



**CEDEFOP**

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for the Development  
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# **VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN LATVIA**

***COUNTRY REPORT***  
*(previous Thematic Overview)*

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# **01 - GENERAL CONTEXT – FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY**

## **0101 - Political and socio-cultural/economic context**

Latvia is an independent democratic republic established in 1918. From 1940 to 1991, it was occupied by the Soviet army and was incorporated into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Latvia regained its independence in 1991.

Legislative power is held by the parliament (*Saeima*), which consists of 100 representatives elected for a period of 4 years. It is elected through proportional representation by citizens aged 18 and older. The 9th Saeima was elected in October 2006.

The head of State is the President who is elected by the *Saeima* for 4 years. Executive authority rests on the Prime Minister and the Cabinet of Ministers. The *Saeima*, the Cabinet of Ministers and the Ministry of Education and Science are the main decision-making bodies for VET at national level. The Ministry implements a unified national policy and development strategy in education.

Until December 31, 2008 there were 26 districts in Latvia, which consisted of 26 counties and 444 civil parishes with elected local governments. In order to optimise structure of the local authorities, the territorial administration has been reformed to regions (*apriņķis*) including 10 republic cities (min. 25 thousands inhabitants) under state jurisdiction, and 109 counties (*novads*, min. 4 thousands inhabitants), which may consist of one or several parishes and/or towns. It is planned to complete administrative reform until 2012.

The number of inhabitants continues to decrease gradually (from 2,346 million in 2002 to 2.271 million in 2008) due to migration (-0.61% in 2002 and -0.18% in 2007 of total population) and ageing (15.95% in 2002; 22.13% in 2008 of inhabitants above age 60). Long term migration saldo in 2007 (-642 inhabitants) has decreased by 63.9% comparing to 2002 because of number of immigrants has increased. The most of population in 2008 lived in urban area (67.9%), of which 57.44% lived in Riga and its district (Central Statistic Bureau of Latvia, 2009). The urban/rural ratio in the total number of population has not changed during last 5 years. The majority of social and economic facilities are concentrated in Riga and in great cities, therefore, availability of education and other services in rural regions should be particularly promoted. However, inland migration is not as great, as migration to other states. The main inhabitant migration stream may be observed from rural regions to Riga.

## **0102 - Population and demographics**

Latvia covers 64,589 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of 2.271 million people (CSB, 2008). Between 1990 and 2000 the population has decreased by 10.74%, while decrease in population rates since 2000 reached 4.7%.

The share of the population below working age is decreasing (18% in 2000; 13.8% in 2008). The proportion of the population of schooling age is expected to decrease further until at least 2015. Proportion of population aged 60 and above shows steady increase, i.e.

difference in rates between 2000 and 2008 is 1.14%, in 2008 accordingly 22.13% of population were aged 60 and above.

The proportion of economically active inhabitants in the population has increased due to an increase in the pension age (58.9% in 2000 and 65.6% in 2008). According to demographic forecasts, the economically active part of the population will remain constant till 2010. There will fall between 2010 and 2020 when a general ageing of the population is expected.

YEAR	TOTAL	0-19	20-59	60 +
2005	2 305.1 (100%)	526.3 (22.8%)	1 267.5 (54.9%)	511.3 (22.2%)
2010	2 239.6 (100%)	450.1 (20.1%)	1 282.2 (57.3%)	507.3 (22.7%)
2015	2 174.2 (100%)	421.2 (19.4 %)	1 243.2 (57.2%)	509.8 (23.5%)
2020	2 115.4 (100%)	440.1 (20.8%)	1 150.2 (54.4%)	525.2 (24.8%)
2025	2 068.1 (100%)	443.7 (21.5%)	1 079.9 (52.2%)	544.4 (26.3%)

Source: Demography 2007, Riga: CSB, 2007

### 0103 - Economy and labour market indicators

During the period of 2005-2007, the Latvian economy grew rapidly, when GDP grew annually by 10.9% on average, while in 2007 – by 10%. According to the Ministry of Economics, the high growth rates were mainly ensured by the domestic demand. Private consumption and investment experienced considerable increase. However, since 2007, the growth rates started to decrease and in the middle of 2008 became negative. GDP per capita according to purchasing power standards was 52.6% of the EU-27 average in 2008 (estimation of Eurostat); total value of GDP in 2008 was EUR 22,590,224,302 (Law on the State budget for 2008, 2008).

However, expenditures for education do not constitute a great part of the General government consolidated budget expenditures, i.e. EUR 501,937,776 in 2008, as shown in the table below.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>FROM THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET</b>	16.3	17.2	16.7	19.7	20.2
<b>FROM GDP</b>	5.8	6.1	6.2	7.1	7.8

Source: Report on the economic development of Latvia. ME, Riga, December 2008.

The structure of the economy has slightly changed during the last years in favour of services sectors, while the growth of sectors related to production of goods was slower. In 2008, the share of services sectors in terms of value added has increased by 74.2% compared to 71.8% in 2000. However, the employment rate by sectors is different due to noticeable differences observed in the levels of productivity in various economic sectors and the unregistered employment (see table below). The majority of people employed without labour contract work in building, trade and various services.

YEAR	BY VALUE ADDED				BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES			
	2000	2006	2007	2008	2000	2006	2007	2008
PRIMARY SECTORS*	4.8	4.0	3.6	3.5	14.5	11.6	10.4	8.0**

INDUSTRY	17.3	15.4	13.2	13.4	19.8	16.6	16.2	17.1
CONSTRUCTION	6.1	6.8	8.4	8.9	5.9	10.0	11.5	11.2
SERVICES	71.8	74.8	74.7	74.2	59.8	61.8	61.9	63.1

\* Agriculture, hunting and forestry; fishing; mining and quarrying; \*\* Data missing

Source: CSB, 2009

The employment rates have changed slightly comparing the years 2007 and 2008, e.g. total and female (aged 15-74) employment rates have increased by nearly 1%. In total, 572,150 men and 552,350 women were employed in 2008; the number of employed females has increased, while number of employed men has slightly decreased comparing to 2007.

<b>TABLE 3. RATES OF EMPLOYMENT IN 2008 (%), CBS</b>			
<b>RATE OF EMPLOYED POPULATION TO THE TOTAL POPULATION</b>			
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>MALES</b>	<b>FEMALES</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	62.6	67.8	58
<b>AGE (YEARS)</b>			
<b>15 -24</b>	11.8	13.8	10.8
<b>25 -34</b>	23.0	24.6	21.2
<b>35 -44</b>	24.0	23.6	24.5
<b>45 -54</b>	23.7	22.0	25.7
<b>55 -64</b>	13.3	12.2	13.8
<b>65 -74</b>	4.3	3.7	4.1

Source: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2009

An unemployment register has existed since 1992. The registered unemployment rate reached a peak in 1998 by 9.2% (111.4 thousand inhabitants) and decreased gradually since 1999 reaching the lowest point in 2007 at 6% (52.3 thousands inhabitants); thereafter, the unemployment rate started to increase reaching 7.5% in 2008 and 10.7% in March of 2009. The total number of unemployed people in 2008 was 76,435 of which 32.7% were persons with vocational education. It should be noted that great part of unemployed having vocational education have graduated several decades ago. The CSB data shows that the unemployment rate in 2008 is still higher among men than women (8.1% and 7.0% respectively). While women tend to use the services of the State Employment Agency (SEA, *Nodarbinatibas valsts agentura*) more every year (52% at the end of 2008) than men; however, the difference between women and men unemployment rates in 2008 has decreased noticeably.

<b>TABLE 4. REGISTERED UNEMPLOYED BY GENDER (AT THE END OF YEAR IN %)</b>					
	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>MALES</b>	41.0	40.1	39.1	38.0	48.0
<b>FEMALES</b>	59.0	59.9	60.9	62.0	52.0

Source: State Employment Agency, 2008

Registered unemployment differs in various areas of country: traditionally, the highest unemployment rate is registered in Latgale, the eastern part of Latvia – 10.8%, while in other regions the average unemployment rate was 7%. In Riga and its district there was the lowest registered unemployment rate 5.5%, in December 2008. Moreover, proportion of the employed in urban areas increases continuously, while in the countryside the rate decreases.

The other issue is unemployment of young people, which is one of the risk groups. The unemployment rate among young adults (younger than 25) has decreased since 2000, i.e. from 21% to 13.1% in 2008, which is lower than the EU-27 rate 15.4%. Due to the

global economic situation the rate has increased by almost 2% since 2007 (Labour Force Survey, 2009). According to CBS, the proportion of those seeking employment out of the total number of the economically active population aged 15-19 or 20-24 was 48.3% and 26.1% in 1996; 35.7% and 19.6% in 2000; and 29.7% and 10.2% in 2008. Meanwhile, the proportion of students is comparatively high, i.e. in 2008/2009 there were 554 students per 10,000 inhabitants (5.5% of population studied in HEI in 2008) (CSB, 2009). In 2008, the unemployment rate was 14.1% among those with higher education (ISCED 5), in comparison to 28.2% among those with completed general upper-secondary education (ISCED 3A), 32.7% among those with vocational or upper-secondary vocational education (ISCED 3B + ISCED 4) and 22.8% among those who have completed basic education (ISCED 2).

## 0104 - Educational attainment of population

According to Eurostat data, youth education attainment level generally has an increasing tendency, i.e. in 2001 – 71.7%, and in 2007 – 80.2% had completed upper-secondary education, which is slightly higher than the average youth education attainment level in EU-27 (76.6% in 2001 and 78.1% in 2007). There are no particular political reasons for the increase of youth education attainment, however, more people are involved in education through programmes for unemployed, evening schools and pedagogical correction programmes (see 4.2).

	TOTAL	PRE-PRIMARY, PRIMARY AND LOWERSECONDARY EDUCATION (ISCED LEVELS 0-2)		UPPER-SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY NONTERTIARY EDUCATION (ISCED LEVELS 3-4)		TERTIARY EDUCATION (ISCED LEVELS 5-6)	
		TOTAL (1000)	%	TOTAL (1000)	%	TOTAL (1000)	%
<b>EU27</b>	268 116	77 859	29	125 857	47	62 688	23
<b>LV</b>	1 215	182	15	756	62	273	23

Source: Eurostat; EU Labour Force Survey; Date of extraction: 27/05/2008

In comparison with EU member states where 47% of the population have achieved ISCED level 3-4, 62% have achieved the same level in Latvia. Traditionally, there has been a premium (and increasing tendency) for people obtaining higher level education (75% of graduates from upper-secondary school continued studies in 2008) because a higher education degree is considered to provide greater career prospects and bolster social status.

During the Soviet period, upper-secondary school was compulsory, but since 1991 only primary and lower-secondary level (9 grades) are compulsory.

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
<b>EU-27</b>	17.1	16.6	15.9	15.5	15.2	14.8
<b>LATVIA</b>	19.5	18.1	15.6	11.9	19 (p)	16 (p)

(p) Provisional value Source: Eurostat; EU Labour Force Survey; date of extraction: 29 May 2008

Women tend to participate more in adult education than men, i.e. accordingly 9.3% and 4.6% in 2007. Adults participate in continuing education programmes, professional

improvement programmes and adult education programmes, i.e. various study courses of languages, computer, accounting etc, as well as educational activities for the unemployed (see section 5).

**TABLE 3. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AGED 25-64 PARTICIPATING IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING OVER THE FOUR WEEKS PRIOR TO THE SURVEY**

	2002			2005			2007		
	TOTAL	FEMAL	MALE	TOTAL	FEMAL	MALE	TOTAL	FEMAL	MALE
	L	ES	S	L	ES	S	L	ES	S
EU-27	7.2	7.8	6.6	9.8	10.5	9	9.5	10.3	8.6
LATVIA	7.3	9.2	5.1	7.9	10.6	5	7.1	9.3	4.6

Source: Eurostat; date of extraction: 27 Feb 2009; last update: 14 Nov 08

## 0105 - Definitions

- **general education** (*vispareja izglitiba*) – the definition of “general education” in Latvia does not differ noticeably from the international definition, i.e. education mainly designed to lead participants to a deeper understanding of a subject or group of subjects, especially, but not necessarily, with a view to preparing participants for further education at the same or a higher level. These programmes, which are with a general orientation and do not focus on a particular specialization, are typically school-based. After a successful completion of these programmes the participants are not provided with a labour-market relevant qualification at this level. However, the term “general education” is mostly used to refer to upper-secondary education, while the term “academic education” is used for higher level education programmes.
- **pre-vocational education** (*pirms-profesionala izglitiba*) – this term is not used and is not applicable to the Latvian education system.
- **vocational education** (*profesionala izglitiba*) – in the Latvian context the term has the same meaning as stated in the international definition. Education mainly designed to allow participants to acquire the practical skills, know-how and understanding necessary for employment in a particular occupation or trade. Successful completion of such programmes leads to a labour-market relevant recognized vocational qualification. Mostly, the term “vocational education” refers to upper-secondary education, while “professional education” is used to refer to higher level education programmes.
- **technical education** (*profesionala izglitiba*) – this term is not usually applied, see vocational education.
- **tertiary education** (*augstaka izglitiba*) – see higher education
- **higher education** (*augstaka izglitiba*) – an educational level, which is acquired after upper-secondary education, in science or art; development of the individual in a selected academic or professional field of science or art, or in an academic or professional study stream in preparation for scientific and professional activity (Education Law, 1998).
- **further education** (*talakizglitiba*) – continuation of previously acquired education and professional skill improvement in conformity with the requirements of the specific profession (Education Law, 1998).
- **post-secondary non-tertiary education** (*pecvideja izglitiba*) – in Latvia the programmes (ISCED 4) lie between the upper-secondary and tertiary levels of education, as well. However, nationally they are qualified as upper-secondary programmes. The further vocational programmes (1-3 years long) and professional improvement programmes (at least 160 hours long, which may be as a part of qualification) fall in this category. These programmes are oriented only to acquisition of professional knowledge and skills.



Educational process and assessment is organised likewise to other upper-secondary education programmes. The students are usually older than those at level 3.

- **training** (*apmaciba*) – the term is more applied to separate courses, e.g. professional improvement or further education programmes for adults with vocational and practical orientation, or particular educational processes, while “VET” is referred as “vocational education”.
- **initial vocational education and training** (*sakotneja profesionala izglitiba*)– formally organised vocational education, mostly at upper-secondary education level, which is similar to the international definition, i.e. education undertaken after full-time compulsory education (mainly 9 years long primary and lower-secondary education) to promote the acquisition of the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to entry an occupation. The management and legal basis of initial vocational education are not separated from continuous vocational education; therefore, frequently initial vocational education is referred as “vocational education”.
- **continuing vocational education and training** (*profesionala talakizglitiba*)–a special kind of vocational education which provides an opportunity for adults with previous education and professional experience to acquire a specific level vocational qualification (Vocational Education Law, 1999). Thereby, the term is interpreted similarly to the international definition, i.e. CVET can be broadly defined as professional or vocational development through education and training undertaken typically after one has completed initial vocational education and training. It is provided and undertaken at the initiative of public authorities, social partners, sectors, enterprises, individuals as well as a range of voluntary and community organisations. However, all recognised CVET programmes lead to certification; it is not considered daily education.
- **school-based programmes** (*skolas realizetas programmas*) – this term is not largely applied, since majority of vocational education programmes, apart from apprenticeship, are implemented partly in educational institutions, i.e. they include practice training in enterprises.
- **alternance training** (*alternativas apmacibas*) – no exact term in Latvian, since “alternance training” is not applicable to the Latvian education system.
- **apprenticeship** (*maceklu apmaciba*) – in the Latvian context, the term has very similar explanation as in the international definition: systematic, long-term training alternating periods in a school or training centre and at the workplace; the apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and may receive remuneration. The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation according to education programmes developed by the Chamber of Crafts and the Ministry of Education and Science.
- **curriculum** (*izglitibas programma*) – the term frequently referred as “education programme”, which is a document regulating the educational activity of education institution. In line with the education level, the type of education, the target group and the State education standard, the education programme determines goals, tasks and planned results of the education programme; requirements for previous student education; educational content as a unified contents summary of study subjects or courses; plan for the implementation of the education programme; assessment of the personnel, funds and material resources necessary for the educational programme implementation in accordance with the Cabinet Regulations regarding the minimum expenditures for the implementation of education programmes per one learner (Education Law, 1998).
- **qualification** (*kvalifikacija*) – evaluation of educational and professional skills with respect to a particular profession, confirmed by documentary evidence (Education Law, 1998). The national definition is similar to the given international one: a formal outcome

of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.

- **skills** (*prasmes*) – the Latvian context for the term is similar to the international definition, i.e. the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems.
- **competences** (*kompetece*) – the term is frequently used and understood interchangeably with “skills”, since in the Education Law (1998) the terms “knowledge, skills and attitudes” are used to describe education and its process; while within the ESF project “Development of a Unified Methodology for the Quality Improvement of Vocational Education and Involvement and Education of Social Partners” (2005-2007) the combination of “knowledge, skills, attitudes and professional competences” is used. However, the international definition could be applied: the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/ or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.

## 02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT – OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

### 0201 - Objectives and priorities of the national policy development areas of VET

Vocational education has gone through four major stages of development since 1995:

**1995-1998:** the main goals for the development of vocational education were defined and determined by the Strategic Programme for the Development of Education 1998-2003 (*Izglitibas attistibas strategiska programma*). During this time, Phare projects were of great importance.

**1999-2001:** the Vocational Education Law (*Profesionalas izglitibas likums*), adopted in 1999 formed the juridical basis for vocational education (please see 3.1). The Law regulates the forms of vocational education, the level of qualifications to be obtained and their requirements as well as the responsibility of the different VET structures. Phare projects assisted the implementation of the Law.

**2002-2005:** reforms continued linked to the process of joining the EU. The Education Development Concept for 2002-2005 was adopted, as was the Programme *Vocational Education Development Programme for 2003-2005* with much more specific goals (improving quality in, and access to, VET and to promote efficient expenditure). A number of other strategic documents have been adopted promoting lifelong learning and human resource development, including improving VET opportunities, for example, the annual National employment plans. The overarching aim of the Education Development Concept was to carry out the necessary changes in the education system to enhance the building of a knowledge-based, democratic and socially integrated society that would increase economic competitiveness and simultaneously preserve and develop Latvian cultural values.

**2007-2013:** *the Guidelines for the Development of Education for the Period of 2007-2013 (Izglitibas attistibas pamatnostadnes 2007.-2013.gadam, 2006)* worked out by the Ministry of Education and Science underpins current policy priorities.

Before preparing the Guidelines, a survey on education development during 2002-2005 was carried out to identify improvements and problems, such as pre-school education availability, poor quality of basic education, the low status of teacher profession, the mismatch of vocational and higher education to labour market demands etc. The identification of problems assisted in stating general policy priorities for 2007-2013.

The main objectives of the Guidelines among others are:

- to introduce and finance teacher assistant posts to provide support to pupils (Forms 1-6) with learning difficulties;
- to provide additional support for those with low levels of education and training;
- to prepare a structural model for higher education programmes with additional available places;
- to provide continuous state investment for arranging and modernising education establishments;
- to increase the role of social partners in VET.

The Guidelines are implemented through the working strategy 2007-2009 of the Ministry of Education and Science (*Izglitibas un zinatnes ministrija*).

Furthermore, the Ministry implemented ESF National programme project “Fostering the Implementation of Vocational Guidance Provision and Careers Education in the Educational Sector” (2005-2007) to improve the accessibility and quality of vocational guidance provision and careers education at providers.

In recent years vocational education prestige, quality and social dialogue have become a great policy priority, therefore, in 2008 the Ministry of Education and Science worked out project of concept *Raising attractiveness of vocational education and involvement of social partners within vocational education quality assurance (Profesionalas izglitibas pievilcibas paaugstinašana un socialo partneru līdzdalība profesionalas izglitibas kvalitātes nodrošinašana)*, which is not approved yet and, therefore, cannot be described in details.

## 020101 - National Lifelong Learning Strategy

The most recent LLL policy planning document was the Guidelines for Lifelong Learning Policy 2007-2013 (*Mužizglitibas politikas pamatnostādnes 2007.–2013.gadam, 2007*) prepared by the Ministry of Education and Science, which outlines the vision for 2013 in terms of the needs of different target groups; mainstream development; policy aims and results indicators; and resources available. The following aims for lifelong learning policy were listed:

- To ensure the **availability** of lifelong learning for all social groups – it is planned to create conditions for progress of educated people within all schools, to ensure flexible second chance education according to individual needs, to strengthen formation of education support system for career guidance and counselling, to promote offer of formal and informal/non-formal education, to arrange territorial access to lifelong learning, and to organise activities for minimising gender differences within lifelong learning;
- To develop a **qualitative education offer** for adults providing sustainable competences for further socioeconomic and civic activities – in the Guidelines, the following activity directions are given: to create state regulated mechanisms for impacting the offer and demands of education and labour market, to coordinate adult education within the education system, to develop state support for adult education providers, to evaluate the quality of adult education, to implement a validation system for informal and non-formal learning;
- To form **legislative and administrative system** involving various stakeholders;
- To form lifelong learning administrative structure both at local and national levels, to develop a legal basis for lifelong learning, to create lifelong learning financing mechanisms.

## 020102 - Policy development in the main VET policy areas

### Governance and funding

Initial vocational education financing is determined by the *Education Law* (1998), the *Vocational Education Law* (1999), the *Crafts Law* (1993) and regulations of the Cabinet, as well as by statutes of certain vocational education institutions. At present (2009), a new *Vocational Education Law* is being worked out.

Subsidies come from the state general budget, local governments and private sources. Amount of state subsidies is determined by the Cabinet of Ministers in conformity with number of persons in education and minimal educational cost per one learner. This normative funding in vocational education was introduced in 2000. Education establishments make an inquiry for fund every year. After the state budget confirmation school receive funding and spent it to realise their educational programmes accordingly the legislation.

According to the directions set in the *Education Development Concept 2002-2005*, schools under the authority of the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture since July 2004 were to be reassigned to the MoES, which assisted in simplifying vocational education management and funding. The MoES overtook previously separate systems of funding mechanisms, institutional networks, curricula development, and quality monitoring; thus, ensuring pursue of consistent information on vocational education and unified decision making.

## Guidance and counselling

Different innovative activities to modernise the guidance and counselling system have been launched during last years in Latvia at national level.

The White Paper on the Improvement of the Career Guidance System (approved in 2006) has been developed by the Ministry of Welfare in cooperation with three other ministries (the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Economics, Ministry of Regional Development), with the Association of Local Governments, the social partners' organisations, the guidance practitioners. It was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. The Paper covers all aspects of lifelong guidance, including the mechanisms to ensure better cooperation and coordination between key players in guidance and counselling at different levels.

The National Forum (NF) on guidance and counselling was established in 2007 involving the policy makers from relevant ministries, guidance providers, social partners and clients. NF aims at being an advisor on necessary improvements of guidance and counselling policy and system at national and local levels. NF contributes to the development of guidance and counselling policy and system.

To optimise the system of guidance and counselling within the labour sector, the former Professional Career Counselling State Agency (PCCSA) has been incorporated into the State Employment Agency (SEA) in September 2007. According to the current legislation, SEA is responsible for provision of guidance and counselling for all individuals irrespective of their age and social status (the employed, the unemployed, students from age 16). Several new regional offices have been established during the last years and different National and ESF funded programmes and projects are being implemented to support capacity building of institutions responsible for labour market and gender equality policies and support information dissemination and increase public awareness.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia implemented the project (2005-2008) with the objective to improve access to and quality of guidance and counselling in all educational institutions irrespective of their type and level. There were the following activities:

- Professional upgrading of the guidance practitioners currently working in the educational sector;

- Developing, testing and piloting methodological and training materials for careers education purposes in schools;
- Developing various information resources on learning opportunities including a national data base and self-assessment tests for E-guidance;
- Developing national qualification framework and a study programme for training of guidance counsellors, piloting the study programme.

## Teacher education

There is no separated education system for vocational education teachers, yet specific requirements for general and vocational education teachers' qualification and education exist, as well as payment regulations. However, when teacher education or other issues are discussed publicly in most cases situation of general education teachers is considered. Raising teachers' salaries has been set as one of the major priorities.

Until the *Vocational Education Law* (1999) was passed, VET teachers were only specialists in the vocation field, few had a pedagogical qualification. As result of the law, in 2008/09 the proportion of teachers having pedagogical education reached 68.5% of the total number of vocational teachers.

Improving teacher training and the professional development system was one of the main action points in the *Concept on the Education Development in 2002-2005* aiming to ensure the quality of vocational education provision and its harmonisation with the social and economic needs. *The Concept of Education Development for 2002-2005* suggested the harmonization of the teacher study programmes' content with the education content reform.

The *Vocational education development programme* for 2003-2005 (2003) comprised teacher education in the frameworks of the priority Quality of Vocational Education, in which teacher education is viewed as one of the vocational education quality improvement mechanisms. In 2002, Vocational Teacher Occupational Standard was approved and consequently, four universities started implementing Vocational Teacher Education Programmes. The impulse for this programme was given by the Cabinet Regulations on *Demands for Necessary Education and Professional Qualification to Teachers* (approved in 2000 and inforced in 2004). It set unified demands for teacher qualifications according to which all full time teachers working at school have to possess pedagogic qualification. The Cabinet Regulations *Procedures on the Acquisition of Education and Professional Improvement of Vocational Education Teachers* (2005) outline the procedures for vocational teachers acquiring education and participating within professional improvement programmes.

During the period 2003-2005, approximately 300 further teacher education programmes per year were harmonized, fostering correspondence between teacher further education programmes and demand of education content and bilingual education reforms. In April 2008, one of the pilot project Development of In-service Teacher Training Network activities, introducing 5 level teacher qualification category system, results have been approved. The system includes a model of professional teacher career development, i.e. the level of category depends on teachers' qualification and work experience. A higher category involves not only additional functions, e.g. methodological work and education planning, but also impacts teachers' payment.

The MoES has commenced to implement ESF National Programme project *Development of further teacher education methodological network and provision*, which in the frameworks of ESF National Programme activity *Human resources and employment* aims to provide the development of continuous vocational teacher education enabling teachers to work with different target groups. Within EQUAL project vocational in-service training program for teachers working with persons with special needs has been worked out by the State Social Integration Agency.

A few obstacles to the planned changes may be mentioned: lack of unified approach and system of further teacher education management, as well as lack of educators and funding. Due to lack of State funding, teacher ability to participate in professional improvement and further education programmes is limited, thus study concerning the efficiency of current resources should be carried out. However, positive developments have been registered: ESF funding is planned to be allocated to further teacher education. As well, teacher salaries have been increased; and a unified teacher payment increase system has been worked out.

Regarding teacher payment there are several socioeconomic problems which are typical both in Latvia and Europe. In the near future there may be crises due to teacher ageing (8.05% of teachers are over age of 65) because young people do not choose teacher profession both for low payment and status. The number of novice teachers decreases: 19.23% of teachers were under age of 30 in 2000/01, while 6.5% of teachers – in 2008/09. Most of teachers are females, which fosters gender segregation in Latvian society. Taking into account rapidly increasing inflation and limited state budget funding, teacher payment is not differentiated enough and is not competitive.

The other issue emerging is the future increased rate of unemployment among teachers due to the optimisation of school network. In order to provide the re-qualification courses for these teachers, it is planned to involve ESF funding.

## **Skill needs strategy**

All topics related to the **anticipation of skill needs and qualifications** are defined in the National Development Plan and Development Programmes. The next steps in terms of reviewing the Latvian situation include the implementation of the following planning documents: *Long-term Economic Strategy of Latvia for 2001-2030*, *National Economy Single Strategy for 2004-2030*, *Common Declaration for Employment Priorities of Latvia 2003* (issued by the government and European Commission), *National Action Plan on Employment for 2004*, *National Development Plan for 2007-2013*, *The Law on Unemployed and Job Seekers* (2002).

Information on skill needs is collected partly, but not systematically, at national level. A few sector analyses (e.g. in ICT and the construction industries with Phare support) and research into the changing labour market have been conducted in recent years to provide information for planning education provision. In some regions or sectors employers' surveys are conducted by employment services to identify short-term annual needs. These surveys show less demand for people with low-level qualifications and an increasing demand for qualified workers and craftsmen, equipment and machine operators, and multi-professional skills.

Changes in society and economy have a significant impact on the development of education provision which should allow people to continuously update their skills and competences during their lifetime in accordance to the emerging needs on the labour

market. This has a significant impact on the education system which should allow people to re-enter the system according to their needs.

The following strengths of skills forecasting may be mentioned: necessary legislation and regulations introduced; cooperation structures between the government and social partners founded; ESF and ERAF national programmes implemented to ensure conformity of education quality with the labour market requirements; unified procedure for the examination process in IVET and CVET introduced; access to education for socially excluded target groups promoted. The following obstacles may be mentioned: the lack of cooperation between vocational education providers and employers, and the lack of funding for research.

## **Validation of non-formal and informal learning**

There is no system for validating skills and competences acquired through informal/non-formal education. However, in the framework of the ESF National Program for the Development of a Unified Methodology for the Quality Improvement of Vocational Education and Involvement and Education of Social Partners (*Vienotas metodikas izstrade profesionalas izglitiba kvalitates paaugstinašanai un socialo partneru iesaistei un izglitošanai, 2005-2007*), a project with the same title has been implemented. Results have been disseminated to stakeholders and professionals. The project included the procedure for validation of acquired skills within informal/nonformal education for adults.

At present (2009), a new *Vocational Education Law* is under preparation; this Law is expected to introduce the system for validating skills and competences acquired through informal/non-formal education.

## **020103 - Current debates**

There are several issues discussed related to vocational education and employability: first and most important because of the economic situation, raising efficiency of vocational education financing and optimisation of school network (see 2.3); second, strengthening the social dialogue among stakeholders; third, raising attractiveness of vocational education. The third issue has been addressed in the new concept project *Raising attractiveness of vocational education and involvement of social partners within vocational education quality assurance (Profesionalas izglitiba pievilcibas paaugstinašana un socialo partneru lidzdaliba profesionalas izglitiba kvalitates nodrošinašana, 2008)*.

## **0202 - The latest developments in the field of European tools**

It is impossible to discuss policy progress concerning the EU tools EQF and ECVET in Latvia since they have not been introduced yet. However, linking the Latvian professional qualification system (see 4.1) to EQF has started already. On higher education level the system has been set already; legally it will be introduced with the new *Higher Education Law*, which has been submitted to the Parliament for discussion. In vocational education NQF will be integrated through the new concept of *Vocational Education Law*. The new Vocational Educational Law among others is expected to stipulate the introduction of the European Credit System for VET within the national education system. It will introduce the system for validating skills and competences acquired through informal/non-formal education.



Regarding the introduction of NQF, some amendments are planned to be made in the Education Law (1998):

- To define the terms qualification, qualification level, knowledge, skills and competences;
- To formulate qualification levels and corresponding general description of knowledge, skills and competences;
- To provide a link between qualification levels and EQF qualification levels;
- To include demand that all education programmes both formal and informal/nonformal is developed indicating knowledge, skills and competences.
- Speaking about transferring learning outcomes acquired, since the vocational education is implemented through entire programmes, the possibilities to change mid-course are limited.

Geographic mobility since 1998 has been fostered in the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci programme. The implementation of the Leonardo da Vinci programme is supervised by the State Education Development Agency. In 2008, there were confirmed 38 preparatory visits, 102 mobility, 5 transfer of innovation and 5 partnership projects. In 2008, around 600 persons in total (VET students and teachers, people in labour market, counselling specialists and other representatives of VET personnel) received grants and participated in the mobility projects. The total grant for the activities approved was EUR 2,220,000. In 2008, the agency supervised 414 projects, including Lifelong Learning Policy and Leonardo da Vinci II period.

In 2001, the *Law on the Recognition of Regulated Professions and Professional Qualification* was adopted determining the procedure for the recognition of vocational qualifications in regulated professions obtained in foreign countries (not only in EU countries) which assisted in providing legal basis for supporting mobility.

Since 2005, the National Europass centre (NEC) has fulfilled the tasks defined by the European Commission, such as the coordination of receiving Europass documents and the promotion of the use of Europass. It has also implemented several support measures e.g. National Europass website [www.europass.lv](http://www.europass.lv). NEC has provided the Europass Mobility form to all the citizens having the mobility experience in programmes Leonardo da Vinci, Comenius and Erasmus and having expressed the wish to obtain one. The interest in the Mobility documents has increased: 62 Europass Mobility Passes were issued in 2005, while 447 passes – in 2008.

## **0203 - Possible projections of the financial crisis on VET policies**

### **020301 - The foreseen consequences of the crisis on VET**

As result of economic regression, the **unemployment rate** started to increase reaching 7.5% already in 2008 and 10.7% in March of 2009. The total number of unemployed people in 2008 was 76,435 of which 32.7% were persons with vocational education. The CSB data shows that the unemployment rate in 2008 is still higher among men than women (8.1% and 7.0% respectively). While women use the services of State Employment Agency (SEA, *Nodarbinatibas valsts aagentura*) slightly more by every year (62% at the end of 2007); the rate of men using the services tends to decrease.

The state **funding for educational sector**, including vocational education, has been reduced in 2009 approximately by EUR 132,327,078 in the framework of state economy

recovery and development programme. The funding procedure for the vocational education establishments under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science is stipulated by the Cabinet *Regulations on the expenditures minimum per one student for implementing vocational education programmes (Noteikumi par profesionalas izglitibas programmu istenošanas izmaksu minimumu uz vienu izglitojamo, 2004, 2007)*. The inflation and economic situation require constant raise of financing; however, state budget expenditures for education has not increased and in 2008 vocational schools received in average 60% of the normative financing due to the limited of financial resources. See section 9.

## **020302 - The measures already taken or envisaged to be taken as response to the crisis**

Since the number of unemployed has increased significantly, the government plans to introduce changes in the unemployed payment system. It is planned to prolong the term of payment from four or six months to nine months; as well as, the amount of payment is planned to be the same for all the unemployed.

Due to the current economic situation the Ministry of Education and Science has proposed to the government several reforms within education system in general and particularly within vocational education system in order to improve efficiency of the educational management and financing. The main directions for action are the following:

- Improving efficiency and effectiveness of vocational education funding and delivery;
- Transferring key education service delivery decision-making to local governments to improve flexibility and responsiveness to local needs;
- Strengthening evaluation, regulation and accountability in the education system.

In order to **improve efficiency of vocational education financing and management**, the Ministry plans to take several steps.

**First**, the funding of education is planned to be reorganised from the principle “money follows education establishment” to the principle “money follows student” and to promote consolidation of education establishments.

By August 2009, 13 state vocational schools are planned to be assigned under the supervision of local governments and consolidated with general education establishments, thus offering various education programmes in one building.

By September 2010, 12 vocational schools are planned to be reorganized as “competence centres”, which would provide and recognise qualifications both for vocational education students and adults.

By December 2009, seven vocational schools are planned to close following the evaluation of their results.

By September 2009, funding for student transportation compensations and scholarships for vocational education students are planned to decrease by 50%.

**Second**, the quality and offer of vocational education programmes are expected to be reinforced. The cooperation with and responsibility of local governments and employers concerning vocational education quality and availability are planned to reinforce.

By October 2009, the cost and offer of education programmes are planned to be evaluated in order to develop an education programme system based on modules and to

establish 12 regional competence centres in cooperation with professional associations and employers.

By June 2009, the procedure of licensing and accreditation vocational education programmes is planned to be evaluated as a measure to better match the educational offer with labour market demands.

By May 2010, differentiation of basic education for grades 7-9 is planned to be introduced to provide both general education programmes and vocational orientated programmes.

## **03 - LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK – PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **0301 - Legislative framework for IVET**

Basically, the same laws and regulations provide legislative framework both for initial and continuous vocational education.

The Education Law (*Izglitibas likums*, 1991, 1998, 2001) regulates the whole system of education including initial and continuous education, determines the rights and duties of the state, local governments, public organizations, professional associations, individuals, educational institutions, parents and students, as well as levels and types of education and types of educational institutions.

Vocational Education Law (*Profesionalas izglitibas likums* 1999, 2001) sets out the principles for organising, implementing and awarding qualifications both for initial and continuous vocational education. It states the division of tasks and competences and the relationship between employers, teachers and students. For the first time, the Law recognises an active role for social partners in vocational education. It also states the different pathways for pursuing vocational education, the structure of programmes and the funding principles. The 2001 amendments introduced vocational continuing education for adults and provided for a training system which allows people, regardless of age and previous experience or qualifications, to acquire the knowledge and skills relevant to the demands of the labour market.

The enacting of laws is regulated through Regulations issued by the Cabinet of Ministers (*Ministru Kabineta noteikumi*). One of latest documents (2007) is the Procedure for Developing Occupational Standards (*Profesiju standartu izstrades kartiba*), prepared by the Ministry of Education and Science along with other institutions. The regulation outlines the procedure for developing standards and lists the duties of the involved institutions. The Vocational Education Administration (*Profesionalas izglitibas administracija, PIA*) supervises the development of occupational standards for vocational education programme levels 1, 2 and 3 and the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for levels 4 and 5. Standard projects are written by a work group consisting of representatives of a particular interest organisation or trade union. The standards include:

- duties and tasks of a particular profession;
- professional skills, knowledge (mentioning the level), and competences necessary for accomplishing the tasks;
- place of the profession within the structure of the employment description.

The Vocational Education Law and other related laws and regulations such as the Procedure for Developing Occupational Standards (*Profesiju standartu izstrades kartiba*, 2007), Regulations on the Procedure of the Centralized Professional Qualification Examinations (*Centralizeto profesionalas kvalifikācijas eksamenu norises kartiba*, 2007), Procedure for Organising Practice Training (*Macību prakses organizēšanas kartiba*, 2000), the Law on Employers' Organisations and their Unions (*Darba deveju organizāciju un to apvienību likums*, 1999) determine the role of social partners in VET development. Social partners draw up proposals for improving VET policy and planning and organise labour market research in cooperation with state and local government institutions. They are also

involved in setting up occupational standards and VET educational programmes. At present (2009), a new Vocational Educational Law is under preparation, and a new Higher Education Law has been submitted to the Parliament for discussion.

According to the Law on Trade Unions (*Par arodbiedribam*, 1991, 2005), all inhabitants have rights to form trade unions based on occupational, sectorial, territorial etc. principles. These organisations are independent from employer. Together, they form the Free Trade Union, i.e. an umbrella organisation for 2,600 trade unions from 21 sectors, and in the name of their members conclude collective agreements concerning work and other social and economic issues. In 2008 there were 2,298 collective agreements concluded between member organisations of Free Trade Union and employers. The collective agreements are binding for both parties and include such points as payments, working hours and vocations, release from work, learning and qualification improvement possibilities, work conditions and security, social guarantees etc.

## 0302 - Institutional framework: IVET

**The Vocational Education Law** (*Profesionalas izglitibas likums*, 1999) determines the competence of those institutions responsible for the organization of VET.

**The Cabinet of Ministers** (*Ministru Kabinets*) determines the state's political and strategic areas in VET; it funds VET providers according to criteria established by the Ministry of Education and Science (*Izglitibas un zinatnes ministrija*); it sets the framework for issuing state-recognised qualifications and determines the recognition of qualifications obtained in other countries.

**The Ministry of Education and Science** (*MoES*) develops the framework regulations for VET and accredits providers. It also creates and updates the register of occupational standards and makes proposals about the allocation of funds from the state budget. It organises guidance and counselling services and researches skills demands of the labour market. It employs the heads of VET institutions under its supervision.

**The Department of Vocational and General Education** (*Profesionalas un visparejas izglitibas departaments*) is part of the Ministry of Education and Science and regarding vocational education it develops state policy and strategy in VET. The department guides, plans and coordinates VET development and supervises VET providers. It collaborates with employer institutions and trade unions and provides technical support for the work of National Tripartite Subcouncil for Cooperation in Vocational Education and Employment (*Profesionalas izglitibas un nodarbinatibas trispusejas sadarbibas apakšpadome*). It also assures that national policy meets EU demands and takes part in developing transnational agreements.

**Vocational Education Administration** (*Profesionalas izglitibas administracija*) is under the Ministry of Education and Science and it organises the accreditation of VET providers and programmes. It participates in the development of occupational standards as well as the content and methodology for exams. It oversees the functioning of learning and examination centres and organises the professional development of VET teachers.

**National Tripartite Subcouncil for Cooperation in Vocational Education and Employment** (*Profesionalas izglitibas un nodarbinatibas trispusejas sadarbibas apakšpadome*) was founded in 2000 to promote dialogue between employers and employees on training and employment issues. The Sub-council, which consists of the representatives from Ministries (Welfare, Economy, Finance, Justice, Agriculture, Education and Science,

Regional Development and Local Government Affairs), the Association of Free Trade Unions and the Confederation of Employers, participates in the development of the occupational standards determining the curriculum and content of vocational education programmes.

At school level (initial vocational education), vocational education institutions are classified according to their ownership:

- state VET institutions;
- local government VET institutions;
- private VET institutions.

VET is free for full-time students at institutions operated by the state or local governments. Students also receive a grant determined by the Cabinet of Ministers. The number of VET institutions operated by local governments and private parties is rather small, due to school optimisation reform; the number of schools has decreased (see Table). More school network reforms are expected after 2009 June in the frameworks of state economy recovery plan (see 2.3).

<b>TABLE 1: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS ACCORDING TO THEIR STATUS</b>		
<b>EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION ACCORDING TO STATUS</b>	<b>NUMBER OF SCHOOLS, SCHOOL YEAR 1999/2000</b>	<b>NUMBER OF SCHOOLS, SCHOOL YEAR 2008/2009</b>
<b>STATE VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS</b>	111 (91.8%)	81 (88%)
<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS</b>	5 (4.1%)	5 (5.4%)
<b>PRIVATE VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS</b>	5 (4.1%)	6 (6.5%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	121	92

Source: CSB, 2009

### **0303 - Legislative framework for CVET**

The same laws and regulations provide legislative framework both for initial and continuous vocational education. See 3.1.

### **0304 - Institutional framework: CVET**

The same institutions as for the initial vocational education (see 3.2) share the responsibilities for organising continuous vocational education.

In 1993 the Latvian Adult Education Association (*Latvijas Pieaugušo izglītības apvienība, LPIA*) was founded to develop adult education and a lifelong learning system. It is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation, unifying providers of adult education in Latvia -both individuals and organizations. The aim of the Association is to foster development of adult education system and to participate within forming lifelong education policy, thereby, promoting values of civic, democratic and open society in Latvia. In 1995 the Association became a member organisation of European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), while since 1997 the Association is member of the European Prison Education Association and European Adult Education Research

Association (ESREA). The main objectives of the Latvian Adult Education Association are the following:

- To participate in the formation of lifelong education policy;
- To promote everyone's self-expression of personality and right to education during the entire life-time;
- To promote a responsible attitude of humans towards nature and social environment on the local, national and global level;
- To teach the ability of co-existence by developing a tolerant attitude towards the different.

Between 1995-1996, a network of adult educational centres and co-ordinators was established by the local governments at the regional level. In total, there are 21 centres in districts and five in the cities. Usually there are 3-4 employees and 3-4 equipped classrooms in the centres, frequently the coordinators are volunteers.

## 04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (IVET)

The **Latvian educational system** comprises pre-school education (*pirmskolas izglitiba*), 9-year basic education (*pamatizglitiba*), upper-secondary education (*videja izglitiba*) and higher education (*augstaka izglitiba*). Post-secondary education is not clearly discriminated, it mostly belongs to secondary level.

Pre-school education (ISCED 0) is for children aged 5-7 years and is provided by general education establishments or kindergartens as a part of compulsory basic education.

Basic (primary and lower-secondary) education (ISCED 1 and 2) lasts 9 years and is compulsory for children aged 7 and above. The National Basic Education Standard (*Valsts pamatizglitibas standarts*) determines the curriculum and content of national examinations. Successful completion is awarded by a certificate of basic education.

Those who do not complete basic education by 16 should continue studying to complete the programme by the time they are 18. They can also choose VET programmes that allow them to obtain a first or second level professional qualification and to complete the obligatory basic educational programme.

3-year vocational basic education programmes are provided in vocational schools for students without a certificate of basic education (after completion of at least 7 grades of basic education, but they must be at least 15 years old). The graduates obtain a certificate of basic education and 1 level qualification (See section of the Latvian VET system below).

Upper-secondary education (ISCED 3) comprises two types of programmes: general secondary (*vispareja videja izglitiba*) and vocational secondary (*profesionala videja izglitiba*).

General secondary education has 4 study fields: general; humanities and social sciences; mathematics, natural science and technical; and vocational (arts, music, business, and sports). There are a number of obligatory subjects (e.g. Latvian, two foreign languages, maths, computer science, etc.). Every programme includes obligatory and optional subjects relevant to the particular field of studies.

To receive the Diploma of Secondary Education (*Atestats par visparejo videjo izglitibu*), students should take at least 5 examinations in compulsory (maximum 4 exams) or optional study subjects. Provision is regulated by the state which determines its level, form and target groups. It also defines the strategic goals and main tasks of each programme; its obligatory content, basic principles and assessment.

Tertiary education (ISCED 5): while there is a difference between academic and professional higher education, it is not institutionalised. Universities and other higher education institutions run both academic and professional programmes, e.g. physiotherapist, lawyer, teacher, translator, marine mechanic etc. Academic higher education programmes (ISCED 5A) lead to a Bachelor's degree (*bakalaura grads*) and Master's degree (*magistra grads*). The duration of Bachelor's programmes may be 3 or 4 years. A Master's degree is awarded after the second stage of academic education and requires at least 5 years of university studies.

Postgraduate education (ISCED level 6). A Master's degree or the equivalent is required for admission to doctoral studies (Ph.D.) which last 3-4 full-time years.



## 0401 - Background to the IVET system and diagram of the education and training system

The IVET programmes are provided by vocational secondary schools (vocational secondary education programmes) and vocational schools (basic vocational and vocational education programmes). The Vocational Education Law (revised in 2001) stipulates that VET programmes are classified as follows:

- vocational basic education programmes lasts for 3 years and are foreseen for students without a certificate of basic education (after completion of at least 7 grades of basic education, but they must be at least 15 years old); graduates receive a certificate of basic education and qualification level 1;
- vocational education programmes last for 2-3 years for students with basic education or persons at least 15 years old and graduates receive a Certificate of vocational education and qualification level 2; they may continue in 2 year vocational secondary education programmes(see below);
- vocational secondary educational programmes take 4 years and are open to students who have completed compulsory basic education, Graduates receive a diploma and a Level 3 vocational qualification (see below).
- post-secondary non-tertiary vocational education (ISCED 4B) are to be implemented after graduating from general secondary programmes. They are focused towards mastering purely professional skills and knowledge.
- first level professional higher education (college education) programmes.

The Law of Higher Education Institutions (*Augstakas izglitibas likums*) and the Vocational Education Law (*Profesionalas izglitibas likums*) stipulate a 2-level professional higher education – the first level (2-3 years) leading to professional qualification Level 4 (ISCED 5B) and second level (ISCED 5A) leading to qualification level 5 (4-6 years). Having completed a programme, students are awarded with a professional qualification or a professional Bachelor's degree that can be followed by a further 1-2 years of professional Master's studies. The Master's degree of higher professional education is awarded if the total duration of studies is at least 5 years. There can also be short second level professional higher education study programmes (1-2 years), where the qualification is obtained on the basis of the previously acquired first level professional higher education or Bachelor's degree. In total the duration of professional qualification Level 5 study programmes is not less than 4 years after secondary education and not less than 2 years after college education.

The Law defines five levels of professional qualifications:

- Level 1 (ISCED 2): theoretical and practical training that prepares students for performing simple tasks in a certain area of practical activity (assistant cook, carpenter etc.);
- Level 2 (ISCED 3): theoretical and practical background that allows the holder to perform qualified work independently (carpenter, hairdresser, cook, welder etc.);
- Level 3 (ISCED 3): advanced theoretical and professional background which enables the holder to fulfil certain tasks, including planning and organising work (various technicians, car mechanics, hotel service specialist etc.);
- Level 4 (ISCED 5): theoretical and practical background that enables the holder to perform complicated tasks as well as to organise and manage others in their work;

- Level 5 (ISCED 5): the highest qualification of a specialist in a field that enables the holder to plan and perform research and scientific work in the field.

Different vocational education programmes are developed and offered for all economic branches. The National Standard of vocational education (*Valsts profesionālas izglītības standarts*) and the Occupational Standards (*Profesiju standarti*) determine the curriculum and content of vocational education programmes.

At VET institutions, various educational programmes are offered. The following table shows the type of programme, their duration, previous education and possibilities to enrol at higher education institutions on completion.

<b>PROGRAMME AND LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION TO BE OBTAINED</b>	<b>ISCED LEVEL *</b>	<b>PREVIOUS EDUCATION</b>	<b>DURATION OF STUDIES (YEARS)</b>	<b>QUALIFICATION</b>	<b>POSSIBILITY TO ENROL AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS</b>
<b>VOCATIONAL SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME LEVEL 3</b>	3A, 3B	9-year basic	4	Diploma of vocational secondary education	Yes
	---	vocational education	2		Yes
	---	general secondary	2		Yes
<b>VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME LEVEL 2</b>	3C	Students must be at least 15 years old	3	Certificate of vocational education	No
		Students must be at least 15 years old	2		
	4B	general secondary	2	Certificate of qualification	Yes
		general secondary	1		
<b>VOCATIONAL BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME (INCLUDING PEDAGOGICAL CORRECTION PROGRAMME**) LEVEL 1</b>	2A, 2C	Students must be at least 15 years old	1-3	Certificate of vocational education and certificate of vocational basic education	No

\* Some programmes have not been awarded with ISCED classification.

\*\* pedagogical correction – programme for early school leavers and those with low level of basic knowledge and skills. The main aim of the programme is to integrate youngsters back to education system and help them acquire simple professional skills.

Source: MoES

[Please find attached the diagram of the education and training system in Latvia](#)

## 0402 - IVET at lower secondary level

Students are admitted to VET programmes (ISCED 2A, 2C) without consideration of their previous education but not earlier than in the year in which they turn 15. Those without basic education are admitted to VET programmes which include pedagogical correction (this is targeted at early school leavers and those with a low level of basic knowledge and skills – the aim of the programme is to integrate young people back into the education system).

Programme duration is 1-3 years and leads to a certificate of basic vocational education which certifies that the student has obtained a first level qualification (ISCED 2A, 2C). The proportion between theory and practice is 35:65 in the basic vocational education programmes, while between general and vocational subjects 60:40. This means that they have the theoretical and practical training to carry out simple tasks in certain fields, for example as a cook's or carpenter's assistant). However, these programmes are not attended on a large scale: in 2008/2009, 729 students (0.39 % of basic education level students or 1.9% of vocational education students) participated in these programmes.

## 0403 - IVET at upper secondary education (school-based and alternance)

In 2008/2009, 35,300 students (90.9% of vocational education students) participated in upper-secondary vocational programmes.

EDUCATION LEVEL AND TYPE	TYPE OF PROGRAMME	ISCED 97	
		EDUCATION LEVEL	CODE
Vocational secondary education	Vocational education – part of vocational secondary education which does not give the right to continue studies at a higher education level. Duration 2-3 years	Upper-secondary	3C
	Vocational secondary education which ensures professional qualification level 3 and gives the right to continue studies at a higher education level. Duration 3-4 years.	Upper-secondary	3A 3B
	Intermediate programme in general secondary education. Duration 1 year. Previous education – vocational education.	Upper-secondary	3A 3B

The Vocational Education Law stipulates that the duration of vocational training is 2-3 years for people who have completed basic education. Upon graduation a VET certificate is awarded attesting that the qualification corresponds to **professional level 2** (theoretical and practical aptitude for carrying out qualified executive work independently, for example as carpenter, hairdresser, cook, seamstress, welder – **ISCED 3C**). Vocational training does not give the right to continue studies at a higher education institution, nevertheless for students, who want to continue, a 1-year intermediate course in general secondary education is available.

The content of vocational education study programmes leading to professional qualification level 2 (ISCED 3C) is divided into theory and practice 35:65 respectively and

between general and vocational subjects 60:40. The practical training usually takes place at the schools and enterprises. Qualification practice training in enterprises for 3 years long programmes (i.e. at least 4230 hours) has volume of 840 hours, while for two years programme (i.e. at least 2840 hours) – 480 hours.

Students who have completed general or vocational basic education (level 1 – ISCED 2C) can be admitted to upper-secondary VET programmes which last for 3-4 years. Upon graduation, an upper-secondary VET diploma is awarded, as well as a professional qualification **level 3 (ISCED 3A, 3B)**. The diploma gives the rights to continue studies at a higher education institution. The structure of upper-secondary VET programmes combine theory and practical training on a 50:50 basis and general and vocational subjects on a 60:40 basis.

Teachers make the choice of teaching methods according to particular subject topic or theme. However, teachers are urged to apply interactive methods involving information technologies. Teachers have the responsibility to find or produce appropriate teaching aids, which, of course, highly depends on resources available at the education establishment.

COUNTRY	TOTAL ISCED 3	GENERAL PROGRAMMES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ISCED 3	VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ISCED 3		
			VOCATIONAL (%)	PREVOCATIONAL (%)	VOCATIONAL AND PREVOCATIONAL (%)
<b>EU27</b>	22 205 390	0.48	0.05	0.46	0.51
<b>EU25</b>	20 782 183	0.49	0.06	0.45	0.51
<b>LV</b>	108 212	0.66	0.00	0.34	35.5

Source: Eurostat, date of data extraction: 26 Feb 09

As shown, the general secondary education pathway is more popular than for vocational secondary education because general education has higher prestige and it ensures greater possibility to continue within higher education.

## **0404 - Apprenticeship training**

An apprenticeship system exists on a small scale mainly in the crafts sector in traditional professions, e.g. builder, potter, lathe operator, carpenter, and it is regulated by the Law on Crafts (*Par amatniecibu*, 1993). The Law stipulates the organisational basis for crafts, basic regulations for apprenticeship and the procedure for stating craftsman qualifications. The main organisation involved is the Chamber of Crafts which is a self-governing organisation.

Through the apprenticeship system it is possible to obtain the journeyman (*Amata zella diploms*) and, thereafter, master craft qualification (*Amata meistara diploms*). The journeyman qualification is awarded after passing journeyman examination, which comprises two parts: presentation of qualification work and techniques used and theoretical knowledge. The master crafts qualification is awarded after passing master crafts examination.

Apprenticeship qualifications do not provide access to regulated professions nor do they give access to continue in the formal education and training system. There are no mechanisms in place for those, who dropped out from apprenticeship before completing training, to continue in another form.

Apprentices are admitted regardless of their previous education but not earlier than the year in which they turn 16 (unless they have permission from parents or tutor). Apprenticeship programmes are drafted by the corresponding craft professional association and approved by the Council of the Chamber of Crafts. Duration of the programmes depends on the particular craft association; therefore, a great variation exists. The curricula are not approved by the Vocational Education Administration as for IVET programmes, as these programmes are not part of formal IVET.

An apprenticeship is based on the Chamber of Crafts standard template contracts, concluded between apprentice and master. They determine the relative responsibilities of apprentices and their master. During the apprenticeship, an apprentice is regarded as a student; however, as the apprentice acquires more knowledge, skills and competences, they may receive some payment for individual projects. However, the payment procedure greatly depends on particular craft and individual agreements.

The Chamber of Crafts is planning to introduce several measures to increase interest in apprenticeship, they include: providing more information to VET schools and improving the network of craft masters who would be interested in training apprentices.

Apprenticeship training can be organised in two ways:

- the apprentice works with a crafts master and looks for theoretical training possibilities in vocational schools; or
- an apprentice is a student in a vocational school and during practical placement is working with a crafts master. After graduation, the student must pass the exam of journeyman in the Chamber of Crafts to receive journeyman qualification.

Theoretical training for masters and journeyman qualifications are offered also by the Chamber of Crafts.

## **0405 - Other youth programmes and alternative pathways**

There are no other youth programmes as alternative pathways except for the pedagogical correction programme. This is part of IVET system leading to the same education certificate and qualification but its main aim is to re-integrate early school leavers and those with low level of basic knowledge and skills back to the education system and help them acquire simple professional skills (please see 4.1 and 4.2).

## **0406 - Vocational education and training at post econdary (non tertiary) level**

It is possible to enrol in programmes of vocational training or post-secondary vocational training after completing general upper-secondary education. The main providers at post-secondary level are vocational secondary schools. Target groups of post-secondary non-tertiary IVET are general secondary school graduates at age of 18-20. Programmes last for 1-2 years and their main objective is to prepare their students for entering labour market. The programmes last for at least 3,120 hours, of which training

practice is at least for 480 hours. The proportion between theory and practice is the same as in vocational secondary education, i.e. 50:50, as well as division of theory in general and vocational subject, i.e. 60:40.

To gain a certificate of qualification, students must fulfil all the requirements of the educational standard, i.e. to receive a grade in all the subjects, practical studies and practical placement and pass a qualification examination. The qualification, which is awarded by education establishments, allows students to enrol in labour market.

In the school year 2008/2009, 6.3% (2,447) of students at vocational education institutions studied in such programmes.

## 0407 - Vocational education and training at tertiary level

The Vocational Education Law (1999) provides for higher professional programmes at two levels: college programmes (professional qualification level 4; ISCED 5B) and higher professional education programmes (professional qualification level 5; ISCED 5A). In accordance with the Law of Higher Education institutions (1995), it is possible to obtain a mix of academic and professional qualifications:

- Bachelor – *bakalaura*s (either academic or professional);
- Master – *maistrs* (either academic or professional);
- Doctor – *doktors* (scientific degree).

In a number of vocational fields, there are **college programmes** (1<sup>st</sup> level higher professional education programmes) which represent the first cycle of professional higher education. They lead to level 4 professional qualifications (ISCED 5).

First level higher professional education programmes are available at colleges (former institutions of post-secondary VET) and higher education institutions. Studies last for 2-3 years following completion of general or vocational secondary education. The “Diploma of the first level higher professional education” (available since June 2000) is equal to level 4 (theoretical and practical training that enables holder to perform complicated tasks as well as to organise and lead the work of other specialists). Programmes are available in engineering, computer science, business administration, nursing and law. Programmes can give credit towards further studies in the second cycle of professional higher education.

The content of **first level higher professional education** comprises study courses (comprising general subjects, humanities, social sciences as well as technical subjects), a practical placement and a thesis. The content of the study course and the practical placement is set out in occupational standards for some professions. The volume of programmes in credit points is 80-120 (1 Latvian credit point is equal to 40 student work hours and 1.5 ECTS), of which general courses constitute minimum 20 credits, courses in speciality – minimum 36 credits, training practice – minimum 16 credits, diploma paper minimum 8 credits.

**Second level higher professional education programmes** (ISCED 5A) are provided by universities and other higher education institutions. Studies last for 4-5 years after completing general or vocational secondary education. The “Diploma of Higher Professional Education” is equivalent to level 5 (highest specialist qualification which provides for practical performance as well as abilities to plan and perform research and scientific work). Content comprises (for professional bachelor programmes, professional

master programmes, higher professional education programmes), study courses, a practical placement and a qualifying thesis. The content of the study course and the practical placement is set by the respective occupational standards for certain professions. The volume of professional bachelor programmes is at least 160 Latvian credits (1 Latvian credit =1.5 ECTS), of which general courses constitute minimum 20 credits, theoretical courses of speciality and IT courses – minimum 36 credits, courses of occupational speciality – minimum 60 credits, free choice courses – minimum 6 credits, training practice – minimum 26 credits, state examination (including diploma or bachelor paper) – minimum 12 credits.

There are numerous programmes according to existing occupations: lawyer, electricity engineer, teacher, head of enterprises, pharmacist etc.

## **05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (CVET) FOR ADULTS**

### **0501 - Formal education**

#### **050101 - General background (administrative structure and financing)**

There is a long tradition of adult continuing education in Latvia usually with evening courses for working adults who had not completed primary or secondary education. According to education policy documents, adult education should satisfy both the need for personal development and public needs. It should aim to fulfil individual needs and complement existing levels of education and training regardless of age and levels of previous education. Strategies for adult education in Latvia were defined in the Concept of Adult Education of Latvia for 2002-2005 (*Pieaugušo izglītības koncepcija 2002.–2005.gadam*) and in the National Lisbon Programme for 2005-2008. The Guidelines for Lifelong Learning Policy for 2007-2013 (*Mūžizglītības politikas pamatnostādnes 2007.–2013.gadam*) outline the main priorities for lifelong learning (please see 2.1.1). The Guidelines were developed to sustain lifelong learning according to the people's interests and abilities and the regional socio and economic development needs. The aims for lifelong learning policy are related to the availability, qualitative education offer and forming legislative and administrative system for lifelong learning (please see 2.1.1).

The legislation for continuous vocational education is the same as for initial vocational education (see 3.2 and 3.3). The Education Law (*Izglītības likums 1998*) stipulates that adult education should be individually chosen to encourage personal development and improve labour market competitiveness. Adults have the right to follow programmes throughout their whole life, regardless of formal levels of education. On completion, adults receive a certificate of completion from the provider.

Speaking of continuous vocational education and labour market dialogue, there is a lack of skill needs research on national scale.

In order to promote participation in continuous vocational education, between 1995-1996, the regional network of adult educational centres and co-ordinators was established by the local governments (see 3.4). The State Employment Agency (*Nodarbinātības valsts agentūra, SEA*), which organises training for the unemployed people, works on regional basis and has 27 regional offices.

#### **050102 - Major characteristics of formal CVET**

The Vocational Education Law (*Profesionalas izglītības likums 1999*) regulates two formal types of continuing education: 1) vocational continuing education and 2) professional improvement. Vocational continuing education enables adults with previous education and work experience to obtain professional qualifications. They are always concluded by a specific qualification for a specific profession acknowledged by the state. Professional improvement enables people regardless of their age and previous education or professional qualifications to master systematized professional knowledge and skills corresponding to the requirements of the labour market. They lead to a formal qualification.



Vocational continuing education may be classified as follows:

- enterprise staff training;
- training for unemployed people (organised and funded by the State);
- adult education provided in centres of adult education, evening schools, etc. supported by local governments;
- various training programmes and projects financed by international and local donor institutions and funds, carried out by the state, local governments, nongovernmental and other organizations;
- individual continuing education financed by individuals themselves.

Descriptions of continuous education programmes levels are included in education programmes classification; continuous education programmes belong to basic, secondary (lower and upper) and higher levels; legally no comparison with ISCED levels is provided, but continuous education programmes may belong to professional qualification levels 1-4 (see 4.1).

<b>1. BASIC EDUCATION LEVEL</b>	continuous vocational education without limits for previous education (awarding professional qualification level 1)
<b>2. LOWER-SECONDARY EDUCATION LEVEL</b>	continuous vocational education for students with completed or unfinished basic education (awarding professional qualification level 2)
	professional improvement after basic education
<b>3. UPPER-SECONDARY EDUCATION LEVEL</b>	continuous vocational education for students after general or vocational upper-secondary education (awarding professional qualification level 2 or 3)
	professional improvement after upper-secondary education
<b>4. HIGHER EDUCATION LEVEL</b>	continuous vocational education implemented in colleges or HEI for students with at least first level professional higher education (awarding professional qualification level 4)

There are a number of organisations involved in CVET and the network of providers includes: ministries; employers' organisations; trade unions; university continuing education departments and their distance learning centres, the school of state administration; local training centres; chambers of commerce, centres of adult education, State Employment Agency and other educational organisations and associations. General education programmes and parts of vocational training can be pursued part-time during the evenings.

The continuous vocational education programmes are drawn according to the occupational standards and vocational education standards by the education providers. According to Vocational Education Law (1999), continuous vocational education programmes have to include minimum 30% of content stipulated by the state vocational upper-secondary education standards (see 7.4). The duration and content of professional improvement and professionally oriented education are stated by particular education programme.

The most popular CVET courses are in social sciences, entrepreneurial activity, law, services, health and social care, foreign languages, liberal sciences and arts, as well as engineering sciences, production and building, and teacher education.

Providers can only offer courses in programmes which have been licensed and programmes must meet both educational and occupational standards. All publicly provided CVET programmes longer than 480 hours and professional improvement programmes longer than 160 hours must be accredited by the Ministry of Education and Science (*MoES, Izglitibas un zinatnes ministrija*). Applications must include information about how the programme will be funded, the target audience, the length of the programme, where it will be implemented, etc. Providers must also be certified by MoES. If professional improvement programmes are shorter than 160 hours, provider must acquire a license from their local government for implementing such programmes.

The **accreditation system** is based on standards determined in the Vocational Education Law (1999). The principle of accreditation ensures that programme content meets the required standards of publicly provided vocational education and occupational standards. It also assists in the transparency of training; thereby, fostering the ability to recognise Latvian qualifications in other countries.

Participants completing a vocational continuing education programme take a centrally determined examination which is organised by the Ministry of Education and Science. They aim to ensure that all the graduates, obtaining a certain profession, have identical knowledge, competencies and skills. Social partners are also involved in evaluating examination performance.

At the end of **professional improvement programmes**, an examination following centralised procedures and methodologies are taken, which are stipulated by the *Cabinet Regulations on the Procedure of the Centralized Professional Qualification Examinations (Centralizeto profesionalas kvalifikācijas eksamenu norises kartība, 2007)*. To issue a certificate of professional improvement, the programme must be at least 160 hours long.

**Distance learning** is kind of part time extramural studies, which is provided both by private and state education institutions. Education institutions may provide both full time and part time extramural studies. Mainly higher education institutions offer distance learning programmes. For example, Distance Education Centre of Riga Technical University, which was formed in 1997 in frameworks of Phare programme, offers several study courses (computers, business planning, languages etc.).

TABLE 2. PARTICIPATION IN FORMAL EDUCATION BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND WORKING STATUS, 2005 [%]				
ISCED 0-2				
	POPULATION	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	INACTIVE
EU-25	1.4	1.3	2	1.6
LATVIA	:	:	:	:
ISCED 3				
EU-25	5.2	3.8	7	10.3
LATVIA	4.5	5.5	:	2.7
ISCED 5-6				
EU-25	8.5	7.3	15.1	14.3
LATVIA	9.8	11	:	:

: Information not available

Source: Eurostat, date of extraction: 9.03.2009; last update: 09.11.2005

Since basic education (grades 1-9) is compulsory, the numbers of students even in the initial vocational basic education programmes is very small, e.g. in 2008/09, 1.9% of all vocational education students (not adults) participated (CSB, 2009). Meanwhile, the higher education is rather popular and there is a comparatively high rate of university

students within population, i.e. in 2008/2009 there were 554 students per 10,000 inhabitants (5.5% of population studied in HEI in 2008) (CSB, 2009).

## 0502 - Non-formal education

### 050201 - General background (administrative structure and financing)

There is not separate administrative structure and legislative basis for informal/non-formal. Adult education represents informal/non-formal education in Latvia.

### 050202 - Major characteristics of non-formal CVET

Adult education can be pursued in state owned, local government, private with state investment or private which include enterprise training centres and other educational establishments.

Most programmes need to be accredited but publicly owned providers can offer informal training programmes without obtaining a license.

There is no system for validating skills and competences acquired through informal/non-formal education. However, in the frameworks of the ESF National Program *Development of a Unified Methodology for the Quality Improvement of Vocational Education and Involvement and Education of Social Partners*, the project with the same title has been implemented and results have been disseminated among stakeholders and professionals. The project included the development of the procedure for recognition of acquired skills within informal/non-formal education for adults. Currently (2009), a new Vocational Education Law is being worked out, which is expected to provide a legal basis and to introduce the system for validating skills and competences acquired through informal/non-formal education.

In 2007, 394.4 thousands adults participated in education programmes; the most popular courses are languages, computers, and accounting (CBS, 2009).

<b>ISCED 0-2</b>				
	<b>POPULATION</b>	<b>EMPLOYED</b>	<b>UNEMPLOYED</b>	<b>INACTIVE</b>
<b>EU-25</b>	6.5	9	7.6	2.8
<b>LATVIA</b>	2.9	4.3	:	:
<b>ISCED 3-4</b>				
<b>EU-25</b>	16.4	18.9	14.8	6.7
<b>LATVIA</b>	10.7	12.9	8.6	3.5
<b>ISCED 5-6</b>				
<b>EU-25</b>	30.9	33.7	22.7	13
<b>LATVIA</b>	33.3	38.3	:	10.7

: Information not available

Source: Eurostat, date of extraction: 9.03.2009; last update: 09.11.2005

Participation in informal/non-formal education on ISCED 0-2 is low because primary and lower secondary education (9 grades) are compulsory. Therefore, individuals are more interested to involve in higher levels of informal/non-formal education.

**Enterprise provided training** can assist employees to adapt to new tasks or to re-qualify to improve their career chances. For enterprises in Latvia participation in training is a voluntary activity and they tend to be more concerned with providing training to ensure their employees can adapt to new workplace demands and provide courses on-site or outside of the enterprise usually at private providers. The number of providers has been increasing, especially in the cities, to meet the training demands of enterprises.

Training is available to learn a completely new skill or to add certain competences (e.g. teamwork skills). Every training provider produces a study programme of different courses. Trainers may be employed by a training provider or may be contracted to provide a certain course directly by the employer. It is usually at the discretion of the provider to design their own training programmes but for certain regulated professions other bodies may be consulted to ensure that relevant occupational standards are met. The quality of provision is not otherwise monitored.

Enterprise management usually takes the decision to provide training for their employees and the human resource and training departments would seek the most appropriate training depending on the size of the enterprise. Training courses would usually be funded by the enterprise although employees may have to contribute.

Enterprises tend to provide training through external or internal courses. Other means such as job rotation within the organisation may also be used. Study groups and participation in conferences can also constitute training provision. In terms of provision, compared to other enterprises in the EU, Latvian enterprises follow the trend that the larger the enterprise the more likely it is that training will be available.

**Legally training in the enterprises is addressed** only in the Labour Law (2001, 2006). However, in most cases, training in enterprises depends on enterprise initiative and resources. The Labour Law (2001, 2006) stipulates that employee's position, who during the work time has been assigned to vocational training or qualification improvement, is guaranteed. The expenditures related to vocational training or qualification improvement are covered by the employer.

Concerning the training leave, the Labour Law (2001, 2006) stipulates that:

For an employee, who both works and studies in any type of education institution, in accordance with labour contract may be allocated education leave either reserving or not salary. If the employee has a lump sum payment, during the education leave in case of payment, average salary is paid.

In case of passing state exams or writing final theses, education leave (not shorter than 20 days per year) is allocated to employee, saving payment during the period.

Some training issues are regulated by a number of Articles of the Labour Code, as well:

- Article 191 stipulates that employers must create the necessary conditions for employees to participate in education and training through combining work and study. This must be included in collective agreements, which are concluded between trade unions in the name of their members and employer concerning work and other social and economic issues. (See 3.1);
- Article 192 stipulates that theoretical studies and practical training, if employees are trained on site, have to be organized during working hours or after working hours in accordance with legislation, collective agreement or labour contract or according to the mutual agreement of the contractual parties;

- Article 193 stipulates that upon completion of training, employees are assigned a category or job title which reflects their specialty and qualification in accordance with the terms of the collective agreement or by mutual agreement of the contractual parties;
- Article 201 stipulates the employers must facilitate employee's participation in all kinds of education and training. For some regulated professions, e.g. doctors, nurses, training is compulsory.

Decisions on enterprise training are taken with the cooperation of the social partners. In 2000, the Tripartite Cooperation Subcouncil for Vocational Education and Employment (*Profesionalas izglitibas un nodarbinatibas trispusejas sadarbibas apakšpadome*) was organized with representatives from Ministries (Welfare, Economy, Finance, Justice, Agriculture, Education and Science, Regional Development and Local Government Affairs), the Association of Free Trade Unions and the Confederation of Employers. The task of the Subcommittee is to promote dialogue between employers and employees on training and employment issues (see chapter 3.2).

There is little information available on the scale of **education undertaken at individual initiative** in Latvia. Some universities have Continuing Education Departments which provide training for individuals. Other training options include self-education through informal study using media, audio and video cassettes, as well as computer learning. In frameworks of project (2006-2008) libraries have been equipped with computers and free wireless Internet which provides more opportunities for self-studies. There is a number of education centres, typically centres established by local governments, providing range of study courses, e.g. languages, computers, accounting.

## **0503 - Measures to help job-seekers and people vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market**

Training for unemployed people is organised by the State Employment Agency (Nodarbinatibas valsts agentura, SEA) which procures training from accredited educational institutions. There are the following types of programmes available:

- vocational continuing education (see 5.1);
- professional improvement programmes (see 5.1);
- adult education programmes (see 5.2);
- other educational programmes.

They are available if the professional qualifications and/or work experience are no longer required on the labour market and the person cannot find work. They are also available when somebody has lost their professional skills. To participate in courses, unemployed people must be at least 18. As demand outstrips supply, motivation is also taken into account when selecting participants.

Training programmes for unemployed people are financed from the state budget. They can also be organised according to employer proposals who are seeking employees with certain skills; where this is the case, the employer must provide a job for the trained person for at least 1 year.

Vocational training for unemployed people is organized by the State Employment Agency (SEA). The SEA does not carry out training: it procures it from licensed education and training providers through a tendering and contractual procedure. The number of persons engaged in the training activities has considerably increased in 2009, i.e. in 2008

April, 263 unemployed started education, while in 2009 April – 538. In 2008, 11.2% of the registered unemployed people involved in SEA activities commenced vocational training, professional development programmes, training at workplaces, modular education or non-formal education.

The SEA is organised on a regional basis as their training programmes. Providers are responsible for programme quality. When procuring training, SEA examines the following:

- material and technical facilities for implementing educational programmes;
- teachers comply to the education and professional qualification requirements of the training programmes;
- ability to meet the course and programme schedules and keep appropriate records.

The SEA should follow up on the training provision on a monthly basis and a statement is prepared indicating the performance of individual trainees.

Most of this training is funded from the EU Structural Funds through the European Social Fund (ESF) project Training and Continuing education of the Unemployed which started in October 2004. The objective is to provide vocational training in skills required on the labour market for both adults and young people who have obtained an educational level necessary to master a profession. 1379 unemployed were engaged in the project in 2007, of which 19.2% were aged 15-25 years. After completion of the training courses (e.g. foreign languages, computers, accounting), 93.5% of the unemployed got a job.

In the framework of the ESF project Training and Continuing education of the Unemployed during the period 2008-2010, the registered unemployed are offered to acquire vocational training, to improve professional qualification or to change qualification. For people with basic education, programmes of qualification level 2 (480640 hours) are provided; for the unemployed with secondary education, programmes of qualification level 3 (960 hours) are offered.

Professional improvement programmes do not include acquirement of qualification and lasts 160-320 hours.

<b>TABLE 1. PARTICIPATION RATE OF UNEMPLOYED IN EDUCATION, 2007</b>			
	<b>FORMAL AND NONFORMAL EDUCATION</b>	<b>FORMAL EDUCATION</b>	<b>NON-FORMAL EDUCATION</b>
<b>LATVIA</b>	16.3	-	16.3

p -Provisional value *Source:* Eurostat, date of extraction 27.02.2009

Speaking about the education for others at risk of social exclusion, there are several groups at risk of social exclusion: young jobseekers aged 15-24; those of preretirement age (aged 55-64), those with low skills and a low level of education; disabled individuals; long-term unemployed (seeking work for more than 12 months); individuals after parental leave; ex-prisoners and ex-drug addicts.

Young people (up to 25) are an especially important target group given that their rate of unemployment in 2008 was 13.1%, which is slightly higher than in other age groups, although lower compared to the EU-27 mean of 15.4%. Special attention is given to young people with low educational achievement, those who have been expelled and young offenders.

Generally, individuals with a low educational attainment are also an increasingly important target group (in 2008, 22.8% of all jobseekers had only basic level education).

At the end of 2008, 11.1% of registered unemployed have been unemployed for longer than a year.

In order to promote education for socially excluded groups, the ESF project Providing Training for Social Exclusion Risk Groups, Including Information and Communication Support to Disabled Persons (2004-June 2007) was implemented. This promoted the integration of unemployed people at risk of exclusion by improving their professional qualifications and their competitiveness on the labour market. 312 unemployed participated in 2007, of which 24% were unemployed disabled people; 20% long-term unemployed people; 20.5% – young unemployed people (aged 15-25 years) with only basic education or less; 29% – unemployed after parental leave, and 4.8% – ex-prisoners. Total funding of ESF projects was EUR 101,599,153 during the period 2004-2008.

## 06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

### 0601 - Types of teacher and trainer occupations in VET

Within the vocational education system vocational education teachers are both teachers and trainers. They implement a range of programmes: vocational basic education; vocational upper-secondary education; and professional development and continuing education.

Vocational secondary programmes comprise general subjects, professional subjects, practical training and work placements. Therefore, **teachers in the initial vocational education** system are: teachers of general subjects or of a vocational subject. Practical training is taught by vocational subject VET teachers.

VET **teachers for continuing education programmes** do not have a specific reference within vocational education terminology. They have the same requirements as initial vocational education teachers.

#### 060101 - Teaching and training occupations in VET

According to the Register of Occupational Standards, there is vocational education teacher, teacher of social sciences, teacher, and social teacher. With the exception of the social teachers, all the other **teachers' work involves:**

- Implementation of education programmes according to national vocational education standards and occupational standards. Syllabi are developed by teachers and are approved by the head of education institution. (See 7.4);
- Assessment and analysis of the knowledge and skills of students acquired during the learning process;
- Fostering development of creative attitudes and independence in learners;
- Search for and application of new ideas, technologies, and methods.

The Law identifies only one type of teacher and trainer in all the VET system: vocational education teacher. VET teachers can be categorised according to the level of programme taught: basic vocational and upper-secondary vocational, although they can teach both levels if they have the appropriate education. All VET teachers can teach both IVET and CVET at basic and upper-secondary level in educational establishments.

#### 060102 - Responsible bodies

According to the Education Law (1998), **the Ministry of Education and Science is the institution responsible for co-ordinating teacher education and their continuing education.**

Regarding the **demands of vocational education teacher education and qualification**, amendments in the Vocational Education Law implemented in January 2004 stipulate that all VET teachers are required to gain a teacher (pedagogical) qualification. Since 2004, all VET teachers must be in one of the following situations:



- have a vocational qualification (vocational secondary education or master crafts level qualification awarded by the Chamber of Crafts) and higher education teacher qualification;
- have a vocational qualification and participating in teacher education;
- have a higher teacher qualification or an academic degree and a teacher qualification.

SCHOOL YEARS	TOTAL NUMBER	EDUCATION LEVEL							
		SECONDARY				HIGHER			
		TOTAL	INCL. GENERAL SECONDARY	INCL. VOCATIONAL SECONDARY	INCL. WITH PED. EDUCATION	TOTAL	INCL. HIGHER ED.	INCL. OTHER TYPE PED (>320 H)	PH D
2004/05	4,775	842	88	754	465	3,933	2,674	1,027	48
2005/06	5,028	721	60	661	473	4,307	3,041	1,164	59
2006/07	4,824	590	70	520	304	4,234	2,867	734	50
2007/08	4,687	398	47	351	222	3,117	2,211	808	39
2008/09	4,918	421	51	370	229	3,181	2,295	810	37

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 2009

The Cabinet Regulations *Regulations on Demands for Necessary Teacher Education and Professional Qualifications (Noteikumi par prasibam pedagogiem nepieciešamajai izglītībai un profesionalajai kvalifikācijai*, 2000, 2006) describe the following requirements:

- the vocational qualification requirements to be met by VET teachers;
- the training programmes which should be followed to qualify to work as a VET teacher.

Regulations have gone further since 2005. The Cabinet Regulations the *Procedure for Vocational Education Teacher Education and Professional Development (Profesionalas izglītības pedagogu izglītības ieguves un profesionalas pilnveides kartība)* were issued to stipulate the procedure to acquire the necessary qualifications for VET teachers in the vocational education, lower and upper-secondary vocational education and continuing vocational and professional development programmes. It also sets the procedure for the teachers' professional improvement. (See 6.2.2)

**Education for vocational education teachers** is organised in higher education establishments. To apply, candidates must have acquired either vocational secondary or general secondary education diploma.

There are two types of programmes depending whether the teacher is training to be a general subject teacher in a VET school or a teacher of a specific vocation:

Teacher education programmes for general subject teachers are the same whether the teacher will work at the general education or vocational education system. The study programmes includes both pedagogical courses and courses related to the particular field. Thus, students study a higher teacher education and achieve a teacher qualification.

For the teachers of vocational subjects, professional education programmes are available in different occupational sectors. First, graduates obtain a professional qualification or scientific degree in the branch. Second, if the graduate liked to work in VET school, they should continue in a separate teacher education programme (for no less than 320 hours) at a higher education institution, adult continuing education centre or other training institution.

For those without a teacher qualification, but with a higher education in the speciality, who would like to work in VET schools as a VET teacher, there is a special programme (Vocational education teachers' professional improvement programme lasting

no less than 320 hours) designed according to the occupational standard for VET teachers (2002). To apply, prospective students must have a secondary vocational or a higher professional education level. A combination of secondary education and a master of crafts qualification are also accepted.

The assessment is implemented through regular tests, exams, seminars, presentation, practical works, home assignments, at the end of studies students have to pass qualification exam, write and present diploma paper (evaluation in 10 grade scale, 10 – with distinction (*izcili*), 1 – very, very weak (*loti, loti vaji*)).

All teaching staff (teachers, school director, deputy directors, methodologists, interest education teachers, social pedagogue, librarian etc.) should participate in **further education** to improve their professional qualification every third year. Different continuing education programmes, courses, seminars, projects and other teacher tools could be used as long as they are not less than 36 contact hours in total. The Education Law (1998) states that a teacher is responsible for their professional development. Teachers have rights to use 30 calendar days every third year for professional development as a paid training leave. It is the responsibility of the head of a vocational school to monitor their staff development.

Various organisations provide continuing training for vocational education teachers including school boards, municipalities, professional associations, the Vocational Education Administration, learning and examination centres, universities and higher education institutions, as well as continuing vocational training centres.

### **060103 - Recent reforms to VET teacher/trainer training**

Improving teacher education and professional development system was one of the main action points in the *White Paper on the Development of Education in 2002-2005* developed by the Ministry of Education and Science, which aimed at ensuring the quality of vocational education according to the needs of society and economy.

The *Vocational Education Development Programme for 2003-2005* (see 2.1) the sub-programme “the quality of vocational education” included improvement of vocational school teacher education and the further education system, as well as improving teacher payment system and foster implementation of requirements concerning teacher qualification set in the laws and regulations (see above). There were following activities related to further teacher education: to promote correspondence of further teacher education to education content through updating continuous vocational teacher education programme example, to control correspondence of teacher study programmes to changing education content and methodology.

### **0602 - Types of teachers and trainers in IVET**

Within the vocational education system vocational education teachers are both teachers and trainers. They implement a range of programmes: vocational basic education; vocational upper-secondary education; and professional development and continuing education. See 6.1.

## 060201 - Types of teachers, trainers and training facilitators in IVET

As vocational secondary programmes comprise general subjects, professional subjects, practical training and work placements. Therefore, **teachers in the initial vocational education** system are: teachers of general subjects or of a vocational subject. Practical training is taught by vocational subject VET teachers. See 6.1.

## 060202 - Pre-service and in-service training of IVET teachers and trainers

There is not separate teacher education system for initial and continuing vocational education teachers. See 6.1.2.

## 0603 - Types of teachers and trainers in CVET

Within the vocational education system vocational education teachers are both teachers and trainers. They provide a range of programmes: vocational basic education; vocational upper-secondary education; and professional development and continuing education. See 6.1.

## 060301 - Types of teachers, trainers and training facilitators in CVET

There is only one type of occupation regulated by law which is a vocational education teacher. There are no differences between vocational education teachers in the IVET or CVET system, and teachers for continuing education programmes do not have a special reference in vocational education terminology. They have the same requirements as other vocational education teachers (see section 6.1.2).

VET teachers in VET schools provide both IVET and CVET courses, and there is no distinction regarding their education requirements. In enterprises in-company teachers and trainers could be involved in local training, nevertheless, there is no regulation on their education requirements. Those involved in apprenticeship training should have a craftsman qualification (see 4.4).

## 060302 - Pre-service and in-service training of CVET teachers and trainers

The **pre-service education** is the same for all vocational education teachers. Professional training programmes are available in different occupational sectors within the higher education system. Graduates obtain a professional qualification or scientific degree in the branch. If the graduate would like to work in VET school, they should continue in a basic teacher programme (no less than 320 hours) at a higher education institution, adult continuing education centre or other training institution.

The training content and curricula are the same for all VET teachers: all must follow a higher education study programme in the appropriate field at a higher level (ISCED 5A). The assessment and quality monitoring structure is also the same.

All teaching staff (VET teachers, school director, deputy directors, methodologists, interest education teachers, social pedagogue, librarian, etc.) should participate in **further education** to improve their professional qualification every 3 years. Different continuing education programmes, courses, seminars, projects and other teaching aids could be used

as long as they are not less than 36 contact hours in total. The Law on Education states that a teacher is responsible for their professional development. Teachers have the right to use 30 calendar days every third year for professional development as paid training leave. It is the responsibility of the headmaster of a VET school to monitor their staff development.

Various organisations provide continuing training for VET teachers including school boards, municipalities, professional associations, the Vocational Education Administration, learning and examination centres, universities and higher education institutions, as well as continuing vocational training centres.

## **07 - MATCHING VET PROVISION WITH LABOUR MARKET NEEDS**

### **0701 - Systems and mechanisms for the anticipation of skill needs(in sectors, occupations, education level)**

Information on skill needs is collected partly, but not systematically, at national level. A few sector analyses (e.g. in ICT and the construction industries with Phare support) and research into the changing labour market were conducted in recent years to provide information to plan education and training provision. In some regions or sectors employers' surveys are conducted by employment services to identify short-term annual needs. These surveys show less demand for people with low-level qualifications and an increasing demand for qualified workers and craftsmen, equipment and machine operators, and multi-professional skills.

### **0702 - Practices to match VET provision with skill needs**

Skills needs are taken into account when drafting vocational qualifications through the definition of occupational standards for different professions. Standards are developed by representatives of educational institutions and social partners through working groups organized by the Ministry of Education and Science. Occupational standards are confirmed by the National Tripartite Subcouncil for Cooperation in Vocational Education and Employment (*Profesionalas izglitibas un nodarbinatibas trispusejas sadarbibas apakšpadome*) and by the Minister of Education and Science (*Izglitibas un zinatnes ministrija*). Standards usually are updated and reviewed as necessary but not often than every 5th year. Every 5 years standards are assessed and updated by education providers, employers, students, government organisations, quality assurance agencies and external experts. Representatives of the MoEs and other ministries, the Latvian Union of Local Governments, the Employers Confederation, non-governmental field organizations, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Confederation of Free Trade Unions and vocational education providers take part in developing occupational standards.

Occupational standards comprise a description of specific tasks and employee duties as well as the abilities and skills necessary to carry out those tasks. Standards also determine to which level of professional qualification each specific profession corresponds. When developing educational programmes, educational institutions have to ensure the acquisition of all the abilities, skills and knowledge mentioned in the occupational standards. Furthermore, the content of final qualification examinations is drafted in line with occupational standards, as well. By May 2009, 434 occupation standards had been drafted and approved, of which 22 were added to standard register in 2008, e.g. specialist of interior design, marine mechanic, operator on information input.

## **08 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT**

### **0801 - Strategy and provision**

#### **Embedding LL guidance in LLL and employment strategies**

There is a shift from the professional orientation system to career development support system, which is a range of activities aiming at assisting individuals at different age and experience to choose the most appropriate type and place of learning and/or employment. The latter system was initiated in 2006 with the approval of the White Paper on the Improvement of the Career Guidance System (see 2.1).

Lifelong learning strategy is outlined in the Guidelines for Lifelong Learning Policy 2007-2013 (*Mužizglitibas politikas pamatnostadnes 2007.–2013.gadam*, 2007) prepared by the Ministry of Education and Science (see 2.1.1). One of lifelong learning policy aims – availability of lifelong learning for all social groups – includes the direction to strengthen the formation of education support system for career guidance and counselling involving specialists and to provide information and education and career consultations. It was planned to establish 48 education support institutions, career development and counselling centres, as well as to increase the number of services ensured by these bodies by implementing 150 career education projects. Since the implementation of the Guidelines is not concluded, the progress of these activities cannot be evaluated. Furthermore, the current economic situation has impacted the initiatives negatively, i.e. there is lack of funding for their successful implementation.

#### **Evidence-based policy and strategy making**

Both the White Paper on the Improvement of the Career Guidance System (2006) and the Guidelines for Lifelong Learning Policy 2007-2013 (2007) included field studies in order to determine issues to be solved.

As mentioned previously in the section 2.1.2, the data concerning the skill needs is collected partly on sectoral basis, but not systematically and regularly at national scale.

#### **Cooperation between education and employment sectors/administrations in the area of LL guidance**

The *White Paper on the Improvement of the Career Guidance System* (2006) stated the need to form a policy coordinating institution at national level, which would include both representatives of ministries and social partners. The development of the Career Support System Cooperation Council was initiated in 2007.

However, in reality at school level communication between education establishments, employers and parents occurs informally and irregularly in the terms of activities not included in the ordinary curriculum, e.g. project weeks or career days. The intensity of communication greatly depends on particular education establishment and their administration; thus, some schools are more active than others.

## Bodies responsible for providing guidance and counselling services

### Bodies in education and employment

The Ministry of Education and Science (*Izglitibas un zinatnes ministrija, IZM*) (see 3.2), and the Ministry of Welfare (*Labklajibas ministrija*) are **responsible bodies for career guidance and counselling**. The Education Law (*Izglitibas likums 1998*) stipulates that district local governments ensure the provision of guidance and counselling for children and young adults while the Vocational Education Law (*Profesionalas izglitibas likums, 1999*) stipulates that the Ministry of Education and Science (*Izglitibas un zinatnes ministrija, IZM*), organizes guidance and counselling for unemployed people and for labour market research.

The **Ministry of Welfare's policy** until September 2007 was realised by the Professional Career Counselling State Agency (*Profesionalas karjeras izveles valsts agentura, PKIVA*), when the organisation according to the Support to Introduction of Career Education within Education System (2006) was incorporated into the State Employment Agency (SEA) as Career Service Department. PKIVA was created in 1987; in 2006 it had 5 regional information counselling centres and 19 district consultation rooms in the all regions. The SEA operates in accordance with the Labour Law (2002), the *Law on Social Security* (May 1995) and the *Law on the Support for the Unemployed and Job Seekers* (May 2002), which states: "Measures for reducing unemployment include guidance and counselling and consulting services, which are offered to those wishing to pursue education or who are working or wish to participate in remunerated work; the aim is to promote the competitiveness of these people in the labour market and to offer help in the choice of a professional career.

In 2000, the **Ministry of Education and Science** through the State Education Development Agency (*Valsts izglitibas attistibas agentura, VIAA*) as a part of Euroguidance Network created the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance (*Profesionalas orientacijas informacijas centrs, POIC*), which provided information on vocational education in Latvia and other EU countries. Since 2007, the Centre has been re-organised into the Career Support Department of the Agency. The Department has no regional or local offices and is partly financed by the Ministry and partly by the EU Leonardo da Vinci programme. It collaborates with similar organisations in Europe, together forming the Euroguidance Network. In schools activities of career education are implemented, schools cooperate with local guidance centres, some schools have career consultants.

### Other bodies

In 1996, as an initiative of career consultants and the former Professional Career Counselling State Agency (*Profesionalas karjeras izveles valsts agentura, PKIVA*) the Association of Career Consultant was founded to foster professional development of career consultants, to exchange experience and to represent Latvia in the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance.

In 2009, the Association of Latvian Career Development Support (*Latvijas Karjeras attistibas atbalsta asociacija*), which is a NGO, was established to promote the formation of career development support system. Since the Association was founded recently, its role in NGO sector cannot be evaluated.

There are several private career guidance organisations offering range of services, e.g. courses, career consultations and job placements etc. Yet there is not a united network or strategy for these organisations.

## 0802 - Target groups and modes of delivery

The Career Service Department of State Employment Agency offers career counselling for all: young people about to choose a career; adults – whether employed,

unemployed or returning to the labour market; disabled people; parents; and educators. The total number of people who used the services of the Agency in 2008 is 67,730, which has increased by 21.06% comparing to 2006 (NVA, 2009).

The clients of the Career Service Department (PRIVA) receive the following services:

- individual and group consultations on career and educational choices and professional suitability;
- individual consultations on employment related questions;
- workshops for young people and adults on career development and questions on seeking employment;
- consultations on educational opportunities in Latvia and abroad.

Various counselling methods are used including: individual consultation in questions on education, profession choices and career planning; group consultations for determining the optimal vocational field; consultation on educational possibilities; consultation on the content of a profession; determining the professionally important qualities, skills, individual characteristics, etc.; workshops – for young adults “You and your career”; workshops – for job seekers “How to find a job”; consultations in improving methods for job search and CV-writing.

The State Education Development Agency supports implementation of careers education policy within education sector. The State Employment Agency centres throughout the country provide individual career counselling.

## **0803 - Guidance and counselling personnel**

The Career Service Department (*Karjeras pakalpojumu departaments*) of the State Employment Agency includes Career Information Unit and Career Service Methodology Unit, as well as 24 district consultation rooms in the all regions (2008). The total number of employees in the Department is 15, while 58 specialists are working as career counsellors and/or psychologists. The requirement for working in the Department is higher education in psychology (academic or vocational) but higher teacher education is also acceptable.

There are seven employees In the Career Support Department of the State Education Development Agency, of which two form the Project Implementation Unit.

In schools, the career education enters under the responsibility of class teacher.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia has launched in 2005 the project *Fostering the Implementation of Vocational Guidance Provision and Careers Education in the Educational Sector* (2005-2008) with the objective to improve accessibility and quality of careers education at educational institutions of all types and levels. Among the main activities, there were:

- Professional upgrading of guidance practitioners/teachers currently working in the educational sector (3,700 teachers in 2006 and 1,525 teachers in 2008);
- Development, testing and piloting of methodological and training materials for careers education purposes at schools;
- Development of various information resources on learning opportunities including a national data base and self-assessment tests for E-guidance;



- Development of national qualification framework and a 2-year study programme for educating guidance counsellors, piloting the study programme.

This project fostered the implementation of initial and continuing training of guidance practitioners, developing training materials and information resources. As a result, several informative materials about education and career opportunities have been published; in 2006 professional master education programme for career counsellors has been licensed and started to be implemented in 5 higher education institutions.

## **09 - FINANCING – INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES**

As in many other countries, primary funding aims are to increase cost-effectiveness. The largest share of the funding is intended for higher education. Funding allocated to education increases from year to year, e.g. state subsidies for VET from 2003 to 2007 have increased by 71%, but actual amounts due to the inflation and other factors remain insufficient. Due to current economic situation the state funding for educational sector, including vocational education has been reduced in 2009 approximately by EUR 132,327,078 in the terms of state economy recovery and development programme.

In order to implement the priorities determined in the Guidelines for the Development of Education for the period of 2007-2013 (2006) and to compensate for the raising costs, amendments in the Cabinet *Regulations on the expenditures minimum per one student for implementing vocational education programmes (Noteikumi par profesionalas izglitibas programmu istenošanas izmaksu minimumu uz vienu izglitojamo, 2004, 2007)* were introduced. Amount vary according to the vocational education programme, e.g. expenses per one commercial or administrative education programme student are EUR 2,472 a year, while pharmacy education programme – EUR 4,945 (MoES, 2008). However, state budget expenditures for education is not sufficient and in 2008 vocational schools received in average 60% of the budgeted financing due to the limited of financial resources.

### **0901 - Funding for IVET**

Initial vocational education is financed according to the Education Law (*Izglitibas likums*), Vocational Education Law (*Profesionalas izglitibas likums*), and Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers (*Ministru Kabineta Noteikumi*).

Subsidies come from the state general budget, local government and private sources. State subsidies are determined by the Cabinet in conformity with the numbers of students and the related per capita costs. Providers bid for funding every year. Once the state budget is confirmed, schools receive funding and spend it to implement their educational programmes according to legislation.

As the majority of VET schools are state-owned and run, the national budget is the main source of funding. The overall budget for VET was EUR 87,388,767 in 2008 (EUR 46,401,181 in 2005). The funding for vocational education establishments in 2008 comprised 88.9% of subsidies from the state general budget (EUR 77,645,972) and by 11.1% of their own income (paid services provided by VET institutions, amounting EUR 8,581,185).

In 2008, 91.3% of state funds allocated to VET schools were for recurrent costs, including salaries for staff, i.e. 57.9% of total expenditures, and just 1.9% towards capital investment.

### **0902 - Funding for CVET and adult learning**

There is no precise recent data on total investment in CVET because information is collected on separate survey basis. While funding from the state budget can be assessed, other sources are not so easy.

## 090201 - Funding for publicly provided CVET

According to data from the Central Statistical Bureau (*Latvijas Republikas Centrālā statistikas parvalde, CSB*), annual state budget expenditure on adult education institutions has decreased. There are several sources of funding for adult education: participants' fees, employer investment, investment of non-governmental organisations, payments from local governments and state budgets. The rise in 2005 was related to an increase in funding for the State Employment Agency due to the implementation of structural funds projects.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL FUNDING</b>	15 124.36	18 479.37	15 030.17	16 495.87	21 184.97	34 320.1
<b>OF WHICH:</b>						
<b>FROM THE STATE BUDGET</b>	7892 (47.9%)	6778 (44.8%)	7839 (42.4%)	4361 (29%)	5018 (30.4%)	4200 (19.8%)
<b>FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUDGETS</b>	560 (3.4%)	592 (3.9%)	648 (3.5%)	636 (4.5%)	416 (2.5%)	859 (4%)
<b>PARTICIPANTS' FEE</b>	3747 (22.7%)	3784 (25%)	3270 (17.7%)	3842 (25.5%)	4601 (27.9%)	7777 (35.3%)
<b>FEES PAID BY ENTERPRISES AND ORGANISATIONS FOR TRAINING THEIR EMPLOYEES</b>	4037 (24.5%)	3674 (24.3%)	3981.5 (21.5%)	4714 (31.3%)	5685 (34.4%)	7581 (35.7%)
<b>OTHER SOURCES</b>	228	297	2741	1426	776	1068

Source: CSB data, 2005, 2006

State funding for adult education (including some training for unemployed people) has decreased by 28% between 2000 and 2005. Some local governments allocate a fixed percentage from the budget to adult education.

## 090202 - Funding for CVT in enterprises

According to CSB data (2006), in 2005 enterprises allocated EUR 7,581 thousands for training their employees, which is 35.7% of total funding for adult education. The tax system does not promote employer investment in training. Only approximately 4% of enterprises have a training budget and vocational training is mainly available only in large, stable enterprises. These enterprises usually have enough funds as well as a human resource development strategy; some also have their own training centres.

	TOTAL (%)		SIZE CLASS (NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES)					
			10 TO 49 (%)		50 TO 249 (%)		250 OR MORE (%)	
	CVTS3	CVTS2	CVTS3	CVTS2	CVTS3	CVTS2	CVTS3	CVTS2
<b>EU27</b>	1.6	:	1.1	:	1.4	:	1.9	:
<b>EU25</b>	1.6	2.3	1.1	1.5	1.4	2.4	1.9	2.5
<b>LV</b>	0.8	1.1	0.3	1.3	0.8	0.8	1.2	1.3

Source: Eurostat; 2nd and 3rd continuing vocational training survey in enterprises (CVTS 2 and CVTS 3).

Note: Total costs: direct costs, labour costs of participants and balance of contributions to national or regional training funds and receipts from national or other funding arrangements Cyprus, Malta, Slovakia and Iceland were not covered by CVTS 2; Iceland was not covered by CVTS 3 either.

Smaller enterprises tend to invest less in training. They tend to have other priorities in terms of their survival within the market.

### 0903 - Funding for training for unemployed and other groups excluded from the labour market

The expenditure on training for unemployed people is low. In 2002 it was 0.0305% of GDP and in 2004 – 0.0162%. Active employment measures are financed from the social insurance budget but they constitute less than 10% of funding.

EXPENSES	2002	2003	2004
<b>GDP</b>	8 130 000	9 031 420	10 513 429
<b>EXPENSES IN CVET FOR UNEMPLOYED</b>	2 485 281	1 968 501	1 704 670
<b>OVERALL SPENDING ON CVET FOR UNEMPLOYED AS A % OF GDP</b>	0.0305%	0.021%	0.0162%
<b>EXPENSES FOR THE TRAINING PER UNEMPLOYED PERSON</b>	437	383	404

Source: CSB data, 2005

The main institution for implementing labour market policy and programmes for unemployed people is the State Employment Agency (*Nodarbinatibas valsts agentura*) which is a public corporation under the Ministry of Welfare. It remains a governmental organisation funded by the state but operates independently. It is financed from the State base budget, income from the provision of services, gifts and donations, as well as from other resources in accordance with regulations.

With the new *Law to Support Unemployed people and Jobseekers*, the range of clients of the State Employment Agency has been broadened; nevertheless, the funding has not been increased. Continuing vocational education expenses for unemployed were EUR 1,704,670 in 2004 and EUR 9,222,005 in 2005, for the latter figure including funds from ESF.

### 0904 - General funding arrangements and mechanisms

In Latvia there are not formed such financing mechanisms as sectoral training funds, learning accounts and vouchers, as well as, saving schemes. The existing mechanisms – tax incentives, scholarships in initial vocational education, and study loans – are outlined below.

The legal basis for **tax incentives** is formed by the Law on Income Taxes of Enterprises (1995, 2007) and the Law on Income Taxes of Inhabitants (1993, 2008). The former concerning tax allowance for donors stipulates that “tax is reduced for residents by 85% of sums donated to education organisations”. The latter regarding reimbursed expenses states that “expenses (both payer’s and their family members’) related with professional development, obtaining speciality, education are reimbursed before taxing year incomes”.

In practice, legal entities do not use tax allowances (a type of tax incentives) frequently because refund sum is too little, i.e. EUR 213.43 per employee who has an

agreement with employer and for which the employer does not have to pay income tax. Any legal entity which has made the agreement with the employees and submitted their annual CIT declaration is eligible for funding.

Speaking about low allowances for private persons, any taxpayer who has submitted their annual PIT declaration is eligible for refunding of their education costs. However, the amount individuals are paid back is comparatively small – EUR 213.43. In 2005, 58.1% of taxpayers, who filled in their annual PIT declarations, have completed form for reimbursable (until 2009 filling up PIT declarations was not mandatory). Expenses may be requested to be reimbursed in 3 years period. It is planned to increase the max sum to EUR 426.86, the legal amendments are still under debate.

The State Revenue Service (*Valsts ienemumu dienests*) is the institution responsible for monitoring progress on the use of the tax incentive and taking corrective actions.

**Scholarships in initial vocational education** are stated by the Cabinet Regulations on Scholarships (1995, 2002, 2004). The regulations determined the average stipend for the initial vocational education and tertiary students – EUR 12 per month. Since 2002, amount of stipend has increased. According to the amendments of the Regulations (April 2006), since January 2007, the average stipend for initial vocational education student had to be increased by EUR 28.5 per month. This initiative has been discontinued and it is planned to decrease by 50% the funding for student transportation compensations and scholarships of vocational education students by September 2009 because of current economic situation.

Only tertiary education students can apply for **study loan**. Allocation of study loans from the state budget was established in 1999 and the contract with students was made from July 2000. Since September 2001, study loans are allocated from funds of credit institutions with the State guarantee. Tertiary education students may receive two different study loans: to cover study programme expenses and for personal expenses during studies.

According to the *Vocational Education Law* (1999), students studying in accredited first level vocational higher education programs may receive student loan from the state budget or credit institution with the warranty from the government. The order of the allocation, repayment, and clearance of the loan is defined in the *Law of Higher Education Institutions* (1995).

## 10 - NATIONAL VET STATISTICS – ALLOCATION OF PROGRAMMES

### 1001 - Classification of national VET programmes

#### 100101 - Main criteria used to allocate VET programmes

The Ministry of Education and Science determines to which level (ISCED) each education programme belongs. The classification of education programmes in accordance with ISCED levels is stipulated by the Cabinet Regulations on Education Classification (*Noteikumi par Latvijas izglitības klasifikaciju*, 2008).

Classification of vocational education programmes is described in section 4.1.

#### 100102 - VET levels in the national educational system

See table 1 in section 4.1.

### 1002 - Fields of education and training

Different vocational education programmes are developed and offered for all economic branches. The National Standard of vocational education (*Valsts profesionālas izglitības standarts*) and the Occupational Standards (*Profesiju standarti*) determine the curriculum and content of vocational education programmes.

Issues on collecting, analysing and disseminating national statistics are regulated by the *Official Statistics Law* (1997, 2007), which determines that the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) is the major (and the only legal) institution for organising work of national statistics. The Law was drafted in compliance with the European Council Regulations on Community statistics (February 1997) to ensure higher quality of statistical data from both ethical and professional aspects. The CSB is directly subordinated to the Ministry of Economics and is financed by state budget, income from charges for provided services, and foreign sources.

Educational statistics is responsibility of The Culture, Education, Science and Health Statistics Section, included in the structure of Social Statistics Department. The Section prepares annual detailed tables for Eurostat on the work of education establishments, as well as has organised The First and Second Survey in Enterprises. The CSB provides statistical information concerning the numbers of VET graduates and enrollers, enrolment on national scale. CSB uses the following **thematic groups** to describe enrolment statistics in vocational education establishments without the differentiation of education level:

- General education;
- Humanities and Arts;
- Social Sciences; Business and Law;
- Natural sciences, mathematics and information technology;
- Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction;

- Agriculture;
- Health and Welfare;
- Services;
- Other thematic groups.

The occupational groups are enumerated in the *Cabinet Regulations on Occupational Classifier, basic tasks of occupation and ground demands of qualification, and procedure of Occupational Classifier usage and updating* (2006, 2007).

The Occupation Classifier has 9 main groups, which are listed mainly in descending order of occupational skills. The major occupational groups are the following:

- Legislators, senior officials and managers (this group includes also the leaders of local municipalities and heads of enterprises and organizations of different level);
- Professionals (this group includes occupations whose main tasks require a high level of theoretical and professional knowledge in life sciences, social sciences and humanities);
- Technicians and associate professionals (this group includes occupations whose main tasks require technical knowledge in the fields of technical, life and social sciences, as well as humanities);
- Clerks (this group includes secretaries, cashiers, customer attendants, accounting, financial and other office workers);
- Service workers and shop and market sales workers (this group includes shop assistants and workers of public catering, security, social care and other kinds of services);
- Skilled agricultural and fishery workers (this group includes farmers of vegetables, cereals and domestic animals, foresters, fishery workers and hunters);
- Craft and related trades workers (this group includes workers and craft workers of different branches who have the required knowledge, experience and skills);
- Plant and machine operators and assemblers (this group includes occupations where knowledge and skills in operation and maintenance of industrial machinery and equipment is required);
- Elementary occupations (this group covers domestic and related helpers, supervisors, sweepers, transport workers a.o. workers performing unqualified tasks in construction, agriculture, forestry, industry and other branches).

## **1003 - Links between national qualifications and international qualifications or classifications**

There are **five levels of professional qualifications** defined by Vocational Education Law (1999):

- Level 1 (ISCED 2): theoretical and practical training that prepares students for performing simple tasks in a certain area of practical activity (assistant cook, carpenter etc.);
- Level 2 (ISCED 3): theoretical and practical background that allows the holder to perform qualified work independently (carpenter, hairdresser, cook, welder etc.);
- Level 3 (ISCED 3): advanced theoretical and professional background which enables the holder to fulfil certain tasks, including planning and organising work (various technicians, car mechanics, hotel service specialist etc.);

- Level 4 (ISCED 5): theoretical and practical background that enables the holder to perform complicated tasks as well as to organise and manage others in their work;
- Level 5 (ISCED 5): the highest qualification of a specialist in a field that enables the holder to plan and perform research and scientific work in the field.

Linking the Latvian professional qualification system (see 4.1) to EQF has started already. On higher education level the system has been set already; legally it will be introduced with the new *Higher Education Law*, which has been submitted to the Parliament for discussion. In vocational education the NQF will be integrated through the new concept of *Vocational Education Law*.



# 11 - AUTHORS, SOURCES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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[www.aic.lv](http://www.aic.lv) Academic Information Centre (*Akademiskās informācijas centrs*)

[www.csb.gov.lv](http://www.csb.gov.lv) Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (*Latvijas Republikas Centrālā statistikas parvalde*).

[www.izm.gov.lv](http://www.izm.gov.lv) Ministry of Education and Science (*Izglitības un zinātnes ministrija*)

[www.izmpic.gov.lv](http://www.izmpic.gov.lv) Vocational Education Administration (*Profesionalas izglitības administrācija*)

[www.karjerascentrs.lv](http://www.karjerascentrs.lv) State Employment Agency Career Service Department (*Nodarbinātības valsts aģentūras Karjeras pakalpojumu departaments*)

[www.lm.gov.lv](http://www.lm.gov.lv) Ministry of Welfare (*Labklājības ministrija*).

[www.nva.lv](http://www.nva.lv) State Employment Agency (*Nodarbinātības valsts aģentūra*).

[www.viaa.gov.lv](http://www.viaa.gov.lv) State Education Development Agency (*Valsts izglitības attīstības aģentūra*).

## 1103 - List of acronyms and abbreviations

AIC – Academic Information Centre (*Akademiskās informācijas centrs*)

CSB – Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (*Centrālās statistikas parvalde*)

KIPNIS – Provision of career education programmes within education system (*Karjeras izglītības programmu nodrošinājums izglītības sistēmā*)  
<http://www.viaa.gov.lv/Euroguidance/kipnis/index.htm>

MoES – The Ministry of Education and Science (*Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija*)

MoW – Ministry of Welfare (*Labklājības ministrija*)

NEC – Latvian National Europass Centre (*Latvijas Nacionālais Europass centrs*)

NF – The National Forum (*Sadarbības padome*)

PCCSA – Professional Career Counselling State Agency (*Profesionālās karjeras izveles valsts aģentūra*)

PIA – Vocational Education Administration (*Profesionālās izglītības administrācija*)

SEA – State Employment Agency (*Nodarbinātības valsts aģentūra*)

VIAA – State Education Development Agency (*Valsts izglītības attīstības aģentūra*)

VIKNVA – The State Agency for Quality Assessment in General Education (*Visparejas izglītības kvalitātes novērtēšana valsts aģentūra*)