

EQAVET Peer Review on the role of the mechanisms for monitoring VET graduates' insertion and for skills and qualifications forecasting in the National Quality Assurance for VET framework - Flash Report

The Romanian Peer Review

The 17th EQAVET Peer Review took place on 25-26th April in Bucharest, hosted by the National Centre for TVET Development (NCTVETD). Five peers from Finland, Italy, Malta and Slovakia participated.

The Peer Review focused on the mechanisms for monitoring initial VET graduates' insertion and for skills and qualifications forecasting. The host aimed to explore how they could improve the efficiency and quality of the methodologies and processes currently being piloted to track professional insertion and to anticipate skills and qualification needs linked to VET provision in Romania.

Several Romanian VET stakeholders participated in the Peer Review, including a VET graduate, school director and representatives from the Ministry of Education and national agencies, regional authorities, and the energy sector.

Quality assurance in VET

Romania has a system consisting of more than 1000 VET schools across eight regions. A Quality Assurance (QA) legislation was introduced in 2006 and all Romanian VET providers have the obligation to develop annual self-assessment reports. External evaluations of VET providers are carried out every five years. While the Romanian education system is rather centralised, eight Regional Action Plans for Education have been established to create linkages between the provision of VET and the economic and social needs at regional and local levels.

In recent years, Romania has developed several measures linked to quality assurance of their VET system. This includes the ongoing work on the tracking of VET graduates and forecasting skills and qualification needs.

Towards integrated mechanisms to VET graduate tracking and to forecasting skill and qualification needs

The topic of the peer review reflects current priorities in the VET policy agenda, which are part of a wider change process of the education system in Romania, and related to the 'Educated Romania' reform process and the development of a new law on primary and secondary education. One of the key priorities for VET is related to improving the capacity of the system to respond to changing demands in the labour market.

In 2013, Romania first introduced efforts to establish a national methodology for the tracking of VET graduates. The methodology developed back then was however not considered sustainable for comprehensive monitoring at national level. As part of the ongoing ReConect project (2021-2023), national and regional stakeholders are currently working to create an integrated mechanism for VET graduate tracking which consists of two monitoring elements:

a quantitative element (based on administrative data) and a qualitative element (based on graduate surveys).

Since the available administrative data does not allow to comprehensively map what graduates do after their education, this is complemented with a graduate survey, which has been piloted. The survey also includes questions to capture graduates' opinions and perceptions of their education and career after graduation.

Finding a balance between a lengthy survey that would discourage graduates from completing it and being able to collect the necessary data to better understand what graduates do after their VET education (e.g., continued another education programme, employed, unemployed etc.) has been key. The experience from the survey piloting has shown that it is challenging to reach graduates after their VET education.

To further strengthen the systematic approach to graduate tracking, the Romanian host is currently working to align a set of existing databases to enable analyses on an individual level by using unique personal identifier (CNP).

In addition, a mechanism is being developed to forecast the need for qualifications and skills in the labour market. This also takes place as part of the ReConnect project. The methodology foresees the integration of different data sources, based both on administrative data and data from employer satisfaction surveys. The aim is to use the data from the administrative dataset and the survey to forecast trends of the labour market need and the effectiveness of the VET provision.

The ESF-funded ReConnect project was referenced as an important step towards establishing linkages between VET and the labour market during the Peer Review. VET graduate tracking is one of the focuses of the project and during the Peer Review, the host presented how it has been instrumental in piloting new initiatives and enabling stakeholders to work together.

Empowering VET schools in collecting and using data

Schools are responsible for collecting data on VET students, this is generally carried out through the Integrated Information System of Education (SIIR). The data is not aimed to rank schools which could be perceived as discouraging for disadvantages schools, it should instead be regarded as an added value and as a key tool in a wider basket of measures supporting schools to remain relevant to the labour market needs.

Therefore, the peers and the host discussed how to empower schools in their role as data collectors and how the findings from the data collection could be better used by schools in planning their programmes and anticipate emerging trends. For example, 25 % of the VET curricula can be locally adapted and thus, accurate graduate tracking can help schools to identify potential gaps in the teaching and to adjust their content accordingly.

On a national level, accurate data and analyses of VET graduate tracking will enable more evidence-based decision-making and shared understanding of the current situation and emerging trends and needs.

Peer discussion

The discussions between the peers, the hosts and the participating Romanian stakeholders focussed on various challenges related to methodologies for data collection and analysis.

The host and peers discussed how to overcome challenges such as ensuring safe use and protection of data, achieving adequate response rates to surveys, addressing limitations of existing databases, and how additional data sources could be integrated in the future. Another point of discussion related to ways and methods of making effective use of the data collected in the monitoring and anticipation processes, as well as possible risks associated to this.

At the end of the meeting, the peer reviewers shared their initial feedback. A comprehensive feedback report will be drafted and shared with the Romanian host within the next few weeks.

The EQAVET Peer Review initiative 2022 – 2023

The [2020 Council Recommendation on VET](#) called upon the EQAVET Network to develop a specific methodology for EQAVET peer reviews, with the objective to support the improvement and transparency of quality assurance arrangements at system level in the Member States. Over the course of 2021, with the support of DG EMPL and the EQAVET Secretariat, the EQAVET Network agreed on a joint methodology and prepared a Peer Review Manual.

The Quality Assurance National Reference Points (EQAVET NRPs) from 21 Member States have agreed to take part in the first phase of the EQAVET Network's peer review initiative. The Romanian Peer Review was the eighth out of twelve Peer Reviews that are scheduled to take place in 2023, following nine Peer Reviews in 2022.