

Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) methodology

Statistics Explained

This article describes the methodology of the [continuing vocational training survey \(CVTS\)](#) — the [European Union \(EU\)](#) harmonised survey on continuing [vocational training](#) . The CVTS provides comparable data on vocational training within the EU [enterprises](#) with at least 10 or more employed persons and belonging to a certain group of economic activities.

The CVTS along with the following two other data collections, the [adult education survey \(AES\)](#) and the [EU labour force survey \(EU-LFS\)](#) provide EU statistics on [lifelong learning](#) .

Lifelong learning is defined as an intentional search for knowledge throughout life (after the end of initial education in particular). It is aimed at improving a person's skills and competences for personal or professional reasons.

The CVTS is an EU-wide data collection on continuing vocational training carried out in enterprises. It refers to education and training activities financed totally or partially by the enterprise for their persons employed. The use of work-time and the acquisition of training equipment is also considered as financing.

The following topics are covered in the CVTS data:

- provision of CVT courses and other forms of CVT (training/non-training enterprises);
- CVT strategies;
- participants in CVT courses;
- costs of CVT courses;
- time spent in CVT courses;
- characteristics of CVT courses;
- assessment of CVT activities.

On top of these topics, some information on initial vocational training is also collected through the CVTS.

Coverage and mandate

Six waves of the CVTS have been carried out until now with the reference years 1993, 1999, 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2020.

CVTS 1993

The 1993 CVTS was carried out as a pilot survey with a sample of 50 000 enterprises in all [EU Member States](#) (at the time [EU-12](#)). The [statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community \(NACE\)](#) was used to classify the business sectors covered by the survey. Agriculture, fishing, public administration, education, health and social work, activities of households and extra-territorial organisations and bodies were not included (see Table 1). The 1993 survey had limited comparability with the following rounds. Its results were disseminated through the

[1993 CVTS results](#) publication.

CVTS 1999

The following round of the CVTS took place in 1999 and covered 24 of the current [EU-28](#) Member States (Croatia, Cyprus, Malta and Slovakia not included and only the region of Pomorskie was surveyed in Poland). This wave of the survey was conducted based on a gentlemen's agreement, and used the same coverage of the business sectors as the 1993 CVTS. Detailed information on this round of CVTS can be found in the [1999 CVTS Manual](#) . The 1999 CVTS data are available in Eurostat's online database in the tables of the ' [trng_cvts2](#) ' series. Despite the guidelines of the gentlemen's agreement, the 1999 edition of the CVTS also had limited comparability with the other rounds.

CVTS 2005

The 2005 CVTS covered the [EU-27](#) of that time and Norway. [Regulation \(EC\) No 1552/2005](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council established 'a common framework for the production of European statistics on vocational training in enterprises', and was the legal basis for the 2005 survey. This legislation was complemented by [Commission Regulation No 198/2006](#) which sets out the specific details of the variables, sample size, transmission of the data and quality aspects of the CVTS. This third round of the survey continues to use the NACE Rev.1.1 classification for describing the economic sector of the enterprises.

CVTS 2010

Further legal arrangements (namely [Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 822/2010](#) , amending [Regulation \(EC\) No 198/2006](#)) were the framework for the fourth round of CVTS carried out for the reference year 2010. The changes were aimed at the simplification of variables, reducing the burden on respondents, adjusting the sampling and adapting it to the NACE Rev.2 classification. The geographical coverage included 27 EU Member States (excluding Ireland) and Norway.

Continuing vocational training survey metadata

Reference year	Data	Geographical coverage	Institutional mandate	NACE coverage
1993	1993 CVTS Report	EU-12	pilot survey	Rev. 1.1
1999	trng_cvts2	EU-28 Member States excluding Croatia, Cyprus, Malta and Slovakia. For Poland, only in the Pomorskie region.	gentlemen's agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C, • D (15–16, 17–19, 21–22, 23–26, 27–28, 29–33, 34–35, 20+36), • E, • F, • G (50, 51, 52), • H, • I (60–63, 64), • J (65–66, 67),
2005	trng_cvt	EU-28 Member States (excluding Croatia) and Norway.	Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005 of the European Parliament and the Council, Commission Regulation (EC) No 198/2006.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B, • C (10–12, 13–15, 17–18, 19–23, 24–25, 26–28, 29–30, 16+31–32, 33), • D-E, • F, • G (45, 46, 47), • I, • H, • J, • K (64–65, 66), • L+M+N+R+S
2010	trng_cvt	EU-28 Member States (excluding Ireland) and Norway.	Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005 of the European Parliament and the Council, Commission Regulation (EU) No 822/2010 amending Regulation	Rev. 2
2015	trng_cvt	EU-28 Member States, Norway and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.	Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005 of the European Parliament and the Council,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B, • C (10–12, 13–15, 17–18, 19–23, 24–25, 26–28, 29–30, 16+31–32, 33), • D-E, • F, • G (45, 46, 47), • I, • H, • J, • K (64–65, 66), • L+M+N+R+S
2020	trng_cvt	EU-27 Member States, Norway, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia.	Commission Regulation (EU) No 1153/2014 amending Regulation (EC) No 198/2006.	

Source: Metadata file (trng_cvt_esms)



Table 1: Continuing vocational training survey metadata Source: Metadata file trng_cvt_esms

CVTS 2015 and 2020

CVTS 5 was carried out in 2016 for CVT activities that took place in 2015. [Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 1153/2014](#) (amending Regulation (EC) No 198/2006) provides the implementation details for CVTS 5. While the majority of variables remained unchanged compared to CVTS 4, some variables were simplified or removed in order to further reducing the burden of CVTS to the extent possible. For details see the CVTS 5 implementation manual.

CVTS 6 was carried out in 2021, for the reference year 2020 and following the same requirements as CVTS 5.

Detailed information on each round of the CVTS can be found in the [complementary methodological information](#).

Basic concepts

Continuing vocational training (CVT) consists in training measures or activities which have as their primary objectives the acquisition of new competences or the development and improvement of existing ones and which must be financed at least partly by the enterprises for their persons employed who either have a working contract or who benefit directly from their work for the enterprise such as unpaid family workers and casual workers. Persons employed holding an apprenticeship or training contract should not be taken into consideration for CVT. The training measures or activities must be planned in advance and must be organised or supported with the special goal of learning. CVT can take place on-site, online or both (blended/hybrid learning). Random learning and initial vocational training (IVT) are explicitly excluded. CVT measures and activities cover both CVT courses and other forms of CVT.

CVT courses

CVT courses are usually separated from the active workplace (learning takes place in locations specially assigned for learning, like a class room or training centre). They show a high degree of organisation (time, space and content) by a trainer or a training institution. The content is designed for a group of learners (e.g. a curriculum exists). Two distinct types of CVT courses are identified: internal (managed by the enterprise itself) and external CVT courses (managed by third-party organisations).

Other forms of CVT

Other forms of CVT are typically connected to the active work and the active workplace, but they can also include participation (instruction) in conferences, trade fairs, etc. for the purpose of learning. These other forms of CVT are often characterised by a degree of self-organisation (time, space and content) by the individual learner or by a group of learners. The content is often tailored according to the learners' individual needs in the workplace. The following types of other forms of CVT are identified:

- planned training through guided on-the-job training;
- planned training through job rotation, exchanges, secondments or study visits;
- planned training through participation (instruction received) in conferences, workshops, trade fairs and lectures;
- planned training through participation in learning or quality circles; and
- planned training through self-directed learning/e-learning.

Training enterprises

Training enterprises are enterprises that provided either CVT courses or other forms of CVT for their persons employed during the reference year.

Participant in CVT courses

A participant in CVT courses is a person who has taken part in one or more CVT courses during the reference year. Each person should be counted only once, irrespective of the number of CVT courses they have participated in (e.g. if a person employed has participated in two externally managed courses and one internally managed course, they should be counted as one participant).

Costs of CVT courses

The costs of CVT courses cover:

- fees and payments for CVT courses;
- travel and subsistence payments related to CVT courses;
- the labour costs of internal trainers for CVT courses (direct and indirect costs); and
- the costs for training centre, training rooms and teaching materials.

CVT course costs also include the cost of contributions made by the enterprise to collective funding arrangements through government and intermediary organisations but exclude receipts from collective funding arrangements, subsidies and financial assistance from government and other sources.

Time spent on CVT courses

Time spent on CVT courses refers to paid working time (in hours) spent on CVT courses, i.e. the time that all participants have spent in total during the reference year. This should only cover the actual training time, and only the time spent during the paid working time.

Initial vocational training

Since 2005, the CVTS contains some variables on initial vocational training (IVT). IVT within enterprises is defined as a formal education programme (or a component of it) where working time alternates between periods of practical training (workplace) and general/theoretical education (educational institution/training centre). The definition of IVT

differs between CVTS waves, for details see the implementation manuals for each wave, available in [CIRCABC](#) .

Number of persons employed

The number of persons employed is defined as the total number of persons who work in the observation unit excluding persons employed holding an apprenticeship or training contract (i.e. the definition of persons employed in CVTS deviates from the one used for structural business statistics as regards the treatment of persons employed holding an apprenticeship or training contract).

For additional definitions used in CVTS and further information see the CVTS implementation manuals available in [CIRCABC](#) .

Usual breakdowns and classifications

Principal economic activity of the enterprise

The [classification of economic activities \(NACE\)](#) is used in the CVTS to describe the economic sector of the enterprises. NACE is a four-digit classification providing the framework for collecting and presenting a large range of statistical data according to economic activity in various statistical data sets. Several versions have been developed since 1970. NACE Rev.1.1 was used for the first three rounds of CVTS and NACE Rev.2 for the 2010 and 2015 rounds.

Size class

A threshold of 10 persons employed is applied as the minimum for the coverage of enterprises. The classification of the size of the enterprises uses the following classes:

- Small — from 10 to 49 persons employed
- Medium — from 50 to 249 persons employed
- Large — 250 persons employed and more

Source data for tables and graphs

- [Download Excel file](#)

Context

Education statistics in the EU

[Eurostat](#) publishes data on education and training which can be found on Eurostat's [database](#) and cover the following features:

- participation in education and training;
- learning mobility;
- education personnel;
- education finance;
- education and training outcomes;
- languages.

These statistics are based on four main data sources:

- Education systems – joint UNESCO-OECD-Eurostat (UOE) data collection;
- Adult education survey (AES);

- Continuing vocational training survey (CVTS); and
- Labour force survey (EU-LFS).

Statistics on lifelong learning – which can be found under the folders 'adult learning' and 'continuing vocational training in enterprises' in the 'participation in education and training' section of Eurostat's database on education and training – are based on the AES, the LFS and the CVTS.

The adult education survey and the labour force survey both provide data on participation in lifelong learning from the individuals' perspective while the CVTS covers the theme of lifelong learning through the enterprises' viewpoint (continuing vocational training).

Other articles

- [Education and training in the EU – facts and figures](#)
- All pages on [education and training](#)
- [Adult learning statistics](#)

Database

- [Education and training \(educ\)](#) , see:

Participation in education and training (educ_part)

Continuing vocational training in enterprises (trng_cvt)

Dedicated section

- [Education and training](#)

Methodology

Metadata

- [Continuing vocational training in enterprises](#) (ESMS metadata file – trng_cvt_esms)

Manuals and other methodological information

- [Further methodological information on the CVTS](#)

Legislation

- [CVTS legal basis](#)

External links

- [CEDEFOP – European centre for the development of vocational training](#)
- [European Commission – Education and training – Adult learning](#)
- [European Commission – Education and training – Vocational education and training](#)
- [OECD – OECD policy reviews of vocational education and training \(VET\) and adult learning](#)
- [UNESCO – Institute for lifelong learning](#)
- [UNESCO – Strategy for technical and vocational education and training \(TVET\) \(2016-2021\)](#)

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