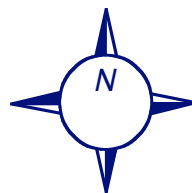


**Achieving the Lisbon Goal:**  
The Contribution of Vocational Education and Training Systems

# Country Report: Slovenia

Author: Philip Ammerman

This report is one of a series of European country reports. It has been written to support a larger report: **Achieving the Lisbon Goal: the contribution of VET**, prepared by the Lisbon-to-Copenhagen-to-Maastricht Consortium for the European Commission. This report is not intended as an official view. But rather independent insight into specific aspects of National VET systems in Europe.



**NAVIGATOR**  
Consulting Group

## Table of Contents

<b>List of Acronyms</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Progress of national VET systems towards meeting the challenges of Lisbon</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<i>2.1 Strategies and barriers for improving IVET</i> .....	7
<i>2.2 Reducing the number of early school leavers</i> .....	10
<i>2.3 Increasing VET at tertiary level</i> .....	11
<i>2.4 Incentives for updating knowledge &amp; skills</i> .....	14
<i>2.5 Meeting the challenges of an aging population</i> .....	16
<i>2.6 Effectiveness and efficiency of VET</i> .....	19
<b>3. Theme 2: Innovation in Teaching and Learning</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<i>3.1 Improvements in learning processes and contents</i> .....	20
<i>3.2 Improving integration; integration of formal and informal learning</i> .....	22
<i>3.3 Evaluation and quality assurance of VET provision</i> .....	23
<i>3.4 Professional development and status of teachers and trainers</i> .....	24
<b>4. Theme 3: Building Competences for a European Labour Market</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<i>4.1 Challenges &amp; policies in relation to the Lisbon employment strategy</i> .....	26
<i>4.2 Involving stakeholders</i> .....	28
<i>4.3 Transparency, recognition &amp; mobility</i> .....	29
<b>5. Scoreboard: Achieving the Lisbon VET Objectives in Slovenia</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>Annex I: List of Sources</b> .....	<b>32</b>

This report was written by Philip Ammerman of NAVIGATOR Consulting Group as part of the project consortium led by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) for the project: *Achieving the Lisbon Goals: The Contribution of Vocational Education and Training Systems* (Contract No. EAC/84/03). Further information can be requested directly from the author at the following contacts: 17, Pentelis Avenue, Athens 15234 GREECE • Tel +(30-210) 640-3098 • Fax +(30-210) 645-3393 • Email: pga@navigator-consulting.com

### Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and do not represent those of the European Commission.

## List of Acronyms

CCI	Chamber of Commerce & Industry
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Education and Training
CFP	Community Support Framework
CHE	Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia
CoC	Chamber of Crafts
COE	Council of Experts on Vocational Education and Training
CPI	Centre for Vocational Education and Training
CVT	Continuing Vocational Training
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
ENQA	European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
ERI	Educational Research Institute
ESS	Employment Service of Slovenia
ESF	European Social Fund
ETF	European Training Foundation
EURES	European Employment Service
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies
IVET	Initial Vocational Education and Training
LLL	Lifelong Learning
LLW	Lifelong Learning Week
MOCCA:	Modernisation of curricula, certification and assessment of vocational education and training for youth and adults
MOESS	Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
MOLFSA	Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs
NEI	National Education Institute
NEC	National Examination Centre
SEDS	Strategy for the Economic Development of Slovenia
SIAE	Slovenian Institute for Adult Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training

## 1. Introduction

The Government of Slovenia adapted its *Strategy for Economic Development of Slovenia 2001-2006* (SEDS) in July 2001, while its guidelines were taken into account in the National Budgets of 2002 and 2003, as well as in its Pre-accession Economic Programme as well as its Single Planning Document for Objective 3: Human Resources. The SEDS confirms the central role of human resources development, education and training in future development, and establishes as a primary objective the transition to a knowledge based society. The SEDS also outlines a number of areas for development in its national VET and employment systems:

- Low adult functional literacy, and particularly the literacy needed in the information age;
- Low enrolment in tertiary education and low participation in lifelong learning; the qualitative development of tertiary education, the incorporation of entrepreneurship and creative cooperation, as well as the amelioration of regional imbalances are identified as particular issues
- Structural imbalances in qualifications and employment, particularly among adults, long-term unemployed, women and disabled people;
- Adverse demographic trends that will reduce the labour supply and affect employment rates; this includes the need for greater sectoral balance between primary, secondary and tertiary sectors as well as the efficient development and allocation of human resources; short-falls in supply of skilled workers with qualifications in mathematics, sciences and information technology are identified as a particular weakness;

SEDS outlines the following key measures:

- Increase in total investment in education and training, particularly in the field of adult education, as well as introduction of individual education accounts and employment policies;
- Provision of high quality education and training at all levels, including development of certification of different forms of qualifications and increasing flexibility of education, mobility and transparency of standards;
- Raising adult attainment levels and integration of lifelong learning; provision of counselling services as well as outreach to unemployed, inactive and other groups;
- Improvement of writing skills and other literacy through education and counselling centres for adult learning;
- Increasing responsibilities and motivation of employers for human resources development through a number of means.

Slovenia has been among the leaders in implementing reforms in the VET and employment systems<sup>1</sup>, and has integrated the Lisbon Agenda objectives into its policies. Starting with the White Paper on Education in 1996 as well as reforms supported by the Phare programme, Slovenia has made a concerted and long-term effort towards VET reform and harmonisation with European standards. Further information on the reform process is given in Section 2.1. The main institutional and social partners in the VET system include:

- The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MOESS), which is responsible for the educational system, including schools (from basic to upper secondary), higher education; and adult learning.
- The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (MOLFSA), which is responsible for approving occupational standards on the basis of approved policy.
- The Council of Experts on Vocational Education and Training (COE) provides a forum comprising MOESS, MOLFSA, the Employment Service and other social partners that advises the Government: this has had an important role in providing continuity in VET policy.
- The Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia (CHE) provides a forum for expert advice to the Government for the development of tertiary education. It comprises a range of experts in the field, as well as university rectors and the President of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts.
- The Centre for Vocational Education and Training (CPI) is an advisory body that is responsible for the development and modernisation of curricula in VET, including technical standards work on VET, training of teachers and trainers, materials and equipment development and similar tasks. The Centre is the National Reference Point for VET standards, and is a member of CEDEFOP's TT Net and Refer Net.
- The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE), which is responsible for the national adult education strategy as well as development of content, curricula, coordination and the institutional framework.
- The Council of Experts for Adult Education is a group of experts in the field that support the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education (SIAE), Ministry of Education and other partners in development of policies and strategies for LLL.
- The Educational Research Institute (ERI) is responsible for research, monitoring and evaluation of the national educational system as well as curricula, training and teaching methods, and harmonisation with international standards. ERI has eight Centres, including the Centre for Modernisation of Education, the Centre for Womens' Studies, and the Centre of Applied Epistemology.
- The National Education Institute (NEI) is responsible for monitoring the national curriculum and the educational system in the pre-university (or pre-tertiary) educational framework. NEI also evaluates and trains teachers and trainers, and has a total of 10 offices in Slovenia.

---

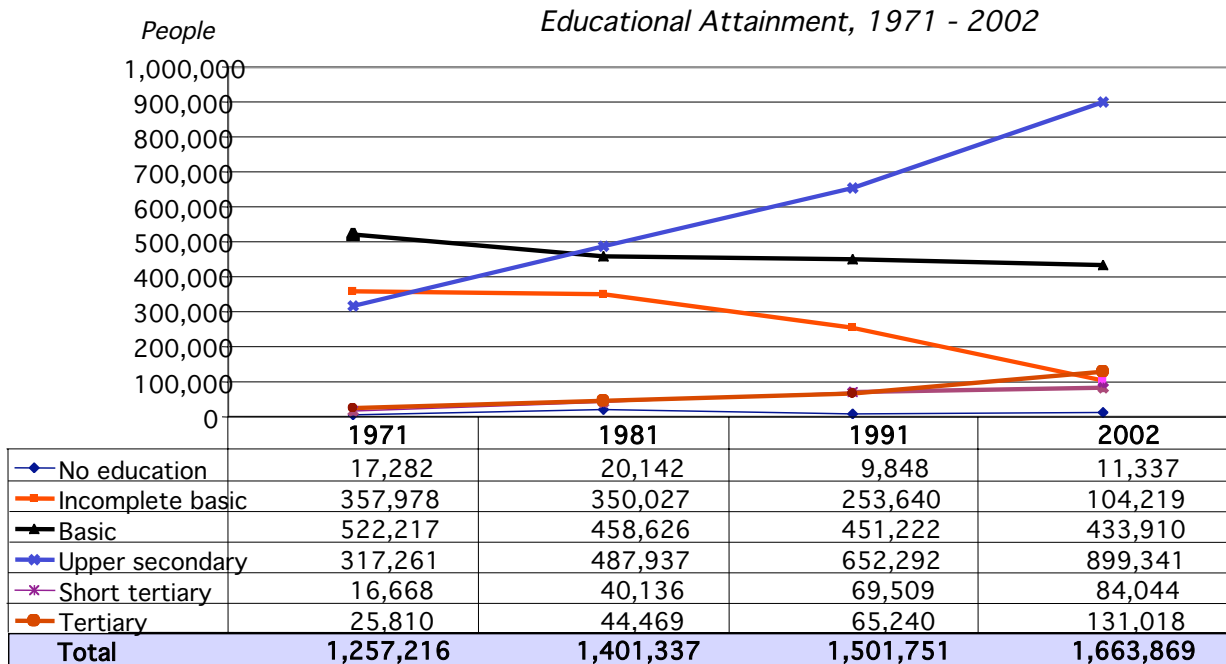
<sup>1</sup> European Training Foundation: *Thirteen Years of Cooperation and Reforms in the Vocational Education and Training in the Acceding and Candidate Countries*, 2003.

- The National Examination Centre (NEC) is a central body responsible for developing, administering and monitoring the *Matura*, the main completion certificate between secondary and tertiary education, as well as other certifications, including foreign languages and some adult education courses.
- The Chamber of Crafts (CoC) is an employer representative that is responsible for occupational standards development as well as the organisation of VET training and apprenticeships. The CoC regulates the so-called “O” education, which comprises 26 professions<sup>2</sup> offered on the basis of 3-year studies in 21 secondary schools throughout Slovenia, with an enrolment of approximately 3,000 students in 2003.
- The Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) is an employer representative that is responsible for occupational standards development and organisation of VET training and apprenticeships. In addition, CCI operates the Centre for Technological Training (CTT) and the Gea College – High School for Entrepreneurs.
- The Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS) is the central labour market organisation: it maintains a network of 59 local offices and is responsible for issues such as labour market monitoring, operation of EURES and ESF, coordination of national and regional human resources development plans, coordination of services to unemployed, and similar activities.

Slovenia has a high rate of educational attainment. According to the 2002 Census, completion of upper secondary education has risen from 317,261 people to 899,341 between 1971 and 2002. Completion of short-tertiary courses has risen from 16,668 to 84,044 in the same period, while tertiary completion rose from 25,810 to 131,018 people. The number of people with no education, incomplete basic education or basic education, in contrast, has fallen.

---

<sup>2</sup> The professions include: toolmaker, construction locksmith, car tinsmith, car mechanic, car lacquerer, electrician of motor cars, fine-mechanic, machinery mechanic, fitter of cooling devices, fitter of water-supplying devices, fitter of heating devices, fitter of air conditions, fitter of gas devices, joiner, upholsterer, hairdresser, leather-fur tailor, leather dealer in fancy goods, electrician-power supply, tailor-dressmaker, knitter, chemical cleaner and textile keeper, mason, carpenter, shoemaker, florist.



This paper examines the policy and strategic reforms in Slovenia in light of the Lisbon Agenda and the Copenhagen Declarations. It reviews the progress made in VET and wider reforms made to date, and benchmarks these against the 2010 objectives.

## 2. Progress of national VET systems towards meeting the challenges of Lisbon

### 2.1 Strategies and barriers for improving IVET

*What strategies are being used to by government, social partners and providers etc. to achieve these objectives: (a) Raise the status of IVET? (b) Improve the attractiveness of IVET? (c) Increase the flexibility of IVET? (d) What are the main barriers to achieving these objectives?*

The current VET legal framework is based on a series of reforms initiated in the 1990s which was initiated by the Slovene government. In 1996, the main educational reform was adopted, comprising six acts: the most relevant of these is the *Organisation and Funding of Education Act*, the *Vocational and Technical Education Act* and the *Adult Education Act*. These were then supplemented in 2000 with three new acts, of which the most relevant to this review was the *National Occupational Standards Act*. Further reforms were enacted in the *New guidelines for the*

*preparation of educational programmes of short-term and upper secondary vocational and technical education of 2001.*

Vital support for the reforms was extended by the Phare MOCCA<sup>3</sup> programme, which has supported the policy transition process with important impacts on the development of the overall VET legal and operational system, including aspects such as teacher training, financing, quality assessment and preparation for EU accession and the European Social Fund. An important impact of MOCCA was the development of a certification system for non-formal qualifications. MOCCA builds on a previous Phare programme which supported modernisation of curricula and training reform.

The Slovenian system has firmly established VET as a viable pathway for individual development. Primary education is compulsory between ages of 6 and 14 or 15 (ISCED Levels 1 & 2). Following this, there are four main choices for vocational education at the secondary (ISCED 3) level:

- Lower vocational are available to students finishing primary education, or in some cases for students who have not completed primary education;
- Vocational schools: either part time or under the dual system;
- Secondary technical and professional schools;
- Gymnasias, or general secondary schools. The Gymnasias offer a 4-year curriculum and include professional or technical options. A *Matura* qualification is awarded upon graduation.

The duration of education varies between 2.5 and 4 years depending on the course path followed; the course path, in turn, depends on the occupational qualification being achieved. The occupational profile varies from worker-level qualifications (2.5 years) to master-craftsman, which combines three years of vocational education with at least three years of practical experience, and is mandatory for people wishing to establish their own businesses or entrepreneurial activity in the listed craft professions maintained by CoC or CCI. There are 48 Master Craftsman occupational standards and examinations.

These range of qualifications options at the ISCED Level 3 includes the *Matura* course, which is for students that have completed their school-leaving certificate but want additional qualifications that prepare them for post-secondary or tertiary education.

At the post-secondary and tertiary levels, graduates with these qualifications have three main options:

- Vocational Colleges: these are considered a practical education (over 40% “applied” learning in companies) separate from tertiary education. There are 18 vocational colleges: 12 run by the Government and 6 by CCI or enterprises.
- Higher Professional Schools (Professional Tertiary Education)
- Universities (Academic Tertiary Education)

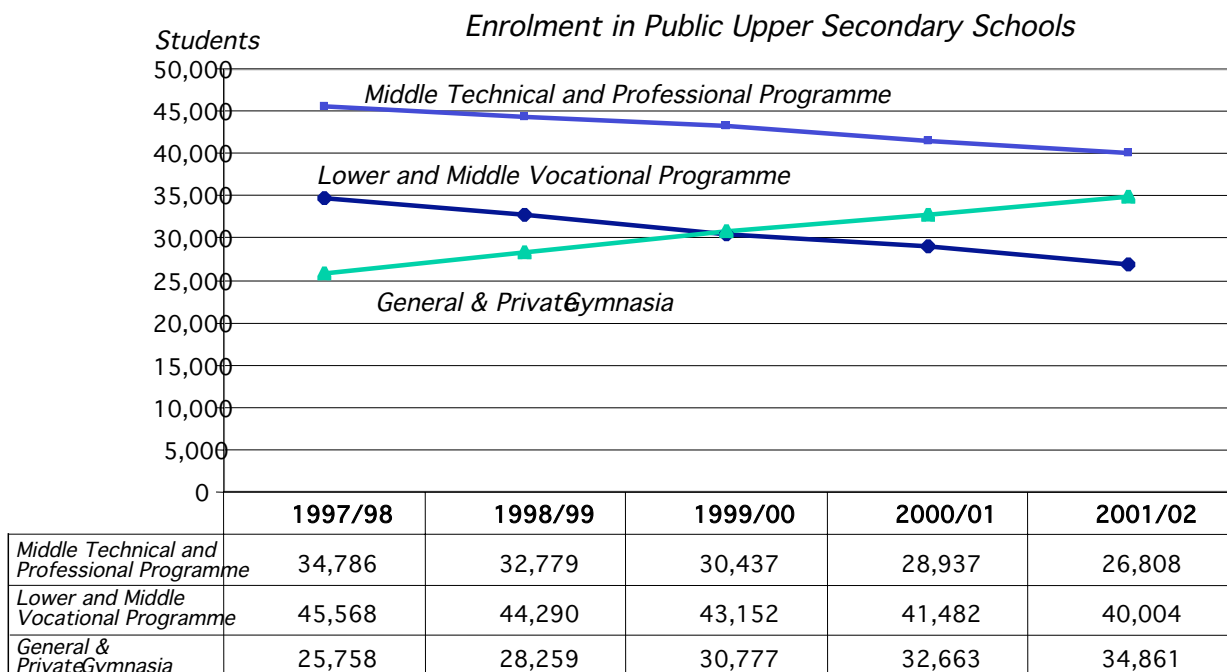
Some important reforms made to improve attractiveness of IVET include:

---

<sup>3</sup> MOCCA: Modernisation of curricula, certification and assessment of vocational education and training for youth and adults



- The introduction of a Dual Education System covering approximately 40 vocations. Contracts between trainees and employers are approved by the Chamber of Crafts (CoC) or the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), based on a three year apprenticeship and the successful completion of an examination. Subsidies for apprentices have been introduced: the Ministry of Economy subsidised 1,547 places through CoC (SIT 40,857/member) and 812 places through CCI (SIT 40,164/member) in 2002.
- The introduction of VET modules as well as additional options for horizontal and vertical mobility. Included in this is the definition of occupational standards based on an NVQ system tied to work of social partners and the master craftsman certification.
- The development of a system for the accreditation of prior learning based on national vocational qualifications (NVQ). To date, 63 catalogues have been prepared, which include the competence profiles as well as assessment methods.
- The upgrading of the vocational stream through investment in schools, equipment, teaching methods and similar efforts.
- Tourism and entrepreneurship circles have been organised in primary schools. Other activities to introduce entrepreneurship and innovation are being developed.
- The Youth Entrepreneurship and Creativity Programme has been developed by the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Agriculture, and a some 5,462 students participated in various programmes in 2002.



2002 Census; Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia 2004

Enrolment in public upper secondary schools shows declining trends in Middle Technical and Vocational Programmes as well as Lower and Middle Vocational Programmes. Enrolment in Middle Technical and Vocational Programmes fell from 34,786 students in the 1997/98 school year to 26,808 students in the 2001/02 school

year, while enrolment in Lower and Middle Vocational programmes fell from 45,568 students to 40,004 students in the same time period. Enrolment in General and Private Gymnasias, in contrast, rose from 25,758 students to 34,861 students in between 1997/98 and 2001/02. As seen in Section 1, however, overall attainment of upper secondary education rose from 317,261 people in 1971 to 899,341 people in 2002.

The European Training Foundation and the Government of Slovenia identify a number of remaining challenges in the IVET system, including<sup>4</sup>:

- Low levels of literacy;
- A need to improve the training and qualifications levels of teachers;
- A high drop-out rate in secondary vocational education;
- A low enrolment rate in dual system programmes (average 54% occupancy rate) as well as declining enrolment in upper secondary vocational education;
- A focus on supply-driven provision and a need to improve links with the labour market;
- A need to adjust the content of some courses, making them less theoretical and more applied to the needs of young adults entering the labour force.

## 2.2 Reducing the number of early school leavers

*How does your country relate to other countries in terms of the contribution to increasing or reducing the number of young people: (a) Who leave education or training at the earliest opportunity and with few or no recognised qualifications? (b) Who leave formal education with low levels of basic skills at age of 15?*

Slovenia has a low rate of early school leavers: in 2002, the share of population aged 18-24 with lower secondary education and not in education and training amounted to 4.8%. Females comprised 3.3%; males comprised 6.2%. This compares with an EU-25 average of 16.5%. Slovenia is therefore above the Lisbon target for this benchmark. Attainment levels are also high: Slovenia had a total of 88.1% of population aged 22 that completed at least upper secondary education in 2002, compared with an EU-25 rate of 78.7%.

There is, however, a problem identified with the high drop-out rate. Approximately 10% of students drop out of the primary system, resulting in a lack of skills and qualifications for the labour market. While some enrol in the second-chance schools or adult education, not all do. In the vocational secondary system, the drop-out rate has historically been approximately 16% although recent years have seen a declining trend. Gymnasias have a lower drop-out rate. Reasons for the drop-out rate include the restricted number of places in preferred courses as well as the academic approach to some courses, which is perceived as being too theoretical, and the lack of a student-centred approach.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Comments in this section are taken from the ETF *Monograph on VET and Employment Services in Slovenia* and the Government's SEDS Report.

<sup>5</sup> European Training Foundation: *Monograph Vocational Education and Training and Employment Services in Slovenia*. 2002.

The Government is planning to lower the drop-out rate through increasing the availability and quality of IVET: an example of this is the re-introduction of the Dual system. The presence of additional resources, including stipends for some students, is being increased. A review of documentation, however, illustrates that policy emphasis, however, does tend to focus on adult education and the tertiary level, and it is likely that further efforts are needed at the secondary and post-secondary level. The fact that Slovenia has a lower age of compulsory education compared to other EU countries may be a factor in explaining the problems with adult literacy mentioned in SEDS and other documents.

## 2.3 Increasing VET at tertiary level

*What steps are being taken to establish or improve technological and vocational qualifications at the tertiary (higher) educational level? Please refer in particular to any attempts to make pathways more flexible, and to introduce shorter post-secondary VET courses.*

The role of VET at the tertiary level has been identified as a major policy priority in SEDS as well as other Government and MOESS documents. The main challenges identified at the national level include low levels of adult literacy; low levels of information-age literacy; low enrolment in tertiary education; the need for qualitative development of tertiary education; and the need to incorporate entrepreneurship and innovation in the curricula.

VET at the tertiary level is currently provided by a number of institutions, including:

- Vocational Colleges (*vi\_je strokovne\_ole*), which are considered as post-secondary studies though not higher education;
- Undergraduate professional colleges, faculties or art academies (*visoke strokovne\_ole*);
- Undergraduate academic faculties (*fakultete*);
- Post-graduate programmes (*Specializacija, Magisterij or Doktorat znanosti*) offered by professional colleges, faculties and art academies;
- Post-graduate non-degree studies offered by professional colleges, faculties and art academies.

There are also CVT programmes run by the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS) as well as other governmental and non-governmental actors.

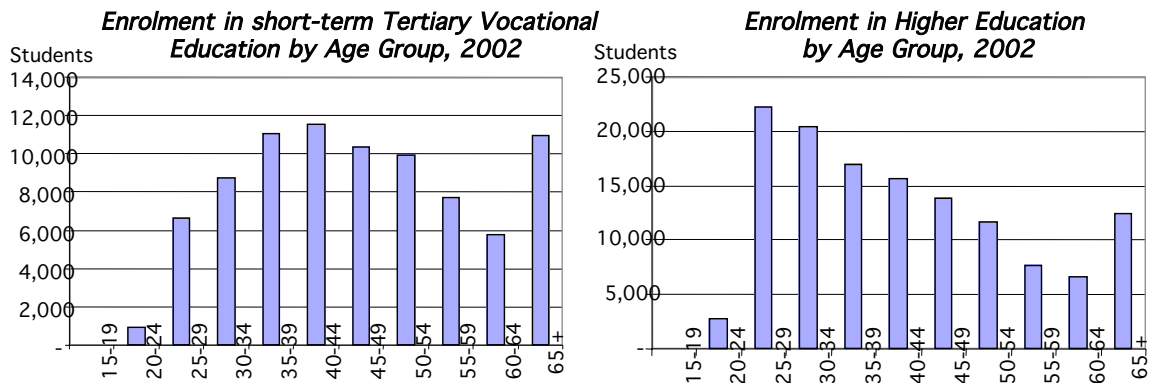
Enrolment in tertiary programmes is high: in 2001, Slovenia compared favourably to the then EU-15 for total participation in tertiary education, with 30.9% of the age group 20-29 enrolled in some form, compared to the EU-15 average of 26%<sup>6</sup>. Women have a high participation rate in overall tertiary education, at 56% of the total population age group. Enrolment in science programmes is lower than the EU average, at 5%. Enrolment in engineering, manufacturing and construction programmes, however, is higher at 17.5%.

---

<sup>6</sup> European Training Foundation: *Thirteen Years of Cooperation and Reforms in Vocational Education and Training in the Acceding and Candidate Countries*. 2003.

	Total Participation		In Science	In Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction
	% population aged 20-29	% women in total	% of total participation	% of total participation
EU-15	26.0	53.2	11.8	14.5
Slovenia	30.5	56.0	5.0	17.5

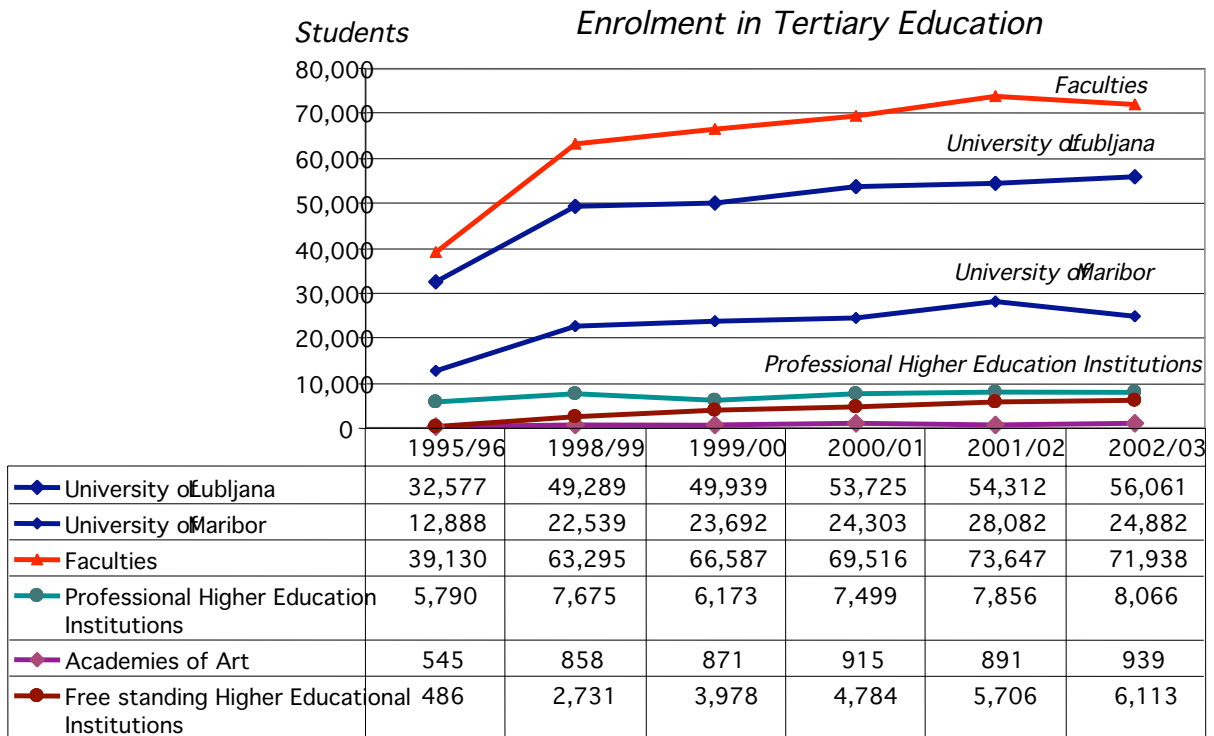
In terms of overall enrolment in mathematics, science and technology, Slovenia had a total enrolment of 22.5% in 2001 at the ISCED 5A, 5B and 6 levels. There was, however, a significant gender imbalance, with only 10.5% female enrolment versus 37.9% male enrolment (of the total student population)<sup>7</sup>.



2002 Census; Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia 2004

Overall enrolment in specific institutions has risen significantly: total enrolment in the institutions seen above went from 91,416 in 1995/1996 to 167,999 in 2002/2003, an increase of 84%. The average age of enrolment has also been shifting, with a greater share of older age groups. A review of students in short-term tertiary vocational education, for instance, show that some 34,000 students were over 50 years old in 2002.

<sup>7</sup> European Commission: *Education and Training 2010: The Success of the Lisbon Agenda hinges on Urgent Reforms*. 2004.



*Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia 2004*

The Higher Education Master Plan, adopted by the National Assembly in 2002, establishes specific objectives for tertiary education and incorporates the principles of the Bologna Process. Some objectives of the Plan include<sup>8</sup>:

- Increasing the share of the labour force with a vocational college, undergraduate or post-graduate degree to 25% of the total by 2005;
- Expanding the links between higher education and employment, and employing 8,000 new graduates per year;
- Providing flexible study tracks, including part-time studies, while removing barriers on funding between part-time and full-time studies;
- Improving offerings for students with special needs in terms of didactic methods, study locations, and others;
- Improving career guidance and counselling services
- Expanding adult education, life-long learning and distance learning;
- Implementing the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) as well as refining post-graduate programmes in terms of curricula, concepts, and content as well as encouraging integration and ensuring higher quality and more efficient studies.
- Monitoring of staff, curricula and institutions; hiring new staff.

Some specific initiatives<sup>9</sup> that have been undertaken to implement the Master Plan and other VET reforms include:

<sup>8</sup> Eurybase. *National Dossier: A Dossier of the Slovenian Educational System*. 2003.

<sup>9</sup> For clarity, some initiatives are mentioned here that are not strictly within tertiary education, but fall within upper secondary or "non-higher, tertiary education".

- The provision of entry into tertiary education from the vocational system: applicants with a 5-subject *Matura* are now granted equal access to tertiary education; applicants with a 4-subject *Matura* can take a further exam for equivalency.
- Government funding of higher education has been increased. This includes university education as well as institutions run by trade unions or the private sector.
- The Amendments to the Higher Education Act (2004) establish an undergraduate programme of 3-4 years, followed by post-graduate programmes (1-2 years), except for studies leading to restricted professions.
- The development of a National Qualification Structure based on modular curricula, problem-solving approaches, and other reforms intended to improve quality and base curricula on occupational standards and not the older Nomenclature of Occupations (*nomenklatura poklicev*) system.
- The change in distribution and design of curricular content, which is now done on the basis of 80% at a national level and 20% at the regional level.
- The development of national competencies, including foreign languages, ICT, entrepreneurship, and social competencies, which have also been tied to new VET curricula in different sectors.
- The development of a national Lifelong Learning and Adult Education strategy, the increase of lifelong learning offerings and increasing enrolment in LLL (covered in more depth in section 2.5).
- ECTS is being extended to the shorter, sub-degree programmes offered by vocational colleges.

The Council for Higher Education is responsible for counselling, planning and managing the accreditation system for higher education. Representatives of employers and students will be added to the Council. Quality assurance will be provided by the National Agency and Council for the Evaluation of Tertiary Education.

The role of vocational colleges will be more firmly established within tertiary education, and their programmes accredited by the National Council of Experts for Vocational Education and Training, as well as by self-evaluation. The role of accreditation of private colleges is being defined. A major issue here includes teaching staff requirements, as many trainers in private colleges are part-time experts from industry.

## 2.4 Incentives for updating knowledge & skills

*What initiatives and measures are the following taking to motivate employees to update knowledge and skills? (a) Government (b) Employers (c) Other stakeholders. Please provide examples (if any) of the contribution of VET to successfully promoting inclusion*

The great majority of funding for VET is undertaken by the Government, and the measures employed involve, to a great extent, improving the quality and quantity of supply. Basic, compulsory education has been extended from eight years to nine, with a tenth year optional for those students wishing to improve their results in the

general knowledge examination, or who have failed a previous grade. The number of places available for study in the upper-secondary, post-secondary / non-tertiary, and tertiary levels has been expanded, and a dual system has been introduced. Horizontal and vertical pathways between vocational and tertiary education have been established and strengthened. Adult education and lifelong learning opportunities have been significantly expanded or increased, and accreditation of prior learning systems have been introduced. Two important initiatives should be mentioned in this context:

- The development of occupational standards through the National Qualifications Structure and the link of VET curricula to occupations, rather than the Nomenclature of Occupations system should introduce flexibility and make the take-up of specific modules or qualifications more attractive.
- The establishment of 63 catalogues for accrediting informal and non-formal learning as well as the expanded role of adult education should improve the participation rate of older as well as other age groups in the VET system.

There continues to be a preference for academic qualifications in Slovenian society and, to a lesser extent, in the labour force. This creates a significant motivational force for younger and older age cohorts to continue participation in the educational system.

Investment by companies in VET and CVT is growing. Slovenian enterprise expenditure on CVT courses was measured at 1.3% in 1999, compared to an ACC average of 1.5% and an EU-15 average of 2.3%<sup>10</sup>. According to the Eurostat Labour Survey<sup>11</sup>, however, Slovenian participation in lifelong learning for the 25-64 age group in 2002 was 8.8%, compared with an EU-15 average of 8.5% and a EU-25 average of 7.9%. It is highly likely that Slovenian participation in the CVTS

In addition, employers and associations play a significant role in funding VET. Employers co-decide the allocation of state funding for training of employed, while adult education is carried out in state-approved government and private institutions.

There have been some efforts to improve flexibility and the “demand” side of VET. The Voucher System of Counselling has been introduced by ministries and chambers to provide continuing training and support to enterprises. This programme is run through the Small Business Development Centre, and mobilises a group of business advisors that provide training and consultancy to small enterprises, entrepreneurs and unemployed people, with the objective of creating employment and SME development. The fact that this is a voluntary programme with direct involvement of enterprises may improve take-up: however, it should be emphasized that training is only one component of the Voucher System.

The Slovenian VET system has by tradition and necessity promoted inclusion. Gender inclusion in VET is assured by law, despite clear preferences or gender participation in some programmes, such as car mechanics or hairdressing. For minorities, there are special schools for members of the Hungarian and Italian minorities which incorporate cultural and historical elements in a bilingual programme. Additional classes are organised for the Roma population. Special

<sup>10</sup> Eurostat. *Continuing Vocational Training Survey*. 2002.

<sup>11</sup> European Commission. *Education and Training 2010: The Success of the Lisbon Agenda hinges on Urgent Reforms*. 2004.

primary schools exist for people with special needs at the primary and to a lesser extent secondary levels. During the break-up of Yugoslavia, Slovenia accepted a large number of ethnic Bosnian refugees, and special classes were organised. Current policy initiatives focus on improving the participation rate of younger people in the VET system, particularly those that have dropped out or have low qualifications. It is seen, however, that efforts to promote inclusion at higher levels in the VET system, including the upper secondary and tertiary, may be needed.<sup>12</sup>

An interesting example of a programme designed to promote inclusion is the Female Entrepreneurship Programme, managed by the Ministries of Labour, Economy and Agriculture. This programme aimed to support the training, preparation and counselling of women in the labour force. At the national level, the programme contacted women, identified participants, organised meetings and workshops, participated in international networks, and supported exhibitions and promotional activities. Over 281 women were trained at the local level, and some 2,639 participated in total in workshops, training, excursions and other activities.

## 2.5 Meeting the challenges of an aging population

*Please identify any innovations and initiatives in VET that are being introduced to encourage older people (55+) to remain at work longer and to participate in training and other forms of lifelong learning.*

Slovenian participation in education and training for the 25-64 age group amounted to 8.8% in 2002, of which 9.7% participation was by females and 7.7% participation was by males. This compares favourably with an EU-25 general average of 8.6%, but is below the 2010 15% EU-average level established by the Lisbon Agenda.

Adult education and lifelong learning have traditionally been important in Slovenia, and their importance has been confirmed in a number of policies, including the SEDS, the *Adult Education Act*, and the Adult Education Master Plan. The SEDS identifies adult literacy as being a critical priority objective. The consultation process on the Lifelong Learning Memorandum has given additional impetus to reform efforts. The Council of Experts for Adult Education (*Strokovni svet Republike Slovenije za izobraževanje odraslih*) is a group of experts in the field that support the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education (SIAE), Ministry of Education and other partners in development of policies and strategies for LLL. These include the design and adoption of educational programmes, syllabi, standards and examination catalogues.

The objectives of adult education are to enable adults to gain specific knowledge, competencies and skills as well as state-approved qualifications. The general programme is entitled “Programme of Basic Education for Adults”, and is intended to achieve functional literacy, improvement of knowledge required for work and occupations. Other objectives in this programme include the provision of education and training for the unemployed, promotion of democracy, foreign language learning, rights of minorities, and groups with special needs. Besides the Basic Education Programme, adults can enrol in programmes leading to vocational and technical qualifications, including those programmes leading to master craftsman certification.

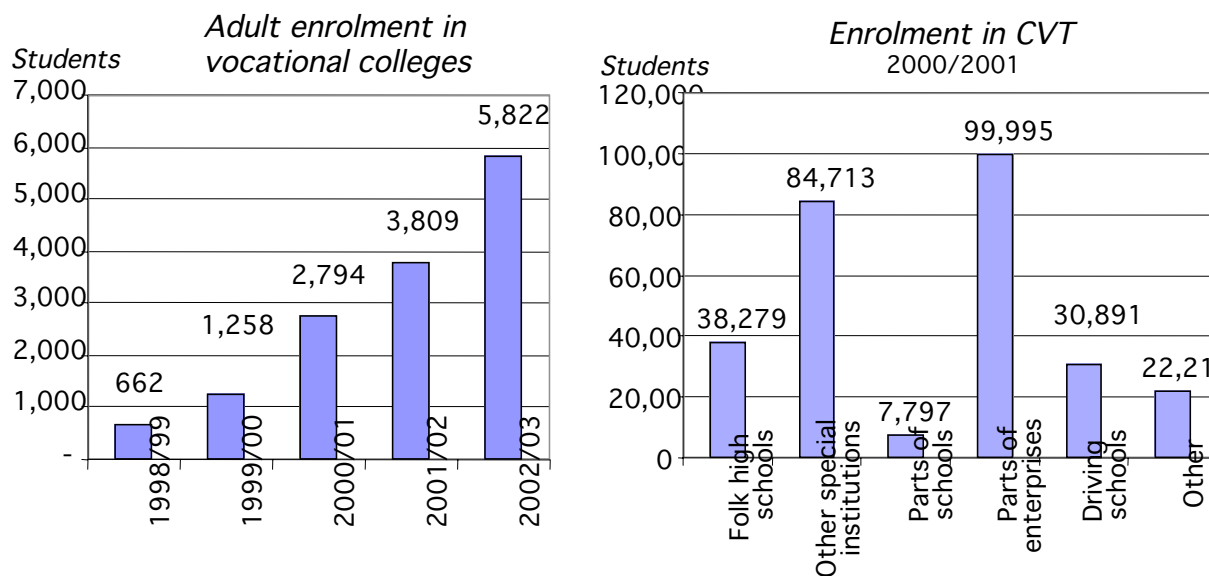
With added resources and priorities given to adult education, a number of positive indicators are seen. Overall enrolment in vocational colleges has risen to 5,822

---

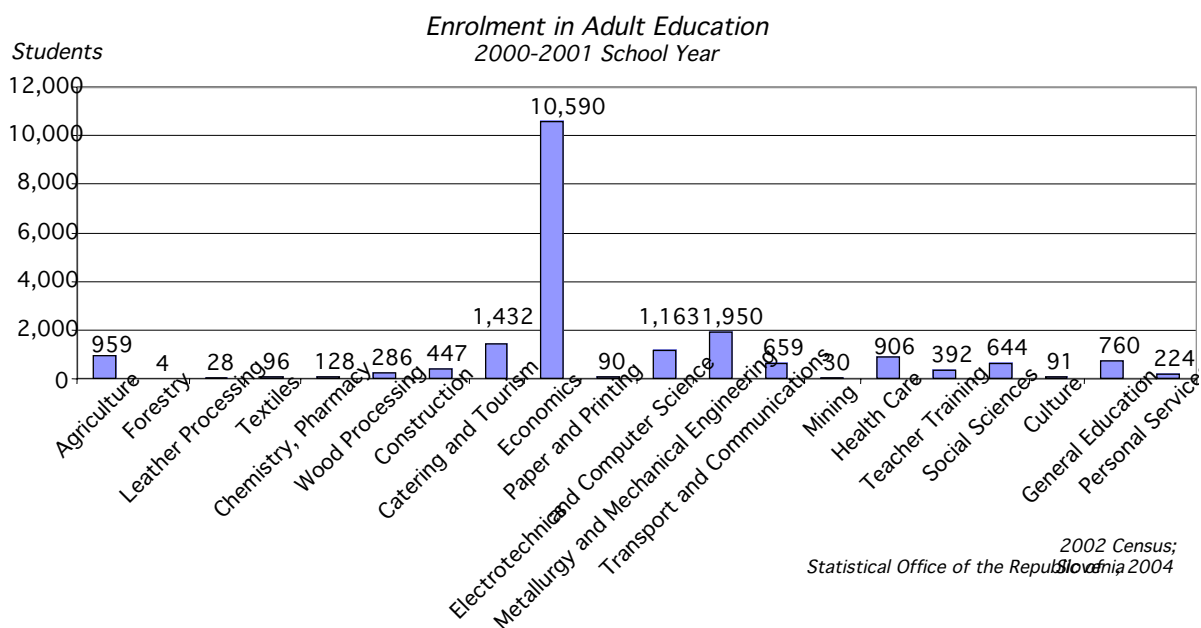
<sup>12</sup> ETF Monograph on VET in Slovenia



students in 2002/2003 academic year. Continuing vocational training has also increased, with a total of 207,739 people enrolled in the 2000/2001 school year.



In addition to enrolment in adult learning or CVT programmes, Section 2.3 has shown the overall high rate of participation of older age groups in tertiary learning. In terms of enrolment in adult education, major areas of interest for adult education include economics; catering and tourism; metallurgy and mechanical engineering; and electrotechnics and computer sciences. In contrast, occupations that represent more traditional economic sectors, such as textiles and leather, forestry, and mining, have relatively low enrolment. Agriculture maintains a high enrolment, however, with 959 adults enrolled in 2000/01. Overall enrolment broadly reflects the findings of EURES on labour market unmet supply in Slovenia, which is presented briefly in Section 4.1.



The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) coordinates national LLL activities. SIAE has developed an Adult Education Master Plan, which establishes policy priorities and targets for this field. The Institute undertakes a range of activities, including:

- Development of adult education programmes;
- Training and development of teachers and experts in the field of adult education;
- Development of an adult education and learning information system, including a database, web site and other ICT applications;
- Publishing an annual survey of adult education supply in Slovenia;
- Maintaining a library and documentation centre as well as a series of bulletins and publications;
- Public awareness, dissemination and awareness-building;
- International networking and representation as well as knowledge transfer.

SIAE has also launched the Lifelong Learning Week (LLW) in 1996 as a means of increasing public awareness in lifelong learning as well as presenting specific training and educational possibilities to the public. The LLW has been growing in importance, and in 2003 numbered some 563 providers, 3,072 events and 50,600 visitors.

Number\ Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Providers	74	137	267	374	500	545	563
Events	500	1,000	1,500	1,900	1,900	3,400	3,072
Media items	163	623	457	600	820	1,400	1,230
Visitors to events	10,000	22,320	30,000	35,000	40,000	40,000	50,600

A number of other institutions are also involved in LLL, including:

- The Andragogical Association of Slovenia;
- The Centre for Vocational Education and Training;
- The Employment Services;
- The Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the Chamber of Crafts;
- Universities and faculties;
- Professional organisations, such as the Work Safety Institute, the Construction Centre of Slovenia, the National Employment Institute, and others;
- Organisations operating at the local level, including private educational institutes, corporate educational centres, folk high schools, and others.

The development of accreditation of informal learning has also helped advance LLL opportunities: some 63 standards have been established.

A journal on adult education, *Andrago\_ka spoznanja* (Andragogical Cognition), has been published since 1995, with contributions from the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports.

## 2.6 Effectiveness and efficiency of VET

- a. *In the current the national debate, how effective is the system of VET perceived to be? (Is the VET route effective in fostering individual careers, self-confidence and personal identity? Benefits of training for employers? Is the VET route effective in combating youth unemployment?)*
- b. *In the current national debate, is the VET system seen as offering efficiency/ good value for money? (These questions are given as examples and need not all be answered: Who is investing in VET - the state, the employers, and individuals – and what are their benefits? How can we make the best use of existing resources: Better balance between practical and theoretical training, accreditation of prior learning, raising completion rates, etc.? Improving management and organisation of VET?)*
- c. *What are the main trends in terms of investment in VET (Public investment? Incentives to employers as well as to individuals to invest more? Public-private partnerships?)*

Funding of VET is dominated by the Government. Most funding is given by the State budget or municipal budgets. The State budget is responsible for higher education (through the Higher Education Master Plan), post-secondary vocational colleges, secondary schools, and schools and institutions for children with special needs. Local municipalities and communities partially support elementary and pre-school education.

Training for unemployed people as well as other activities implemented by the Employment Service is funded by the Government; training of disabled workers is provided through the Institute for Pension and Disability Insurance, also financed by the government.

The Government helps fund the activities of certain private professional institutions of higher education on the basis of a "concession agreement". The Government co-finances adult education institutions: it co-funds approved programmes that are implemented by public and private institutions, based on the Adult Education Master Plan.

The Voucher System of Counselling is a good example of the growing cooperation between the Government and the private sector: funding is provided by the Ministries of Economy, Agriculture and Information and Communications for individual and small business training and development in cooperation with the Chambers of Commerce & Industry, Crafts and Agriculture. The Dual System is also co-financed: the Ministry of Economy subsidises trainees in CCI and CoC.

Recent information on total public expenditure on education could not be accessed. However, the ETF reports that in 1995, Slovenia allocated some 6% of GDP to education in 1998, and that the same level was foreseen for 1999 and 2000.<sup>13</sup> This is greater than the EU-25 rate of 4.94%, but cannot be confirmed with more recent data. Public funds for vocational and technical education amounted for 0.64% of GDP in 1996.

---

<sup>13</sup> ETF Monograph on VET in Slovenia.

The effectiveness of VET is widely accepted. Some comments made in literature by a variety of national and international sources, including SEDS and ETF:

- VET has to become more effective and of higher quality;
- Links between VET and employment must be increased;
- The role of the private sector in VET should be enhanced to assure quality and take-up. This should include private sector funding in the VET system.

Some additional comments and perceptions on the VET system are given in Section 3.1.

### 3. Theme 2: Innovation in Teaching and Learning

#### 3.1 Improvements in learning processes and contents

*Please identify innovation in teaching and learning methods and contents for VET. (For example, developments towards student-centred learning styles; a possible shift from content/subject based learning to competences/outcomes; more problem- and project-based pedagogy, and contextualised work-based learning processes and contents.)*

Innovation in teaching and learning methods has been a key policy objective in Slovenia. The Phare MOCCA programmes as well as the *Vocational and Technical Education Act* and the *Adult Education Act* played a significant role in reforming the VET system, including implementation of contextual and individual-based learning. Between 1996 and 1998, curricula reform efforts updated teaching content, subjects and methods, with the following main features<sup>14</sup>:

- The shift from subject-oriented to goal-oriented curriculum planning, including additional autonomy for schools and teachers.
- The introduction of new and diversified teaching methods to make learning more interesting, including the allocation of more time for group work, discussions, exercises and similar methods.
- The design of more balanced curricula with less stress on memorisation and reproduction of facts, with stronger development of learning skills, creativity, aesthetic and social skills, and the emotional dimension of education.

In addition, the Dual System was introduced, while at the same time the National Qualifications System was revised to replace the old “*nomenklatura*” system of vocations. This process included curriculum reform as well as reform of the learning and qualifications process.

Despite these reforms, comments made by the ETF and the Phare MOCCA programme<sup>15</sup> indicate that the knowledge catalogues for general education subjects are too demanding and comprehensive, include too many theoretical subjects and are not adjusted to individual needs. This is also seen in the Dual System, where apprentices do not see the relevance between some aspects of their curriculum and their future specialisation and careers. Finally, the need for higher quality learning facilities, more exposure to problem-oriented learning and learning in the corporate

<sup>14</sup> ETF. *Integration of Work and Learning in Hungary and Slovenia*. 2001

<sup>15</sup> ETF. *Monograph on VET in Slovenia*.

context, and the approach of general education followed by increasing degrees of specialisation, are all identified as representing potential challenges.

Several institutions support the process of innovation and monitoring of learning processes at the national level:

- The Council of Experts on Vocational Education and Training have supported the process of curricular and process reform, together with the Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia.
- The Centre for Vocational Education and Training (CPI) works on modernisation of curricula, training of teachers and trainers, development of materials and similar tasks.
- The National Education Institute (NEI) is responsible for the development and transfer of pedagogical and teaching skills. It is responsible for the implementation of the National Curriculum, including monitoring and testing existing and new methods of teaching.
- The Educational Research Institute (ERI) undertakes research and development activities in the field of national education. Its Centre for the Philosophy of Education and Centre for the Modernisation of Education (among others) focus on curriculum development and modernisation. ERI also participates in international networks and projects for curriculum and VET system development, including the European Commission, OECD<sup>16</sup>, and others.

There are currently a large range of projects underway to increase the effectiveness, innovation and creativity in the VET system. Some examples include:

- New guidelines for the development of vocational and technical education were adopted in 2003, which have led to the supplement of content in the *Matura* and Vocational *Matura* catalogues. The changes include a modular programme structure based on general and specific competencies.
- The Framework Curriculum has been adopted to include a 20% open curriculum option. This enables the school and its social partners to choose up to 20% of its curriculum.
- A recommendation has been made for a minimum of 24 weeks practical training in an enterprise, and also lessening the division between school-based and dual system learning by increasing the in-company learning component.
- The Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Agriculture co-founded the Youth Entrepreneurship and Creativity Development Programme in 2001. In 2002, 12 forms of entrepreneurial training and 10 support projects had been implemented, with a total participation of 5,462 young people. Of these, 58% were female and 42% were male, while 70.4% were in primary school; 14.6% in secondary school; 7.6% in tertiary education; and 5.6% were unemployed.
- The three ministries have also started training of trainers and mentors for creativity and entrepreneurship; a total of 39 mentors were trained in 2002.

---

<sup>16</sup> Although Slovenia is not a member of the OECD, it has implemented certain OECD standards for monitoring and assessing its national education system, and has an ongoing cooperation.

- CPI introduced the “Working for Myself” programme, a series of teacher training workshops on innovation and entrepreneurship aimed at the secondary vocational institutions. A total of 31 teachers and 330 pupils were trained in subjects such as “Entrepreneurship in the world of VET”, “Active Entrepreneurship” and others. Entrepreneurship knowledge standards and teaching curricula have been prepared, and are being expanded in the 2003/2004 year.
- The University of Maribor established the Centre for Distance Education Development (CDED) in 1999, which is intended to support the educational process through technological support, advise on didactic and pedagogical methods, supply information and introduce e-learning and multimedia services. The Faculties of Electrical Engineering & Computer Science; Education; and Organisational Sciences participate in CDED.
- At the tertiary level, the University of Maribor and the Ljubljana Faculty of Economics introduced an undergraduate course on entrepreneurship as well as postgraduate courses in the MBA programme. The Gea College of Entrepreneurship offers undergraduate and postgraduate studies in entrepreneurship.

New reforms have also been planned for the Dual System, which include the introduction of programmes in the service sector, the development of employer incentives and inter-company training centres, and the expansion of scholarships and other measures for promoting the participation of young people and adults.

### 3.2 Improving integration; integration of formal and informal learning

*Please identify the institutional and organisational links (or lack of them) between learning sites at schools and companies. (How are the traditional barriers between learning at schools/colleges and learning in the workplace being overcome? How far can “simple experiencing” at work be transformed into a “reflective experiencing” by linking company-based learning with school/college based learning?)*

General curricula reform in Slovenia have emphasized the role of general learning, the ability to solve problems and learn in contextual environments. Specific curricula designed under the Adult Education Master Plan, by the Educational Research Institute, and other organisations have adopted problem-solving approaches, “real life” learning activities, group work, and interaction. Curricular reforms made in 2003 have also made a recommendation for a minimum of 24 weeks training in enterprises in all vocational programmes (not including Dual System programmes, which have higher requirements).

The Dual System of education was developed with specific provisions for company-based learning. Programmes under the Dual System include classroom training, followed by extensive, in-company practical training. This system is also enshrined in the Master Craftsman certification process, which stipulates a minimum level of work experience-usually at least 3 years-between the end of the formal learning and the master craftsman examination.

The link between classroom and corporate training is expected to increase with Accession. Programmes such as ESF as well as funding under the Community Support Framework and the Employment Services promote labour market programmes and training.

However, observers of the VET system, including ETF, have identified the need for further exposure to corporate learning as well as higher quality learning environments, as seen in the previous section.

### 3.3 Evaluation and quality assurance of VET provision

*What systems are in place to evaluate the processes and outcomes of VET – for learners, systems and the system? (a) For the individual (assessment of competences and knowledge) (b) For the institution (internal/external quality management) (c) For the system (monitoring and evaluation)*

Extensive efforts have been made to evaluate the processes and outcomes of the VET system. At the individual level, assessment of students at the secondary level is implemented during the school year. There are three assessment periods throughout the year, and a final assessment score is made that enables passing to the next grade. The National Examination Centre (NEI) is responsible for the design and application of the *Matura* examination, which is the certification of knowledge between secondary and tertiary education, and is necessary as a school-leaving and university-entrance diploma. The *Matura* exists for vocational as well as general education, as well as the Dual System and some adult education topics, such as foreign languages. Pupils graduating from shorter-term vocational education courses are evaluated through a board of examiners comprising teachers as well as specialists from the chamber of employers supervising the specific profession or occupation. Students graduating from tertiary level institutions (including vocational colleges) are assessed based on a mixture of class and academic performance, examinations and other academic requirements. Certification is based on the submission and assessment of a relevant diploma or thesis paper and accompanying examination.

Accreditation of prior learning has been developed through the National Vocational Qualifications Act of 2000, which established a certification system for the assessment and verification of vocational-related knowledge and skills acquired in informal or out-of-school learning. The assessment results in a state-approved certificate that demonstrates competencies, and over 60 occupational profiles have been developed.

At the institutional level, internal quality management is provided by self-assessment on a regular basis. Secondary schools perform self assessments based on the national curriculum and the annual action plan developed at the national as well as school level. Class-level evaluations are performed through class meetings, often held once per week. Parent consultations and parent-teacher meetings are held usually three times per year. Teachers of individual subjects meet in study groups with teachers from other regions to evaluate the teaching process and exchange experience. The MOESS supported a project entitled the Assessment and Quality Assurance of Education project, which led to the development of self-evaluation guidelines for primary and secondary schools, which included the development of indicators.

Self assessment in tertiary education is implemented by institutional departments and senates. The Assessment and Quality Assurance in Education project also developed assessment guidelines and indicators for higher education.

Self-assessments are complemented by the evaluation activities implemented by organisations on an institutional and system basis, including:

- The Educational Research Institute (ERI) reviews, monitors and evaluates the national education system, including its harmonisation and comparison with European institutions and systems.
- The National Education Institute (NEI) evaluates programmes at the pre-university level, including pre-school institutions, elementary schools and general upper secondary schools (Gymnasia). The NEI plays an important role in monitoring early school leavers and school drop-outs, as well as performance of final examinations. NEI issues at least one report to each school per year.
- The University Research and Development Centre evaluates programmes at the university level. It monitors indicators such as graduation and drop-out rates, and issues reports to each institution.
- Centre for Vocational Education and Training evaluates programmes in vocational and technical schools. It evaluates school leaving exams as well as the results of the national Vocational *Matura*.
- The National Examination Centre with compulsory external examination at the end of basic and general upper secondary education (*Matura*) on the national level. It also monitors the results of national *Matura* awards.
- The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) monitors the area of adult education, and in particular the problems of young people who drop out of education.

Evaluation of programmes and curricula is assured by the National Commission for the Implementation and Assessment of Innovations and Programmes in Education, established in 1998 and composed of experts from schools, universities, the ERI, the NEI, SIAE and the Centre for VET. The Commission has prepared methodological guidelines and specific evaluation programmes. The Commission for Vocational and Technical Education includes teachers, schools, counsellors and experts from the relevant institutions who provide similar feedback on VET. Additional guidance at the system level is given by the National Council of Experts for Vocational Education and Training and the National Council of Experts for Higher Education.

### 3.4 Professional development and status of teachers and trainers

*Teachers' and trainers' professional development is now recognised as a decisive factor in improving learning processes and outcomes. Please indicate the key initiatives and innovations that are taking place in the training of teachers and trainers.*

*(These questions are given as examples and need not all be answered: Is initial training being introduced or reformed? If so, how? What provision is made for the continuous professional development of VET teachers and trainers? How do innovative education and training practices benefit students, companies and society? What is the position of trainers within organisations? How much autonomy do they have? What is the professional status - social status and self-esteem - of VET teachers and trainers in the society?)*

Teachers in public institutions have the status of civil servants, whereas those teaching in private schools have the same status as employees in the private sector. Public sector teachers much follow the Framework Curriculum, which establishes



content areas, and the Catalogues of Knowledge, which establish the content of external examinations. Teachers have the freedom to decide teaching methods and relationships. They are able to decide professional matters, including curricula modernisation and evaluation measures, within larger and established frameworks.

In-service training is recognised as important to the professional development and personal growth of teachers, and thereby to the quality and efficiency of the educational process. The management of the in-service training system is the responsibility of the In-service Training Programme Council, which is appointed by the Minister of Education. The Council consults with experts in the field; proposes training areas; selects and accredits programmes; publishes catalogues of programmes and otherwise coordinates the process. The supply of training programmes is from VET institutions such as the NEI, NEC, School for Head Teachers, SIAE, or Centre for Vocational Education and Training, or from external providers. Other institutions, such as higher education institutions, private organisations or societies, teachers associations, adult education centres, can also propose programmes. If selected by the In-Service Council, these are included in the in-service training catalogue, and attendance is funded by the Ministry. Schools provide a study leave of five days per year per teacher for the purpose of in-service training, and also pay for costs of training.

Supplementary training is commissioned by MOESS, and include subjects that address curriculum renewal, training of external examiners, post-graduate non-degree courses leading to a teaching qualifications, programmes for trainees and trainee mentors, programmes for teaching children with special needs, ICT and others. The post-graduate programmes leading to a teaching qualifications are compulsory.

Participation in in-service training is rewarded with a point system, which plays a role in promotion evaluations. Participation in commissioned or priority programmes, such as when required by educational reforms or changes to curricula, is either compulsory or strongly recommended.

Teachers in the secondary school system are qualified according to general education subjects or *matura* subjects. The *matura* subjects require additional, subject-specific education, which is obtained by completing the higher education study programme of the relevant specialisation as well as a one-semester post-graduate course leading to teaching qualification. Teachers of practical disciplines need to complete at least an upper secondary technical school in the relevant specialisation, obtain three years of work experience, and complete the teacher training course or pass the master craftsman examination.

Autonomy is ensured in the upper secondary level through the Open Framework system: schools may define up to 20% of the curricula taught in conjunction with their social partners.

The profession of teaching is respected in Slovenia, and trainers or instructors that have made it to the upper echelons of administrations, institutions or at the master-craftsman level are usually seen as being in privileged positions. The situation in the private sector varies.

## 4. Theme 3: Building Competences for a European Labour Market

### 4.1 Challenges & policies in relation to the Lisbon employment strategy

*What are the main challenges to achieving the Lisbon employment objectives for your country, according to the European Commission 'Kok Report'? Please identify any policies and strategies being developed to tackle these challenges. Please identify any obstacles standing in the way of reform of VET in relation to achieving the Lisbon objectives.*

Slovenia had a labour force of 922,000 actively employed people in 2002, and a further 58,000 unemployed (see charts on following page). The total inactive population number 707,000 people. The average employment rate was 58.1% in 2002. At 64.7%, male economic activity was higher than female activity, which was 51.9% in 2002. General unemployment reached 5.9% in 2002; the male unemployment rate was 5.7%, compared to a female unemployment rate of 6.3%. The largest disparities in unemployment are seen in the 15-24 age group, where unemployment was at 15% in 2002, down from 18.2% in 1998. The lowest unemployment rate was seen in the over 50 age group, but this may also be due to lower activity rates.

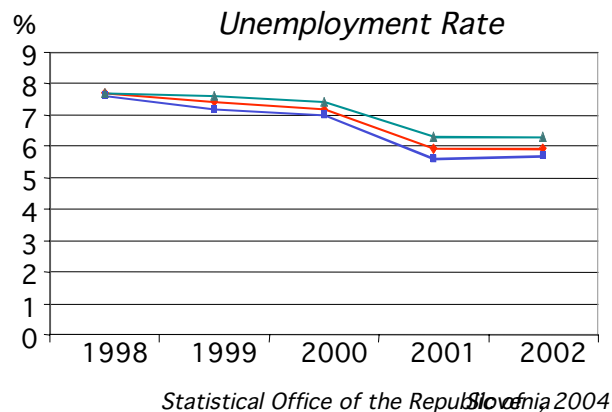
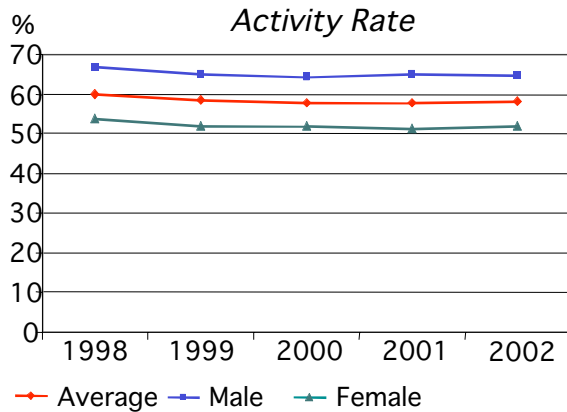
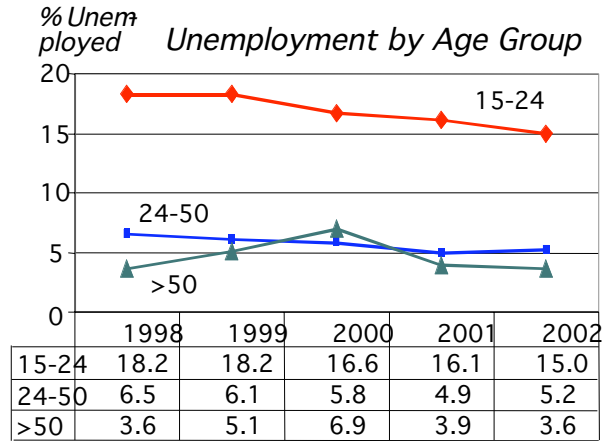
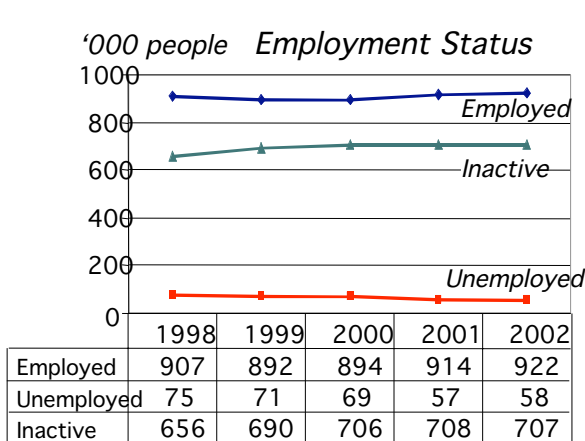
The Kok Report outlines the following priorities for Slovenia:

- Increasing Adaptability: assessment of the tax and minimum wage systems to increase activity and reduce undeclared work; promotion of flexible forms of work while maintaining balance between flexibility and security.
- Make Work a Real Option For All: Increase employment for workers over 55, reduce use of early retirement schemes, ensure consistency between taxes and benefits, improve staff training in the public employment service, intensify cooperation with private services.
- Invest in Human Capital: Increase the participation of adult education; reduce drop-out rates; define incentives for private sector; review the role of social partners.

To this extent, there are few differences between the Kok Report, the Labour Market Strategy to 2006<sup>17</sup>, the Employment Service Annual Strategy, and the Slovenian Economic Development Strategy (SEDS). Specific policy goals have been established for adult learning, increasing employment, and human resource development, as outlined in Section 1. The specific objectives for employment and human resources development established in SEDS include:

---

<sup>17</sup> Government of Slovenia. *Strategic Goals of the Labour Market Development up to 2006: Employment Policy and its Implementation Programmes.*



- First Pillar: Increasing employability of the population; cutting and preventing long-term unemployment; promoting lifelong learning and employment of older people; raising literacy; establishing flexible and high quality education systems; reducing the number of non-conformities between supply and demand.
- Second Pillar: Expanding and promoting entrepreneurship; eliminating obstacles for establishing SMEs; reducing high taxation of labour; establish stimuli for investing in human capital.
- Third Pillar: Promote adaptability of companies and individuals; support knowledge and preparedness of employers and employees; develop consensus between social partners; shorten working times; develop flexible working agreements; invest in knowledge.

Some of the major challenges affecting the labour market include:

- Great structural changes in the economy have occurred since 1990, with the services sector adding significantly to GDP, while the primary and secondary sectors have lost ground. Further work is needed in developing VET educational and qualifications systems for the services sector, particularly for those professions for whom a university degree may be an over-qualification (e.g. bank tellers, insurance workers), but whom are not well-served by the existing range of VET offerings. Given EU accession as well as changes in the global trade environment, it is likely that some sectors, e.g. textile and leather industries, may face further challenges.

- EURES<sup>18</sup> identifies unmet demand for labour in areas such as building labourers and craftsmen, cleaners, metalworking, electricians, electrical fitters, specialists in the technical and scientific fields (mechanical and electric engineers), information technologists, nurses, doctors, primary school teachers and other fields.
- There are continuing employment problems for people with no skills, employment impediments (age or disability), as well as economic restructuring. According to EURES, occupations such as agriculture and hairdressing, machine operators in some manufacturing and textiles/leather products, and clerical workers are seen to have specific problems.
- There is a general perception that the strategies have been crafted but not implemented, and that greater private sector involvement is needed in the definition and funding of specific programmes. Involvement in EU programmes is likely to be critical in this respect.

Since SEDS was defined in 2001, there have been greater attempts to involve the private sector and to move towards direct support for initiatives in the private sector. An example of this is the Ministry of Labour programme for self-employment of unemployed persons. This programme offers assistance to potential entrepreneurs on self-employment opportunities, procedures, and management issues, as well as co-financing. Further self-employment assistance is provided by the Small Business Development Centre (SBDC). In 2002, a total of 2,842 people participated in training or consultancy schemes, and 1,004 became self-employed. It is likely that participation in European Social Fund as well as other initiatives will support this trend.

## 4.2 Involving stakeholders

- Please describe the role of stakeholders or social partners in the planning of VET at national, sector and company level*
- Which actions to anticipate and recognise skills and qualifications needs (at national, sector or regional level) for your country do the European social partners identify as important in their recent report?*

Employer stakeholders are actively involved in developing and planning VET strategies and policies. The Council of Higher Education includes representatives of employers and students. The Centre for Vocational Education and Training was co-founded by the Government, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) and the Chamber of Crafts (CoC). The CCI and CoC are active both in developing occupational standards as well as in managing the dual system of apprenticeships and the examination / certification boards.

Other stakeholders, including private VET providers, are also involved, and the government directly sponsors some private providers. There is also a regional dimension to VET, as some vocational colleges and local communities play a role in adapting curricula to regional needs as well as organising and financing adult education. Employee stakeholders, i.e. trade unions, play a lesser role, which is

---

<sup>18</sup> EURES. *Country Page Slovenia*. 2004 (EURES Web Site).

usually restricted to labour tribunals, monitoring of labour conditions and similar activities.

Involvement of private sector educational providers, and particularly the private colleges, may be required. There is a difference in curricula and teacher preparation between the public and private sectors, and this may be an issue that will affect future development of VET provision.

The Government has followed a conscious policy of “Europeanisation” of the VET curricula in the upper secondary general education programme. The curricula have been revised to include European geography and history, the role of the European Union, cultural heritage and similar subjects. “European classes” are being introduced in the 2004/05 school year.

### 4.3 Transparency, recognition & mobility

*A key objective of the Copenhagen Agreement is to establish mechanisms that can lead to a European labour market. Credit transfer, qualification frameworks and Europass are specified in this respect. What measures, if any, are being developed at national and/ or sector level (a) To establish credit frameworks (b) To establish or reform a qualifications framework (c) To implement Europass?*

Slovenia is implementing the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) for VET, including shorter VET courses. The Phare MOCCA programme has been critical in harmonising curricula and standards. Institutions such as the National Examination Centre or the Education Research Institute maintain international standards and agreement. Slovenia has implemented the provisions of the Bologna Declaration for tertiary education, and is in the process of implementing Europass.

The Centre for Vocational Education and Training is the National Reference Point for national vocational qualifications and standards, including databases, catalogues, transparency and equivalency. The Centre maintains the National VET Observatory and is a reference point of CEDEFOP, including TT Net and Refer Net.

## 5. Scoreboard: Achieving the Lisbon VET Objectives in Slovenia

LISBON VET OBJECTIVE	CURRENT STATUS	RESPONSE
<p><b>1. Investment in Education and Training</b></p> <p>No benchmark. However, 1999 EU average was 5.0% for public expenditure on education as share of GDP, while average of three best performing countries was 7.4%.</p>	<p>Expenditure in 1998 amounted to 6% of GDP to education in 1998, and that the same level was foreseen for 1999 and 2000.</p>	<p>Unknown.</p>
<p><b>2. Early School Leavers</b></p> <p>Benchmark is an EU-average rate of 10% or less by 2010, down from 1999 EU average of 19.4%.</p>	<p>In 2002, early school leavers were at a rate of 4.8% of the total age group. However, problems with high drop-out rate are seen.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase availability and quality of IVET through educational reforms, introduction of dual system.</li> <li>• Development of accreditation of prior learning; 64 profiles introduced by June 2004.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Graduates in Mathematics, Science and Technology</b></p> <p><i>“By 2010, Member States will have at least halved the level of gender imbalance among graduates in mathematics, science, technology whilst securing an overall significant increase of the total number of graduates compared to the year 2000.”</i></p>	<p>Slovenia had a total enrolment of 22.5% in 2001 at the ISCED 5A, 5B and 6 levels in maths, science and engineering. Female enrolment was at 10.5% of total student population; male enrolment was at 37.9%.</p>	<p>Unknown.</p>

LISBON VET OBJECTIVE	CURRENT STATUS	RESPONSE
<p><b>4. Upper Secondary Education Attainment</b></p> <p><i>“By 2010, Member States should ensure that average percentage of 25-64 year olds in the EU with at least upper secondary education reaches 80% or more.”</i></p>	<p>Attainment of at least upper secondary education has grown to 54.1% of the total population and 69% of the population over 15 by 2002. There has been a significant numerical increase between 1971 and 2002.</p>	<p>The Government is increasing the provision of upper secondary educational opportunities as well as funding.</p> <p>However, it is uncertain if the 80% level can be reached without changes in compulsory education levels or other, more direct measures.</p>
<p><b>5. Key Competencies</b></p> <p><i>“By 2010, the percentage of low-achieving 15 year olds in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy will be at least halved in each Member State.”</i></p>	<p>Unknown.</p>	<p>Unknown.</p>
<p><b>6. Lifelong Learning</b></p> <p><i>“By 2010, the EU-average level of participation in lifelong learning should be at least 15% of the adult working age population (25-65 age group) and in no country should it be lower than 10%.”</i></p>	<p>Slovenian participation rate was 8.8% in 2002.</p>	<p>Adult education has been expanded, both in terms of opportunities as well as actual enrolment.</p> <p>Accreditation of prior learning has been expanded; 64 occupational profiles have been developed.</p>

## Annex I: List of Sources

*This is a partial list of sources consulted.*

- Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training. *Description of Centre* (on web site). 2004.
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia. *Slovenia: Current Economic Trends, 2003-2005*. June 2004.
- Chamber of Crafts of Slovenia. *Description of Chamber* (on web site). 2004.
- Educational Research Institute. *Description of Institute* (on web site). 2004.
- Employment Service of Slovenia. *2003 Annual Report*. 2004.
- European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. *Learning for Employment: Second Report on Vocational Education and Training in Europe*. 2004.
- European Commission. *Education and Training 2010: The Success of the Lisbon Strategy Hinges on Urgent Reforms*. 2004.
- European Commission. *EU Productivity and Competitiveness: An Industry Perspective*. 2003
- European Commission. *Employment in Europe*. 2003
- European Commission. *Jobs, Jobs, Jobs: Creating More Employment in Europe. Report of the Employment Taskforce chaired by Wim Kok*. November 2003.
- European Commission / Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. *Joint Assessment of Employment Policy Priorities in Slovenia*. 2001.
- European Commission. *Implementing Lifelong Learning Strategies in Europe: Progress Report on the Follow-up to the 2002 Council Resolution on Lifelong Learning: Acceding and Candidate Countries*. 2003.
- European Charter for Small Enterprises. *Slovenia Country Report*. 2003.
- European Employment Observatory. *Quality of Work through Investing in Human Resources: The situation in the EU 25, candidate countries and Norway*. 2004.
- European Employment Service. *Country File, Slovenia*. 2004 (on EURES Web Site).
- European Innovation Scoreboard. *Country Performance Slovenia, 2003*.
- European Training Foundation. *Assessing Management Training Needs in Slovenia*. 2001.
- European Training Foundation. *Integration of Work and Learning in Transition Countries: The Experience of Hungary and Slovenia*. 2001.
- European Training Foundation. *Monograph, Candidate Countries: Vocational Education and Training and Employment Services, Slovenia*. 2002.
- European Training Foundation. *Review of Progress in Vocational Education and Training Reform, Slovenia*. 2002.



- European Training Foundation. *Slovenia Resource Dossier*. 2003
- European Trend Chart on Innovation. *Country Report Slovenia*. 2003.
- Eurybase. *National Dossier: A Dossier of the Slovenian Educational System*. 2003.
- Eurydice. *Summary Sheets on Education Systems in Europe: Slovenia*. 2004.
- Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development. *Slovenia in the New Decade: Sustainability, Competitiveness, Membership in the EU. The Strategy for Economic Development of Slovenia, 2001-2006*. 2001.
- Institute of Social Sciences. *Quarterly Report Slovenia*. April 2004.
- Maribor University. *Description of Distance Learning Centre* (on web site). 2004.
- Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. *Consultation Process of Memorandum of Lifelong Learning*. July 2001.
- Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. *Description of Education System* (on web site). 2004.
- National Education Institute. *Description of Institute* (on web site). 2004.
- National Examination Centre. *Description of Centre* (on web site). 2004.
- SLORITTS Project (IPS-2000-01064). *Regional Innovation Strategy of Slovenia as an EU Region*. 2004.
- Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. *Current Issues in Adult Learning and Motivation: Proceedings of the 7<sup>th</sup> Adult Education Colloquium*. 2003.
- Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. *Description of Centre* (on web site). 2004.
- Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. *Lifelong Learning Week* (on web site). 2004.