slovenian region, 13% in the region of Podravje, 12% in the region of Gorenjsko, 9% in the Savinja region). In other regions their presence is extremely low. The distribution of programmes shows a similar pattern: 42% are delivered in the central Slovenia region; in other regions the share does not exceed 11%. In the central Slovenia region one training provider covers 4,505 inhabitants while for example in the Spodnjeposavska region this number amounts to 19,456 inhabitants (the average for Slovenia amounts to 7,587 inhabitants).

3.1.4 STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION OF CONTINUING TRAINING

Providers of continuing vocational training

There is no separate monitoring of organisations providing continuing vocational training. Since providers of adult education mostly provide work-related training programmes, we assume that the same network covers also continuing vocational training. While there is no single reliable database, clearly private training providers dominate the adult education scene. The survey data on providers and programmes for the school year 2000/01 indicate that of all providers 38% are private organisations, 16% are people's universities, 16% secondary schools, 7% societies and associations of societies, and 4% units for adult education in schools and other institutions.45 Statistical data concerning providers of further education for the school year 1997/98 show the following composition: 20% people's

universities, 9% school units, 18% companies' training centres and 47% other specialised organisations (including primarily private providers of adult education, post-secondary schools and universities, specialised training centres, institutes and similar organisations). 46

The available data indicate that employer organisations only form a small share of the continuing vocational training providers. More often, however, they cofinance other training providers. Trade unions provide specific training for their members only but mainly concerning union affairs. Currently there are no training centres established jointly by the social partners. Preparations have been going for some time now for the establishment of intercompany/regional training centres but little progress has been made mainly due to unsolved financial issues. In contrast, 13% of firms and enterprises maintain their in-company training centres. 47 Training centres are also organised by several industrial branches.

Improvement of the level of formal education of the Slovene population is an important goal of adult education. Discussions among policymakers and other stakeholders concerning the integration of formal, non-formal and informal learning has only recently started and formally recognised diplomas so far can only be achieved within the formal education system. Adults can obtain a formal education degree either by enrolling in education and training programmes for young people which may (or may not) be adjusted to the specific learning needs of adults, or by enrolling in programmes specially developed for adults. In practice, however, at the secondary level there are virtually no special programmes for adults. Formal secondary education is provided by schools - some of them have special departments for adult education - as well as by adult education organisations, which are accredited for delivering these programmes. Non-formal training, be it regulated or not, is not recognised by the

⁴⁴ Brenk. 2001.

⁴⁵ Such as public institutes, post-secondary schools and institutions of higher education, special educational centres, institutes, libraries, chambers, crafts associations, Brenk, 2001.

⁴⁶ The remaining 6% were represented by other suppliers (driving schools are not included). Rapid reports, No 169/2000.

⁴⁷ Statistical Office of the Republic Slovenia, 1998, ŠOL-ZAP questionnaire, AOP, table 1.

formal vocational education and training system. Although the Act on Adult Education (article 7) has introduced the possibility for assessment of equivalency of standards of the training regulated by non-school regulations and their recognition in the formal system as yet no such procedures exist in practice.

The introduction of the certification system has not solved this issue since the certification system is not yet an integral part of the formal vocational education and training. Currently preparations for the development of modular training are taking place, which will enable the acquisition of a certificate for each module that has been achieved. It is expected hoped that the certificates will open the possibility for the integration of qualifications obtained outside school-based vocational education and training with formal school certificates and diplomas. Preparations for this to happen have already been started.

Since continuing vocational training is a central component of Active Employment Policy measures, obviously the Employment Service of Slovenia, as the principal implementation agency of the employment policy, has an important role to play in the system of continuing vocational training. The role of the ESS will be described and analysed in detail in chapter 4.

3.1.5 ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION OF TRAINING

Examinations are carried out externally for formal education and non-formal regulated training and provide nationally recognised diplomas and certificates. Examinations are also carried out in some non-regulated programmes but the evidence acquired on this basis is not yet publicly recognised. Examinations on the basis of "non-school" regulations are run at the level of individual industries, and as part of in-company training in some enterprises. The Chamber of Crafts carries out certification of qualifications for pursuing activities, which do not require master craft examination. Most recently the Chamber of Commerce

and Industry has also established its own assessment and certification system. The validity of certificates acquired in these systems, however, is still limited to the issuing company or organisation. However, an agreement has been reached between the MOESS and the Chamber of Commerce that the certificates now issued by the latter will be transferred into the national system and that the chamber will step into the National Qualification system as it is being shaped by further legislation. The same applies to the pilot certificates developed under the Phare MOCCA programme.

Assessment and certification of non-formal and informal learning and work experience which is intended to provide nationally recognised certificates is undertaken under the authority of the Ministry of Labour. With the support of the Phare MOCCA programme procedures for assessment and certification were developed and tested in 2000.⁴⁸ However, these publicly recognised certificates, acquired in regulated non-formal training programmes are not recognised by the formal education system. As mentioned earlier, discussions have started with a view of better integrating diplomas and certificates stemming from the various forms of formal, non-formal and informal learning that now exist in parallel. Clearly, within an institutional context dominated by formal regulations this is a rather delicate issue.

Mechanisms for ensuring quality of continuing vocational training

The responsibility for the supervision of quality of formal continuing vocational training programmes and non-formal publicly recognised training is entrusted to the competent ministries. For the supervision of the provision of conditions for practical training in the dual system the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Crafts are responsible.

The relevance of the training outcomes is assured by involving social partners in the development and approval of occupational standards/standards of knowledge and skills in the certification system, in assessment and certification procedures,

⁴⁸ Ivančič et al, 2000.

3. CAPACITY OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO SUPPORT NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT POLICY OBJECTIVES

and also in the development, approval and execution of training programmes in the state regulated continuing vocational training. The quality of the achieved educational and training standards is assured via external examinations.

Several mechanisms are applied in order to assure quality of the teaching process in formal education and training. Social partners are involved in all phases. Competent ministries define norms and standards for carrying out formal training programmes and verified non-formal training. These include material conditions and qualification requirements for staff in order to be accredited for carrying out a particular regulated training programme or to obtain public financing. However, compliance with the requirements is checked only at the time of registration/verification. Special guidelines for adjusting training programmes for youth to the needs of adults were recently issued by the Ministry of Education⁴⁹. Systematic evaluation is legally required only when new and/or modernised training programmes are implemented on an

experimental basis. By and large therefore, quality control remains a mixture of input and output control mechanisms with little attention to the learning process. However, this situation is still better than for non-formal non-regulated training - the largest share of continuing vocational training – which has no supervision of quality at all. Here, quality is basically regulated by supply and demand on the training market. As elsewhere in Europe, the search is for quality control instruments that will allow private training providers to develop and implement adequate quality management themselves, without state control, but that will also allow as much as possible public recognition of certificates achieved in the informal and non-formal training system.

Collecting and updating information on continuing vocational training

The National Statistical Office collects yearly data on enrolment in education and training and on education and training provision. Separate data sets for individual levels of education as well as for further

Table 2. Participation of adults in education and training programmes in school year 1997/98 by type of training programmes

Type of training programmes	No. of participants	%
Formal university and higher education	15,541	7.1
Two-year post-secondary vocational colleges	232	0.1
Four and five-year technical and professional secondary education	4,305	2.0
Two-year vocational-technical education	2,050	0.9
Three-year secondary vocational education and training	3,638	1.6
Lower level vocational education and training	328	0.2
Other formal CVT programmes at the secondary level	1,212	0.5
Non-formal verified training programmes	17,039	7.8
Non-formal non-verified training programmes	174,820	79.8
Total	219,165	100

Sources: (a) formal secondary education: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Research results No 745/2000, tables 4.1.4; 4.1.5; 4.1.6;4.1.7; 4.1.8; 4.1.9;

⁽b) university and higher education and two-year post-secondary vocational colleges: Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Slovenia 2000, tables 6.12; 6.14.

⁽c) organised non-formal verified and non-verified training: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Rapid report. No 169/2000

¹Also those students are included, who did not fulfil criteria to enrol as full-time students.

⁴⁹ Velikonja, Klenovšek-Vilić, Lorenčič, 1999.

adult education and training of the employed are maintained. Data sets include numbers of enrolled persons by types of programmes and, in some cases, providers. By combining all these data sets an approximate figure of the number of enrolled persons in various forms of formal and non-formal education and training may be obtained. For the adults enrolled in formal education information on age and gender is available while in the case of non-formal training and training of the employed only information on gender exists. Standardised indicators of the development of continuing vocational training and its effects are also missing which makes it difficult to monitor and assess developments regarding the implementation of policies.

3.1.6 CLIENT GROUPS

Given the insufficient information system on continuing vocational training at the national level it is also difficult to identify groups who are clients of continuing vocational training in Slovenia. Based on the results of the SIALS research, the largest share of participants in continuing vocational training is formed by the self-employed (46%), followed by the employed (41%) and the unemployed (16%). Individual groups outside the labour market do not exceed 11% while retired people have the smallest share (6%).50 The results also demonstrate that better educated persons (with at least four years' secondary education), persons aged between 25 and 40 years, and the employed occupying managerial and supervising positions participate most regularly in training. Moreover, looking at the statistical data on the distribution of the employed enrolled in training it is evident that the majority of the participants comes from government and public services, financial and business services and the distribution of electricity, gas and water. Thus the data indicate that employees in private industry are relatively underrepresented among those who are involved in continuing vocational training.

3.2 RESPONSIVENESS OF CONTINUING TRAINING PROVISIONS TO THE NEEDS OF THE LABOUR MARKET AND THE INDIVIDUAL

3.2.1 RESPONSIVENESS OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING TO INDUSTRIAL CHANGES

It has been assumed that responsiveness of continuing vocational training to labour market needs can best be secured by grounding formal and non-formal verified continuing vocational training on the occupational standards proposed by the representatives of employers. Furthermore, it has been assumed that responsiveness could be secured by involving social partners in the development, adoption and implementation of training programmes. Social partners do indeed have legal possibilities to initiate adjustments of occupational and educational standards and thus to align training to changes in occupational skills. However, it has to be noted that, due to the lack of human and financial resources, a continuous analysis of changes in the occupational structure and the composition of skills is virtually not undertaken. Consequently, no efficient forecasting mechanism for future training needs is available. Until recently certain elements of occupations from the National Standard Classification of Occupations (description of typical tasks) were used to construct "nomenclatura" which served as a basis for developing training programmes. Now preparations are in progress which will enable the development of occupational profiles based on regular labour market analyses. Moreover, the present centralisation of continuing vocational training does not allow consideration of the training needs of individual regions, which is clearly visible from the regional distribution of training provision. But perhaps the greatest obstacle at present is the uneven regional distribution of training provision.

3. CAPACITY OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO SUPPORT NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT POLICY OBJECTIVES

Other factors that impede an efficient responsiveness of continuing vocational training to the needs of the labour market may be found in the regulated nature of the formal continuing vocational training system, which as argued earlier closely resembles the system of initial vocational education and training for young people. In addition, the procedures for development and adoption of occupational standards/standards of knowledge and skills, and for the development and adoption of training programmes are very long. Moreover, a traditional subject-based approach to training programmes is still prevalent and too little attention is paid to the development of competencies. Methods of teaching and learning are still very traditional and do not support the development of key qualifications. Not surprisingly for the regulated nature of the continuing vocational training system, it is the absence of a legal basis that is often cited as the reason why adjustments and innovations cannot be introduced. It seems that there is a fear within the formal system that the introduction of some innovations may endanger the established position of schools, while at the same time their own adjustment to changing conditions is very slow.

Thus, the conclusion could be drawn that existing regulation mechanisms are too rigid to make it possible for the formal continuing vocational training to respond quickly enough to changes in the labour market, regardless whether the emergence of new skills or new employment patterns are concerned. Thus, the existing regulated continuing vocational training system seems to be more appropriate for traditional occupational labour markets and employment patterns characteristic of these markets and does not correspond with the flexible employment patterns, which are developing at present. The centralised nature of regulation does not leave room for adjustments to special needs of regional labour markets.

One might expect that non-formal training, especially non-verified forms that are outside any regulation, is likely to react much more promptly to the changing needs of the labour market. This is only partly the

case though. According to the data on training contents, the needs for key qualifications such as foreign languages, communication skills, computer literacy, and management and organisation are largely covered by non-regulated non-formal training. This often holds also for newly emerging skill areas. But this kind of training does not gain adequate social and economic recognition yet, nor are there sufficient quality control mechanisms in place. As mentioned earlier, the certification system is expected to gradually fill this gap. Providers of non-regulated training also do not contribute to greater equality in access to training of different groups of population as they are largely concentrated in regions with a higher density of better educated population and tend to adjust their training supply to the needs of this particular population. There has been discussion about the establishment of intercompany training centres, based in training centres of formerly state-owned large companies, that could potentially respond more flexibly to training demands, but progress has been stalled over financing and ownership issues.

3.2.2 RESPONSIVENESS OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING TO SECTORAL NEEDS

It is characteristic that quite a number of service industries (banking, state administration, distribution of electricity) has developed their own internal continuing vocational training systems. What they expect from the formal education system is to provide them with young people with broad general qualifications, whom they subsequently provide with branch-specific professional skills, attitudes and competencies. Also large successful companies have developed their internal continuing vocational training systems. As has already been mentioned, some industrial branches also established their own systems of certification. However, some of these have already expressed interest for national recognition of certain part of their internal training (e.g. language courses). Obviously, continuing vocational

training provided by industries and enterprises is only accessible for the respective employees and within the recruitment and promotion policies of the sectors and the enterprises. Sectoral training bodies composed of social partners have been foreseen by the Vocational and Technical Education Act. Also these bodies have not been yet formally established.

3.2.3 RESPONSIVENESS OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING TO THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS

The provision of continuing vocational training which is more adjusted to the particular learning needs of individuals has not yet gained ground in Slovenia. The Slovene Institute for Adult Education has pioneered some of such individual-oriented forms of adult education in the beginning of 1990s. Most known among these are the so-called study circles. The number of organisations which include study circles has increased from 16 in 1993 to 58 in 1999/2000, the number of study circles from 36 to 169 and the number of participants from 316 to 1,834. They are mainly organised within people's universities and private educational organisations. The highest percentage of users are employed or self-employed, and belong to the 27-45 age group.⁵¹ This form of learning seems to be most appropriate for better educated people. Study circles play an important role in the development of local communities, and sometimes even contribute to creation of side employment. This may be observed when study circles deal with tourism and preservation of cultural traditions.

Recent innovations include centres for independent learning, a form of open learning. In the school year 1995/96, nine such centres were active, while in the school year 1999/2000 their number amounted to 36. They operate within people's universities, private education organisations, libraries and other education institutions; only three of them are established within companies.

According to the data for 1999, centres for independent learning received 2,503 participants. Almost 40% of these had completed elementary school or less. Most frequently, the participants learned foreign languages and (considerably less often) computer skills.

There are some attempts to bring formal programmes for young people closer to the learning needs of adults. Training providers are expected to adjust the organisation of training delivery as well as the teaching process to the needs of the participants and guidelines for this have been issued by the MOESS. However, as is shown by research findings these guidelines are only rarely applied in everyday practice.⁵² Other forms of individual-centred learning are still undeveloped in Slovenia. For example, distance learning exists in Slovenia only in the field of post-secondary and higher education while work on the development of modular training in vocational education and training has only just started.

In general, there are no special incentives set by employers to motivate their employees for training, such as in the form of linking continuing vocational training to wage or salary increases. At least this is the case for short training courses. Formally recognised qualifications of course remain related to the wage and salary structure. According to the Labour Relations Code, employees are obliged to attend training when their employers require them to do so. The SIALS results show that more than half of the training of better educated employees and 80% of the training of less educated employees was in fact initiated by the employer.53 Nevertheless, there are signals that employees are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that more training increases the security of their present employment even though it is not connected with wage/salary improvement. Sometimes the opportunity to participate in training sponsored by the employer may even be considered as a privilege as such.

⁵¹ Malečkar, 2000.

⁵² Drofenik et al, 2001.

⁵³ Mirčeva et al, 2000.

3.2.4 THE ROLE OF COUNSELLING/CAREER ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

All recent documents on vocational education and training and labour market policy documents recognise the importance of career guidance and counselling. There are two different developments in Slovenia: guidance and counselling provided by the employment service and counselling provided by adult education providers in local communities. The role of the employment service concentrates basically on occupational guidance and will be described in chapter 4. A model for educational guidance for adults in local communities is being developed in the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education in cooperation with adult education organisations in five regions. The basic objective of this project is to provide adults with high quality information and guidance in support for their education and learning. In the project special attention is paid to the development of local and regional networking between training and education providers.

3.2.5 THE POLICY ON ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

The issue of assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning was already treated in the White Paper on Education in Slovenia of 1996⁵⁴ and has subsequently been included in the Act on Adult Education of 1996. It is considered as an important measure to support lifelong learning and, after long discussion, was introduced at the end of the 1990s in the form of the so-called certification system. The certification system enables the assessment and certification of knowledge, skills and competencies obtained either in different types of education and learning, or as the result of practical work experience. The assessment takes place against nationally agreed standards of knowledge and skill requirements for performing

certain jobs existing on the labour market. The obtained certificates are nationally valid but currently they are recognised only on the labour market. In order to be recognised by the education system (and allow for access to the formal education system) an assessment of equality of standards is required. Considering the existing structure of the formal vocational education and training programmes, this would obviously not be an easy task. Nevertheless, through the certification system an important step towards opening up of the formal education system has been made. For the moment, the methodological and technical capacities for effective integration of formal, non-formal and informal systems are still to be developed.

Other systemic changes that would have to be introduced for this to happen (such as in governance, financing, modularisation and decentralisation of curriculum responsibilities), have been recognised but also need practical implementation.55 The Ministry of Education has already declared that the recognition of prior learning should be one of the important adjustments in formal vocational education and training of adults. However, as yet no evidence on such practice exists. However, assessment of prior and informal learning has started to become applied also in other areas of non-formal training such as in foreign language training.

It has to be pointed out that not only representatives of the formal education system but also the social partners are rather suspicious about the quality of qualifications achieved on the basis of assessment of prior learning or work experience. This reflects the long tradition of formal education and the importance in society attributed to educational diplomas. In addition, there is some concern that recognition of non-formal and informal learning might undermine the status and quality of formal education. Another major obstacle in this area is the lack of financial and human resources. Apart from limited technical and professional support capacities, it should be reminded that in the

⁵⁴ White Paper on Education in Slovenia, 1996.

⁵⁵ Memorandum on Further VET Modernisation, 2000.

Slovene vocational education and training system a large share of responsibilities for realisation of the system is assigned to the employers (and their chambers) who claim that they are not capable of taking these on board. However, without their intensive cooperation the system cannot effectively function.

3.2.6 THE RESPONSIVENESS OF THE SYSTEM OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING TO THE EMPLOYED AT RISK OF UNEMPLOYMENT

There is no evidence of any systematic publicly funded continuing vocational training measures directed to the employed at risk of unemployment, nor is there any systematic information available. The labour relations law obliges employers to retrain their redundant workers as one of the options prior to lay-offs. However, financial support from the side of the Ministry of Labour and the employment service has gradually been diminished for this purpose. In the first half of the 1990s, extensive financing of retraining of redundant workers was provided by the Ministry of Labour through the employment service, but from 1995 onwards this was gradually diminished and in 1998 it stopped completely as policy priorities have shifted and other measures of active employment policy gained in importance (see for more details chapter 4).

3.2.7 THE SCOPE OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROVISIONS FOR EMPLOYEES

Statistical data on the participation of the employed in training show that in 1998 approximately 74% of Slovene enterprises enabled access to training of their employees: 7% within companies, 18% on the external training market, while 49% combined in-house training with external supply. In total, 52% of the employed participated in some kind of training. Short-term upgrading training courses were by far the most important (38%), while only 2% participated in programmes of formal education, 0.1% in specialisation programmes, 0.2% in programmes of retraining and 12% in programmes of training for work (including training compliant to legal requirements, such as safety and health in the workplace).56

Table 3 indicates that the number of the employed included in various types of training varies from one year to another. Until 1996 there was an overall increase in all types of further training; in 1997 a considerable decrease took place, and in 1998 an increase was again registered with retraining of employed remaining at a level below the 1995 one. Access of the employed to training also largely differs by industries as described earlier.

Table 3. Index of increase in participation of the employed in education programmes by types of education 1994 – 1997 (1994 = 100)

Type of training programme	1995	1996	1997	1998
For the acquisition of technical education	110.1	111.4	93.3	120.4
Specialisation	99.6	108.7	93.9	117.1
Retraining	88.7	148.9	62.1	72.6
Training for basic qualifications	104.7	104.8	98.7	105.3
Short-term upgrading courses	114.2	122.6	93.4	122.5
Total	111.4	117.8	94.6	117.8

Source: Participants in Education: Statistical Information No 129, 1998. Statistical Office of Slovenia, Statistical Information No 279, 1996, Statistical Office of Slovenia, ŠOL-ZAP Questionnaire on Education of the Employed, 1998

⁵⁶ Statistical Office of Slovenia, ŠOL-ZAP Questionnaire on Education of the Employed 1998, AOP tables, own calculation.

Referring again to the SIALS results, 46% of the employed are included in various forms of education and training. Their training is mainly intended for the needs of work and upgrading of professional skills (77.5%).⁵⁷ Of all training participants, 13% wanted to obtain a higher level of education while 87% are included in non-formal training and professional upgrading training. Two-fifths of the participants come from companies and organisations with less than 100 employed, and nearly two-fifths from large firms and companies with 500 and more employed. A relatively small share of participants comes from medium-size companies (12%). Of the employed in managerial positions 62% participated in training, of those in supervisory positions 54% and without managerial or supervisory position 41%. In terms of gender no particular difference among the participants is registered. On average, the participants spent 141 hours a year for training (women 129 hours, men 153 hours).

The results of the SIALS research also demonstrate that nearly two-thirds of the training of the employed results from employer initiatives: 40% in enterprises with less than 20 employed; 60% in organisations with 100 to 199 employed, and in 70% of the cases in large firms and enterprises. The data also suggest that employers more often initiate training of staff with either limited supervisory liability (71%) or those with large supervisory liability (69%), and less often the training of the employees who do not have any supervisory liability (62%). These patterns seem to be largely in line with those from EU countries.

3.2.8 CONCLUSIONS

In general, it has to be said that the existing continuing vocational training system does not yet correspond well with either the needs of today's flexible labour markets or with the needs of many individuals. Contrary to the goals stated by various strategic documents, it does therefore not seem to be very effective in

reducing structural and regional discrepancies on the labour market. The state-regulated continuing vocational training is too rigid and too centralised to be capable of addressing requirements of newly emerging occupations and activities or the particular needs of individual regions. Non-regulated non-formal continuing vocational training, on the other hand, seems to adjust more promptly to new developments. However, non-formal training is not recognised as being of equal value to formal training. Moreover, it is very selective and concentrated in regions with a high density of better educated population and where (market) needs for training are highest and does therefore not contribute to a more even regional distribution of continuing vocational training provision. On the other hand, the policy initiatives are there and the problem can also be seen as one of insufficient capacities for their effective implementation.

Most of the training, both in the formal and non-formal sector, is delivered by using traditional methods and forms and does not take into account special needs and particularities of adult participants. Some new approaches have been introduced on a relatively small scale in adult education (study circles, centres of independent learning, project learning of young adults) but these approaches take place in non-formal training and are not easily transferred to the formal system. The further development and promotion of the certification system shall undoubtedly increase the value of non-formal training. Also forms of supporting mechanisms such as guidance and counselling are at the very start. Although all the important education and labour market policy documents emphasise lifelong learning principles the implementation of measures to support their realisation have been developing very slowly so far. However, as lifelong learning in practice requires a fundamental review of many of the underlying concepts and institutions of the present highly formalised and centralised system, this should not come as a surprise.

3.3 RESPONSIVENESS OF CONTINUING TRAINING PROVISIONS TO THE NEEDS OF GROUPS AT RISK OF EXCLUSION FROM LABOUR MARKET/SOCIETY

3.3.1 A POLICY FOR PROMOTING ACCESS TO CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR DISADVANTAGED/ MARGINALISED GROUPS

In addition to the policy aim of a general increase of the level of education of the labour force, a policy for promoting access to continuing vocational training of unemployed young adults (aged 15 to 26 years) who are without completed initial education has now been declared the top priority. The Employment Service of Slovenia is the main institution responsible for developing and implementing measures in this area. It organises and finances various training activities. Some of them are intended for the development of social skills necessary to be successful in training and on the labour market. It also is in charge of the main programme in this area, the so-called Programme 5000 (see chapter 4).

The Employment Service of Slovenia also provides training measures for the disabled, which are explained in chapter 4.

Some measures for improving the social adaptability of young people (Programme of project learning for young people -PUM) and for improving literacy skills (Training for "Life Successfulness" – UŽU) were developed by the Slovene Institute for Adult Education. In 1993 a basic literacy programme was initiated. It was meant for adults who did not complete primary or secondary education and for adults who have no more than ten years of schooling. The programme lasts for 120 hours and is carried out by specially trained teachers. The main goal of the programme is to enable the acquisition or renewal of basic skills of reading, writing and calculating. In addition, it seeks to motivate participants

for the continuation of education and training. The programme was adapted for adults with special needs and for adults who were completing primary school in its later phase. According to the most recent data since 1993 around 830 persons have participated in the programme.

Special training programmes for young adults in the age group 15-25 (PUM) are intended for those young adults who have no basic vocational qualifications and no work experience, who dropped out from schools, are poorly motivated for education and training and have unreal views concerning work, career planning and employment. The main goal of the programme is to motivate these young people to develop work habits, discover their talents and abilities, learn how to cooperate, and define their vocational goals. In the school year 1999/2000 the project had 203 participants. Of these, 125 completed the whole year while the others either enrolled in training, found employment or left the programme.58

3.3.2 CONCLUSIONS

Measures introduced for promoting access to continuing vocational training for groups at risk of exclusion from the labour market or society correspond with the long-term strategic goals of labour market policy. They are intended to improve educational levels and vocational competencies of the labour force and to reduce structural discrepancies on the labour market. By introducing new training measures for the disabled and disadvantaged they also contribute to assuring equal opportunities. However, some of these measures are not of a permanent nature; their realisation highly depends on the availability of financial resources. Also, some are politically motivated and are not adjusted to real needs of target population. Finally, not all groups at risk of exclusion from the labour market have equal access to these measures; middle-aged generations and the older population with poor educational achievements are largely neglected and excluded. The small share of participation in continuing education and training of this

⁵⁸ Dobrovoljc, 2000.

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part of the population is evident also from the data on participation of the unemployed in training presented by the Employment Service of Slovenia.⁵⁹

3.4 CONTRIBUTION OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING TO PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Promoting entrepreneurship is part of the second pillar of the employment policy and is also included in the Slovene labour market and employment policy documents. Measures intended to promote self-employment have been introduced by the Employment Service of Slovenia. These offer the unemployed various kinds of training and counselling. Local employment services organise short information seminars that provide future entrepreneurs with basic information on self-employment, procedures required to establish a firm and factors which must be taken into account in realising self-employment projects. Afterwards they can participate in a three-day introduction seminar where they get more detailed information from fields important for conducting business (such as legislation, marketing and accounting). Also in-depth workshops and training are available to those interested. The courses are designed to equip new entrepreneurs with knowledge and skills needed to prepare a business plan, bookkeeping and accounting etc. In 1999, the project on promotion of entrepreneurship was carried out as a joint project with the Centre for Promotion of Small Business. In order to select providers of training seminars a project "Standard for training of entrepreneurs" was developed.

In the period from 1991 to 1999, 19,704 persons participated in short information and motivation seminars, 22,327 persons were involved in various forms of training and 23,055 received individual counselling by institutions outside the employment services. It is judged that this kind of support significantly contributed to the creation of an environment supportive to

the development of entrepreneurship. Indeed, according to the Employment Service of Slovenia more willingness of other actors (state administration and agencies, financial institutions, specialised agencies) for cooperation would have increased the successfulness of the programme. ⁶⁰

3.5 CONCLUSIONS

An overall analysis of continuing vocational education shows certain positive trends in the field. This concerns both the formation of policy and changes in the scope and quality of supply and demand. However, continuing vocational training remains centralised and the gap between formal and non-formal system is largely preserved. Access to training opportunities frequently remains very unbalanced. Contrary to the goals stated by strategic documents on labour market policy continuing vocational training hardly contributes to the reduction of structural and regional discrepancies. The more developed regions are in a markedly privileged position while the underdeveloped regions remain so also in the field of continuing education and training. The main client groups in continuing vocational training are represented by the employed and the better educated groups in society. The supply of training opportunities and incentives for training for the less educated are poor. Typically, promotion of continuing vocational training opportunities have so far been directed towards young adults, or were defined in such a way that they were more easily recognised by better educated persons.

Although recently the coordination between different actors, both at the national and the regional level, has improved, negative consequences of the too dispersed responsibilities are still present. The effectiveness of investments in continuing vocational training is reduced due to poor transparency of activities, and even more so due to ill-controlled allocation and monitoring of financial resources.

⁵⁹ Employment Service of Slovenia, Annual Report 1999, pp. 10-11.

⁶⁰ Employment Service of Slovenia, Annual Report 1999, p. 29.

The most critical issue for an effective provision of continuing vocational training remains the rigidity of the system of formal continuing education and training, which changes only very slowly and is quite immune to innovation but also poorly supported by analyses of training needs. Although the principle of lifelong learning has been adopted in many recent policy documents, measures that would support the implementation of these principles are very scarce in practice. The absence of innovative training approaches geared to learning needs of adults is one of the most evident examples of this situation.

Representatives of employers through the chambers play a key role in the social dialogue on continuing vocational training, with the result that development and implementation of continuing vocational training policy is clearly dominated by economic interests. Participation of representatives of workers in the social dialogue is rather weak, and almost absent as far as other actors such as representatives of civil society and local communities are concerned.

In the future, priority should be given to the following issues:

- acceleration of adoption of the National Programme for Adult Education and corresponding annual programme at the national and regional levels;
- a progressive decentralisation of continuing vocational education;
- further development of social partnership and its promotion at the regional level; trade unions should strengthen their influence in the field, and local actors as well as institutions of civil society should be invited to participate;
- changes in tax legislation are urgent, to allow tax relief for investments of employers and individuals in training;
- establishment of joint training funds for financing training of the employed;
- introduction of innovative forms of investment in training for the less educated;
- transparency and quality control of educational activities of various providers:
- greater transparency and better monitoring of the use of resources for continuing vocational training and their effects; and
- promotion of new approaches to education and learning and strengthening the integration of work and learning.

4.1 THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OF SLOVENIA (ESS)

The public employment service has been operating in the territory of Slovenia under various organisational and institutional forms from as early as 1900. After the Second World War, it was re-established in 1952 as the Office for Placement, with job placement and the payment of special allowances to unemployed workers as its main tasks. Subsequent changes in legislation brought about several changes in the organisation, operation and name of the public service. With the latest amendment of the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act in 1998, the National Employment Office was renamed the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS).

4.1.1 LEGAL FOUNDATIONS, GOVERNMENT POLICY AND ACTIVITIES OF THE ESS

The work of the ESS is defined in a number of laws and sublaws and is geared to implementing the government's employment policy, which is gradually shifting towards giving more weight to a variety of active labour market measures. The ESS also has additional tasks of a type no longer generally considered as belonging to the core tasks of employment services, but which it inherited from the employment service as it existed before the 1990s. As a result, the ESS has responsibilities in a wide range of fields and its tasks include all preparatory, promotional, professional, financial-administrative, management, reporting and statistical-analytical activities related to these fields.

There are several separate laws defining the tasks and responsibilities of the ESS. The basic law defining the management, organisation and activities of the ESS is the **Employment and Unemployment Insurance** Act, which was adopted soon after Slovenian independence in 1991. During the 1990s it went through a large number of changes, the most important in 1998. The terms and conditions of the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act are described in detail in 13 sub-acts (implementing acts), adopted by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. The ESS is also charged with the implementation of the Employment of Foreigners Act and its sub-acts. In addition, activities of the ESS are defined in the Training and Employment of Disabled People Act and in the Labour Administration Registers Act. Additional specific ESS tasks are defined in numerous other statutory provisions regulating such matters as pensions and disability insurance, labour relations, social security, and personal data protection. The ESS must consistently comply with all legislation, which regulates the work of recipients of public or budgetary funds.

Apart from the duties defined by the legal framework, the ESS is directly responsible for the implementation of programmes and other measures regarding employment, which are adopted by the government or parliament. Therefore, the ESS has to carry out not only numerous professional tasks, but also a large amount of administrative work as well. In compliance with the legal and administrative foundations, the tasks of the ESS are concentrated in several basic activities, which will be briefly described in the following paragraphs.

Registration, counselling and placement of the unemployed

Placement and counselling are the main and by far the largest activities of the ESS. Related to these activities are the maintenance of records of registered unemployed and other persons (such as foreign citizens receiving unemployment benefit or unemployment assistance, unemployed people who cannot work for

health reasons, etc.) in compliance with the provisions of the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act.

The latest legal changes brought about a new emphasis on active labour market measures in the work of the ESS. At the same time the obligations of the registered unemployed have become more clearly defined as well. The ESS now prepares a "back-to-work plan" for each unemployed person and monitors the jobseeking activities of the unemployed as well as the implementation of agreements from the back-to-work plan. This goes along with a stricter supervision of the status of the unemployed. The unemployed person is obliged to take on an appropriate or suitable job or participate in an employment programme if this will lead towards improved employment opportunities or a guaranteed job.

The ESS organises both individual and group methods of informing and counselling the unemployed (the so-called closed system of dealing with clients) and also provides general information on vacancies and other matters for clients (through various leaflets and brochures, the internet, vocational information and counselling centres) in the so-called open system of dealing with clients.

Due to a rapid increase in the number of the unemployed⁶¹, the scope of the work involved in this activity has expanded significantly. At the end of 1988 the number of registered unemployed was still very low (25,371). However, five years later it had increased more than five-fold (137,142). The number of inflows and outflows of unemployed demonstrates the scope of the ESS' activities better than the total number of the unemployed (stocks). In comparison with the late 1980s, flows increased significantly during the 1990s and the composition of those flows has also changed. In 1988, the total annual inflow was 27,802 persons (mainly first-time jobseekers) and the outflow was 20,257 persons. In 1993 the inflow rose to 97,722 persons (mainly redundant workers and workers with expired temporary contracts) and the outflow to 78,804 persons.

⁶¹ Detailed figures are presented in the annexes.

Table 4. Registered unemployment – inflows/outflows, 1998 – 2000

	1998	1999	2000
Total inflow	77,021	80,778	82,329
Total outflow	78,968	93,055	92,094
- of which in employment*	55,448	62,350	60,161
Unemployed (December)	126,625	114,348	104,583

^{*} The number includes those employed in public work programmes. Source: ESS

Although in recent years there has been a decrease in the number of the unemployed, the scope of inflows and outflows is still high, showing the greater dynamics of the labour market, a situation which is likely to continue.

A more dynamic labour market will not only influence the scope of the ESS activities but will also require improved quality standards of work with clients. Moreover, while flows have increased, stocks of registered unemployed increasingly include persons who are difficult to place in employment. Due to this unfavourable structure of the unemployed, individual work with difficult-to-employ groups and employers will have to be intensified (see table 5). In view of the decreasing total numbers of unemployed and immediately employable people, employers will have to be persuaded to employ those groups of

the unemployed which have so far been of less interest to them (particularly elderly people and the long-term unemployed).

Implementation of unemployment insurance schemes

The ESS carries out all procedures regarding the payment of rights arising from unemployment insurance. These include: unemployment benefit, unemployment assistance, health insurance and pension and disability insurance. This activity comprises providing information to clients, as well as a huge amount of administrative work related to the registration of applications and documentation to exercise payment of rights. Work includes registration on to the health or pension insurance register, monthly calculation and payment of rights and contributions for social insurance, decisions regarding

Table 5. Typical groups of registered unemployed, 1987 – 2000

	Average no.	Individual categories, 1987–2000 (%)*						
Year	of registered unemployed	Under 26	First-time jobseekers	Women	Unemployed for over one year	With no qualifications	Over 40	
1987	15,184	50.6	30.1	48.8	33.1	57.7	17.0	
1988	21,342	51.9	28.7	47.3	36.9	57.1	14.5	
1989	28,218	51.5	29.1	48.9	42.7	55.4	15.0	
1990	44,623	51.4	26.5	47.9	37.4	49.8	16.1	
1991	75,079	47.8	22.2	44.7	41.8	46.1	19.0	
1992	102,593	40.7	20.2	43.9	50.9	46.5	25.0	
1993	129,087	37.4	19.0	43.8	54.8	45.3	28.2	
1994	127,056	33.5	19.0	44.9	62.1	45.8	32.4	
1995	121.483	32.2	19.7	46.7	59.0	46.6	34.0	
1996	119,799	31.4	19.4	48.1	53.8	47.0	37.7	
1997	125,189	29.1	18.3	48.8	59.6	47.1	43.0	
1998	126,080	26.3	18.1	49.9	62.4	46.9	46.7	
1999	118,951	25.8	18.7	50.6	62.9	47.5	50.5	
2000	106,601	23.4	17.9	50.7	61.4	47.2	50.7	

complaints, procedures regarding the temporary suspension of rights, ⁶² and procedures regarding overpayments, including court cases.

The Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act of autumn 1998 also brought significant changes in this field of activity. These included an extension of the minimum insurance period as a condition for receiving unemployment benefit, a reduction of the maximum period of receiving unemployment benefit, changes to the system of extending rights to elderly recipients or those who need insurance for a period up to a maximum of three years before retirement, and prolongation of the period of receipt of unemployment assistance (UA) up to a maximum of 12 months. Changes also include a more direct link between the receipt of unemployment benefit (UB) or assistance (UA) and stricter obligations regarding active job search, acceptance of a suitable or appropriate job and participation in active employment policy programmes. A special sub-law details the cases and circumstances in which the award of UB or UA may be immediately terminated. UB is income related and a person can receive it if he is jobless through no fault of his own and if he was employed for a period of at least 12 months in the 18 months prior to unemployment. UB amounts to 70% of the average wage for the first three months of entitlement, and to 60% for all subsequent months. The duration of receiving UB differs and depends on the previous

employment insurance period, i.e. from three months for those with one to five years of insurance up to 24 months for those over 55 years of age and with 25 years of insurance (for those who have the same period of insurance but are under 55 the maximum period of entitlement is 12 months). The lowest UB is set at 100% of the guaranteed wage (minus tax and contributions paid from the guaranteed wage) and the highest level of UB is three times the lowest benefit amount. A person becomes entitled to UA if his right to UB or his employment following a trainee period of less than 12 months have ended, and he meets conditions of income (up to 80% of quaranteed wage per family member) and property limits. UA amounts to 80% of the guaranteed wage (minus tax and contributions paid from the guaranteed wage). At the beginning of 2000, UA amounted to SIT 24,788 net, and at the end of the year, SIT 25,838 net.

These changes have resulted in a gradual decrease in the number of recipients of unemployment benefit and a gradual increase in the number of recipients of unemployment assistance. In 2000, UB for newly entitled persons was approved for an average period of 7.9 months, which is a significantly shorter average period in comparison with that of 1998 (15.3 months) and of 1999 (9.2 months). However, due to a large number of recipients of UB exercising the right to UB according to the old legal system, in 2000 the real average period of receiving UB was 22.3 months.

Table 6. Recipients of UB and UA, 1998 - 2000

	1998	1999	2000
Unemployment benefit (UB)			
average number of recipients per month	37,734	33,860	27,264
number of recipients at the end of year	36,082	31,227	23,091
Unemployment assistance (UA)			
average number of recipients per month	3,331	3,045	3,737
number of recipients at the end of year	2,818	3,283	3,754
Recipients of UB and UA as a percentage of average monthly unemployment	32.6%	31%	29.1%

Rights can be temporarily suspended in the following cases: participation in employment programmes (public works, education), military service, temporary incapacity for work due to health reasons, a full-time work contract for up to 12 months, and imprisonment for up to six months.

UB recipients are mostly over 50 years of age (68.6% at the end of 2000) as well as people with the lowest levels of education (41.8%). By the end of 2000, recipients received UA for an average of 6.9 months (compared to 3.9 months at the end of 1999).

Implementation of employment programmes

With the increasing focus on active labour market policies, this activity has become more and more important since the beginning of 1990s. The number and content of the programmes have changed several times and have been adapted to the conditions of the labour market, which are shown in table 7. In total, 63,005 people were enrolled in employment programmes in 2000. Of this group, 54,942 were unemployed and 40% of them were employed in different job-subsidy schemes (public works, on-the-job training, refunding of employers' contributions etc.), 9,063 participants were redundant workers and disabled workers in sheltered workshops. In 2000, the ESS was involved in the following programmes:

Education and training programmes, which are many and are divided into:

- programmes of assistance in career planning and jobseeking, which take the form of intensive workshops and last from 12 hours to three months;
- job clubs, in which the unemployed spend for four hours per day for a period of up to three months;
- functional training programmes to acquire additional vocational skills and knowledge, which last from a few days to a maximum of seven months;
- on-the-job training programmes (with or without an employment contract) and work trials, which take place in companies and last from one to six months (up to one year for disabled people); and
- "Programme 5000", initiated jointly by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, with a budget adopted annually by the government, aimed at young

unemployed people under 26 years of age who have not completed vocational education (above all for dropouts) in order to acquire a formally-recognised certificate of education or qualification.

In 2000, 28,298 people participated in education and training programmes. The majority (59%) were women; 49% were people under 26 years of age; 31% were first-time jobseekers and 34% were long-term unemployed. The exit rate into regular employment is measured six months after termination of the programme and differs between the individual programmes. The exit employment rate in programmes aimed at assisting job search and career planning has been around 40% over the last three years; in job-clubs it has been between 55% and 60%; in on-the-job training schemes the exit rate has been between 75% and 80%, and in functional training programmes around 55%. An evaluation of "Programme 5000" (the programme started in the 1998/99 academic year) showed that 5,137 or 73% of participants completed the educational programme in time and two-thirds of them found employment by the end of 2000. In the last three years the overall exit rate into regular employment from education and training programmes has been between 45% and 49%.

Public works, a combined programme of employment and training for difficult-to-employ groups. The participants are employed part-time (30 hours per week), and the difference to full-time employment (40 hours) is spent on training and active job searching. Participation in the programme lasts for up to one year and can be prolonged if no suitable or appropriate job is available.

In 2000, 10,474 people were enrolled in more than 2,100 different public works programmes; 58% of participants were women, 38% were over 40 years of age, one-third were without vocational qualifications and about 50% were long-term unemployed. Prior to participation in public works almost two-thirds had received unemployment benefit, unemployment assistance or social welfare assistance. The exit rate into

Table 7. Participants in active employment policy programmes, 1991 - 2000

_	1001	1000	1000	1001	4005	4000	4005	4000	4000		
Programme	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total
Education and training for the unemployed (preparation for employment)	12,000	9,900	15,270	10,768	16,702	19,321	16,481	30,646	30,889	28,298	190,275
Joint funding of trainees	7,200	9,300	13,117	8,423	5,011	2,230	64	-	-	-	45,345
Subsidising of new jobs	3,308	9,822	-	-	-	-	-	987	848	-	14,965
Lump-sum UB payments	3,468	1,143	2,183	1,208	1,176	881	562	17	19	-	10,657
Self-employment (becoming self-employed)	1.831	2,363	3,494	3,716	3,211	2,310	1,590	1,630	1,643	1,682	23,470
Public works	1,248	3,513	4,367	4,475	4,272	4,728	5,354	10,641	10,296	10,474	59,368
Training for the disabled	362	424	732	867	1,339	1,453	1,088	1,182	957	930	9,334
Joint funding of jobs for the disabled	-	-	120	156	181	99	115	57	35	49	812
Medical service	-	-	-	1,470	1,689	1,965	2,382	2,742	3,284	4,048	17,580
Subsidising of sheltered workshops	-	-	-	2,500	3,100	3,530	4,036	4,895	5,424	5,840	29,325
Joint funding of redundant workers:											
Project 11	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,618	10,299	2,275	1,524	20,716
Retraining	16,838	8,396	10,285	2,780	2,250	2,086	1,596	1,127	-	681	46,039
 Redundancy payments 	4,566	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,566
 Purchase of additional insurance period 	6,554	4,689	2,067	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,310
Training of workers taken from other companies	236	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	236
Refunding of employers' contributions under Art. 48a	-	-	-	906	2,724	1,596	1,178	1,172	6,223	8,101	21,900
Refunding of employers' contributions under the Conditions for Refunding Act	-	-	-	359	520	799	667	717	-	-	3,062
"A Thousand New Opportunities"	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	127	127
Labour funds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,473	1,057	1,251	3,781
Surpluses in public companies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	360	-	360
Rehabilitation and restructuring of companies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	145	-	145
Total No. of participants in employment programmes	57,611	49,550	51,635	37,635	42,175	40,998	41,731	67,585	63,455	63,005	515,373

regular employment was 17 % in 1998 and 28% in 1999.

Refunding of contributions is made to employers who take on unemployed people from the following target groups: long-term unemployed, unemployed people over 50, recipients of unemployment benefit or unemployment assistance, and first-time jobseekers who have been unemployed for more than six months. Employment in this programme lasts for up to three years with the amount of subsidy being gradually decreased and it is also linked to the unemployment rate in the local labour market. The programme started in 1998. Under this scheme 14,441 persons were employed by 11,045 employers at the end of 2000.

A pilot programme of subsidising jobs in non-profit activities ("1000 new opportunities"). Disabled people, long-term unemployed and people over 45 whose employment in public works has expired can participate in this programme. The duration is three years during which the amount of monthly subsidy is gradually lowered from 80% to 40% of the minimum wage. The programme started in the middle of 2000 and by the end of that year 127 persons had been placed in a job within the programme.

Self-employment facilitation

programmes, which include information, business training, advice and lump-sum subsidies or the refunding of contributions when becoming self-employed. The programmes also provide advice and

financial assistance for the establishment of cooperatives. In 2000, 1,682 unemployed people became self-employed and ten cooperatives were co-financed. The ESS also cooperated with the Small Business Promotion Centre in some projects aimed at developing entrepreneurship among women, young people and those who could establish small home-based businesses. This programme started in 1991 and since then 23,470 persons have become self-employed.

Training for the disabled. These programmes are divided into two groups.

- Subsidies to sheltered workshops. The ESS subsidises part of the costs for each employed disabled person. The amount of subsidy depends on the degree of disability.
- Training and employment programmes for the disabled, which include occupational rehabilitation, subsidies for new jobs for the disabled and help with the costs of adapting work places for people with severe disabilities.

In 2000, 142 sheltered workshops received monthly subsidies for 5,840 employed disabled people. A total of 930 unemployed disabled people participated in special rehabilitation-training programmes and an additional 1,232 people participated in regular education and training programmes; 287 disabled were employed by cofinancing and subsidising the work places for people with handicaps, while 900 found employment in public work programmes. To assist more than 17,000 unemployed disabled people, the ESS employs special counsellors who referred 4,628 people to additional medical counselling services.

Restructuring projects in companies, which include:

■ Cofinancing of the labour funds from which training and re-employment of redundant workers and unemployed persons is funded. Labour funds are established at the local and regional level by employers and other partners who have to guarantee at least 30% of their own resources. The remainder can

- be claimed from the national budget through the mediation of the ESS.
- Cooperation in two government programmes: restructuring in companies (P-11) and restructuring in the leather, textile and shoemaking industry. The ESS has cooperated in personnel restructuring and the preservation of jobs in companies who participate in the programme.

In 2000, a total of 13 labour funds with 1,251 participants (31% were unemployed, the rest redundant workers) were co-financed. Both government projects covered 39 companies in which 2,484 employees were offered training in order to be able to keep their jobs.

Promotion of regional and local employment projects. The ESS provides professional assistance and co-finances local development centres and their employment development programmes which are selected on the basis of public tender. In 2000, 28 local development centres and 30 employment development projects were co-financed by the ESS.

The ESS monitors and controls the implementation of all the programmes including descriptive evaluations with all basic statistical and analytical data. However, it does not have sufficient resources for explanatory evaluations based on profound research methods nor does it avail of the necessary expert knowledge. Such evaluations, which would measure the gross, net and dead-weight effects of individual programmes, have not been made during the last few years. It is expected that such evaluations will in future be carried out by independent research institutions and financed by the government.

Vocational guidance and counselling

The ESS carries out group and individual forms of vocational guidance and counselling for adults (mainly unemployed and redundant workers) and young people. Individual and group counselling for the unemployed is undertaken by specialised vocational counsellors with a university degree in psychology in close cooperation with ESS employment advisers. It is

focused primarily on the difficult-to-employ. ESS vocational counsellors also provide vocational guidance for school children. Here they work together with school counsellors. Guidance mainly takes the form of lectures and sessions for young people and parents. The number of individual consultations for young people is slowly decreasing as this task should be – and is gradually being – taken over by the schools.

A network of Vocational Information and Counselling Centres (CIPS) has been developed where clients can have self-service access to written, audio-visual and electronic information (also via the internet), take self-testing programmes and receive individual counselling. The extension of self-service access to information reduces the need for individual forms of guidance and information provision, while the professional work is shifted more to the preparation and updating of different types of information. The centres' programme also includes group information sessions, presentations from employers and presentations on individual occupations. The centres are increasingly becoming a meeting point for close cooperation between the ESS and educational institutions, employers and other partners.

The first CIPS was established in Ljubljana in 1998 with Phare assistance. Additional centres have since been established in Maribor, Ribnica, Brežice, Kočevje and Žalec. The ESS's objective is to extend the network to all other regional offices. The ESS became a member of the EU network of National Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance and also participates

in the Leonardo and Estia Community programmes on matters related to vocational guidance. As a result, the work of the centres is in line with similar centres elsewhere in Europe.

Management of national scholarship schemes for students

In compliance with the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act and the Sub-Act on Scholarships, the ESS's basic tasks regarding national scholarships (means-tested allowances) and Zois scholarships for gifted secondary school and university students⁶³ are manifold. They include the following: providing information to clients; registering and processing applications for national scholarships at the beginning of each academic year; collecting and making decisions on proposals for Zois scholarships and taking decisions regarding the proposals; issuing positive and negative notices to applicants; dealing with complaints; calculating the amount of scholarships; making monthly payments of scholarships; monitoring how the recipients' obligations are met; identifying claims and procedures for repayments; organising summer camps for Zois scholarship recipients; preparing analytical reports on scholarship recipients; and planning of resources for scholarships.

The number of recipients of both national and Zois scholarships increased rapidly in the first half of the 1990s, but due to economic crisis, employers stopped giving scholarships to secondary school and university students almost completely and the state had to fill the gap. The number has remained more or less stable in recent

Table 8. Number of individual consultations for adults and youth, 1998 – 2000

	1998	1999	2000
School children	12,938	11,949	11,237
Unemployed and other adults	16,170	15,276	14,037
Total	29,108	27,225	25,274

Source: ESS

⁶³ Zois scholarships are given to secondary and university students who have proved to be highly gifted in intellectual or artistic fields. The principal objective of the Zois scholarships is to encourage gifted young people early on, to set themselves high professional objectives and help them to realise their educational ambitions.

years. In the 2000/01 academic year the ESS received and processed a total of 74,435 applications for scholarships. From these, 52,662 students are in receipt of scholarships for the 2000/01 academic year (data from January 2001).

In accordance with the Sub-Act on Student Loans, the ESS also conducts the tender process for student loans and carries out the necessary administrative and technical procedures (provision of information, preparation of the tender, registration of applications, checking conditions for loans, preparation of lists for banks, monitoring recipients, preparation of reports, etc.) The first loans were granted in 1999 to 1,528 students. In 2000, 201 candidates applied for loans, and 715 students have received loans on the basis of previous contracts.

Employment of foreign workers and employment of Slovenians abroad

The implementation of the act which regulates the employment of foreigners has become one of the core activities of the ESS since 1992 when Slovenia first adopted legislation in this field. In compliance with this act, the ESS carries out all procedures preceding the issuing of work permits (checking conditions of the Slovenian labour market), the issuing itself, including keeping records, up to providing statistical data and reports. The ESS issues about 40,000 work permits annually. A new Act on Employment and Work of Foreigners came into force on 1 January 2001 and again brought numerous changes significantly extending the scope of ESS tasks. The major changes are as follows: statutorily defined regulative role and mechanisms of state labour immigration policy (i.e. annual quota of work permits issued, restrictions in branches and occupations); differentiation of work permits (more than 30 different types of permits are defined); obligatory registration and deregistration of working foreigners; and charging of administrative fees and other payments regarding work permits, etc. It is expected that the number of work permits issued will not increase as a result of the new act, but the actual scope of work in this field will be significantly wider due to the more complex procedures and additional administrative and financial activities that these require.

Also included in this activity is ESS responsibility for the administrative procedures regarding the employment of Slovenians abroad on the basis of international agreements on employment. At present Slovenia has only signed such an agreement with Germany which allows language practice and the employment of Slovenian medical nurses and seasonal workers. If a transitional period for the free movement of workers is introduced by the European Commission, it is expected that additional bilateral employment agreements will be signed, adding to the workload of the ESS.

Statistical-analytical and development activities

The ESS secures the professional and methodological basis for its records and for the monitoring of statistical data for all its activities. It prepares regular monthly statistical reports and information at the national and regional level. It also produces analyses of periodic trends and structure of registered unemployment, analytical overviews of the scope and current demands of the labour market, analyses of individual segments of the labour market, an analysis of employers' annual employment plans, and an annual ESS business report. The ESS prepares data and information for the intranet and internet, the public media, and for regional and local developmental institutions. The ESS's experts are members of a professional inter-institutional team which prepares research methodologies and classifications for the national statistical office. As far as monitoring registered unemployment and scholarships are concerned, the ESS is the main supplier of data for the National Programme of Statistical Research. The ESS also provides numerous data for statistical reports and overviews which the government uses for communication with international governmental organisations and the European Union. In 2000, a total of 183 different statistical reports and analyses were prepared at the national and regional level. Experts from the ESS also

cooperate in the development of vocational education and training programmes for adults.

4.1.2 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

The ESS is an independent legal entity with the status of a public institution and operates uniformly across the whole of Slovenia. The ESS organisational scheme (see annex 3) includes the Head Office (HO) which develops professional guidelines for work and coordinates the implementation of all ESS activities. It provides all regional and local offices with complete information, personnel, legal, financial, developmental and organisational support and monitors their activities and work. There are 59 local offices operating within 12 regional offices (annex 3). Contacts with the unemployed, employers and other clients take place in local offices as these provide all direct services for clients such as employment information and counselling, job brokering activities, collection of unemployment insurance and other claims, referrals of unemployed to employment programmes, etc. Regional offices coordinate the activities of local offices. They prepare regional annual working plans and targets, ensure the implementation of employment programmes where they work directly with employers, local communities and other regional and local partners, as well as with external programmes providers. They follow up and monitor the implementation of programmes in the field, take decisions about client claims and applications and prepare statistical-analytical information at local and regional level.

The ESS management consists of the managing director, appointed by the government for a four-year period and the administrative council (see annex 3). The administrative council is organised on a tripartite basis and has 13 members (four workers' representatives, four employers' representatives, four government representatives and a representative from the ESS's workers council). The administrative council discusses and

adopts the annual business plan and report, monitors financial and material management of the ESS and the implementation of employment programmes. It also proposes policy and employment programmes and changes of regulations to the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs or the government.

In compliance with the new ESS statute, which was adopted in April 1999, the administrative council also takes decisions regarding the establishment of the council of ESS partners at regional level and decides their responsibilities. However, no such regional councils have as yet been established. One reason for this is that the governmental National Employment Action Plan for 2000 - 2001 also envisages the establishment of regional committees for employment and vocational education. These would guide and coordinate regional employment and development programmes and coordinate vocational education with regional labour market needs. At the same time, regional developmental agencies have been established in most regions to prepare regional development projects and to focus on the development of human resources as well. The programme councils of these regional agencies consist of representatives of social partners, local communities and other partners, as well as representatives of the ESS regional offices. In terms of content, organisation and institutional links, the cooperation of social and other partners at regional level is still in the development stage, so there is a need for a rational and efficient division of their roles and methods of work in the human resources development area. This clarification is urgently needed to improve on current achievements in human resources development. It is also urgent in view of the need to define and establish the institutional implementation structure for future ESF funding. While defining the institutional arrangements in human resources development at regional and local levels, it would be better to rely on the existing expertise and institutional networks with single regional councils of social and other partners, instead of a variety of

different institutions that more or less cover similar ground.

The annual business plan is the basic document, which determines the scope and content of the tasks and material conditions for the ESS's operation. The annual business plan is prepared in accordance with the government programme of active employment policy measures and the amount of available budgetary resources. It presents an overview of the number of expected participants in individual employment programmes and of other indicators of the ESS activities. Since 1998 the ESS has also defined its key quantitative annual targets in this document. The 2000 business plan, for example, addressed the following key targets: 56,000 unemployed people placed in employment (not including placements in public works), a monthly average of around 6,000 persons employed in public works, 15,000 in-depth individual consultations for unemployed and other groups of adults, an increase in the share of notified vacancies where employers want ESS cooperation in providing candidates (in comparison with the previous year), and at least 1,200 unemployed people randomly checked by the Department of Supervision of the ESS.

Both the scope of planned participation in employment programmes and the ESS annual quantitative targets are incorporated into the annual plans and targets of regional offices. Target planning and the monitoring of the achievement of those targets are the key activities of management by objectives. Using management by objectives, the ESS seeks to provide the highest possible efficiency in performance at all organisational levels. Monitoring of the annual plan and targets is conducted monthly, resulting in monthly statistical reports and data that are made available to all ESS staff on the intranet. Achievement of targets and related problems are also the subject of regular

professional and management staff meetings.

The ESS has developed a wide network of external training and employment providers. Employment and training programmes for the unemployed are carried out by the ESS in cooperation with external training providers (under contract) or directly by employers. The providers of individual programmes are selected by national public tenders. The ESS signs a contract with a provider according to the content and type of programme. On the basis of signed contracts, regional offices coordinate all procedures regarding the participation of the unemployed from specific target groups. They carry out financial monitoring of the programme implementation, taking annual targets and available resources into account. This is how training and education programmes for the unemployed are carried out, including those for the disabled (about 180 contracted providers in 2000) and the programme for facilitating self-employment (68 contracted providers).

Where public works are concerned, the ESS signs an individual contract for each programme endorsed by the Committee for Selection of Public Works⁶⁴, which specifies the obligations of the purchaser and provider. 2,156 public works projects in 2000 involved 10,474 unemployed people. The ESS signs direct contracts with the employers for all programmes which take place at the employer's place of business. These contracts are signed by regional offices in compliance with the annual quota of the expected number of participants, and on the basis of available resources. One such programme for example involves the refunding of contributions to employers, for which the ESS had 11,045 signed contracts by the end of 2000. Programmes to co-finance company restructuring are also implemented on the basis of special contracts, as are co-financed regional and local employment programmes. On the

The Committee for Selection of Public Works is a special body within the Administrative Council which examines and endorses the proposals for public works programmes. The public works programmes can be submitted by local communities, non-profit organisations, and other institutions on the basis of a public tender. The ESS also gives its opinion on the appropriateness of programmes, taking into account the participation of specific target groups. The implementation of the endorsed programmes is carried out on the basis of contracts for individual programmes; these are usually tripartite contracts – between the purchaser (who also co-finances the programme), the provider (where the programme takes place) and the ESS.

basis of the contracts, required documentation and monitoring, the ESS pays out subsidies (every month, every six months, or as specified in the contract's conditions) which are provided from the national budget through the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. Apart from payments to external providers and employers, the ESS also pays different allowances directly to individual participants if they are entitled to them.

As the country's principal organisation for the implementation of active employment policy, the ESS works closely with other national institutions in the field. These include: the Adult Education Centre, the Small Business Promotion Centre, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training, the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Crafts and the Labour Inspectorate. The ESS staff takes part in the work of professional teams preparing the principles and recommendations for employment programmes for the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. This type of cooperation at local, regional and national level will gain more importance over the coming years since both the "National Employment Action Plan for 2000 - 2001" and the "Proposals for Strategic Labour Market Development Targets up to 2006" stress the need for an interdepartmental and interinstitutional approach in creating and implementing national employment policy⁶⁵. Such an approach requires a special view of employment policy - it needs to be a horizontal policy and must become a constituent part of development programmes and national policies in other areas as well, such as education policy, fiscal policy and regional development policy, in particular.

In both documents the ESS is seen as an important institution with regard to the implementation of employment policy. The "Proposals for Strategic Labour Market Development Targets up to 2006" for example contains the following expectations:

"To be able to achieve the targets such as: to increase the quality of placement, to achieve greater efficiency and competence to fulfil the tasks after joining the EU, the ESS will guarantee increased professional competence of its staff, improve efficiency and rationalise work procedures. It is necessary to strengthen the professional and technical capacity of the ESS so as to improve the quality of placement. Improvement in the individual approach to clients, professional teamwork and intensive collaboration with employers are the priorities which the ESS will pay most attention to. These development trends require a strengthened role for local offices, an increase in the number of employment advisers, greater cooperation with local and regional employers, rationalised work procedures due to less administration, establishment of an even more efficient system of monitoring the unemployed and work of external providers, development of self-service forms of approach to labour market information and increased quality of work. To improve efficiency in employment programmes the ESS will take into account regional labour market characteristics and collaborate with regional social partners and development institutions. The tasks which do not belong to the common tasks of public employment services will be transferred to other institutions (national scholarships, subsidising of student meals)"66.

The introduction of the National Employment Action Plan 2000 - 2001 emphasises an important new feature of this document because "...it represents a new scope of programmes and measures of various institutions which, regarding their objectives, need to be connected as much as possible. Therefore this document is based on annual harmonisation of policies and instruments of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and all ministries dealing with economic aspects as well as their implementation institutions." (p.5)

The Proposals for Strategic Labour Market Development Targets up to 2006, Employment Policy and Programmes for its Implementation, second reading, Bulletin of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, No 21/201, p. 96.

Note: the administrative tasks regarding student meal subsidies were transferred from the ESS to the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs in March 2001.

The implementation of these new ideas began in Autumn 2000 with the assistance of the European Union within the twinning project with the English, Irish and Swedish employment services⁶⁷.

4.1.3 RESOURCES FOR THE ESS

Operational resources including staffing for the ESS's work are provided on the basis of a special contract between the ESS and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. The contract is signed every year and it defines the amount of resources which the ESS can spend to carry out the activities and tasks laid down in its annual business plan. The contract also determines an average monthly number of staff (on the basis of working hours - full time employment equivalents) to be engaged by the ESS for its work. In the past few years the ESS received a small amount of resources from special budget items for maintenance and purchase of premises as well.

Labour costs represent about 70% of the funds available to the ESS for financing its operational activities. Various material costs and other investments represent about a quarter of total expenditure. The preconditions for a modern information system already exist. All ESS locations are

connected to the communication backbone, established and maintained by the Government Centre for Informatics. All work posts in the ESS are computerised, use ESS and standard PC applications and have direct internet and intranet access: e-mail communication amongst the staff is used extensively. Throughout the whole period of the 1990s expenditure on information systems was sufficient only for necessary maintenance and upgrading of hardware, while there was no substantial investment in modernisation of software applications supporting the ESS activities. Therefore, the renovation of computer applications is progressing slowly and partially. The majority of applications are still clipper-type, with regional distribution data bases and FTP protocols which ensure the transfer of data to central databases. Despite shortages in resources (in terms of staff and money), a new computer application on a client-server platform with an MSQL central database for scholarship was implemented in 2000 and by the end of 2001, a new application for the unemployment insurance scheme will be prepared. Preparatory work for the modernisation of other applications that support ESS activities has already started. This work is regarded as very important as the ESS has to modernise its information system, not only to be prepared for cooperation within the European Union (EURES, coordination of unemployment

Table 9. ESS expenditure, 1998 - 2000 (in million SIT)

Expenditure	1998	1999	2000
Total operational costs, including investments	3,599.4	4,084.6	4,536.1
Information system expenditure, of which:	136.7	145.8	156.2
maintenance/service of computer equipment (part of material costs)	32.7	45.6	39.2
investments in hardware, licences of software and computer networks	104.0	90.2	117.0
Share of information system expenditure in total ESS expenditure	3.8%	3.6%	3.4%

Source: ESS annual business reports

The twinning project includes: improvement of internal and external control and monitoring systems, improvement of job-broking activities, establishment of an open system of dealing with clients in local offices with different self-service possibilities, setting up quality standards for service provision to clients, establishment of a centralised system for payment of financial transfers, increased involvement of non-public bodies in provision of labour market services and preparation for participation in the European Social Fund. The twinning activities in the ESS also take the form of pilot projects in some selected local offices, which, following evaluation, will provide the basis for future work in other offices.

insurance benefits), but also to manage all its regular tasks more efficiently.

The ESS staff is relatively well educated. About 38% of staff have a university education (BA), 33% a college education, 27% a secondary school education, and only 2% of staff have lower levels of education. The staff's high level of education was in response to more and more demanding work in the 1990s (new and additional tasks). It also enabled flexibility and quick adaptation to new tasks and work methods imposed by frequent changes in legal frameworks and regulations and the short deadlines that were imposed for their implementation. With their level of education the staff is also better equipped to carry out the versatile and complex tasks that the ESS is facing due to its limited staff numbers. The staff is relatively young (average age is 36 years) and it is predominantly female (88%). This in itself brings some additional problems since absences due to maternity leaves and sick leaves (child care) are above the average.

Work in the ESS requires a lot of specific knowledge and skills from its staff. According to the latest changes in the **Employment and Unemployment Insurance** Act, all staff working with clients (staff in the following departments: employment, vocational information and counselling, employment programmes, etc.) have to pass a special examination. This is composed of a written and oral part and covers the content, doctrinal basis and main procedures of all fields of ESS activity. The training needs and upgrading of professional skills in the ESS are also related to the changes and improvements in working methods (above all in dealing with clients), introduction of new classifications, working procedures and new computer applications. This kind of training is organised internally and is carried out by its own staff or by external experts in tailor-made short courses (from one to five days). During the last two years almost all ESS employees attended at least one training course per year. At the end of all courses participants have to pass an

Table 10. Number of staff who participated in training organised by the ESS, 1998 – 2000

Type of training	1998	1999	2000
Upgrading skills and knowledge for dealing with clients*	396	346	502
How to use standard classification of occupations (national classification based on ISCO-88)	69	352	67
Computer courses (MS Office programs, internet, etc.)	144	244	267
The Administrative Procedures Act	1	233	63
Exams according to the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act	1	142	406

^{*}Communication and interview, Building relations with employers, Vocational orientation for adults, Advising process during the preparation of back-to-work plans, Motivation methods for job search, etc. Source: ESS

Table 11. Number of ESS staff (as a full-time employment equivalent), 1998 - 2000

	1998	1999	2000
Average number of staff on the basis of working hours (FTE)	811	833	854
Number of unemployed per employee (average per month)	155	143	125
Inflow and outflow of unemployed per employee	192	208	204
Number of unemployed per employee in employment departments/divisions* (average per month)	420	395	351

^{*} Employees in employment departments (in head office, regional offices and local offices) who perform registration of the unemployed, give employment information and advice, have contacts with employers, and carry out placement.

Source: ESS

exam to show that they are able to use the skills and knowledge presented during the course.

The ratio between the average number of unemployed per member of staff has improved in recent years, but the actual scope of work has not been reduced since steady unemployment inflows and outflows have remained at a high level (about 80,000 persons in annual inflow and about 90,000 persons in annual outflow). The consequences of this development are manifested by the employment advisers' lack of time for regular monthly advisory interviews with the unemployed or for more intensive work with difficult-to-employ persons. There is an average two to four-week period between a person's registration with the employment office and their first interview (which includes the preparation of a back-to-work plan). Later, regular monthly interviews are mainly conducted with the recipients of unemployment benefits and unemployed persons who need more individual counselling and support in their job search. A large part of work with the unemployed is therefore carried out through group forms of information provision and counselling.

4.2 OVERVIEW OF PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

4.2.1 LEGAL FOUNDATIONS

In Slovenia prior to 1991 there were no legal foundations for private agencies dealing with employment and work placement. The legal basis for their work was laid down when the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act was adopted in 1991⁶⁸. Article 6 stated that the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs could grant a contract on concession and thus authorise a private agency to carry out job placement. The agency had to meet conditions regarding personnel and organisation. The same article stated that

placement could be carried out only for some specific groups of workers.

The procedures and conditions for obtaining the concession and categories of workers (groups of occupations) were defined in detail in the "Rules on Conditions which Organisations or Employers have to Fulfil to Carry Out Placement" (Official Gazette of RS, No 501/91). That document determined ten groups of workers, which could be placed by private agencies (however, the restrictions were never fully considered). It was clearly defined that private agencies (PRES – private employment services) could carry out placement both for the unemployed as well as for the fully employed. The act stated that PRES's could not demand payment for their services from the unemployed who were registered with the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS).

When the new Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act was adopted at the end of 1998, the scope of the work of private agencies expanded significantly. The basis of their work is laid down in detail in the introductory articles (chapter 2 – Regular and Occasional Job Placement) and in the Rules on Conditions for Running an Employment Agency (Official Gazette of RS 48/99).

The law defines that on the basis of a special concession (contract) or after they bid and are selected in a public tender, PRES's can provide the following services:

- job placement;
- work placement which also includes temporary and occasional work for secondary and university students;
- placement and provision of labour force (labour leasing, TWA-agencies);
- preparation of "back-to-work plans" for the unemployed; and
- implementation of active employment policy measures for those people who are registered with the ESS.

Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No 5/91 – 8 February 1991, 17/91 – amendment, 12/92 – 13 March 1992, 71/93 – 30 December 1993, 2/94 – amendment, 38/94 – 30 January 1994, 69/98 – 9 October 1998); Rules on Conditions for Running an Employment Agency (Official Gazette of RS, No 48 -2268/99); Decree on Determination of Payments to Agencies Carrying Out Placement for the Unemployed (Official Gazette of RS, No 88/00).

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, which granted concessions both during the period 1991 - 1998 as well as after 1998, has no financial obligations towards concessionaires. The concessionaires receive financing from companies and institutions in which workers are placed or on the basis of contracts from the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the ESS.

PRES's can obtain a concession if they fulfil certain conditions regarding their personnel (level and type of education, work experience, completed professional examinations) and premises. To carry out placement activities, PRES's should apply directly to the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, but to prepare back-to-work plans and to implement active employment policy measures they have to bid by public tender published by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs in the Official Gazette of RS. In the first case, PRES's can obtain authorisation for placement activities for a temporary or indefinite period. In the second case the contract can be signed for a maximum period of two years. In compliance with the rules, a continuous five-year period of work is a condition for obtaining a concession. In recent years the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs has not imposed any restrictions with regard to concessions, of course on condition that the applicants complied with prescribed conditions⁶⁹.

Placement agencies are obliged to submit a report on their activities to the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs once a year. Their work can be subject to administrative, professional and financial control. The procedures and rules for the control of public employment services are used when exercising administrative and professional control. As laid down in the rules, PRES's have to keep separate records of their financial operations when they carry out any additional activities apart from employment services.

4.2.2 POLICY FRAMEWORK

So far as unemployment policy is concerned, overall policy directions of the government and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs do not differ significantly from those in other developed countries, particularly those in the EU. The new law adopted in 1998 and its operational regulations enable greater deregulation in finding solutions to employment and unemployment problems.

Slovenia has accepted the four-pillar model of the EU employment strategy. Taking EU policy guidelines into consideration, it was acknowledged in the National Action Plan for Employment for 2000 - 2001 that the work of PRES's and private institutions should be encouraged, since they, along with the public employment service, would undertake the implementation of tasks in the area of employment. In the preparation of the "Proposals for Strategic Labour Market Development Targets until 2006" the same position was taken.

4.2.3 WORK PLANS, NETWORK AND ORGANISATION OF PRESS

At present there are 112 PRES agencies in Slovenia with valid contracts on concession. Of these, 61 hold only the concession to carry out placement activities for students, 15 agencies have a combined contract and there are 38 concessionaires who work with the unemployed and adult job seekers only. In most cases these are smaller companies employing, on average, fewer than five employees. In 2000, there were only six concessionaires with more than five professional employees employed to carry out employment services. This activity represents approximately half of their income. Most agencies are registered in the Ljubljana and Maribor regions, but others are located in the larger Slovenian towns.

⁶⁹ It should be noted that besides the officially recognised PRES there is an unknown grey area of private agencies that provide consulting services to employers including on recruitment and selection. Such agencies do have files of job seekers (employed and unemployed) but do not have any agreement with public institutions. There is little systematic information available about the scope and number of these organisations.

Similar to the situation in the EU, PRES's in Slovenia are still searching for the most suitable area for their work. In general their real involvement in placement activities is very limited. According to data from the Association of PRES's and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs these agencies place on average 1,000 to 2,000 unemployed people or jobseekers per year. One of the factors that may explain this situation is that there are still unresolved questions on how to pay for such services in cases where placement is carried out for unemployed persons registered with the ESS. Although price rates for placement services for the unemployed were adopted in September 2000, they have not, for various reasons, been implemented yet (to April 2001). In comparison with successful job placements realised by the ESS (nearly 53,000 job placements annually), the share of PRES placements is still relatively low.

One of the characteristics of PRES's in Slovenia is that, if registered for the purpose, they can carry out job placements for secondary school and university students. Due to the low taxes which they have to pay for students, such work is of great interest to employers and many PRES's specialise in this area. This is also one of the reasons why temporary work agencies⁷⁰ have not expanded significantly in Slovenia, although it has to be added that no legal regulations are yet in place either. Placement of managers and highly qualified staff, in contrast, is carried out by only a few agencies since the Slovenian market for this segment of the labour force is relatively small.

Thus, most PRES's work actually involves the implementation of various active employment policy programmes and measures, mainly public works, the organisation of job clubs, the management of labour funds, the organisation of various informative-motivation seminars and education and training courses for the unemployed. Many PRES's are in fact external training providers working under contract for the ESS.

Apart from this work for the ESS, PRES's also provide numerous services in the field of psycho-social rehabilitation; programmes for redundant workers; the search and selection of workers for small enterprises; management seminars and training; counselling and operational activities for personnel; legal counselling regarding labour issues, analyses of companies' training needs; psychological testing with vocational guidance and counselling for the employed and unemployed, and training and employment for the disabled.

Generally, the scope and variety of activities differ from PRES to PRES and depend very much on the needs and opportunities of the market, as well as the knowledge and experience of their staff. In particular, the ability to quickly respond to market needs and high adaptability are the key benefits and qualities of the PRES's.

4.2.4 COOPERATION WITH THE ESS

Based on the above description, it is clear that the ESS could cooperate with PRES's, particularly in the area of placement activities, the preparation of back-to-work plans and the implementation of active employment policy measures.

The scope of cooperation between the ESS and PRES is defined in Article 25 of the rules. This makes it compulsory for a contract of collaboration between the ESS and PRES to be signed when the latter carries out placement activities, is involved in the preparation of back-to-work plans or the implementation of active employment policy measures for the unemployed registered with the ESS. PRES's have to follow the rules and procedures valid for work with the unemployed at the ESS. The rules define a compulsory exchange of information and guarantee data protection for the unemployed and employers.

⁷⁰ Temporary work agencies (TWA) are those private agencies which (in compliance with national legislation) first search for workers, then employ them themselves and afterwards lease/place them to carry out temporary work for other employers.

Since autumn 1999 both the ESS and PRES's have been making preparations for more intensive cooperation. Such collaboration should be based on a common policy for the treatment of individual target groups of the unemployed and jobseekers (preparation of back-to-work plans, monitoring of activities, placement and participation in active employment policy measures). Due to numerous open questions as to how to operationalise this collaboration, the ESS has suggested setting up an experimental form of collaboration. Following evaluation this could be gradually introduced in all ESS regional offices. Despite initial support, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs has not yet fully addressed the numerous suggestions from both sides which were particularly intensive after the establishment of the Association of Private Employment Services in the summer of 2000.

Financing of job placement is carried out on the basis of Article 20 of the rules and the Decree on Determination of Payments to Agencies Carrying Out Placement for the Unemployed⁷¹. This provides a concrete basis for contracts on collaboration between the ESS and PRES's and defines the criteria and the amount of payment for each realised placement of specific target groups of the unemployed. Payments for services concerned with the preparation of back-to-work plans are not laid down in detail in any of the legislation (documents), therefore a list of costs must constitute a part of any tender for the award of concessions (in compliance with Article 12, paragraph 2).

The cooperation between the ESS and PRES's is complicated by the fact that even when an accredited PRES takes on an unemployed person, some services must still be carried out at the ESS, such as, for example: monitoring how the obligations agreed in the back-to-work plan are met; amendments to back-to-work plans; specialised counselling; and management of the procedure of identification of the purpose for participation in active employment policy

programmes. This, under current legislation, forms a constituent part of the back-to-work plan. In addition, the EES has to keep all records, it acts in cases where agreements from back-to-work plans are not adhered to, and also makes all payments and financial transfers for the unemployed.

Another reason that the cooperation between PRES's and the ESS has not fully developed is the fact that the roles and tasks regarding the unemployed for both the ESS and PRES's on one side and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and the state on the other are not clearly defined and legally resolved. In fact, PRES's do not obtain a real concession to carry out a public service with all the related responsibilities, obligations and rights, but actually only receive a kind of work permit. As a result, they are given an opportunity to form a hostile competition to the public employment service. The ESS must provide them with data on vacancies and registered unemployed persons, while PRES's receive payment for a successful placement which the State in turn pays for through the public ESS.

4.3 RESPONSIVENESS OF THE ESS TO THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF CLIENTS AND THE ROLE OF THE ESS IN PROMOTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVE EMPLOYMENT POLICY

4.3.1 BACK-TO-WORK PLANS

The new Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act is based on the modern paradigm that the new measures and treatment of the unemployed are intended to combine active and passive forms of assistance. Employment services and other authorised state agencies are not the only agents implementing these measures anymore. Just as in other areas of work which used to be "booked for" the so-called civil-servant jobs, there is an explicit trend towards deregulation. The state shifts services for the unemployed and

⁷¹ Published in the Official Gazette of RS, No 88/00.

employers from public employment services to private agencies and strengthens the role of local communities in this area. Based on such trends, more and more programmes should be conducted through the cooperation of various partners. Treatment of the unemployed should be based on local conditions and carried out in compliance with the individual needs of unemployed people or smaller target groups.

Concerning the individualised treatment of the unemployed introduced in the new Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act, the back-to-work plan represents an important new feature. It is compulsory for all unemployed people registered with the ESS to prepare a back-to-work plan.

The back-to-work plan is a special form of agreement between the unemployed person and his/her adviser on job search activities as well as other activities related to solving the unemployment problem. In compliance with the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act, the back-to-work plan must be prepared within the first two months following registration with the ESS.

In the preparation of the back-to-work plan, the occupational opportunities of an unemployed person regarding his knowledge, skills, experience and competence are taken into account, as well as the labour market situation and social conditions in the person's local environment.

The back-to-work plan primarily defines:

- suitable or appropriate employment;
- how and where the unemployed person seeks a job:
- what s/he needs to improve occupational opportunities;
- when and where s/he can be available to the ESS; and
- when and how s/he informs the ESS about his/her activities.

On the basis of the completed back-to-work plan, the ESS identifies particularly:

■ job placement;

- participation in programmes to improve employment opportunities;
- (motivation programmes, providing information, training, education, etc.);
 and
- expert assistance (counselling) in decisionmaking on the way to employment.

The back-to-work plan is signed by the unemployed person and his/her adviser. By signing it both parties take on full responsibility as regards the agreed obligations.

4.3.2 STRENGTHENING OF THE INDIVIDUAL APPROACH IN THE TREATMENT OF CLIENTS AND EXPANSION OF SELF-SERVICE ACCESS TO INFORMATION

As explained above, the doctrine of work with the unemployed fully supports an individualised approach to clients where active forms of assistance have priority over passive forms.

The so-called open system of work is based on anonymous treatment of registered unemployed people as well as other categories of jobseeker, including secondary and university students. Within the open system, all who are interested can obtain free information on vacancies, various forms of training and education, unemployment benefit and other rights (that the registered unemployed have). In short, any information of interest to those making decisions about their future career. The above mentioned information is available in local job offices, vocational information and counselling centres, on the internet, and other forms of mass media (TV, radio, newspapers).

The closed system of treatment is intended for those who meet the conditions for unemployed person status and those who belong to one of the categories of jobseekers that, according to the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act, have special status (redundant workers, redundant disabled persons who have to get a job elsewhere, participants in

individual government projects). The key condition for exercising these rights is that the obligations agreed in the back-to-work plan are met. A special procedure exists whereby this right may be suspended in cases where the unemployed person does not fulfil the obligations or violates them. The person is then not entitled to training and education programmes and has to repay the costs related to job searching activities. If the violation is serious, such a person is taken off the ESS register of the unemployed for a six-month period.

4.4 CONCLUSIONS

The ESS is involved in a wide range of activities, including among others those which are not usually covered by other public employment services (such as scholarships, administrative procedures regarding student loans, partly also working permits for foreigners). Its tasks are determined by numerous acts and sub-acts which create a lot of administrative work for the ESS. Due to many legal changes, new tasks and employment programmes in the 1990s, the ESS had to go through a great number of internal organisational and professional adjustments. Just as in EU countries, the ESS is the central institution for the implementation of active employment policy. Despite limitations of staff and material resources, the ESS followed new trends characteristic of European employment services:72 individualisation and differentiation of work with clients (for example, back-to-work plans); a combination of group and individual forms of work; provision of information in self-service forms; job placement services via the internet; and an increase in active employment policy measures and a decrease in passive measures, etc.

The influence of social partners in active employment policy measures and other activities is ensured through the administrative council of the ESS. It operates at the national level, while at the regional level there is no consensus as yet on the form and method of organised and systematic influence of social partners on employment policy. Regional boards of social partners operating at the ESS regional office level would undoubtedly contribute to decentralisation of the decision making process, particularly decisions taken regarding programmes and target groups (which programmes are most suitable for specific target groups in order to meet the specific needs of the regional labour market). The influence of social partners at the regional level will be successful only if they are able to harmonise and express their interests at national level and if there is no fragmentation of the organised forms of work of social partners at regional level.

Although the number of unemployed people has decreased in recent years, the scope and intensity of the highly demanding work of the ESS have not been reduced. Two reasons should be mentioned: greater dynamics of the labour market, resulting in high inflows and outflows into and from employment, and the unfavourable structure of the unemployed themselves. The latter emerged in the mid-1990s when a great part of the newly unemployed (poorly educated, elderly, disabled people) could not find regular jobs and became long-term unemployed. Nearly half of the ESS clients are difficult-to-place persons who require significantly more intensive individual treatment than can be provided by the ESS with the current number of staff. The scope of the ESS work is also increased by the great number and variety of measures and employment programmes, each requiring its own special approach as regards implementation and management.

After accession to the EU, the scope of work will increase since the ESS will have to take over the tasks of the EURES network and carry out the coordination of unemployment insurance contributions. In line with practices in other EU countries it is expected that the government will

⁷² The opinions regarding the role and further development of public employment services in EU member states were adopted by the European Commission in Brussels on 13 November 1998 in the document: "Modernising Public Employment Services to Support the European Employment Strategy". The document determines public employment services as the key institutions in the implementation of the European Employment Strategy.

require the ESS to take over the tasks related to programmes which are cofinanced by the ESF. Modernisation of the information system and strengthening of the staff (mainly through the transfer of tasks which do not belong to the employment services area to other institutions) are therefore urgent. In such a way the ESS will be able to approximate its services to a level comparable to public employment services in the EU countries.

Although the legal foundations for running a PRES in Slovenia have been in place from as early as 1991, PRES's have still not become an important partner of the ESS. This situation did not change even after 1998 when a new law further broadening the scope of their activities was adopted. The reasons for this situation arise from the incomplete definition of legal foundations along with their complicated system of implementation. The current legal procedure of issuing two types of concessions (which are actually more work permits than concessions) seems too complicated and administratively demanding. The legal solutions put PRES's in a privileged position and further complicate work with the unemployed since they impose additional tasks on the ESS. These are mainly tasks related to PRES's particularly in the areas such as job placements, the preparation of back-to-work plans and the implementation of active employment policy measures for the unemployed. In compliance with the regulations, the ESS should allow PRES's open access to databases holding information on vacancies and the unemployed. At the same time, the ESS should carry out all professional-administrative tasks regarding the records of the unemployed and the recipients of UB and UA. Such a solution is irrational both in terms of additional costs as well as additional work for the ESS staff. It does not set the conditions for competitive relations among PRES's

themselves or the relations between PRES's and the ESS.

The scope of temporary and occasional job placement activities (TWA) is limited, particularly due to the existence of agencies who provide placements for secondary and university students and operate under significantly more favourable tax conditions. The legal framework for TWA has not been fully defined especially concerning the status of persons employed through TWA.

The number of registered PRES's is relatively high. Apart from placements they also carry out numerous other activities, for example personnel counselling, education and training, carrying out employment programmes, etc. Professional control and counselling for those agencies are minimal. An additional difficulty is the fact that less than half are members of the Association of Private Employment Services. The data available show that the state does not systematically monitor the work of PRES's and there is no data available on monitoring performed or on suspended concessions either. More up-to-date monitoring of PRES could contribute to more efficient regulation of their role in the implementation of active employment policy objectives in the future.

To improve the efficiency of PRES's it would be necessary to amend the current legal foundations, to define the status of temporary work agencies (together with the solution regarding the position of agencies carrying out placement for secondary and university students) and simplify the cooperation between PRES's and the ESS. Public state resources for this collaboration should, above all, enable a reduction in the duties of the ESS related to the placement of difficult-to-employ groups of unemployed persons, while PRES's should be financed on the basis of results achieved.

5. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

5

5.1 CRITICAL ISSUES

Slovenia is engaged in a complicated process of combining ongoing national labour market and education reforms and aligning these to fulfilling the requirements of EU accession and effective preparation for EU integration. This process puts high demands on institutions and individuals involved, policymakers as well as practitioners. The challenges remain high in particular because of the increasing need, stemming from national concerns as well as from external EU initiatives, to strengthen and improve the coordination between the fields of education and training on the one hand and employment policy on the other. From the foregoing analysis a number of critical issues of this process have become apparent⁷³.

The reform of vocational education and training and the labour market, have developed along different logics and timeframes. While the reform of the

vocational education and training system, initial and continuing alike, have been part of overall education reform policies dating from the late 1980s, the labour market has basically developed as the result of a changed economic regime and the industrial restructuring that followed from that. While education reform has been guided for most of the last decade by predominantly national concerns and interventions, the labour market has been confronted right from the beginning with the challenge of coping with more global and international factors. Nevertheless, labour market policy has only shifted in the second half of the 1990s from predominantly passive towards more attention to active employment measures.

Different timeframes and perspectives have also been influenced by different requirements posed by the EU accession process. The European dimension of education reform and the educational challenges of EU accession only reached

⁷³ See also OECD, Labour market policies in Slovenia, 1997 and OECD, Education Policy Review of Slovenia, 2000.

the Slovenian policy agendas at the end of the 1990s. In contrast, employment policy and labour market reform have been influenced from the beginning by EU pre-accession policies, and even more so within the Luxembourg process by attempts to adhere to the common employment policies of the EU. Slovenian policymakers are now facing the challenge of bringing national education reform into line with the goals of the employment strategy, which is itself very much in line with the common European Employment Strategy. The Lisbon summit has of course increased the pressure to do so within the perspective of the agreed open coordination of education policy among member states.

As shown by the various recently published strategic policy papers, Slovenia has developed a promising conceptual policy framework for both its education and labour market reforms that is overall very much in line with developments in EU member states. It has also established the basic institutions for implementation, many of whom already have a long tradition and had to change their profiles considerably over the recent period. Slovenia's main challenge consists at present in using more efficiently existing capacities and putting in place additional ones for the implementation of agreed reform concepts, including those policy objectives implied by the national employment strategy. It has been argued in the preceding chapters that there is still over-reliance on public institutions, both in education and on the labour market, and a certain distrust towards non-governmental institutions. This has so far led to an underestimating of the role of non-formal and informal learning as opposed to education provided by the formal education system as well as to an underdevelopment of private capacities for the management and implementation of employment measures, especially at the regional and local level. Obviously this has gone along with overcharging existing institutions from the public system at the national level, including social partners.

A final critical issue concerns the information basis available for the development of reform policies and for

monitoring and assessment of progress. Capacities and institutions for data collection and analysis are insufficiently developed and no serious systematic monitoring and assessment of education and labour market reform measures are currently undertaken. Obviously this touches the area of higher education and research which is characterised by a strong academic orientation and the absence of policy-oriented research capacities relevant for education and employment policy. Existing support institutions among others in the education sector have not been able to fill this gap, due to the fact that they are very much involved in developmental activities. The employment service has not been able to undertake such work as it lacks both the quantitative and qualitative staff capacities that would be needed to do SO.

5.2 EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The implementation of the objectives of the National Employment Strategy will demand a change in the role of the bodies in charge of carrying out the tasks at the national level, and a consolidation of the regional and local levels. The key institution for implementing active employment policy is the Employment Service of Slovenia but the analysis has showed that the organisation is overloaded with too many and too dispersed activities, the result of a process of adding ever more tasks to those for which it was traditionally responsible. The main work of the employment service must be focused on the placement of unemployed, guidance and counselling, and on the implementation of employment programmes and unemployment insurance schemes. This implies, as mentioned earlier, that a complementary network of specialised non-public institutions is needed to contribute to carrying out the employment policy, both with regard to linking labour market demand and supply and for the management of labour market programmes.

It seems also appropriate that the numerous and very heterogeneous employment programmes that are now in place become more streamlined (as

regards their content) and implemented according to specific target groups and participants' needs. This would, above all, simplify the current very demanding management of these programmes. The programmes should perhaps also be more clearly aimed at those target groups of the unemployed which have the worst position on the labour market to prevent social exclusion. It is expected that this will be done during the implementation of the next national action plans which will have to realise the objectives from the Proposals for Strategic Labour Market Development Targets until 2006 and the National Development Plan.

The ESS is the central implementation institution of employment policy. In needs the support of social partners at the national level but at the regional level as well. A regional presence of the social partners is an important precondition for the needed decentralisation of labour market policy. Social partners should be involved in deciding which programmes for which target groups should be carried out according to specific needs of the local and regional labour market. At local and regional level it is necessary to take such an approach to employment policy which would also enable an effective control of public resources expenditure and a systematic monitoring of the results (both are preconditions for rational active employment policy). These questions are even more topical in the perspective of the structural assistance from the European Social Fund which Slovenia will have access to after accession to the EU.

Although the legal conditions for running PRES's were already established at the beginning of the 1990s, their share in job placement has remained relatively small. The majority of PRES's are in fact small commercial organisations and many have been cooperating with the ESS as external employment programme providers. The cooperation could be further enhanced especially regarding the placement of difficult-to-employ groups of the unemployed. This would also further reduce the high workload of the employment service as it does not have enough staff to work intensively with those

unemployed clients who have major obstacles in job searching. Other untypical tasks of the employment service, not related to placement, guidance, employment programmes and insurance payments, should be transferred to other organisations as well. Further improvement of the ESS information system and continuous systematic training of its staff will nevertheless be needed if ESS is to be able to provide the effective and efficient support to the implementation of the employment policy objectives.

5.3 INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The modernisation and reform of the Slovenian vocational education and training system has progressed steadily since its initial conceptualisation at the end of the 1980s. Conceived as an integral part of a reform of the overall education system, a genuine vocational education and training system has been established, with the appropriate legislation for that passed in 1996, built on the principles of social partnership and diversity of pathways. The principle of social partnership was considered to secure labour market relevancy of vocational education and training, while open pathways would respond to individual learners needs.

A sound fundament has thus been laid for the further development of the vocational education and training system. However, a series of recent critical reviews have enabled the identification of issues still to be addressed, including new issues that have to be taken on board in view of persisting high dropout rates, ongoing changes in the economy and preparations for EU accession. The review of progress in vocational education and training development and priority setting for future policymaking has increasingly become framed by the development of national development and employment strategies. The further development of vocational education, therefore, is no longer considered only as a refinement of the vocational education and training system as such but also defined in function of the contribution that vocational education and

training can provide for the achievement of these wider development goals.

Thus, all vocational education and training related issues mentioned in the JAP are already being addressed within a mid-term perspective. However, while stakeholders are very well aware of what needs to be done there remains a serious problem of implementation. Amongst others, and as mentioned earlier, this is caused by the absence of applied research capacities to provide the necessary labour market and vocational education and training data and analyses that policymakers would need and of professional project management capacities to develop, manage, monitor and assess vocational education and training change programmes. There is also some scope for further developing capacities to track, monitor and make better use of experiences in EU and other future member states. Phare has been the main and most successful vehicle for this in the recent years but does not provide any opportunities anymore.

The policy agenda proposed in the conclusions of the memorandum on further development of vocational education and training summarises well the main points that vocational education and training reform policy will have to look at in the mid-term. These priorities clearly seek to integrate initial vocational education and training for young people and continuing vocational training for adults within a lifelong learning perspective. Education policymakers rightly stress that education has also other objectives to fulfil but the changes currently under way do certainly have the potential to dramatically improve the capacity of the initial vocational education and training system to support the employment policy objectives.

- Deregulation and decentralisation of educational programmes through the establishment of national framework curricula that can be adapted to local and regional conditions.
- Development of regional human resource development coalitions in order to strengthen social partnership at the regional level.

- Development of a school-based quality assessment system parallel to the external examination system.
- Modularisation of vocational education and training curricula and development of vocational education and training specific didactics to better respond to individual learner needs.
- Adaptation of the financing system to allow more autonomy to schools. This will imply further changes to legislation.
- Development of a system of national vocational standards to follow up the new Law on National Occupational Qualifications. This would be a step towards developing an overall framework for formal school diplomas and non-formal certificates.
- Development, in close cooperation between MOESS, MOLFSA and the chambers, of an infrastructure for assessment of prior learning and work experience.

While a number of these issues have in the meantime already been addressed, many are still mainly policy intentions. Therefore, a monitoring and assessment infrastructure will have to be put in place in order to be able to follow closely the progress made regarding their implementation and real contribution to the employment objectives.

5.4 CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Only recently - and mostly due to the requirements connected with the accession preparations – the main stakeholders have started to consider continuing vocational training as a constitutive part of the educational system as a whole and to bring it into line with main European trends. Most activities in the field of continuing vocational training have been developed and implemented in a rather ad hoc way. This has resulted in a poor coordination of activities of various actors and, consequently, in a high level of fragmentation. There has also been little transparency, especially with regard to funding. As a result, continuing vocational training at present does neither satisfactorily respond to the needs of the

labour market nor to the needs of individuals.

We have observed a very uneven regional distribution of training provision as well as great inequality of access for educationally underprivileged groups of the population (especially poorly educated adults). Furthermore, the persisting gap between formal and non-formal training on the one hand and regulated and non-regulated continuing vocational training on the other, significantly reduces the economic and social value of continuing vocational training and thus its effectiveness. Although various strategic documents point to a common agreement that all these subsystems should complement one another practical measures enabling this to happen have developed only very slowly.

In order to improve its capacity to support the employment policy objectives key priorities for further development of continuing vocational training in Slovenia can thus be defined as follows:

- introducing measures allowing for greater transparency in the field of continuing vocational training, which implies primarily the establishment of an information system that will enable monitoring, assessment and evaluation both of labour market developments as well as continuing vocational training measures and activities;
- strengthening of social partnership especially at the regional and local level and also the inclusion of other stakeholders (local communities, NGOs, professionals);

- reorganisation of the formal continuing vocational training system in the direction of greater flexibility and adaptability to changes; and
- promoting and supporting innovative approaches in developing and implementing training programmes which may bridge the gap between formal and non-formal education and learning.

5.5 FINAL CONCLUSION

Reforms in vocational education and training, CVET and labour market policies have frequently been discussed and undertaken in function of the perceived need that one sector was forced to cope with the deficiencies of one of the others. Yet reforms in all three sectors have tended to be insulated from each other. The preparations for a National Development Plan and the Strategic Labour Market Targets as part of the EU accession preparations have undoubtedly facilitated in bringing ongoing reform processes under one single strategic policy framework. Perhaps the biggest challenge facing Slovenian policymakers is how to improve the coordination between the reform processes in each of the sectors so as to develop and implement a coherent and sustainable education, training and labour market infrastructure that is able. among others, to support effectively and efficiently the national employment policy objectives. Slovenia, obviously, shares this challenge with most EU member states.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

Active employment policy in Slovenia⁷⁴. Measures under the four pillars of the European Employment Strategy

Pillar 1. Improving employability

Education and training programmes

The aim is to promote employment of unemployed people and to reduce labour market structural discrepancies.

Target groups are unemployed people, especially those younger than 26 without occupational qualifications, and those who cannot find employment with their existing occupational qualifications and who would like to acquire additional professional education at the same or at a higher level.

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Assets (in 000):											
amount	50,000	60,000	386,367	1,004,251	812,974	1,304,071	1,604,066	2,031,882	2,709,889	3,767,078	1,941,615
 chain index 	/	120.00	643.95	259.92	80.95	160.41	123.00	126.67	133.37	139.01	51.54
The number of participants:	9,120	12,000	9,900	15,270	10,768	16,702	19,321	16,481	30,646	30,889	28,298
 chain index 	/	131.58	82.50	154.24	70.52	155.11	115.68	85.30	185.95	100.79	91.61
The employment share (in %)	35	38	39	60	35.9	36.6	51.8	57.6	70.7	49.2	

⁷⁴ The programmes for active employment policy covered in annex are the programmes provided by Employment Service of Slovenia. For implementation of some programmes are responsible also other institutes such as Small Business Development Centre and other partners involved in action employment plan.

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

Programmes for providing information and increasing motivation

Programmes for providing information and increased motivation in the form of lectures and workshops whose aim is to encourage the active involvement of participants in solving their unemployment problems and informing them of the opportunities provided by the ESS as part of active employment policy.

		Structure							
Year	Number of participants	Women	Under 26 years old	Over 40 years old	Unemployed for over one year	With ISCED 0-2 qualification	Recipients of unemployment benefit and assistance		
1998	1,262	63.6	45.6	21.9	26.9	52.5	35.9		
1999	1,405	69.1	53.3	18.8	30.0	40.8	29.6		
2000	1,013	64.3	55.3	15,7	26.7	41.3	23.3		

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

Workshops on how to seek employment

Workshops are intended for those unemployed people who need help in orientating themselves on the labour market. These programmes last 12 hours and are intended for people with vocational qualification and with clear professional vocational or employment goals.

		Structure							
Year	Number of participants	Women	Under 26 years old	Over 40 years old	Unemployed for over one year	With ISCED 0-2 qualification	Recipients of unemployment benefit and assistance		
1998	5,249	62.4	42.4	22.6	25.0	29.4	47.9		
1999	4,236	63.6	46.2	20.0	22.3	29.7	36.2		
2000	5,152	65.8	46.3	21.5	16.8	28.1	37.2		

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

Workshops on identifying career objectives

Workshops on identifying career objectives are intended for unemployed people who need assistance in charting a career path (target groups are persons with or without qualification). These programmes last from 24 to 90 hours.

		Structure							
Year	Number of participants	Women	Under 26 years old	Over 40 years old	Unemployed for over one year	With ISCED 0-2 qualification	Recipients of unemployment benefit and assistance		
1998	1,075	64.0	70.1	4.6	42.3	45.0	18.4		
1999	463	59.4	69.3	2.6	31.7	49.2	18.1		
2000	317	64.0	68.8	4.1	32.2	54.3	15.1		

Personal development programmes

Personal development programmes are designed for difficult-to-employ categories of people (marginal groups and long-term unemployed persons), who need assistance in reintegrating with their social environment before entering in employment or other programmes

		Structure								
Year	Number of participants	Women	Under 26 years old	Over 40 years old	Unemployed for over one year	With ISCED 0-2 qualification	Recipients of unemployment benefit and assistance			
1998	1,861	57.0	31.4	42.7	69.3	66.0	22.7			
1999	1,658	56.7	30.0	42.8	66.2	65.2	17.1			
2000	2,229	56.5	28.9	46.3	64.2	64.6	13.5			

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

Job clubs

Job club programmes are intended for those unemployed people who have been looking for an employer but without any real success. In the clubs the participants learn how to systematically search for a work with all information that they need. The programmes last for a maximum of three months (four hours daily) and are offered to those who have been registered with the ESS for over six months and to first-time jobseekers.

Number of participants

Year	1998	1999	2000
Number of participants	1,521	1,682	2,043

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

Gender structure of participants

Year	Women	Under 25	Over 40				
Teal	women	years old	years old	I+II	III+IV	V	VI+VII
1998	73	39	21	11	30	47	12
1999	74	37	22	13	30	48	10
2000	74	34	22	14	34	43	9

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

The efficiency of the job clubs in %

	Share in %				
	1998	1999	2000		
The share of the participants who were employed after the programme (after two months)	50	55	58		
The share of favourable outputs (employed, participating in author programmes after two months)	58	61	66		

Additional training programmes

Programmes include various seminars and courses for unemployed people to increase employability with additional skills. The programme is intended for unemployed people on the basis of individual employment plans. Priority is given to the training for employers who have already been identified. ESS provides programmes for individuals and groups (placement programmes). The programmes last from a few days to seven months.

		Structure								
Year	Number of participants	Women	Under 26 years old	Over 40 years old	Unemployed for over one year	With ISCED 0-2 qualification	Recipients of unemployment benefit and assistance			
1998	5,344	61.7	37.9	23.2	47.3	22.3	33.7			
1999	3,566	59.5	39.2	22.6	38.8	18.2	30.0			
2000	3,744	58.3	31.5	27.4	35.0	10.0	30.7			

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

Work probation periods

This programme started in the year 2000 and is implemented by employers or training providers. The aim is to test the available knowledge and skills for a particular qualification and for the development of an employment plan. The programme is also interesting for employers, because they can see what knowledge and competencies somebody has. The programme lasts a maximum of three months.

		Structure							
Year	Number of participants		Under 26 years old	Over 40 years old	Unemployed for over one year	With ISCED 0-2 qualification	Recipients of unemployment benefit and assistance		
2000	966	47.9	49.4	18.6	28.5	36.0	20.7		

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

On-the-job training programmes

Introduction to work provides help to the employers when hiring a new employee-unemployed person. The programme takes place at the employer's premises and in the scope of already concluded employment relation contract. The unemployed person is trained on the specific field of work with the aim to retain the employment after the introduction to work programme is concluded. The employer has the opportunity to get to know the new employee and train him/her in accordance with the requirements of the specific job or company features. In the case of hard-to-employ categories of people the training could be provided without employment.

The programme duration lasts a maximum six months, or one year for disabled people and others from the hard-to-employ categories of people.

				Stru	cture				
Year	Number of participants	Women	Under 26 years old	Over 40 years old	Unemployed for over one year	With ISCED 0-2 qualification	Recipients of unemployment benefit and assistance		
Training wi	Training without employment								
1998	350	65.7	61.7	10.3	53.7	30.0	10.3		
1999	291	58.8	56.7	17.9	38.5	30.9	8.6		
2000	251	68.5	73.3	6.8	32.3	30.3	4.0		
On-the-job	training								
1998	6,350	54.0	57.0	12.8	47.8	27.8	18.2		
1999	5,040	45.9	58.2	13.0	35.1	25.8	19.1		
2000	2,847	51.1	56.3	15.0	38.1	29.8	2.7		

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

Programme 5000

In the school year 1998/99 the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, together with the Ministry of Education and Sport, have prepared and implemented Programme 5000. Its aim is to enable unemployed people to obtain primary and secondary level education and qualifications (to increase their educational level). The programme is intended for young unemployed people under 26 years old and those who are at least six months unemployed and want to be retrained. Programme 5000 only prepares for public education programmes. Programmes last from six months to up to three years.

The important new feature of the programme is the status of the participants (the unemployed person's status is at rest, the participant gains the right to apply for a scholarship, health insurance benefits and travel allowances).

		Structure								
Year	Number of participants	Women	Under 26 years old	Over 40 years old	Unemployed for over one year	With ISCED 0-2 qualification	Recipients of unemployment benefit and assistance			
1998	7,736	62.9	68.0	4.8	48.4	52.2	15.0			
1999	6,359	60.5	66.4	3.8	60.7	59.5	6.7			
2000	4,854	55.1	68.9	3.7	40.4	61.0	6.1			

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

The public works programme

The objective of the programme is: to mitigate the consequences of long-term unemployment by preventing demoralisation of unemployed people; to preserve and to develop working habits, knowledge and skills; to assure social security for unemployed persons and to encourage labour demand; to encourage self-employment or similar activities; and to open new market niches. Enabling them to perform non-profit activities and services in a defined local community or region, which cannot be implemented as regular activity, underlines the importance of local community development. This also contributes to increasing the standard of living in the individual local community.

Target groups are especially long-term unemployed persons and unemployed people who cannot find suitable employment through regular job mediation and other programmes.

Structure of the participants

Year	19	98	19	99	2000		
		%		%		%	
Number of participants	10,641		10,296		10,474		
Recipients of unemployment benefit	2,202	20.7	2,569	25.0	2,770	26.4	
Recipients of unemployment assistance	518	4.9	353	3.4	833	8.0	
Recipients of social assistance	3,249	30.5	2,469	24.0	2,915	27.8	
Total	5,969	56.1	5,391	52.4	6,518	62.2	
Over 40	3,309	31.1	3,717	36.1	3,982	38.0	
Under 26					492	4.7	
Disabled persons			1,190	11.5	901	8.6	
Employed after programme	1,805	16.9	2,860	27.8	1,658	15.8*	

^{*} The correct figure will be after six months. Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Assets (in 000):											
• amount	4,500	18,000	261,393	638,367	836,317	969,436	1,378,099	1,812,425	2,873,000	6,436,200	4,824,687
chain index	/	400.00	1452.20	244.20	131.00	115.90	142.10	131.50	158.50	224.02	75.00
The number of participants:	22	1,248	3,513	4,367	4,475	4,272	4,728	5,354	10,641	10,296	10,474
chain index	/	5,672.70	281.50	124.30	102.50	95.50	110.70	113.20	198.70	96.76	101.73
The employment share (in %)	1	4.60	7.60	9.40	12.20	11.40	11.70	12.80	16.96	27.80	15.80

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

Programme: 1000 opportunities

The aim of the programme is to subsidising workplaces in non-profit activities. The programme was started in 2000. The people involved are participants in public works, when they finished the one-year programme, those unemployed for three or more years, young long-term unemployed and one person families. The programme represents crossing to employment for those who are finished in public works. The programme realised 172 working places in 2000. The structure of participants shows that 73.2% of people were unemployed for over three years.

Pillar 2. Developing entrepreneurship

The self-employment promotion programme

The aim of this programme is to promote entrepreneurship and to support the creation of new workplaces in the area of small business.

Target groups are unemployed people who wish to realise their business idea and who have the conditions and the potential to implement it.

The self-employment promotion programme takes the form of education and counselling (before and after the business start-up) and financial assistance at the business start-up at the amount of six guaranteed wages. The condition for getting financial assistance is preliminary (self)-employment. In the framework of the self-employment promotion programme the major emphasis, since 1995, has been placed on the encouragement of an entrepreneurial mentality among young people (programmes of entrepreneurship for pupils of primary schools, secondary schools and students), on the initiation of self-employment in rural areas, and on the creation of cooperatives.

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Assets (in 000):											
• amount (1+2+3)	1	35,000	93,000	205,899	649,035	921,677	758,342	626,818	695,000	543,964	505,442
chain index	1	/	265.70	221.40	315.20	142.00	82.30	82.60	110.80	78.27	92.92
The number of participant in various forms of training	192	2,770	6,587	12,669	6,915	8,444	7,899	6,603	6,890	6,309	6,483
chain index	1	1,442.70	237.80	192.30	54.60	122.10	93.50	83.60	104.35	91.57	102.76
The number of effective self-employment	1	1,831	2,363	3,494	3,716	3,211	2,310	1,590	1,630	1,643	1,682
chain index	1	1	129.10	147.80	106.30	86.40	71.90	68.80	102.52	100.80	102.37
The employment share (in %)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100		

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

Education and training

	1998	1999	2000
Informative seminars ¹	1,838	2,144	2,541
Introductory seminars ²	2,272	2,152	1,903
Development and implementation of subsidised consulting on the basis of referrals project ³	5,688	5,623	5,624

Financial assistance and realising self employment

	1998	1999	2000
Non-return funding ¹	1,457	836	673
Return of contribution	-	696	873
Return funding ²	-	77	33
Realising self-employment	1,630	1,643	1,682

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

Number of cooperatives

	1998	1999	2000
Number	2	6	10

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

Structure by gender

	Female
1998	32
1999	34
2000	38

Few hours seminars.
 Three day seminars (legal act).
 Various training in amount of six guaranteed wages.
 Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

Regional and local employment projects

The aim is to employ or encourage self-employment for unemployed and redundant workers. The emphasis is on the creation of new work places in SMEs, prevention of outflow of young people from regions with development problems, responding to local and regional needs, investing in human resources.

■ Support of LPC (local promotion centres)

Programmes are intended to support and to develop local employment programmes. The main aim is to identify local labour market needs.

■ Local employment programmes

These programmes usually merge more regularly forms of active employment measures with the aim to employ unemployed people and redundant workers or to promote self-employment. The most popular forms are self-employment, tele-working and home-based businesses.

	1998	1999	2000
Number of LPC (in the frame of funding)	40	27	32
Number of implementing institutes (projects) in the frame of LPZ – number of contracts)	16	31	30
Number of participants (unemployed persons)	1,015	331	316

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

Pillar 3. Increasing adaptability of companies and employees

As an answer to increased unemployment, in the middle of 1991 the government introduced a measure intended for financially weak companies to solve the problem of permanently redundant workers. The purpose at the start the programme was to mitigate the consequences of lost markets in the former Yugoslavia. Later, the programme was extended to cover advising and financial assistance for personnel restructuring in bigger companies, especially those in labour intensive sectors. The resources for restructuring have gradually been reduced during the last years as the restructuring process came to an end.

During the last two years the programmes have been directed at encouraging permanent human resources development. The programmes are intended for employers who have business difficulties as well as for employers who are at the start of their business development or who are without suitable knowledge on how to manage human resources.

The aim is to prevent transfers into open unemployment, to preserve productive workplaces, to create new jobs, to support personnel restructuring in companies, and to promote re-employment and retraining of redundant workers.

Programmes	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total
Subsiding new jobs	3,308	9,822	-	-	-	-	-	987	848	-	14,965
Lump sum UB payments	3,468	1,143	2,183	1,208	1,176	881	562	17	19	-	10,657
Joint funding of redundant workers											
Project 11	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,618	10,299	2,275	1,524	20,716
retraining	16,838	8,396	10,285	2.780	2,250	2,086	1,596	1,127	-	681	46,039
settlements	4,566	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,566
purchase of insurance period	6,554	4,689	2,067	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,310
training of workers taken from other companies	236	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	236
Labour Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,473	1,057	1,251	3,781
Redundant workers in state-owned companies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	360	-	360
The personnel reorganisation and restructuring programme	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	145	-	145

Cofinancing traineeships

Year	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Assets (in 000):						
• amount	1,973,147,000	2,713,609	1,500,581	1,496,546	400,848	232,631
chain index						
The number of participants:	9,300	13,117	8,423	5,011	2,230	64
chain index						
The employment share (in %)						

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

Refunding of contributions to employers under Art. 46a

The programme is, in principal, open to those employers who newly employ and increase the number of employed persons. This enables the programme to have a direct impact on the employment of the unemployed. The programme started in 1994. The changes in the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance (24 October 1998) mean that the programme is directed mostly at the employment of the following target groups: long-term unemployed people (over 12 months); unemployed people over 50; people looking for the first job; and those who are entitled to receive unemployment benefits. In the year 2001 some changes in the criterion for receiving the refunding of contributions were made.

Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Assets (in 000):							
amount	55,737,000	215,593,676	188,201,449	149,914,185	138,999,981	773,146,000	2,667,102,000
chain index		386.81	87.29	79.66	92.72	556.22	344.97
The number of participants:	906	2,724	1,596	1,178	1,889	6,223	8,073
chain index		300.66	58.59	73.81	160.36	329.43	129.73

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

Number of recipients

	1998	1999	2000
Number of persons	1,889	6,223	8,073
Number of employers	1,482	4,761	6,451

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

Structure of participants

	19	98	19	99	20	00
First-time jobseeker	662	35				
Unemployed for over two years	461	24.4				
Recipients of unemployment benefit	622	32.9				
Recipients of unemployment assistance	95	5.0				
Others	49	2.7				
Unemployed for over one year			157	2.5	76	0.9
Over 50 years old – recipients of unemployment benefit			18	0.3	10	0.1
First time jobseeker – unemployed over six months			41	0.7	26	0.3
Self-employed			843	13.5	1,206	14.9
Recipients of unemployment benefit			272	4.4	120	1.5
Recipients of unemployment assistance			24	0.4	126	1.6
Unemployed persons employed by SME			4,789	77.0	5,356	66.3
Redundant workers by SME			79	1.3	106	1.3
Unemployed people within target groups by SME			0	0	437	5.4
Unemployed people in regions with over 14% unemployment rate by SME			0	0	610	7.6

Pillar 4. Strengthening the policies for equal opportunities

The programme for promoting the employment of disabled persons

The aim is to promote integration of the disabled so that they have a possibility to acquire or to retain employment and have the opportunity to get promoted in their professional career.

The target group is disabled people with a certificate proving their disability.

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Assets (in 000):											
• amount (1+2+3)	20,000	18,000	116,250	192,924	593,511	911,872	876,433	1,129,232	1,130,000	1,794,619	1,978,424
 chain index 	/	90.00	645.80	165.90	307.60	153.60	96.10	128.80	100.10	158.82	110.24
1. Training	445	303	424	639	867	1,339	1,453	1,088	1,182	957	930
chain index	/	68.10	139.90	150.70	135.70	154.40	108.50	74.90	108.60	80.96	97.18
The employment share (in %)	40.7	66.9	56.5	50.1	44.9	36.4	39.6	60	61.2		
2. Cofinancing of sheltered workshops	1	2,500	2,600	2,300	2,780	3,124	3,530	4,036	4,895	5,424	5,840
chain index	1	1	104.00	88.50	120.90	112.40	112.90	114.30	121.20	110.81	107.67
The employment share (in %)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100		
3. Cofinancing of new jobs for disabled persons	/	1	79	107	156	181	99	115	57	35	49
chain index	1	1	1	135.40	145.80	116.00	54.70	116.20	49.50	61.40	140.00
The employment share (in %)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100		

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia.

The programme involves the training and employment of disabled people. Different forms of training are performed according to the content, duration and working environment (normal environment, workshops for disabled persons, etc.). The adaptation of work places for the unemployed is modestly embraced in the programmes. It is mostly intended for the severely handicapped who urgently need special treatment, a specially equipped work place or specific tools.

The employment share from unemployment and programmes

		Unemployed people and inflow from previous year	Employed people
1994	number	216,010	75,528
1994	%	100	34.9
1995	number	203,161	59,992
1993	%	100	29.5
1996	number	213,215	54,640
1990	%	100	25.6
1997	number	202,942	56,070
1997	%	100	27.6
1998	number	205,617	55,448
1990	%	100	27.0
1999	number	207,428	62,350
1999	%	100	25.2
2000	number	197,126	60,191
2000	%	100	30.5

Expenditure on active employment programmes

The increase of active labour market policy has not been achieved yet. The resources for restructuring have been increasingly reduced in the last years as the restructuring process is almost finished. In 2000 more than 13 million SIT were spent on active labour market policies. For 2000 the main focus in active labour market policy is in the field of education and training (2.1 million SIT), public works (5.3 million SIT), refunding the contribution (2.8 million SIT). Other areas of the policy are restructuring, labour funds and the disabled.

Within these priorities focus will be put on regions with high unemployment. The strategies have already been developed in view of future participation in ESF.

Expenditure for active employment policy in % of GDP according to the four pillars of employment policy

Action employment programmes	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Pillar 1	0.22	0.23	0.28	0.40	0.30	0.31
Pillar 2	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.09	0.10
Pillar 3	0.15	0.03	0.05	0.02	0.01	0.00
Pillar 4	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.05	0.04	0.04
Total	0.47	0.35	0.41	0.52	0.44	0.46
Passive employment measures	0.72	0.88	0.89	0.79	0.58	0.63
Total active and passive measures	1.19	1.23	1.31	1.31	1.02	1.10

Source: MOLFSA.

Activation rate

Programmes	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Employment and training	0.160	0.096	0.118	0.085	0.137	0.161	0.132	0.243	0.260	0.265
Joint funding of trainees	0.096	0.091	0.102	0.066	0.041	0.019	0.001			
Subsiding new jobs	0.044	0.096						0.008	0.007	
Lump sum UB payments	0.046	0.011	0.017	0.010	0.010	0.007	0.004	0.000	0.000	
Self-employment - effective self-employment	0.003	0.008	0.017	0.026	0.026	0.019	0.013	0.013	0.014	0.016
Public works	0.017	0.034	0.034	0.035	0.035	0.039	0.043	0.084	0.087	0.098
Training for disabled	0.005	0.004	0.006	0.007	0.011	0.012	0.009	0.009	0.008	0.009
Joint funding for disabled			0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000
Medical services				0.012	0.014	0.016	0.019	0.022	0.028	0.038
Subsidies to sheltered workshops				0.020	0.026	0.029	0.032	0.039	0.046	0.055
Joint funding of redundant workers										
Project 11							0.053	0.082	0.019	0.014
retraining	0.224	0.082	0.080	0.022	0.019	0.017	0.013	0.009		0.006
settlements	0.061									
purchase of insurance period	0.087	0.046	0.016							
training of workers taken from other companies	0.003									
Refunding of contributions to employers under Art. 48a				0.007	0.022	0.013	0.009	0.009	0.052	0.076
Refunding of contributions to employers under the Conditions for Refunding Act				0.003	0.004	0.007	0.005	0.006		
Labour funds								0.012	0.009	0.012
Redundant workers in state-owned companies									0.003	
The personnel reorganisation and restructuring programme									0.001	
Total	0.746	0.468	0.390	0.293	0.347	0.342	0.333	0.536	0.533	0.590

ANNEX 2

Indicators for monitoring the employment strategy

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and DG Employment have agreed on the list of indicators for monitoring the implementation of the employment strategy, including a list of indicators which should be developed in the future. MOLFSA has prepared a "Phare project" for building up the labour market indicators system agreed for monitoring the national employment strategy and the national employment action plan. The aim of this project is to upgrade the system of indicators and to make it comparable with the system used in the EU (by Eurostat, DG Employment/Social Affairs).

Work on ensuring that indicators and reliable statistical information are available has also been made through different twinning programmes (MOLFSA twinning with UK, ESS twinning with Ireland). In establishing the monitoring system MOLFSA will also work closely with the National Statistical Office, the Government Office for Macroeconomic Analysis and Development, the Employment Service of Slovenia and the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit in the National Agency for Regional Development (NARD).

AGREED LIST OF INDICATORS FOR MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

EMPLOYMENT INDICATORS (by gender)

Total employment growth	Annual change in total occupied population (in %).
Total employment rate*	Persons in employment in age bracket 15-64 years as proportion of total population in the same age bracket (in %).
Age breakdown of employment rate*	Persons in employment in age brackets 15-24, 25-54 and 55-64 years as proportion of total population in the respective age bracket (in %).
Total employment rate (Full-time equivalents)*	Total hours worked divided by the average annual number of hours worked in full-time jobs, calculated as a proportion of total population in the 15-64 age group (in %).
	There are no data by gender according to FTE (source is national accounts).

UNEMPLOYMENT INDICATORS (by gender)

Total unemployment rate	Total unemployed individuals as a share of total active population (in %).
Youth unemployment ratio	Total of unemployed young people 15–24 years as a share of total population in the same age bracket (in %).
Long-term unemployment rate	Total long-term unemployed population (>12 months) as a proportion of total active population (in %).

EMPLOYMENT-RELATED ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Real GDP growth	Annual average (in %).
Apparent labour productivity growth	Growth in GDP per capita of employed population and per hour worked (in %).
Real unit labour costs	Growth in total compensation per employee adjusted for labour productivity and GDP deflator (in %).

INDICATORS ON GENDER EQUALITY

Absolute unemployment gap	The difference in unemployment rates between women and men in absolute figures (in %).
Absolute employment gap	The difference in employment rates between women and men in absolute figures (in %).
Gender pay gap	Ratio of women's hourly earnings index to men's for paid employees at work 15+ hours. Breakdown by private and public sectors.

ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION (ACTIVATION)

Activation Rate	
	Registered unemployed (yearly averages). Broken down by types of measures and gender.
	Number of registered unemployed persons (yearly average) (1).

INDICATORS FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

The number of persons successfully mediated by the PES.
The average client case load per PES employee.
Training measures for employees by sort of education (language, IT, personal skills).
Statistics on the sort of clients (gender, age, education level).
Participation rate in different programmes by gender/age, education level, completion.

RESPONSIVENESS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINIG TO LABOUR MARKET NEEDS

Educational attainment rate of adult population by age group and gender.
Percentage of population having attained at least upper secondary level by sex and age groups.

THE NEED TO MAKE THE TAX, BENEFIT AND PENSION SYSTEM MORE EMPLOYMENT FRIENDLY

Replacement rates in different schemes.		
Average retirement age.		
Level of minimum wage as share of average wage, share of people in receiving minimum wage.		
Rate of total tax revenue	Total revenue from taxes and social security contributions by employees and employers as a percentage of GDP.	

ANNEX 3

Information about the Employment Service of Slovenia

Figure 1. ESS regional offices

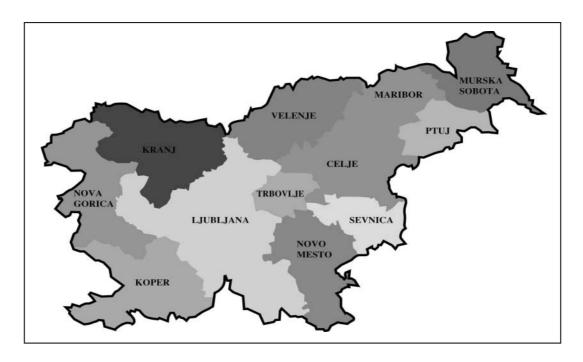


Figure 2. ESS organisation

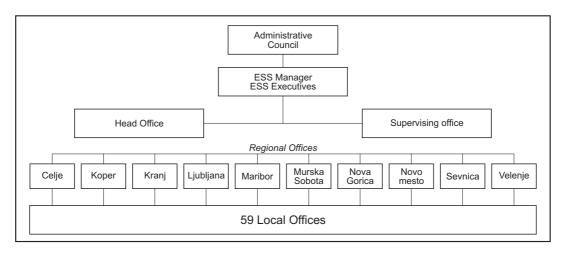


Figure 3. ESS head office

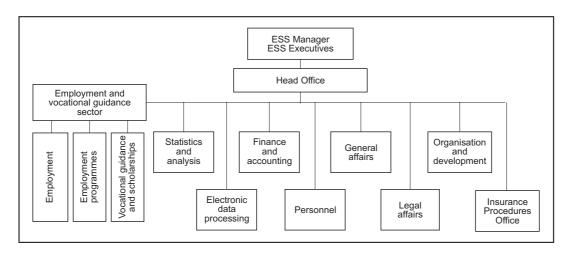
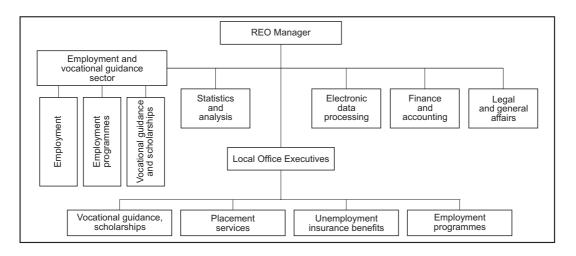
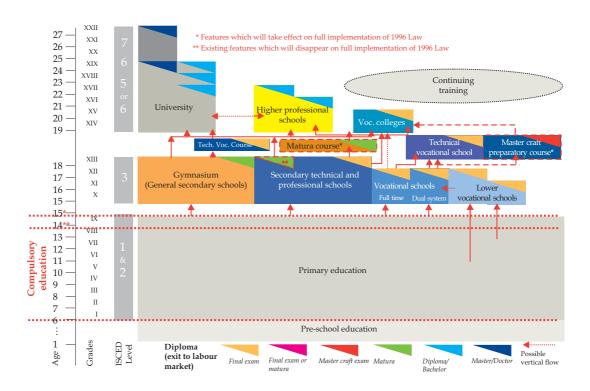


Figure 4. Organisation of regional and local offices



ANNEX 4

Structure of the education system in Slovenia



ANNEX 5

Realisation of the lifelong learning concept in Slovenia

In Slovenia all recently prepared key strategic national documents defining further economic and social development and measures for their realisation⁷⁵ underline a necessity for the implementation of a lifelong learning concept. The strategies start from the importance of human resources in global competition of knowledge, innovation, and creative use and management of information. They acknowledge that the deficit in technological, mathematical and computer knowledge and skills, and in education and qualifications of the workforce can only be overcome by the increased participation of adults in education and by implementation of the lifelong learning concept. It is stressed that lifelong learning not only improves human capital but also facilitates the acquisition of social capital and cultural development, both of which are becoming very important ingredients of "human developmental factor".

The main goals in the field of human resources stated in the documents are:

- increasing education and literacy level of the population;
- promoting occupational mobility and improving position of young people in the labour market;
- developing and implementing systems for facilitating lifelong learning;
- improving access and encouraging activities for participation in lifelong learning;
- increasing participation of adults in education; and
- reducing dropout from formal education.

Measures and strategies to be introduced in order to reach those goals are:

- improving quality of education;
- assuring international comparability of educational standards;
- increasing flexibility in obtaining education and qualifications;
- developing assessment and certification of prior learning and work experiences;
- developing general/key qualifications in vocational training;
- increasing responsibility of social partners for vocational training;
- increasing autonomy of teachers in defining and delivering curricula;
- supporting the development of postsecondary professional education opportunities in underdeveloped regions;
- introducing non-traditional lifelong learning in higher education (credit accumulation, diploma supplement);
- developing educational counselling for adults in all regions with special emphasis on access of educationally non-active population;
- providing selective financing for learning literacy skills, decreasing the literacy gap among regions, and increasing participation in adult education through regional strategies; and
- increasing responsibility and motivation of employers for investment in education/development of the employed by introducing measures such as: preparation of long and mid-term plans of training in firms and enterprises; defining in-company training goals, providing educational counselling to the employed; establishing inter-company training centres and centres for autonomous learning in firms and companies.

Corresponding documents are the Strategy of the Economic Development of Slovenia 2001 - 2006 (adopted by the government on 26 July 2001) and the State Developmental Programme 2001 - 2006 (in procedure for adoption). The role and content of the programme is set by the law on public finances and its by-law. It is defined as an operational document of the Strategy of the Economic Development of Slovenia that translates its starting points and directions into concrete programmes and projects on individual priority areas. In the legislation it is connected with the preparation of the annual state budget and serves as a point of departure for taking decisions on budget priorities.

The relation between the labour market functioning and the implementation of lifelong learning is most explicitly defined in the **National programme of the development of the labour market and employment to the year 2006.** The programme states that the main direction of the employment policy is to support active forms of increasing employment where training programmes and support of lifelong learning which shall facilitate greater employability of the population are central. Six strategic goals of the development of the labour market and employment are defined. Of these, the following concern implementation of lifelong learning:

- improving the educational level and qualifications of the working population;
- decreasing structural discrepancies in unemployment the share of those without vocational qualifications will decrease to 25%; and
- further development of social partnership in solving unemployment problems and increasing employment.

Among key measures and activities for realisation of the strategic goals, the following are defined:

- developing lifelong learning culture;
- improving the educational level of the labour force and decreasing structural discrepancies in the labour market; and
- decreasing dropout from vocational training, secondary technical education and higher education.

Activities and objectives for the realisation of the above key measures are similar to those specified in the strategy of the economic development of Slovenia and in the national developmental programme. They include: modernisation and adjustment of formal education and training programmes according to the individual needs and needs of the labour market; development of new education and learning opportunities not only for work and occupation but also for individual professional, cultural and personal development; development of APEL; implementation of certification system; integration of work and learning; introduction of motivational programmes for individuals and employers; involvement of local levels in planning development and investment in education and training; development and introduction of information and counselling services at the local level.

Given a large share of the population without formal qualifications, those with poor education and qualification achievements are defined as a priority target population.

The programme is operationalised in annual employment action plans adopted by the government. The responsibility for the realisation is delegated to the competent ministries and social partners. A special body composed of representatives of the state and social partners has been established to coordinate and follow-up the realisation of the goals.

At the level of the education system, two policy documents should be mentioned which define the strategic goals and measures directing educational policy towards the realisation of lifelong learning.

The Accession Strategy of the Republic Slovenia in the Area of Human Resource Development⁷⁷ prepared with the support of the second Phare MOCCA programme. The strategy identifies the most important problems in the field of human resources and states that they can be most effectively overcome by putting human resource

⁷⁶ The document was passed by the parliament on 25 October 2001 (Official Gazette of the R Slovenia, No 92/22.11.2001).

⁷⁷ The Accession Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia in the area of human resource development. Ministry of Education and Sports, Phare MOCCA programme, Ljubljana, October 2000. The document represents a professional starting point and was not formally agreed upon by competent actors.

development in the framework of the lifelong learning strategy. Lifelong learning is defined as a factor increasing social security and social inclusion of the population.

The responsibility for the improvement of educational attainment is delegated to the state and social partners, and individuals.

To realise the lifelong learning concept the following has to be assured:

- increasing enrolment in formal education;
- enabling the transition between formal and non-formal education;
- establishing lifelong learning culture and mechanisms for recognition of prior learning as well as conditions for promotion of learning; and
- providing opportunities for acquisition of level and type of education which will guarantee employability, labour market mobility and thus social security.

In order to facilitate the realisation of the aims and goals, a range of objectives is defined at all levels of education and in all education subsystems:

- increasing variety of offer in kindergartens and providing early enrolment of children;
- nine-year primary education starting at the age of six;
- earlier start of learning foreign languages the first foreign language in the 4th grade of compulsory education and the second one optionally in the 7th grade;
- external examination;
- introducing elements of free choice of types of education (private initiative), levels of teaching and learning subjects;
- greater choice of programmes in general education;
- introducing external *maturita* as a state examination;
- introducing social partnership in planning, developing, adopting and executing vocational education and training curricula;
- flexible model of vocational education and training with variety of paths leading to the same outcomes;
- equality of standards in formal education of youth and adults but differences in delivering curricula;
- integration of work and learning further development of apprenticeship;
- substantial increase in opportunities for further education of adults on undergraduate level based on special law, with special attention to general programmes (increasing basic skills and general qualifications) – projects and activities facilitating these objectives are state financed;
- supporting formal general, vocational and professional education of the employed and unemployed young adults; and
- diversifying the system of tertiary education including university and higher professional education as well as post-secondary vocational and professional colleges, and – under special conditions – transition among them.

The document strongly stresses the importance of equipping learning places with the IT. Moreover, information and guidance services are seen as a basic infrastructural condition for the development of human resources.

Based on numerous studies and analyses, the conditions necessary for realisation of the priorities in the framework of lifelong learning are defined for each education subsystem, and for all levels of responsibility (state, regional, enterprise, individual).

National Programme for Adult Education

On the basis of the general framework provided by the Law on Adult Education a national strategy for adult education has been prepared and is to be submitted to the national parliament as a National Programme for Adult Education to 2010 (NPAE)⁷⁸. This document most explicitly defines strategies for implementation of the lifelong learning concept and links it to the improvement of human resources.

One of its main aims is to create the conditions for improving the basic level of knowledge and skills of the majority of the adult population; this is also the most important measure for the realisation of the concept of lifelong learning. It defines priority areas in adult education as well as goals and objectives to be attained in each area, and measures for their realisation. Financial means needed for realisation of the goals and objectives are also specified.

In addition to the upgrading of educational achievements at all levels of education of the population – with special emphasis on the less educated middle-aged population – the following areas are also designated as priorities:

- increasing participation of the population in non-formal general education and learning for improving the quality of living, cultural and civilisation level, conservation of cultural heritage and national identity, cohabitation of different cultures and protection of environment; and
- education, training and retraining of the employed and unemployed for adjustment, upgrading and further development of vocational and professional qualifications, for the utilisation of topmost knowledge and for learning general skills and qualifications required for directing socio-economic and technological development.

The objectives in each priority area are quantified and monitoring is planned. Moreover, measures and strategies, financial means, as well as special incentives at all levels (individuals, employers, local level, branch level) needed for realisation of the goals and objectives are specified.

The strategies for the implementation of lifelong learning are also incorporated in policy documents of vocational education and training and higher education (national programme of higher education, memorandum on further development of vocational education and training).

Practical strategies and measures facilitating the realisation of lifelong learning concept

Innovations and reform activities in education have been going on in Slovenia at least since the end of the 1980s – they started simultaneously with the transition processes. The search for new directions in education was marked by experimenting in teaching approaches, by a shift from content to objective and process-oriented teaching, to output rather than process assessment, greater freedom of teachers and schools in deciding their teaching methods and techniques but, most of all, by rethinking of the concept of teaching and learning. Principles of lifelong learning are an integrative part of the school legislation passed 1996 and were considered during the curricular reform launched in 1997.

The main tools for facilitating the implementation of the lifelong learning principles in formal education developed during the reform period:

■ investment in teacher training to develop new skills for assuming a new role in the process of teaching and learning;

Although the government has not yet submitted the document to the parliament for adoption, it is used by corresponding ministries and other responsible bodies and agencies as a basis for preparing education and training policy as well as measures and activities for its implementation. The goals and objectives suggested in the proposed professional starting points can be – more or less modified – found in most recently prepared national strategic documents.

- educational guidance and counselling to increase the efficiency of learning and the motivation of the population to learn;
- coordinated cooperation of various stakeholders (state, social partners, NGOs, local communities) to increase effectivity of investments in human potential; and
- accelerated investment in ICT and other teaching equipment.

Two consecutive Phare projects for the evaluation of vocational education and training also covered some issues concerning strategies for implementation of lifelong learning. During the first programme the apprenticeship system was introduced in vocational education and training. Simultaneously active participation of social partners in the development and implementation of vocational education and training at the national level started to develop. A project on pilot introduction of social partnership at the regional level was also carried out in three regions. Social partners significantly contribute to designing national education policy and take their share of responsibility in its realisation.

The second Phare MOCCA evaluation paid special attention to bridging formal and non-formal education and learning by supporting the development of the procedures for assessment and recognition of prior learning and working experiences as well as further development of the certification system. It also helped in defining a basis for the development of modularisation in vocational education and training.

In 2001 the professional starting points for the development of training programmes in secondary vocational and professional education and training were revised. The most important novelties supporting the implementation of lifelong learning are: modular approach to the design of training programmes; development of standards of key qualifications; and gradual transition from knowledge to competence-based education and learning.

Measures and activities facilitating six key messages defined in the memorandum on lifelong learning.

New basic skills for all

In youth and adult education and training alike most attention has been paid to learning foreign languages and computer skills⁷⁹. Increased investment has been also characteristic for the development of entrepreneurial skills.

As examples of good practice in the area of the development of new basic skills, the following may be mentioned:

In the context of the international year of world languages several glossaries on certain vocational/occupational and professional fields have been developed. The different sectors were involved: four vocational and high schools – language teachers, experts from the enterprises and Centre for Vocational Education and Training.

With the financial support of the MoES **computer training courses** adjusted to the needs of teachers were developed and delivered.

Enterprising within vocational and high school curriculum. Centre for Vocational Education and Durham University, UK are partners in an international project on teacher training. In 2000, there were 12 teachers of vocational and high schools involved. In 2001, the project continued under the title "Learning for Myself". The participants of the project learn the skills that are needed in modern context of enterprising.

⁷⁹ According to the statistical data in 1998/99 of all participants in non-formal training around 15% learned languages and another 14% learned computer skills.

Primary school students spend at least a week during their time in school (in most schools, two weeks) in special centres founded and funded by the state where under the supervision of the staff trained for the purpose they learn skills and experience learning situations that are not associated with the normal school setting. Communication and social skills are essential objectives.

Concerning the development of basic skills of adults, since 1992 **special courses for the development of prose literacy and numeric skills** have been provided. The courses are delivered by specially trained teachers to about 150 young adults each year. Now the programmes are being revised and are about to be submitted for public recognition. There are also adjusted courses for (mentally) handicapped and for parents with school children (family literacy).

Slovenia has been among ten countries who participated in the Second International Adult Literacy Survey conducted in 1998. The results represent a significant input for designing education policy as well as concrete measures in this field. Preparation of the strategy for improving literacy skills of adult population is one of the central tasks carried out by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education.

Within the Phare democracy programme carried out in 1994 the training course **Unemployment could be a challenge** was developed. Its aim was to enable the unemployed to activate their own problem solving capacities. Some 200 unemployed participate in this training activity annually; it is a regular part of training measures for the unemployed.

Project learning for young adults is a non-formal training programme directed at young adults who are neither in employment nor in youth education. Its main objective is to motivate young people to go back to school and to offer them individual support in developing basic skills while they compensate for missing prior knowledge. The programme is publicly recognised. Currently the programme has around 230 participants

Study circles are a rather popular non-formal learning activity enabling action learning for adults. They foster the development of social and communication skills, as well as community learning. In the first place they create an opportunity for discovering individual potential and enable democratic group learning. They are especially appreciated in rural areas with scarce education provision and little opportunity for social life. As a special form of study circles, **reading circles** have been also developed.

Recently, a trend towards training adults in computer skills has also been emerging. At one of the elementary schools in Murska Sobota **computer workshops have been organised for parents and grandparents of the children attending**. Thus, family literacy has been enhanced.

Non-formal adult learning in computer sciences by video conferencing was provided simultaneously in nine regions with the cooperation of a private enterprise and the Faculty of Computer Sciences of University of Ljubljana. The programme aimed to improve computer skills among students and teachers in high schools. It had been based on learning by doing, but teaching support was delivered by modern video conference model and by other sources of ICT. The teaching was mutually shared.

More investment in human resources

Recently the overall budget earmarked for education has increased to 6% of BDP. Since 1992 some financial means for adult education have been earmarked in the state budget. Now they amount to 0.1% of BDP. As for private investment among already existing measures and those which are in the phase of pilot projects there is only one fund financed from private sources, the Fund for Education of Workers Employed by Sole Traders. The fund pools money from the salaries of the employed by sole traders. It organises and cofinances training, professional meetings, etc.

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Most recent measures and instruments financed from public funds:

- The Phare partnership project **Human resources management in small and medium-size companies in the Podravje region.** It is concerned with developing the training of staff for development tasks in the field of human resources and increasing the awareness of companies of the importance of development of the employed and the continuation of their learning.
- The Fund for the development and training of human resources in Podravje region. It promotes and finances development and co-finances the implementation of training based on the needs of employers. It also facilitates promotion of the human resources development and the rise of awareness.
- With the support of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (MoLFSA) and the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, Investors in People UK are implementing **the Standard Investors in People** in Slovenia. 20 firms of various size, status and economic activities are involved in the pilot phase of the project.
- Individual Learning Account, a project conducted by the ACS as well, as an instrument that should increase investment in education of employees is already posted in the accepted programme of the MoLFSA. It is planned that the instrument will start to develop in 2002.
- "Programme 5000" was first launched in 1998 by the government. The programme is intended to support formal education of the long-term unemployed young people without formal vocational qualifications or with vocational qualifications which are not in demand in the labour market. The programme is financed jointly by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and is managed by the state and social partners. In 1999 the programme was extended from secondary to tertiary education. However, there is a difference in financing. While the participants in secondary education receive grants from public funds, a student loan system was introduced for those in tertiary education.
- "Programme 7000 employed students"- there is an attempt being made to earmark some public funds for financing participation of the employed in formal education in the school year 2002/03. The criteria for selection of the participants as well as the way for realisation of the programme will be negotiated by the state and social partners.

Innovation in teaching and learning

In order to be effective, methods of learning and teaching in modern world should facilitate learning in all life contexts i.e. workplace, active citizenship, labour market, family, etc. alongside the holistic development of human personality. The importance of ICT-based teaching and learning methods have been emphasized according to the importance of education and training of the educators in this field. There are some interesting examples demonstrating that training providers are looking for new approaches to make learning more attractive to students.

In the field of the development of learning material an interactive textbook for a technical subject in correspondent vocational education was prepared by the subject teacher. It is based on the theoretical reflections upon the selected cases that have occurred within enterprises. The learners are invited to select the learning problem and are encouraged to use several other learning sources. At the same time there are tools for self-evaluation and organised support from tutors and study groups.

Distance education opportunities in tertiary education. In higher education the project on distance learning has started within the Phare programme (Phare Multi-country Programme for Distance Education). The newest trends in this area are in the direction of transforming classical distance learning into modern ICT based learning, where the development of electronic study materials and accompanying tutor training are underlined. Electronic forms of distance education are available from a number of providers of tertiary (not higher) education for adults.

With the financial support of MoESS and MoLFSA **self-directed learning** has been introduced in a growing number of centres for self-directed learning. An effort is put into developing methods and instruments to facilitate a learner's path towards the improvement of knowledge and education. There are around 39 general learning centres functioning in local environment with a professional counsellor available, where everybody can, free of charge, learn according to his/her needs and interests; 11 more are expected to be opened in the near future. This initiative is successfully spreading into companies.

The learning exchange is an information system which links together individuals that are willing to share their knowledge with others, and those who seek such knowledge. Information on learning supply and demand is managed by computer data processing using the internet as a communication tool and regularly published (free of charge) in the mass media. All learning exchanges have about 6,700 users who offer or seek knowledge. A large variety of learning areas are covered: languages, mathematics, personal growth, music, computing, physics, handicrafts, art, travelling, economics.

Valuing learning

In Slovenia the awareness of the value of the so-called "hidden" knowledge, acquired in a non-formal or informal way, was awoken at least ten years ago. The idea behind it was to develop procedures that will make knowledge visible and will enable its integration into the formal education system. Already in the first half of the 1990s two projects started simultaneously in this field. **The APEL project** has been dealing with assessment and accreditation of non-formal learning in a narrow scope of training of personnel in adult education (mentors in study circles). **The development of a certification system,** a project strongly supported by the labour ministry, on the other hand, developed the systemic model for certification of national vocational qualification obtained outside formal training programmes. The results of both projects were put together in the Phare MOCCA programme in a project which developed assessment procedures with special attention to the assessment and recognition of prior learning. The project finished in December 2000. The procedures are part of the certification system.

In addition, in August 2000 the Law on National Vocational Qualifications was passed by the parliament. It provides the formal basis for obtaining national vocational qualifications outside the formal vocational education and training system. The introduction of modules in formal vocational education and training will make the integration of certificates in formal education possible.

There are also other cases indicating that new approaches to valuing learning have been gradually spreading. The preparation of the portfolio for a target group of upper secondary-school students, with a view to overcoming the weak points of class work, is aimed at integrating substantive knowledge with process knowledge in order to achieve the objective of lifelong learning. Particular attention has been placed on the changing of entrenched teaching processes and the setting up of a positive learning environment.

New approaches are also used in **some innovation and development projects**. Above all, the use of portfolios for pupils which are the same as for teachers or mentors; introducing self assessment; learning-centred teaching and progress evaluation of every individual learner are being introduced. In addition, there are several actions within the assessment and accreditation of cultural projects, learners' assessments in the area of local environment topics. Some teachers have been successfully using the criteria system, which has proved to be very convenient. There is also a good practice of inter-subject connections and teamwork, of training for writing projects, presentations, papers or A-level theses.

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Certification of knowledge of foreign languages has been introduced in the State Examination Centre (DIC). Linguistic skills standards have been prepared for the four most requested European languages and the preparation of standards for other languages most often taught in Slovenia is under way. Languages are taught against these standards in publicly accredited courses, but can also be certified at the National Examination Centre.

Rethinking guidance and counselling

Vocational counselling for young people has a long tradition in Slovenia. It is provided at various levels and various institutions (employment agencies, schools), while to the adults this kind of service was available merely in non-formal way. In addition to the centres for information and vocational guidance operating within the national employment agency, the activities have started recently to provide adequate information and counselling services also for adults. The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education is carrying out a project for establishing the network of local centres for adult education information and counselling. The training programme for counsellors has been also developed. Currently five pilot local information and guidance centres are operating.

There are also some **innovations aiming at improving vocational counselling for young people.** Within the Phare MOCCA programme, an approach has been developed to provide young learners with opportunities to get acquainted with various occupations. School children spend several days in working environment, do jobs that are suitable for them and get realistic information about the work. The concept will be proposed as a model to other school counsellors.

Bringing learning closer to home

It has often been stated that the capacities and equipment of schools are not (sufficiently) used for the purpose of adult learning. Also in the school curricula there is not enough space for the promotion of different ways leading towards greater cooperation between schools and communities. Several learning opportunities have been developed to enable education and learning of adults in local communities. While describing innovations in learning and teaching study circles, centres for self-directed learning, distance learning and the learning exchange were mentioned. Within the framework of the Open School Project the National Institute for Education stimulates secondary schools to organise activities that provide learning experiences for general audiences on their facilities in evenings, afternoons and during the weekends. The project is subsidised by the education ministry.

Some libraries are becoming centres for reading, learning and other initiatives how to use spare time in a profitable way.

The project Tele-house in Prekmurje is an interesting form of how learning general skills may be facilitated in less developed parts of the country. It is a house equipped with telecommunications equipment providing for the communication of residents at several levels: within the local community, among local communities and with the external world. The house provides varied stimulation for the following activities: learning; writing projects; and the preparation of a TV programme and the local newspaper. It also offers premises for societies and a small accounting office. The house acts as the driver for the stimulation of learning of the local residents who stop there on their way to sell wine, inquire about prices, drought or sale opportunities (between 6,000 and 7,000 people).

The virtual library catalogue (COBISS) has been developed providing useful information for everybody. Most public libraries provide access to the catalogue.

ANNEX 6

Lifelong learning indicators

LLL1 = Education attainment

Percentage of working age population achieving at least upper secondary education by age group and gender, 2000

Gender	%
Total	41.7
Men	40.8
Women	42.2

Source: Labour Force Survey, 2000; Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Slovenia. Table 12.8; own calculations.

Age groups	Total	Men	Women
25 – 34	60.8	50.0	66.2
35 – 44	48.1	44.1	52.0
45 – 54	42.7	42.1	44.1
55 – 64	35.9	38.1	34.8
25 – 64	47.6	44.1	50.0

Source: Labour Force Survey, 2000; Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Slovenia. Table 12.8; own calculations.

LLL2 = Participation in education and training

Percentage of population participating in education and training by gender, age group, education and employment status, 1998

Total percentage	31
Gender	%
Men	32
Women	30
Age groups	%
16 – 19	35
20 – 24	38
25 – 39	40
40 – 49	35
50+	14
Education	%
Some years of primary education	5
Six years of primary education	3
Completed primary education	12
One- or two-year vocational training	17
Three- year vocational training	24
Four- or five- year secondary education	42
Tertiary education	72

Employment status	%
Employed	41
Self-employed	47
Unemployed	16
Farmer	14
Housewife	11

Source: Adult literacy and participation in adult education survey, ACS, 1998.

LLL3 = Early school leaving

Percentage of population of 18 to 24 year-olds having achieved lower secondary education (ISCED level 2) or less and education or training by gender

Not available

LLL4 = Student access to computers

Number of students per computer by education level, 2000

Level of education	No of students per computer
Primary schools	29
Secondary schools	27

Source: RIS (Use of Internet in Slovenia) 2000/01, A survey among schools. http://www.ris.org/indikatorji/zavodis.htm

LLL5 = Internet coverage of schools

Percentage of schools connected to the internet

Level of education	% of schools connected to internet
Primary schools	82-99
Secondary schools	93-100

Source: RIS (Use of Internet in Slovenia) 2000/2001, A survey among schools. http://www.ris.org/indikatorji/zavodis.htm

ICT literacy among teachers: no data available.

There is a rough estimate that less than 50% of teachers have solid digital literacy skills. The estimate is based on the low satisfaction of teachers with knowledge about the internet.

Source: see above

Use of computers for work

Percentage of working age population (employed) using computers at home and/or at work place for work purposes (a) with and (b) without job-related computer training

Not available

Percentage of the working age population using computers for work

44%

Source: RIS: Pcji in Internet med zaposlenimi; http://www.ris.org/si/iris99/news/n221099.html (18. 02. 02.)

Percentage of the population active in adult education participating in job/career-related training by gender, age group, education and employment status, 1998

Total percentage	73
Sex	%
Men	76
Women	69
Age group	%
16 – 25	72
26 – 35	77
36 – 45	75
46 – 55	66
56 – 65	57
Education	%
Some years of primary education/ compulsory education	76
Primary education, one to two-year vocational education	67
Three-year vocational education, four-year secondary education	75
Post-secondary (not higher) education	72
Higher and university education	74
Postgraduate education	68
Employment status	%
Employed	76
Unemployed	59
Housewife	6

Source: Adult literacy and participation in adult education survey, ACS, 1998. In, Mirèeva, J., Z. Pangerc Pahernik, M. Radovan (2001); figures 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, pp. 48-77.

Education and training of the employed provided by employers

Firms and enterprises providing training as a percentage of all firms and enterprises	56
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Source: Statistical Office of Slovenia: Survey SOL-ZAP 99 (CVTS2)

Investment expenditure on education/GDP

Total public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP	6
as a percentage of GDI	

EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES IN SLOVENIA

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

2002 - 104 pp. - 21.0 x 29.7 cm

ISBN 92-9157-300-0