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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORT

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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE
LIFELONG LEARNING: EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICIES
COORDINATION OF LIFELONG LEARNING POLICIES

**NATIONAL REPORT OF SLOVENIA
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010
WORK PROGRAMME**

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Chapter 1

NATIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGY

1.1. CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

1.1.1. Planning the Slovenian lifelong learning strategy

The Slovenian lifelong learning strategy has been prepared on the basis of more than 15 European and over 17 national analyses, reports, strategies and action plans. The draft strategy was presented for public discussion (public debate in the National Assembly, publication on the internet, appeal to relevant ministries) in January 2007. In March and April of this year the draft strategy will be additionally discussed by the three highest expert government bodies in the education field, i.e., the expert councils for general education, vocational and technical education and adult education.

1.1.2. Plans for adjustment, completion or modification of the strategy

Relevant comments from the public discussion have been taken into account with the completed text. It is envisaged that the strategy will be followed by an operational programme with specific activities and proposed sources of funding.

1.1.3. Possible obstacles in establishing the strategy

The draft strategy was created within the framework of the Ministry of Education and Sport, so the main stress is on solutions and measures which are directly connected with the field of education and training. Other fields, e.g., the economy, are mainly responding to the proposal. It is still hard for the idea to be accepted that the question of lifelong learning is not a 'problem' only of education and training.

1.2. COMPREHENSIVENESS, COHERENCE AND RELEVANCE

1.2.1. Systems and levels of education and training covered by the strategy

The proposed strategy divides the continuum of learning into the early life period (childhood and youth), the adult period and the period of higher education, at which early and adult periods

interface and where initial and further learning are most interconnected. The internal cohesiveness of lifelong learning and the importance of cognitive, emotional and social aspects of learning for overall personal development and intergenerational dialogue are stressed, which is less pronounced in European documents.

Individual periods are analysed and key tasks and aims of learning in each of them are stated. It is important that the competences are assimilated in each period that are most important from the point of view of the continuity of lifelong learning, in order for a positive attitude to learning to be developed and for learning to be effective. Messages are in accordance with the messages of the Memorandum on lifelong learning and with the aims of the Education and Training 2010 work programme.

1.2.2. Challenges addressed by the strategy

The proposed strategy speaks of 'strategic cores': a comprehensive systemic arrangement and the cohesiveness of all learning; the range of opportunities and purposes of learning, and the diversity and flexibility of its provision; access of learning to the measure of the individual: key competences for learning and personal growth; learning for successful quality work and professional careers; learning as a source and driving force of development of the community; possibilities of testing and certificating all obtained knowledge; advisory help and providing information.

1.2.3. Priority measures and policy development directions for LLL

The proposed strategy, on the basis of the Lisbon Strategy in the field of education and training and 13 specific objectives of the work programme, specifies 14 aims in more detail, which can be combined into the following groups: adjusting learning to the needs of the individual; developing a positive attitude to learning; developing key competences for a quality life for the individual and the functioning of society; increasing effectiveness and creating equal opportunities.

1.3. MAIN POLICY MEASURES

1.3.1. Main policy measures in the strategy

The Strategy proposes the following measures: improving the quality of education and training by modernising programmes, curricula and catalogues of knowledge from the point of view of the

elements of lifelong learning, with the development of educational and teaching strategies and with quality training of professional staff; developing various forms, methods and pathways of learning and suitable systems for recognising obtained knowledge; improving access to education and learning; creating a suitable normative environment; strengthening research and development and the non-governmental sector as a partner of the state; creating suitable infrastructure, obtaining financial resources and preparing operational programmes for realising measures and promotion of the strategy.

1.3.2. Measures for monitoring progress towards the EU benchmarks

The strategy highlights the need to increase and stimulate private investment. Preventing early school leaving appears in the context of lifelong guidance. A greater effectiveness of education and the development of key competences can be achieved by adjusting organisational forms, teaching methods and techniques to the needs of the individual or individual social groups. Special measures must be adopted for disadvantaged groups, which will increase their inclusion in various forms of lifelong learning. It is similarly necessary to divide responsibility for education between employers and employees and to remove inequalities in access to education whenever it is the employer who can primarily influence it.

The strategy stresses that national programmes have already been adopted in individual fields of education and training (e.g., for adult education, for higher education), which include aims that are important for realising the lifelong learning strategy.

1.3.3. Allocation of resources to main policy measures

The measures of the operational programmes will be financed from the national budget and private investment, funds of the European Social Fund (ESF) (*see Annexes*) and European funds for the »Lifelong learning« programme. It is worth mentioning in particular the possibility of higher private investment and investment by the economy that is provided by the Public-Private Partnership Act of 2006. Further legislative amendments (tax exemptions) are envisaged in the area of employer investment in the development of human resources, especially those with the lowest qualifications.

1.3.4. Measures for changing attitudes to learning and knowledge

Improving attitudes to learning is an element that is stressed in the strategy. The role of early learning in obtaining positive experience and creating a positive self-image is emphasised in particular, to which it is necessary to be heedful in planning programmes. It is similarly necessary to strengthen the role of parents as natural educators. The attitude to learning and oneself as a learning individual is an important factor throughout the whole period of lifelong learning.

1.3.5. Strengthening evidence-based policy making

The strategy stresses in particular the need for constant, systematic research and setting up suitable databases for monitoring the realisation of measures. It highlights the processes of evaluation and self-evaluation as the most important elements of ensuring quality education. However, it is worth stressing that awareness of the importance of evidence-based policy making has only recently been strengthened (*see Annexes*).

1.3.6. Measures targeting the needs of disadvantaged groups

Among the recommendations for implementing learning in the early period, the strategy states the need for differentiation of methods of work, especially for children with special needs, and counts among inclusive models of education also special care for the children of migrants and children from Roma families (*see also 1.3.2.*). It mentions the special needs of older employed persons and adults in late age. Carrying out specific activities for vulnerable groups will receive special attention in the 2007-2013 period.

1.4. DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND DISSEMINATION OF THE STRATEGY

1.4.1. Coordination and consultation mechanisms involving all relevant stakeholders

In the public debate in the National Assembly and by publication on the internet, all interested groups have been asked to contribute to elaborating the strategy. In connection with the further development of education, in February 2007 the minister held a number of discussions with the social partners. Their comments and suggestions have been taken into account in the completion of the strategy, and above all in the preparation of the operational plan.

1.4.2. Implementation and dissemination of the strategy

A draft operational plan has been prepared for implementing the strategy. All measures have envisaged activities and instruments through which they will be implemented. Implementation will be financed from the national budget, with the assistance of ESF funds and European funds for the »Lifelong learning« programme. The operational plan includes all activities that are already taking place in some fields but have not been systematically understood as support for realising the strategy of lifelong learning. The promotion of the strategy will be financed mainly by the grant from the Restricted call for proposals “Implementation of National Lifelong Learning Strategies - Education and Training 2010”.

Chapter 2

IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSVERSAL POLICY OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES IN SUPPORT OF EU PROCESSES

2.1. NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The Slovenian system of qualifications consists of three sub-systems: qualifications obtained through educational programmes at the *formal education levels*, which end with the gaining of a certificate, diploma or other evidence of publicly recognised education; a certification system of national vocational qualifications (NVQ), which enables the gaining of working vocational or professional training and recognition of non-formal knowledge with a publicly recognised document; further and supplementary training, by which an individual deepens knowledge and develops competences for life, work, mobility and career promotion and by which she or he obtains certification which may be a condition for employment or for continuing to perform work.

In April 2006, the Slovenian government adopted a decree on the introduction and use of classification system of education and training (Klasius), which is one of the formal bases for building a Slovenian qualification framework. It is based on eight levels, in which are placed all three of the above enumerated groups of qualifications, from primary school to doctoral, in relation to learning outcomes (*see Annexes*). Conceptual bases are in preparation and a working group has been appointed for the construction of the national qualifications framework. Preparation of the national qualifications framework will require fresh consideration of the placing of individual fields and levels of education, e.g., vocational and technical education and training (VET).

The introduction of a credit system is an important transversal activity. For credit evaluation of learning outcomes in secondary VET and in higher vocational education programmes, the legal bases have been provided, a model has been prepared and preparation of educational programmes that will have a credit evaluation is under way. A credit system has already been functioning in practice for some years in the field of higher education. The credit system relates primarily to assessing formal educational programmes and subjects/modules, but the same credit system is expected also to apply in the certificate system and with non-formal knowledge. In relation to VET, harmonisation with the European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET) is envisaged.

An ECTS credit system does not operate in practice in the area of higher vocational education, but individual institutions already recognise previously obtained knowledge, mainly as part of practical classes performed, and more rarely as part of theoretical subjects. In the area of higher education, the law similarly specifies criteria for evaluation of the formal part of study

programmes according to ECTS, which has already been implemented for some years in practice: this is necessary primarily for the possibility of international student exchange.

2.2. NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

The National Vocational Qualifications Act of 2000 introduced in Slovenia a system of testing and certificating NVQ's, which is based on learning outcomes irrespective of how the knowledge, skills and capacities were obtained. Testing and certificating NVQ's is meant for adults and takes place on the basis of direct demonstration of knowledge, skills and capacities or on the basis of documents and other evidence collected in the individual's portfolio. They thus become visible results of non-formal and informal learning. The economy highlights as good features of the act mainly that it enables a fast response to changes in working processes, that procedures of introducing knowledge and competences are shortened and made cheaper and that candidates who must prove vocational capacities, do so by direct testing and certification.

The act was amended in 2006 for the purpose of linking formal and informal education and working experience, in order to ensure partnership and cooperation in the development of NVQ's and in their promotion, in order to enable transfer between different fields and levels of education and training and to ensure transparency of implementation of the certification procedures. It already largely respects the European principles on identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning of 2004, and a comprehensive system of quality assurance will be set up in the coming years.

The legal bases for non-formal learning are provided by the Adult Education Act, and the National Programme of Adult Education also covers it. Non-formal forms of learning contribute to a rise in participation of the population in lifelong learning, access to the labour market, inclusion of disadvantaged groups in learning and transnational mobility. *See Annexes.*

2.3. POLICIES AND SYSTEMS OF LIFELONG GUIDANCE - CAREER ORIENTATION

New activities have been developed in recent years in Slovenia to assist young people and adults in deciding on a vocation, in education, learning, employment, personal development or career development, the aim of which is to support lifelong learning with a quality and coherent strategy of lifelong career guidance. In 2005-2006, an extensive analysis was carried out of the current development of the guidance activities of informing and advising, which showed that the synergetic effects of various activities must be improved: counselling work in kindergartens, schools and care homes, career guidance within the framework of the Employment Service of

Slovenia and other organisations, informing and counselling for early school leavers, provision of general information and guidance for the young, tutorship and career guidance for students and guidance in adult education.

In December 2005, a National Guidance Policy Forum was founded, which elaborated a Proposal for supplementing the Human Resources Development Operational Programme of the European Social Fund of for the 2007-2013 period. In conformity with the guidelines of the Resolution on strengthening policy, systems and practices in the field of lifelong guidance in Europe, career guidance is included in this Proposal in various ministerial fields of work, which is progress in relation to practice to date. The document is the basis for a faster and more effective development of career guidance services in Slovenia.

2.4. TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY

The basic aim of transnational mobility and project partnership is to improve the quality of providers of education and training, to stimulate and transfer innovations, to support the transparency of educational systems, to strengthen the European dimension and the acquisition of knowledge and competences in a different setting. In 2006 the programme period of the second generation of the Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes ended, in which Slovenia was participating since the beginning, so that with Slovenia's accession to the EU in 2004, activities almost tripled in terms of extent. International mobility is an important element of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2007-2013 and the European Lifelong learning action programme. In recent years, administrative obstacles to entry and residence in Slovenia have been removed, cooperation in mobility has already been included in regulations on the promotion of employees in education and training, as well as changes in education and training have followed the basic guidelines of the EU.

The implementation of tools for transparency is taking place successfully. A Europass Centre has been founded and a national project group for the implementation of Europass established. Activities for the promotion and coordination of a common framework for the transparency of Europass: Europass CV, Europass Language Passport, Europass Mobility, Europass Certificate Supplement, Europass Diploma Supplement, are taking place. The Expert Council for Vocational and Technical Education has confirmed 20 certificate supplements, in line with new educational programmes. The Europass Diploma Supplement is already in use. In cooperation with all partners, a promotion strategy has been prepared which is being successfully realised.

See Annexes.

Chapter 3

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY OBJECTIVES IN SCHOOLS, HIGHER EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND ADULT EDUCATION

3.1. SCHOOLS

3.1.1. Governance and leadership of education and training institutions

There is a trial introduction of changes in the organisation of educational work, which are based on a changed concept of knowledge, evaluating all of a pupil or student's achievements (not just in school subjects), introducing a credit system (easier transition between the different parts of the formal system) and more flexible organisation of classes (organisation of classes no longer specified on a national level by years). Such projects will be financed from European funds.

Changes were introduced in 2005 and 2006 in the method of financing secondary schools (calculation of programme costs per pupil capita), which allow schools greater autonomy in the allocation of funds and, at the same time, bind them to the application of a constant process of self-evaluation.

3.1.2. Stimulating private investment

After the adoption of the Public-Private Partnership Act, since 2006 we have been preparing amendments to the education laws, which will remove obstacles to private investment in education (for the moment the share of private educational institutions in the network of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools is something less than 1%). The share of resources that schools obtain from parents (school funds) and donations for providing above-standard services is also increasing.

3.1.3. Access and equity of participation, treatment and outcomes

Slovenia has an extensive network of primary and secondary schools. In order to preserve small primary schools in out-of-the-way settlements, the ministry has introduced measures by which to ensure optimal ratios between their financing and the quality of teaching provided.

Secondary education is not compulsory, it is free and 98% of each generation enrolls in it (some 99% of primary school leavers are enrolled in their programme of choice). Since 2004, funds for

subsidising school meals and transport have been increased, and textbook funds are working well. Nevertheless, it is possible to see a connection between the socio-economic background of students and their choice of particular forms of education.

More funds have been devoted to including children with special needs in mainstream education (since 2004, e.g., the number of pupils with special needs included in mainstream schools has increased threefold). The system of 'mobile teachers' has been reinforced, who are included in mainstream programmes as additional professional assistance.

Since the adoption of the strategy of education for the Roma in 2004, there are no longer special classes for Roma pupils. Each year, the ministry, together with representatives of the Roma, prepares an action plan with specific measures for the implementation of solutions from the strategy: in 2005 a curriculum was prepared for Roma culture, and by 2008, with the assistance of ESF funds, a Roma dictionary, grammar book and textbook for the Roma language will have been elaborated, and we will similarly co-finance introduction of Roma assistants in kindergartens and schools.

Slovenia has only recently been confronted with livelier migration movements, so a draft strategy for inclusion of migrants in the educational system was prepared in January of this year. The main solutions cover the preparation of courses, curricula and textbooks for Slovenian as a second language, the introduction of individual programmes for work with children of migrants, special forms of work with their parents, inclusion of interculturality and the languages and cultures of migrants in implemented curricula.

Implementation of solutions for all the enumerated groups, as well as the socially disadvantaged, will be co-funded with the aid of the ESF.

3.1.4. Gender equity

In 2005, a Resolution on the national programme for equal opportunities for women and men 2005-2013 was adopted, which also covers aims and measures in the area of education. The main aim is the systematic inclusion of gender equity in curricula and syllabuses, in textbooks and other teaching material and in the education and training of professional staff. By 2013, with the assistance of the ESF, we will co-finance projects in kindergartens and schools which, in addition to gender equity education, will also include equal and responsible parenthood, prevention of violence against women, sexual exploitation etc. It will be additionally necessary to elaborate specific initiatives for removing the difference between »female« and »male« vocations in order

for pupils and secondary students to decide in equal measure for both, whereby segregation by gender on the labour market will be reduced.

3.1.5. The use of learning outcome based approaches for the definition and designing of education and training objectives, standards and curricula, and their relevance to the needs of society and the economy

National assessment of knowledge in primary school serves as feedback information on pupils' achievements (development-investigative function) and is voluntary (98% of pupils took part in 2006). Questions are planned in such a way that it is possible to analyse outcomes in relation to curriculum aims and on a taxonomic level. Secondary students sit the school-leaving external examination (*matura*) at the end of general upper-secondary school programmes (*gimnazije*).

After completion of assessment, analyses and reports are elaborated with proposals for further work. Databases on learning outcomes serve to guide policies on the level of the school and on the national level. In order better to exploit these databases, since 2005/2006 we have been developing a value-added model (part of international OECD research). The results of the project should serve mainly for a more objective judgement of the impact of quality of work in school on pupil or student outcomes.

3.1.6. Quality assurance systems

In addition to external evaluation of quality by the inspection service, there have been ever more projects of self-evaluation in recent years (also with the help of ESF funds). In 2006, a plan was elaborated of systematic involvement in international studies that significantly contributes to the evaluation of the system (Slovenia was already included in the TIMSS, PISA and PIRLS studies).

Legislative changes are envisaged which will prescribe the introduction of quality teams in institutions; these will have to be trained in the use of various mechanisms, interpretation of results and planning measures for improving quality. Instruments for measuring and assuring quality will have to be clearly linked to the aims of lifelong learning if we do not want the process to be distorted into fruitless bureaucratic work or mere classification of schools. Similarly, it will be necessary to find the proper balance between quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

3.1.7. Developing learning partnerships with stakeholders

Cooperation with the environment, above all with parents, and with other educational institutions is developed through various projects (UNESCO schools, health schools, innovation and development projects, youth research work, culture). In the last two years, cooperation has been institutionalised mainly in the field of evaluating and assuring quality in educational work, since schools are obliged to include the local community and social partners in the self-evaluation process.

3.1.8. Strengthening pre-primary education

In 2006 the ministry financed studies aimed at ascertaining whether the share paid by Slovenian parents is greater in comparison with other European countries and whether the scale for determining payments could be more fairly defined. Changes are being prepared on the basis of the results. There were several debates in parliament in 2006 on initiatives for free kindergartens for all children. The need was stressed during those debates for the introduction of various forms of pre-school education (e.g., part-time programmes).

3.1.9. Modernising curricula and assessment arrangements

Considerable attention has been paid in the last three years to the assessment system (New Culture of Testing and Assessment project). Models of monitoring pupils and secondary students' progress with portfolios (e.g., language portfolio) have been developed.

Since 2005, modernising the curricula of primary schools and *gimnazije* has been taking place, which includes the concept of key competences. In this kind of modernisation, it is important to address questions of how to guarantee a high quality of programmes that enable further studies on the tertiary level, how to find the balance between the coherence of the programme and sufficient flexibility and individualisation and how through programmes to guarantee the suitable autonomy of schools and teachers.

3.1.10. Education and training of teachers

Close attention has been devoted to the initial teacher education (pedagogic study programmes have been modernised in line with the Bologna reform) and modernisation of teaching

qualification courses. Descriptions of teachers' competences and proposed standards for accreditation of pedagogic study programmes have been elaborated.

With the aid of ESF funds, in 2005/2006 a modernised method of in-service teacher training was introduced, which now includes a number of forms and is more targeted on competences that a teacher should have in today's circumstances. Teachers can therefore choose between post-graduate non-degree courses and programmes of in-service training. The first are devoted to completing conditions for obtaining the teacher licence and the second for ensuring high professional qualifications for teaching in a specific subject area (familiarity with professional developments) and knowledge of effective pedagogic practice. *See Annexes.*

3.1.11. Achieving EU benchmarks

The share of early school leavers in Slovenia is lower than in other EU Members States (*see Annexes*). It will perhaps be necessary in future to devote more attention to the question of the sense of repetition and to activities for preventing school failure (some models and strategies have already been elaborated in the last four years).

In 2005 a National Strategy for the Development of Literacy in Education was adopted and we have already begun to apply its first measures. Modernisation of curricula is intended to update the approaches to teaching science subjects. Activities have also been introduced for the promotion of scientific and technical vocations. Most of the effects of the measures in both fields can only be expected in the coming years. Systematically planned and implemented activities are certainly necessary, the realisation of which will take place with the aid of ESF funds in the coming six years.

3.2. HIGHER EDUCATION

3.2.1. Governance and leadership of higher education institutions

Since 2004, universities have strengthened the share and role of students and employers' representatives on management bodies. For more effective linkage with the research and business spheres, and transfer and use of knowledge to the economy, special agreements on cooperation are concluded and partnership bodies, special offices, scientific parks, incubators etc have been founded. More and more branch units are being opened in the regions and the network is thus being widened. Because of internationalisation and greater diversification of sources of financing, staffs are being strengthened in international offices, a network of programme

coordinators is being established or services for international projects are being founded. All institutions have a quality committee, and are speeding up the introduction of a tutoring system and 'career centres', and some agreements have been signed on the mutual recognition of credit points.

3.2.2. Stimulating private investment

Newly adopted legislation has opened up opportunities for private investment in higher education, especially the Public-Private Partnership Act and new tax relief for company investment in research and development. Founding private higher education institutions is systematically encouraged, whose founders will include companies in addition to local communities and natural persons. Despite the fact that there are no tuition fees for regular studies at first and second degree levels, the personal investment of individuals in forms of tuition fees for part-time studies is not negligible. *See Annexes.*

3.2.3. Access and equity of participation, treatment and outcomes

Equal access is enabled primarily by public financing of higher education, increasing the number of enrolment places and the possibility of choice (new institutions and extending the network of dislocated units), scholarships and other forms of social benefits for students.

A new Scholarships Act is in process of adoption, which should additionally enlarge possibilities of study, with an increase in the amount of state scholarships and easing of the entry criteria for obtaining them, by increasing the supplement in relation to family income and by the possibility of co-funding company scholarships. Supply and demand for human resources in individual regions will thus be harmonised. Structural unemployment will be reduced, companies will find it easier to decide on scholarships and staff planning, staff will be able to return to their jobs, partnerships will be established among those responsible for development in the region, and education for deficit professions will be encouraged.

Students with special needs have specific benefits in enrolment conditions and the award of scholarships, they receive a special supplement for accommodation, obstacles to physical access are removed etc.

3.2.4. Gender equity

The share of women in tertiary education has long exceeded 50% (*see Annexes*). However, representation by fields shows an explicitly imbalanced ratio, so within the framework of the promotion of studies of science and technology special attention is devoted to guiding girls into these studies.

Despite such a high share of women in higher education, their representation on the staff of higher education institutions is inadequate. While more than half of staff with lower titles are women, they represent only a third of senior lecturers, a quarter of associate professors and barely 13% of full professors. The National Programme of Higher Education (NPHE) therefore set the target of increasing the percentage of women among associate professors to 33% by 2010 and of full professors to 20%.

3.2.5. Use of study outcome based approaches for the definition and design of objectives, standards and curricula and their relevance to the needs of society and the economy

The new Bologna study programmes must among other things be internationally comparable and contain general and subject specific competences and practical education in the working environment (first level), projects in the working environment (second level) and applicative or developmental research studies (second and third levels).

The accreditation of study programmes evaluates their strategic role in economic, social and cultural development, graduate manpower requirements, whether conditions for providing practical training are met and what the opinions of the branch chamber of commerce and industry or craft, competent ministries or relevant employer associations are. Cooperation with the environment is also one of the important standards in external evaluation.

3.2.6. Quality assurance systems

The quality assurance system is being changed into a comprehensive system, with regular external evaluations and achievement of the quality standards in the European Higher Education Area. A Senate for Evaluation at the Higher Education Council has already been formed for the regular evaluation of institutions and programmes. Around ten million EUR from the European Social Fund is available for the development of the system of external evaluation in programme period 2007-2013. *See Annexes*.

3.2.7. Developing learning partnerships with stakeholders

Representatives of the social partners and civil society (NGOs), the Higher Education Council RS and the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Student Issues participate in elaborating legislative proposals. Both students and representatives of employees and employers are involved in the management of institutions. Special bodies have been formed at universities for the linkage of higher education institutions with the economy and local communities (see *Annexes*).

3.2.8. Reinforcing the knowledge triangle between education, research and innovation

A National Research and Development Programme (NRDP) 2006-2010 was adopted in 2005, and in 2006 a draft NPHE was prepared. NRDP measures relate to support of technological development and the economy, strengthening cooperation between public research sphere and companies, and linking companies, research institutions and universities for the transfer of research results into the economy. Similar measures are also envisaged in NPHE.

Some measures have already been realised. The introduction of concessions in research programmes 2004-2008 thus enables the participation of commercial companies. In 2005, new projects were introduced with themes harmonised with the business sector. In 2005 and 2006, public tenders were held for encouraging long-term cooperation between companies and research organisations in the form of technology centres (common research-and-development infrastructures) and platforms (common medium and long-term priorities) and in 2006 a public tender was held for co-financing researchers in the economy to the level of 5.63 million EUR.

In 2004-2006 considerable funds were allocated from the European Regional Development Fund and the PHARE programme for reinforcing the knowledge triangle (for projects of technological centres, networks and parks, business clusters, research centres of excellence, university spin-off incubators etc.). In the period 2007-2013, financing of such activities will continue, and greater support will be given to ensuring the operation of patent offices and university offices for the transfer of technology.

New laws are in process of being adopted: an umbrella act on higher education and research-and-development activities, an act on risk capital companies and an act on the protection of intellectual property.

3.2.9. Participation targets and measures to achieve them

Since more and more young people enrol in tertiary education, the draft NPHE does not envisage specific measures for further increasing the share, so great importance is given to guiding young people into study programmes in the fields of science, technical subjects and healthcare. A further improvement in the educational structure of the population should be achieved mainly with the development of lifelong learning or upgrading training of the adult population (See *Annexes*).

3.2.10. Measures for increasing excellence

NPHE explicitly stresses excellence and competitiveness in the international environment. In the next years, at least one Slovenian university must be ranked among top 200 in Europe; for accreditation of programmes, comparison with two universities which are among top 500 in the world is compulsory; international calls for applications are envisaged for employment posts of a higher education teacher on permanent contract; habilitation standards will be internationally comparable; by 2010 all institutions must have at least 5% foreign lecturers and increase the number of post-graduate students from abroad; internationally comparable differentiation standards for research achievements will be introduced and there will have been founded at least one scientific centre of excellence per three or four faculties by 2010.

3.2.11. Measures for increasing the number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology (EU benchmark)

In Slovenia, higher education institutions propose the number of enrolment places and the government additionally regulates them by consent. The number of enrolment places in sciences, mathematics, computer studies, technical studies, production technologies and construction thus increased by 10% in 2006/2007. Eighteen consultations with students throughout Slovenia were held in spring 2006, in which, in addition to relevant ministries, companies, scholarship providers and job providers for graduates in science and technology took part. Students obtained information on studies, possibilities of scholarships and employment. The shares of enrolled students in the above enumerated fields surpassed expectations, so the government repeated the measures for 2007/2008. The institutions themselves also contribute to the promotion of science and technology subjects. See *Annexes*.

3.3. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND ADULT EDUCATION

3.3.1. Governance and leadership of education and training institutions

In 2004, the ministry began modernisation of the system of financing and management of secondary education, which is based on lump sum financing per capita. It allows schools greater professional and financial autonomy and faster reaction to the needs of the labour market and the environment, and at the same time imposes greater responsibility for educational outcomes and encourages them to seek solutions which will improve both quality and internal economics. *See Annexes.*

3.3.2. Stimulating private investment

VET is financed mainly from public funds. Employers finance practical training which relates to programmes in individual contracts up to 54 weeks, and in programmes with school contracts at least 24 weeks. A case of private investment is the founding of inter-company centres (*see Annexes*). The situation will be improved when education legislation removes obstacles for the development of public-private partnerships and the granting of concessions.

Adult education is financed from public and private funds (*see Annexes*). Co-financing of the education gap is stimulated in the ratio 1/3 state, 1/3 employer, 1/3 participant. Local communities co-finance general non-formal programmes.

3.3.3. Access and equity of participation, treatment and outcomes

Students can choose modules according to their interests in the open curriculum. Those unable successfully to complete education can obtain a NVQ certificate, which gives them access to the labour market. Schools prepare the school curriculum in relation to the enrolled population and the needs of individuals. For students who do not attain minimum standards individualised plans are prepared and learning assistance provided. Textbook funds, free school meals and transport are available. Projects for reducing early school leaving are financed with the help of ESF.

In the sphere of adult education, raising the level of education is co-financed. In 2006 we financed centres for providing information and counselling in adult education (ICAE) and co-financed information and counselling centres for youth (ICCY) and lifelong learning centres (LLC). With the help of ESF funds we co-financed programmes of Project Learning for Young Adults (PLYA) and Training for Success in Life (TSL). It will be necessary to consider in the future how to

integrate them in the national qualifications framework. EU and Phare projects were also successful, devoted to studying the validation system for adults, professional counselling for adults and marginal groups.

See Annexes.

3.3.4. Gender equity

See 3.1.4.

3.3.5. Use of learning outcome based approaches for the definition and design of objectives, standards and curricula and their relevance to the needs of society and the economy

VET programmes, NVQ's and certificating non-formal knowledge are based on professional standards made on the assessed needs of the economy for new knowledge and competences. The link is thus strengthened between education and the labour market and the relevance of programmes is improved. In future it will be necessary to pay more attention to the methodology of creating standards.

Extensive curricular changes in all branches have been co-financed by ESF funds. New framework national curricula have a module structure, are based on competences and evaluated in terms of credit points (credit transfer system). Twenty percent of the curriculum is open to local needs. Learning outcomes are specified in terms of obtaining professional competences (connecting theory and practice, training in companies) and building on key competences and general knowledge. New programmes enable students easier vertical and horizontal transition between them, and adults to obtain certificates on non-formal knowledge that are recognised in further education.

3.3.6. Quality assurance systems

A comprehensive concept of quality assurance in VET is being prepared which includes already existing nationally prescribed standards, curricula, qualifications and teacher training, entering schools in the register, final examinations and vocational *matura*, and adds self-evaluation and compulsory founding of quality management groups in schools, and regular annual reporting on progress. Quality monitoring indicators have been prepared which are expected to be adopted in April 2007.

In order to improve and encourage greater investment in quality in adult education organisations, we have developed a model for self-evaluation 'Offering quality education to adults' (OQEA), which is comparable with models of self-evaluation in other European countries and has many elements identified in the common European quality assurance framework (CQAF).

See Annexes.

3.3.7. Developing learning partnerships with stakeholders

New curricula (20 % of each is open) encourage schools to cooperate intensively with the environment and local companies. With the aid of ESF funds, regional councils for human resource development have been created in which are included employees, schools, regional development agencies and chambers.

Lifelong learning centres include the following social partners: employees, schools which provide adult education, regional development agencies and providers of counselling and independent learning. The ICAE and ICCY models include partners in the local environment with the aim of networking as many providers of education and advisory services for adults as possible, thus assuring a quality, comprehensive and coordinated activity of all those involved.

3.3.8. Measures for improving quality and attractiveness of VET and adult education

In addition to new programmes, it is mainly the quality of their implementation that will contribute to greater attractiveness of VET. An extensive project of introducing programmes and training teachers in the use of new teaching methods and knowledge assessment, greater individualisation and learning support is therefore taking place. Furthermore, a national strategy of encouraging enrolment in and raising the recognition of VET is in preparation.

In 2005 and 2006, the 10th and 11th Lifelong Learning Week (LLW) were held, which help make the Slovenian public more aware and better informed of the importance and diverse opportunities of lifelong learning.

See Annexes.

3.3.9. Measures to reinforce the link between VET and labour market needs

Initiatives for new qualifications, with an assessment of annual manpower requirements and comparative analyses of at least three countries, can be made by chambers, legal and natural persons and ministries, and are discussed by sectoral committees, who commission the preparation of professional standards. An open curriculum allows schools, together with social partners, quickly to include new knowledge and competences into modules.

There is Programme 10,000+ in adult education, which includes unemployed persons without (suitable) vocational education and plays a major role in realising the strategy of development of the labour market, since it helps bridge the education gap and structural lag on the labour market.

See Annexes.

3.3.10. Opening up pathways to further and higher education

Students can continue education in post-secondary and tertiary programmes. On the system level, there are a number of pathways which ensure transition between general and technical education and an easier transition to the tertiary level. One of the possibilities is one-year bridging courses intended for final-year *gimnazija* students offering them a vocational qualification. Final-year technical students who are completing their education with the vocational *matura* can enrol in higher vocational and professional programmes, and by taking an additional, fifth subject of the general *matura* also in university programmes. They can choose the one-year *matura* course as a preparation for the general *matura*, which enables enrolment in all forms of tertiary education. All kinds of measures are financed by the state.

3.3.11. Education and training of teachers and trainers

Several projects have been prepared for a systematic upgrade of the necessary competences of teachers, which are mostly co-financed by ESF funds: team planning and implementation of the school curriculum, advising and supporting the individual in obtaining new knowledge (individualised teaching plans, portfolios), introducing project and problem learning, learning to learn, use of ICT, literacy, introducing e-learning, networking schools, companies and teachers, developing the Teacher Training Network. Programmes of cooperation between schools and the economy have been developed and introduced, with a stress on training teachers and mentors for practical work. *See Annexes.*

3.3.12. Reinforcing the social partner involvement in training

The new Vocational Education Act specifies the involvement of social partners in all phases of developing professional standards and programmes and in their implementation. The share of practical training in companies has been reinforced (at least 24 weeks in vocational education), and seminars for company mentors have been prepared. The most important measure is the foundation of the Public Fund for Human Resources Development and Scholarships.

3.3.13. Enhancing access and opportunities for learning among the disadvantaged

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs is enhancing access and opportunities for learning among the disadvantaged (unemployed, disabled, Roma and persons with identified employment obstacles) through measures of Active Employment Policy programmes, which include activities from the Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2007-2013 (education and training for competitiveness and employability, stimulating the employability of job seekers and the inactive, equal opportunities on the labour market and strengthening social inclusion). *See Annexes and 3.1.3.*

3.3.14. Increasing the rate of adult participation in lifelong learning and reinforcing key competencies among adult learners

The share of adult participation in Slovenia is above the EU benchmark (12.5%) and in 2005 amounted to 17.8% (source: EUROSTAT). Despite the high participation rate, a significant problem remains with the low participation rates of the elderly and the less educated. Less favourable trends are also shown by data on adult participation in formal education, where the number is falling. Measures for solving these problems will have to be envisaged in the operational programmes of the lifelong learning strategy. *See Annexes.*

We believe that in the future the following challenges will have to be confronted:

- It will be necessary to develop manifold organisational forms of formal and other types of learning (flexible organisation of the implemented curricula).
- Methods will have to be developed of reinforcing the involvement of the social partners (their role is still too passive - they cooperate, e.g., only in the preparation of professional standards).
- It will be necessary to consider the concept or method of defining professional standards.
- Within the discussions on the qualifications framework, it will be necessary suitably to evaluate the status and role of VET and various types of knowledge.
- More attention will have to be given to the development of competences for intergenerational dialogue and to develop intergenerational pedagogies. The same applies to intercultural dialogue.

ANNEXES

Item/1.3.3.

Slovenia allotted slightly less than 97 million € in the existing financial perspectives, for knowledge, human resources development and employment, of which slightly more than 29 million € for lifelong learning. The favourable trend of available funds continues in the new financial perspectives within the framework of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme (OP). The OP identifies the development priorities, which are connected with the priorities in European and national development documents, and is based on conditions on the labour market, the need to develop competitiveness and a modern and effective state. Priorities so established will make a key contribution to realising the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005-2008) for realising the renewed Lisbon Strategy, the National Reform Programme for Achieving the Lisbon Strategy Goals in Slovenia and strategic aims of the EU contained in the Community Strategic Guidelines for cohesion. The total indicative share within the framework of OP devoted to 'Lisbon expenditures' amounts to over 85%. There is a larger extent of rights to drawing funds in comparison with the previous programme period and, in the area of human resources development, it enables achieving the aim of »investing in people, whose human capital will ensure a greater level of innovation, employability and economic growth, which is also the best way to higher employment, social inclusion, lessening of regional differences and a high standard of living«.

The OP priorities include, on the one hand, stimulating the highest educated human resources to be employed in the economy and, on the other hand, training and educating employees in companies, with a special emphasis on employees with lower education and qualifications, who are neglected in companies, are not normally included in education and are therefore the most vulnerable in terms of employability. Attention is also paid to development and implementation of new scholarship schemes, development of qualifications framework concept and of new job opportunities. It thus attempts to remove deficiencies in the cooperation between research and the economy; to ensure better employability and mobility of the employed, which will consequently reflect also in greater competitiveness of the economy; to encourage various forms of entrepreneurship, new job opportunities and flexible forms of employment and, through preventive actions, to contribute with suitable scholarship policies to reducing structural lag on the labour market. All the enumerated measures reflect the guidelines of the European Youth Pact, which in its development aims and directions envisages investment in a lifelong career orientation and a knowledge based economy. The strategy of investment in the young through education, training, motivating, counselling and guiding ensures faster and more effective integration of the young into the labour market. In this part, the transfer of knowledge between generations, together with obtaining the required knowledge, skills and competences, is crucial.

Slightly more than a fifth of OP funds is used for modernising education and training systems and their adjustment to the demands of time (programmes of sustainable development and ICT development) and for investment in individuals through the entire life, including with education and training of teachers and trainers. Activities will be carried out in the entire vertical system of education and in all life periods of an individual. The aim is thus to ensure better access to the most varied programmes and forms of lifelong learning to the widest circle of users and to contribute to (even) greater inclusion of the population in lifelong learning.

Item/1.3.5.

Slovenia has thus only in the last decade begun to be more intensively involved in international research (IEA, OECD); in 2006 a systematic plan of inclusion in international studies which are and will be used in policy planning was elaborated. Similarly, during this period the ministry has supported the development of instruments and mechanisms of self-evaluation in education institutions. The ministry has supported implementation of the two activities with national and European funds.

Item/2.1.

Eight levels:

- the first level includes incomplete primary school education;
- the second level includes primary school education;
- the third level includes short-term vocational education;
- the fourth level includes secondary vocational education;
- the fifth level includes secondary general education and secondary technical education;
- the sixth level has two sub-levels: sub-level 6/1 includes higher vocational education, sub-level 6/2 higher professional and university education (first Bologna level) and higher professional education (former);
- the seventh level includes masters degree level (second Bologna level) and university education (former);
- the eighth level includes two sub-levels: sub-level 8/1 includes master of science (former), sub-level 8/2 includes doctorate of science.

Item/2.2.

In the Official Gazette, 279 professional standards and 69 catalogues of standards of professional knowledge and skills have been published. Of these, 210 professional standards were prepared and adopted by the Expert Council in 2005 and 2006 (source: Department for Professional standards, National Institute for VET) and 25 catalogues of standards of professional knowledge and skills. Thirty catalogues of standards are in preparation. Seventy-five providers are entered in the register of providers of procedures for testing and certifying NVQ's, of which 35 new providers were entered in 2005 and 2006. There have been 594 members of committees for testing and certifying NVQ'S appointed, 146 of which in 2005 and 109 in 2006, and 15,271 NVQ certificates have been awarded, of which 3,961 certificates in 2005 and 8,158 in 2006. There are 80 candidates in procedure of obtaining a license as a member of a committee.

There have been four public announcements in newspapers on closing dates for testing and certifying vocational qualifications by providers, two in 2005 and two in 2006.

Training for counselling in the procedure of testing and certifying NVQ's was attended by 166 counsellors, of which 91 in 2005 and 2006.

Non-formal adult education: numerous programmes are provided for increasing literacy, study circles, learning exchange, centres for self-directed learning.

Item/2.4.

Additional funds were available in that period for the support of mobility, up to 2003 EU Phare development assistance funds to a total amount of 600,000 € and in 2006 almost 21,000 € of national funds for the support of mobility in university education.

Almost 40% of secondary schools and all universities are participating in partnership projects of the Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes, and the interest of kindergartens is also gradually increasing.

International mobility of students and higher education teachers:

Within the Erasmus programme, a total of 742 students were included in the academic year 2004/2005, which is 36 % more than in the past academic year (546), in 2005/06 there were 877, which means an 18 % increase, and in 2006/07 already more than 1,000, which signifies a continuation of the growth trend. Within the multilateral CEEPUS programme and bilateral cooperation programmes in 2004-2006, a total of a further 249 students went abroad. The average duration of study exchanges is approaching 6 months. In addition, between 2004 and 2006, 313 students and 174 future young workers obtained practical experience and training abroad. From 2004 onwards, 40 students - foreign language assistants and future teachers have attended practical training abroad for periods of 4-6 months (there were 36 between 2000 and 2003). Despite the good results of increasing mobility among students, still fewer than 2% of the total student population are included in it (source: Student Organisation of Slovenia).

Similarly, the mobility of higher education teachers has almost doubled; since 2003/04 (with 73 candidates) the number has increased to 139 in the 2005/06 academic year and to 141 in the following year.

International mobility of secondary students and teachers:

Within the Comenius programme, in the context of school partnerships in international mobility in 2004 to 2006, 1,027 pupils and students participated (from 2000 to 2003 the number was 417, which means an increase of 2.5 times).

Practical experience was gained by 752 students within the Leonardo da Vinci programme and this kind of practical training became an important part of the curricula of secondary VET schools, despite the demanding organisational and implementation conditions.

The involvement of teachers has similarly increased, from 453 in 2000-2003 to 1,125 from 2004 onwards. Activities also increased in international mobility in in-service teacher training, since 210 have attended seminars or courses through the Comenius programme since 2004, and 651 and 91 LSP teachers (language for specific purposes) have been on short study and professional exchanges through the Leonardo da Vinci programme. In order to get to know systemic arrangements in the field of education and training, 104 individuals involved with development went on study visits.

From the point of view of lifelong learning, international mobility also increased in the sphere of adult education; since 2004 there have been 58 participants in short study exchanges.

It is characteristic of the period since 2004 that, in addition to the international mobility of Slovenians, candidates from other countries are increasingly interested in undergoing study and practice in Slovenia. In the area of higher education, more than 1,300 foreign students have already studied here. Around 200 secondary students underwent practical training and we have hosted 36 foreign assistants, future foreign language teachers.

Progress in the field of inclusion in 'virtual mobility' is very noticeable. In 2004, Slovenia began to cooperate in the activities of the eLearning programme - eTwinning, which is intended to support the international cooperation of schools. During this time, 145 schools (mainly primary schools, where, because of the age of children, pupil mobility is more difficult) have been included in activities, of which some 90 also participate with their own projects. Two handbooks have been published, with a total issue of 3,000 copies.

In 2005 and 2006, there were more than 35 various presentations of the Europass initiative at different events, and publications and video films were prepared. A website www.europass.si was designed, which was visited by 10,305 visitors from March 2006 to December 2006 and recorded 401,516 hits. In 2006, 267 Europass Mobility documents were issued.

Item/3.1.10.

With the aid of ESF funds, 127 new programmes of in-service teacher training have thus been developed, and 33,692 participants have been included in the programmes. 1,462 teachers have been trained in the transfer of new knowledge and competences to other teachers. In the field of VET, 76 new programmes have been developed. Professional qualification programmes have included 3,330 professional staff. Six new programmes have been developed for leadership staff (principals). Programmes of in-service training have been attended by 1,516 principals.

One of the most interesting and successful projects in the reporting years was the project »Partnership of faculties and schools«, in which models of cooperation between university faculties and schools have been developed in the fields of:

- carrying out study practice for students of teacher-specialist study programmes,
- introducing trainees and beginners into independent teaching,
- preparation of new more contemporary teacher training programmes supported by ICT,
- training teachers for researching teaching practice and use of the results.

Nineteen new training programmes were thus elaborated and 1,901 teachers trained.

Item/3.1.11.

Since 1995 the share of secondary school students who successfully complete the year has not significantly changed (90%). In 2005 91.7% successfully completed the year and in 2006 92.6%. The highest share of those repeating in the 2005/06 academic year was among students of secondary vocational programmes (4.8%) and secondary technical programmes (4.3%), and least in *gimnazija* programmes (1.9%): In 2006, 72.7 % of repeaters completed the year.

An extensive study was carried out on the causes of students abandoning regular education in secondary schools. It follows from the research that more boys than girls abandon regular education in secondary schools. The most vulnerable population are in secondary VET programmes. The majority of students left for the first time, but around 20% for the second time, since they had previously been enrolled in another programme or school. School failure or failing marks in one or more subjects are the commonest reasons to leave school early. One of the most important causes of failure and early leaving is absence from classes, as well as too little learning. A third of early school leavers in the last school year (2005/06) stress that no-one showed them how to learn. Around a fifth of students believe that nobody presented to them the technique of learning individual subjects. Students with learning and other difficulties usually turn to friends, instructors, school peers, less to the teachers of subjects with which they are having difficulties. The Ministry of Education and Sport thus started systematically to encourage the counselling and mentor role of teachers. More than a third of students do not have a clear vocational or educational aim at the time of early leaving.

Item/3.2.2.

In the last three academic years, the ministry has awarded concessions for the implementation of study programmes (co-financing from public funds) to seven private higher education institutions.

During preparation of the National Higher Education Programme (NPHE) discussions were also opened on the introduction of contributions for studies or tuition fees for full-time studies, but the question was withdrawn from NPHE during harmonisation with the governmental Council for Student Issues.

Item/3.2.4.

The share of women is already higher in all types of programme, slightly less than the share of men only in higher vocational and doctoral programmes. Data by fields of education, except in the fields of services, agriculture and veterinary studies, indicate explicitly imbalanced ratios. The share of women in 2005/06 was thus lower than the share of men in two fields: in technology, production and construction it only achieved 24%, and in science, mathematics and computer studies 33%. In contrast, the share of women is explicitly greater than the share of men in the following fields: in healthcare and social work and in education their share is 80%, in arts and humanities 73% and in social and business sciences and law 66%.

Item/3.2.6.

The national commission for quality of higher education, which provides higher educational institutions with support in carrying out internal evaluation, carried out the first four pilot external evaluations of higher education institutions in 2006. Simultaneously, it tested the compatibility of standards for external evaluation with standards for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

In 2006, on their own initiative, higher education institutions commissioned international evaluations and obtained international accreditation. Thus, for example, at the University of Ljubljana, after the first evaluation in 1996, the second institutional evaluation EUA is currently taking place, and the Faculty of Economics of the University of Ljubljana has obtained the prestigious EQUIS international accreditation, which ranks it among the best business schools in the world.

Item/3.2.7.

The Council of Trustees of the University of Primorska, e.g., gives opinions on agreements and projects concluded between the university and the economy and local communities. If requested, it participates in external evaluation of the work of the university. Together with the university it formulates agreements on scholarships for students, on the employment of young researchers in the economy and on including company employees in the educational process at the university. In accordance with the interests of the labour market and the region, it supports the elaboration of high-quality and competitive study programmes and the implementation of applicative projects and is cooperating with the university in founding a business incubator.

Item/3.2.9.

The education level of the population is fast improving, the share of the population with tertiary education is approaching the average in the EU. The share of the population in the 25-64 age cohort with tertiary education achieved 21.5% in 2006, which is 5.8% more than in 2000. Such a growth is a result of ever greater inclusion of the young in tertiary education. According to calculations by the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development (on the basis of EUROSTAT data), the inclusion of the young (aged 20-24) in tertiary education in Slovenia is above the EU average (in 2004 it amounted to 40.6%, and in the EU-25 27.8%).

Item/3.2.11.

The following ratios were achieved in 2006/07: social sciences 31.7%, mathematics and computer studies 7.7%, technical studies, production technology and construction 22 %. The Government has given consent for 2007/08 to the following shares: social sciences 31.6% of enrolment places, science, mathematics and computer studies 8.52%, technical studies and production technology 22.58%. The number of enrolment places for healthcare has been increased from 6 to 7 percent. For further regionalisation of higher education and the representation of study fields in individual regions, the Government awarded new concessions to higher education institutions in three regions and provided financing of studies from public funds.

Higher education institutions themselves also carried out numerous activities for the promotion of science and technology, where student councils play a very active role. The University of Primorska gave an original initiative in 2006: representatives of the economy and higher education institutions in the region should form a consortium for providing science and technology studies.

Item/3.3.1.

The project is being done on a pilot basis and is enlarged each year. Thirty-one VET schools were included in 2006/07 and next year there will be around 50.

Item/3.3.2.

Two inter-company centres have been founded, three are in the phase of being founded and a further ten are planned. Employers participate in equipment, 5% of equipment is owned by the partners.

In the adult education field, in addition to 92 public secondary schools, a further 33 people's universities and 58 private schools provide publicly recognised programmes.

Item/3.3.3.

In order to reduce early school leaving, two projects are taking place: measures for preventing early school leaving (MPESL) in which 20 vocational schools are taking part, and information and counselling for the young (ICY), which has established a counselling network intended for the young who have left

the school system. A-year-and-a-half monitoring showed that 826 young people were involved in the information activity and 130 early leavers in the counselling activity.

On the basis of a public tender for raising the education level, education for obtaining secondary and higher vocational education was co-financed. The target group was adults from 25 to 64 years of age, and the stress was on natural sciences. We co-financed the education of 6,411 individuals.

We covered the country regionally with 5 ICAE centres, 6 ICCY centres and 13 LLC centres. All the aforementioned counselling activities together provided 28,525 consulting hours, and 11,771 persons, either adults or youth, participated in counselling.

The PLY programme does not provide formal education and is intended for young adults who have left school early and have major difficulties in being included in both school and work. An evaluation study showed that 40.6% of participants were included in some form of education within one year or more of completing the programme, and 23.7% are employed on a fixed-term or open contract.

TSL programmes included TSL - Reading and Writing Together, for parents of children in the first three years of nine-year primary school, and the programme TSL - Bridge to Education, for adults who re-enrol in school. In 2006, 2 newly developed TSL programmes began to be implemented, namely TSL - Challenges of Rural Areas for less qualified rural inhabitants and a programme for adults with special needs TSL - My Step. In 2006, providers also carried out a programme Computer Literacy, and a publicly recognised programme, Computer Literacy for Adults.

Item/3.3.6.

Adult education providers began to use self-evaluation according to this model in 2001. By 2006 the OQEA self-evaluation model has been used by 73% of People's Universities which provide public programmes of adult education (24 of 33 or 5 new since 2004), 26% of secondary schools (24 of 92 or 8 new since 2004) and 10% of private educational organisations (6 of 58 or 4 new since 2004). In total this is 29.51% of all educational organisations that provide publicly recognised programmes of adult education.

All educational organisations which use the OQEA model have a quality team, they identify the vision, mission and values of the educational organisation as elements that determine the quality strategy. They specify care for quality in their annual working plans and annual reports, determine their own standards of quality in individual fields, which the staff adopts, they prepare self-evaluation reports. They hold extensive discussion on the findings of the self-evaluation report in the staff, they publish some results of self-evaluation on the internet and in other ways. The self-evaluation report is the basis for elaborating specific measures (action plan for the development of quality). Almost 30% of educational organisations now use such an approach and we can justifiably speak of new development progress in the adult education network in Slovenia since there has been increased attention paid to the question of the quality of adult education, a whole range of professional initiatives for improving the situation of adult education in various fields are appearing, responsibility for learning outcomes is increasing, not just in terms of school assessment but also in terms of responsibility for effects in the working process.

Item/3.3.8.

All teachers in one school are trained simultaneously (linking theory and practice, project work, team teaching, problem teaching). Sixty-three secondary VET schools are currently included in this project.

Around 58% of the population were included in VET programmes in 2005/06 (42% of students are in general secondary schools), the share of students enrolled in four-year technical education amounts to 36%. Enrolment is increasing in the areas of electrotechnology and computer studies, mechanical engineering and healthcare (Data of secondary education and student boarding homes, Ministry of Education and Sport, Portorož, 2006).

In the field of adult education, the majority of the population is enrolled in four-year technical and three year vocational education and a smaller share in general education. The prevailing interest is in the fields of business and economics, healthcare and technical studies.

LLW: a network of 400 or 500 providers holds around 4,000 events each time. An important novelty in LLW 2006 was the transmittance of the national launch of the LLW and the award of prizes for exceptional learning and professional success on the local level. In these two years, we have awarded 26 new prizes to learners and have cooperated in the Socrates/Grundtvig project IntALWinE, which has drawn new attention to the importance of involving learners in the design of policies and provision of adult education.

Item/3.3.9.

Unemployed young persons up to 24 years of age amounted in December 2006 to 16%, which is still high in comparison with generally registered unemployment, which was 8.6% (source: Statistical Office RS).

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Sport (MES) are responsible for the programme of education for unemployed persons. The programme is elaborated each year within the framework of the governmental project group for the organisation, monitoring and supervision of the programme, in which the social partners are also included. Candidates can apply for enrolment in classes for unemployed persons or individual tendered places for adult education within the enrolment announcement of the current school year. MES finances the provision of education in classes that consist of 15 to 25 participants. In the 2004/05 school year, approximately 650 participants were educated in 26 classes, and in 2005/06 there were 890 participants in 44 classes.

Since 1998, when the programme first started, up to 2005, 28,176 individuals were included in education. The share of young people aged up to 26 years amounted to 49.9%, the share of persons without vocational or technical education was 49.8%, the share of women was 48.6% and the share of long-term unemployed 49.5%. More than 80% of persons were included in programmes of secondary VET. During this period, 3.6% of participants, or 1,021 of the total of 28,176 people enrolled, discontinued the education.

Item/3.3.11.

From January to December 2006, 222 different training programmes with 4,528 participants were carried out (source: internal data of the National institute for VET). Five new training programmes were developed, by which 272 teachers of practical classes and company mentors of practical training in were trained.

In adult education, 862 professional staff were involved in training for the needs of PLYA, TSL, counselling, quality and 10,000+ programmes.

Item/3.3.13.

Activities in which disadvantaged groups will be included are:

- **Training for success in life (TSL)**
TSL programmes are publicly recognised programmes for raising the literacy level of adults, targeted on less educated disadvantaged groups on the labour market. The common core of the programmes relates to obtaining and developing basic skills connected with literacy (reading, writing, calculating), social skills, principles of lifelong learning and active citizenship and computer skills. The specific contents of programmes are based on the educational needs and interests of individual target groups, and programmes are specially adapted to 5 different groups of less educated adults.
- **Project learning for young adults (PLYA)**
This publicly recognised programme of non-formal education is aimed at young people from 15 to 25 years, who for various reasons have left education early and are thus without any kind of

qualification and are among the more difficult to employ on the labour market due to lack of experience. The basic aim of the programme is to help young people to obtain experience and knowledge, which will enable them to be successful in further education or in their chosen profession. In addition, the aim is to obtain functional knowledge which develops general knowledge, broadens the mind and enhances flexibility of thinking, to obtain positive experience of learning, clearly articulated vocational wishes and to develop capacities of critical and problem-oriented thinking.

– **Programmes of institutional training**

They are aimed at increasing employability and obtaining skills and knowledge. The programme is intended mainly for unemployed persons without adequate qualifications or work experience and unemployed persons from oversupplied professions.

– **National vocational qualifications (NVQ)**

The NVQ programme enables participants to obtain a public document on national vocational qualifications, which proves the obtained professional knowledge and skills required for performing a profession or individual duties within a profession. The programme is aimed at all unemployed persons, including disadvantaged groups.

– **On-the-job training**

The aim is to speed up the employment and reintegration into work of persons whose existing knowledge, skills and work experience do not ensure immediate employment or job retention. The programme is intended for all unemployed persons, including disadvantaged groups.

– **Education programme for unemployed persons**

The aim is to reduce structural lag on the labour market, increase the employability and flexibility of unemployed persons on the labour market, raise the education and qualification level of unemployed persons, and encourage young unemployed persons to return to education or be employed. This would contribute to increasing the general education level, formation of a vocational identity and social and cultural activity. Target groups are unemployed persons without a profession or professional qualifications, unemployed persons who want to obtain another profession, with a stress on science and technology, unemployed persons who cannot find employment in their field and unemployed persons younger than 26.

Item/3.3.14.

The education level of the population is rising, since the number of inhabitants with incomplete primary school has been reduced by 15 % in relation to 2000, and the number with only primary school completed by 12 %.

Inhabitants, 15 years old and more, by education, 2000-2005

Year	2000		2005	
	Total in 1000	Share (%)	Total in 1000	Share (%)
TOTAL	1672	100	1714	100
Incomplete primary education	100	6.0	88	5.1
Primary education	451	27.0	406	23.7
Short-term or secondary vocational education	422	25.2	429	25.0
Secondary technical education	383	22.9	424	24.7
Secondary general education	111	6.6	99	5.8
Higher vocational, short-cycle or specialist post-short-cycle education	94	5.6	89	5.2
Higher professional education	28	1.7	41	2.4
Higher university education	71	4.2	118	6.9
Specialist post-graduate education, masters, doctorate	11	0.7	19	1.1

Source: Statistical Yearbook, 2001 and 2006, SURS

In March 2005, a two-day workshop 'Strategy of developing and realising key competences in the Republic of Slovenia' was held, in which experts from the Slovenian universities, MES, chambers of commerce and industry and of craft, members of expert councils, representatives of public education and training institutions and primary and secondary schools participated. The main aim of the workshop was the elaboration of a strategy of development and realising key competences in Slovenia.