



spotlight on VET

LITHUANIA

VET in Lithuania

The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for shaping and implementing vocational education and training (VET) policy. The Ministry of Economy participates in human resources development and VET policy, and organises research on future skill needs. Advisory institutions play an important role in designing and implementing VET policy and the qualifications system. Most important are the VET council and the central professional committee with its sectoral professional committees.

The main priority for VET is to become an attractive and highly valued part of education and lifelong learning. VET programmes are designed for learners of different ages and educational backgrounds. Initial VET (IVET) offers learners over 14 opportunities to acquire a first qualification. Continuing VET (CVET) is designed for learners who want to improve a qualification they have, acquire a new one or gain a competence needed to do specific jobs (perform functions) as specified in regulations.

IVET is offered at lower secondary (ISCED 2), upper secondary (ISCED 3) and post-secondary education (ISCED 4) levels, leading to European qualifications framework (EQF) levels 2 to 4. Learners can acquire a vocational qualification and complete general lower or upper secondary education. Upper secondary-level VET graduates who have obtained a *matura* certificate may apply to be admitted to higher education. When applying for higher non-university education programmes in the same field, they can be awarded additional entrance points.

Although VET in Lithuania is school-based, practical training and training in enterprises are a major part. In IVET, practical training comprises 60 to 70% of the total time allocated to vocational subjects, of which 8 to 15 weeks is organised in a company or a school-based workshop simulating working conditions. Progressing implementation of apprenticeship is considered a national priority and policy initiatives are in process.

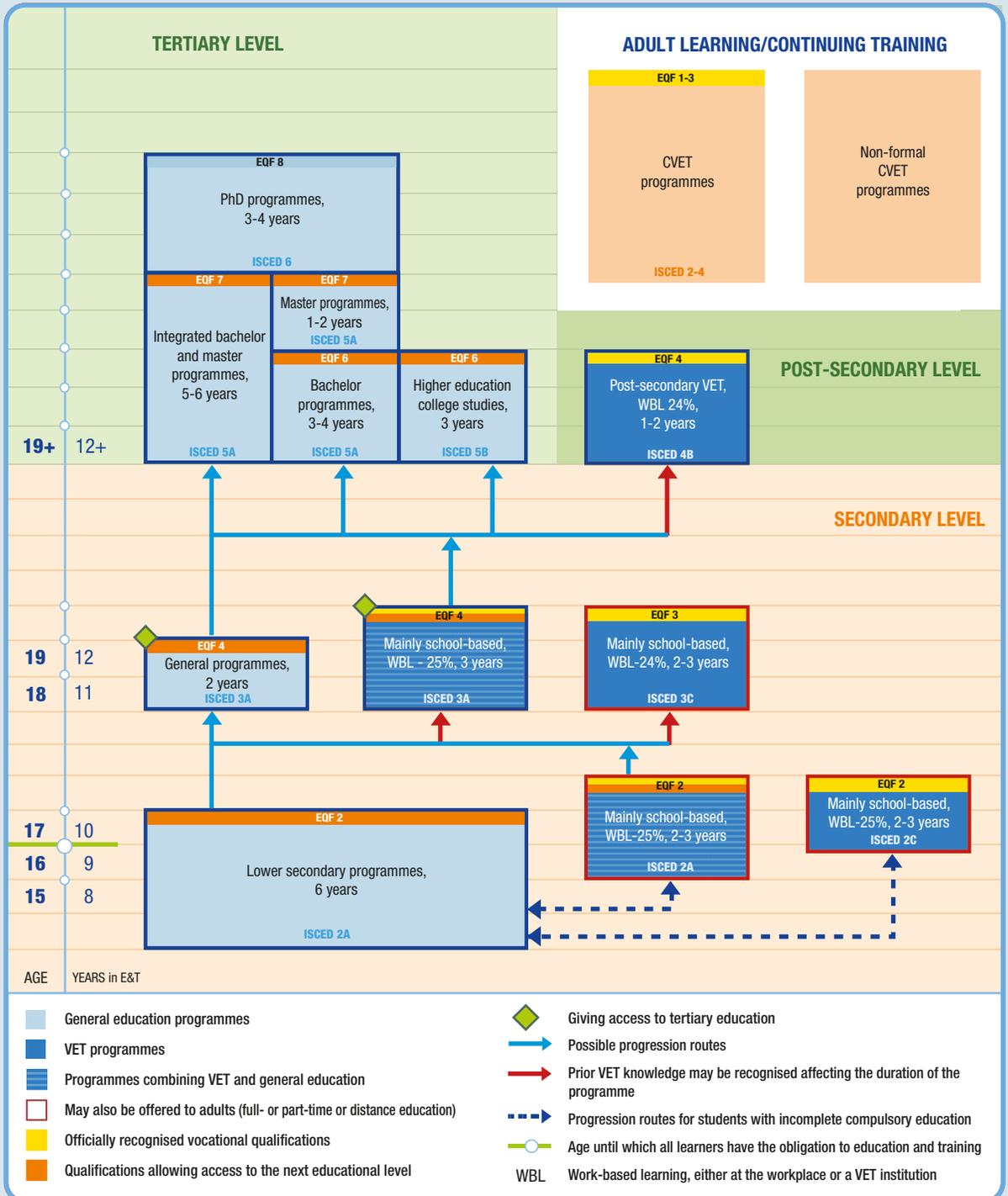
Formal CVET is designed for people with different education attainment levels, from primary to post-secondary; in some cases, a

vocational qualification or work experience is a prerequisite. Programmes last no longer than one year and lead to a vocational qualification at EQF levels 1-3, recognised by the State. Practical training comprises 60-80% of the programme, half of it preferably taking place at the enterprise. Formal CVT for unemployed and those notified of dismissal is funded by a voucher system, which allows the unemployed to choose the training provider. The provision of training is based on contracts between the local public employment service, the unemployed and, if applicable, the enterprise. After training, the employer undertakes to employ the person for at least six months.

Non-formal CVET for the self-employed and training for employees, initiated by employers, is organised in various settings. Some companies have their own training units and qualifications frameworks or apply internationally-recognised sectoral qualifications and programmes.

Social partners have the right to initiate new qualifications, standards and VET programmes. Since 2003, competence assessment has been detached from the training process and since 2012 has been carried out by accredited institutions. Social partners, enterprises and employers' associations may apply for accreditation. Employer representatives participate in designing and assessing VET programmes according to labour market needs. They are also involved in organising training and may participate in the management of VET institutions and become their shareholders. Currently, social partners, enterprises and municipal authorities participate directly in managing self-governing IVET providers, which comprise a quarter of all VET institutions.

VET in Lithuania's education and training system



NB: EQF levels have not yet been defined. ISCED 1997 was used on the chart. Conversion to ISCED 2011 is ongoing.
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Lithuania.

Distinctive features of VET

Competence-based curricula. From 2002, VET curricula in Lithuania have been competence-based, with clearly-defined learning outcomes. The content of VET qualifications is defined in VET standards foreseen to be replaced by sectoral qualifications standards in the near future. These standards will describe the most important qualifications in specific sectors of the economy at different Lithuanian qualifications framework (LTQF) levels. Since 2013, priority has been given to learning-outcomes-based modular VET programmes; their development is currently in progress.

Attention to quality assurance. A national concept for VET quality assurance was developed in 2008, in line with the common quality assurance framework for VET in Europe. All IVET providers have introduced internal quality assurance systems. External assessment of VET programmes started in 2013 focusing on such areas as training/learning environment, lifelong learning, access to learning, learning innovations, labour market relevance of qualifications, and effectiveness of career guidance.

Low level of early leaving from education and training. In 2012, the share of the population aged 18 to 24 with, at most, lower secondary education and not in further education and training was 6.5%, considerably lower than the EU-27 average. It is one of the main national aims to keep the share of early leavers below 9% by 2020.

Challenges and policy responses

Increasing participation in IVET. Although participation in IVET has been increasing in recent years, general and higher education attract most learners. Only 28.7% of students in upper secondary education (2013) are enrolled in vocationally oriented programmes, 9.4% of upper secondary education graduates move to VET, and 66% of upper secondary education graduates move to higher education directly after graduation. A range of actions is planned for better labour market relevance of VET and improvement of VET status. In 2014, the career education programme for general education schools and VET schools was approved and will be introduced in relevant institutions. It defines the aims of career education, principles of implementation and the set of career competences that students should acquire at school.

Offering quality work-based learning including apprenticeship. The legal basis for apprenticeship has existed since 2007, but implementation has been slow so far. Review of the legal basis has been planned to strengthen the offer of work-based learning and apprenticeships. There will also be apprenticeship pilot projects, assistance for enterprises, support for increased student mobility, training of trainers for apprenticeship, establishment of sectoral practical training centres, and other initiatives. This is a 2012-16 government programme priority and will be supported by European Structural Funds in 2014-20. In 2014-15, Lithuania is participating in Cedefop's thematic country review of apprenticeship schemes, which will provide the Lithuanian government with a proposed roadmap of actions for quality apprenticeships.

Improving VET teacher competences. Rapidly changing technologies drive the need to update VET teacher competences. New programmes for VET teacher training in companies have been implemented in cooperation with employers since 2013; teachers can update their qualifications during traineeships in modern companies. Further, VET teacher training initiatives are foreseen in the VET development action plan for 2014-16, including attracting highly-skilled and experienced employees to work as VET teachers.

Other policy measures in the national VET development action plan for 2014-16 include reorganisation of the VET providers' network in accordance with regional development prospects, the development of a competence assessment and recognition system, improvement in the management of VET institutions, and increasing VET attractiveness.



Education and training in figures

Learners in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational and general programmes

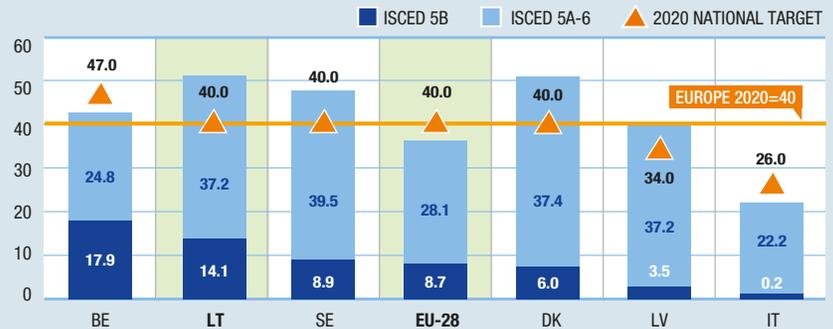
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2012



Source: Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 30.5.2014.

Tertiary education by type

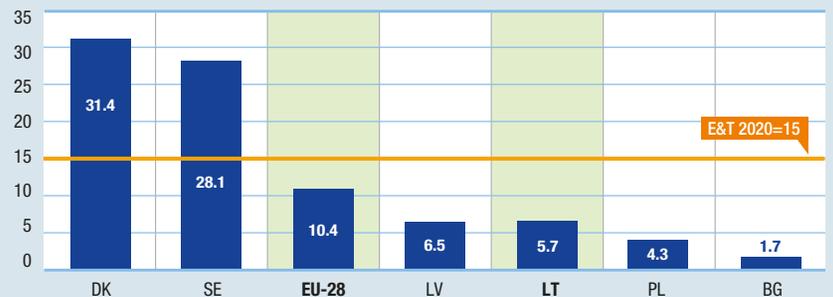
% of 30-34 year-olds with tertiary education by type, 2013



Source: Cedefop calculations based on Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 19.5.2014.

Lifelong learning

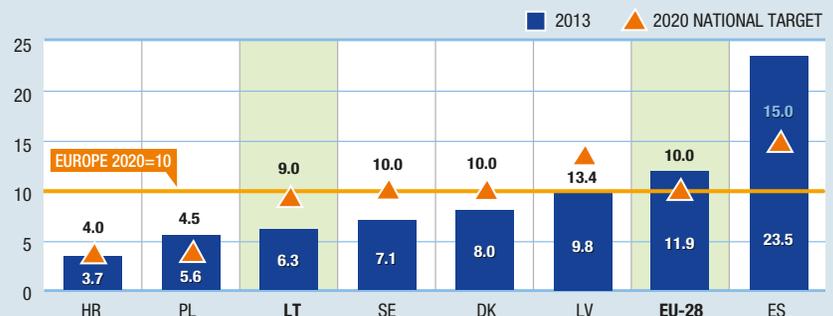
% of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2013



Source: Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 19.5.2014.

Early leavers from education and training

% of early leavers from education and training, 2013



Source: Eurostat labour force survey, date of extraction 19.5.2014.

Further information

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www.smm.lt	Ministry of Education and Science
www.ukmin.lt	Ministry of Economy
www.ldb.lt	Lithuanian Public Employment Service at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour
www.stat.gov.lt	Statistics Lithuania
www.kpmc.lt	Qualifications and VET Development Centre
www.euroguidance.lt	Euroguidance Lietuva
www.aikos.smm.lt	Open information, counselling and guidance system AIKOS
www.kpmc.lt/refernet/?lang=en	ReferNet Lithuania national website

This spotlight is based on input from ReferNet Lithuania.



CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training

Europe 123, 570 01 Thessaloniki (Pylea), GREECE
PO Box 22427, 551 02 Thessaloniki, GREECE
Tel. +30 2310490111, Fax +30 2310490020, E-mail: info@cedefop.europa.eu

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