



# Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015–17

## CROATIA



Cedefop monitoring and analysis of VET policies

**Developments in vocational education and training  
policy in 2015-17**

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This report was produced by Cedefop and reflects contributions from Cedefop's VET policy and systems team, and Cedefop experts working on common European tools and principles for education and training, and statistics. It is based on detailed information on VET policy implementation submitted by Cedefop's European network of expertise on VET (ReferNet) and other sources.

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## Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, the proportion of upper secondary students enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) programmes in Croatia was above the EU average: 71.1% in 2013 (European Commission, 2015, p. 9) against 48.9% in the EU; 70.7% in 2014, compared to 48% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 69); 70% in 2015, compared to 47% in the EU <sup>(1)</sup>. However, the employment rate of recent upper secondary graduates was low at 47.3% in 2014 (European Commission, 2015, p. 9) compared to 70.8% in the EU. Adult participation in lifelong learning was also low: 2.5% in 2014 (European Commission, 2015, p. 9) and 3.1% in 2015 compared to 10.7% on average in the EU in both years (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 69) (Table 1).

VET in the country faced the challenges of improving the approach to practical training and increasing the labour market relevance of programmes. Steps were being taken to address these issues. In 2014, incentives for employers to offer work placements had been increased. A strategy for education, science and technology had been adopted, outlining – among others – the need for bringing education and training closer to labour market needs, introducing work-based learning and modularisation, and opening up access from VET to higher education. VET reform was being prepared.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Eurostat, data for 2015.

Table 1. Framework data: score on VET indicators in Croatia and in the EU: 2010, last available year and recent trend

Indicator label	2010		Last available year		Recent trend (per year)		
	HR <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Yr	HR <sup>f</sup> EU <sup>f</sup>	Range	HR	EU
<b>Access, attractiveness and flexibility</b>							
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	A	A	'14	70.7 <sup>b</sup> 48.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E1</sub>	'13-'14	▪ -0.3	▪ -0.9
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	A	A	'14	0.0 <sup>z</sup> 34.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E2</sub>	'13-'14	▪ 0.0	▪ 0.1
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET			'14	68.5 69.2 <sup>E3</sup>	'13-'14	▪ 0.2	▪ -1.4
Employees participating in CVT courses (%)	23.0	38.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	23.0 38.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Employees participating in on-the-job training (%)	15.0	20.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	15.0 20.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	3.0		'15	3.1 10.7 <sup>b</sup>	'13-'15	→ 0.0	→ 0.0
Enterprises providing training (%)	57.0	66.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	57.0 66.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	A	A	'14	63.8 <sup>b</sup> 42.7 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E1</sub>	'13-'14	▪ -0.4	▪ -1.0
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	19.0	25.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	19.0 25.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			'15	30.9 <sup>b</sup> 33.0 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ -0.8	▪ -0.3
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	0.1 <sup>u</sup>	5.3	'15	0.3 <sup>u</sup> 6.9			
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)			'15	4.3 <sup>b</sup> <sub>C</sub>			
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	2.4 <sup>u</sup>		'15	2.4 <sup>u</sup> 9.5 <sup>b</sup>			
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)	B	9.5 <sup>e</sup> <sub>B</sub>	'11	9.5 <sup>e</sup>			
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)	B	80.2 <sup>e</sup> <sub>B</sub>	'11	80.2 <sup>e</sup>			
<b>Skill development and labour market relevance</b>							
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)			'13	0.56 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E4</sub>			
IVET public expenditure per student (1 000 PPS units)			'13	6.4 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E5</sub>			
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.4	0.8 <sup>e</sup>	'10	0.4 0.8 <sup>e</sup>			
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET			'14	1.2 <sup>b</sup> 1.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E6</sub>	'13-'14	▪ 0.0	▪ 0.0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	A	A	'14	38.7 <sup>b</sup> 30.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E7</sub>			
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates			'14	0.1 9.3 <sup>E8</sup>	'13-'14	▪ 0.0	▪ 0.4
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)	54.3	41.5 <sup>E9</sup>	'12	60.0 41.6 <sup>E9</sup>	'10-'12	▪ 2.9	▪ 0.0
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20- to 34-year-olds)			'15	69.0 <sup>b</sup> 77.2 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ 1.1	▪ 0.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)			'15	3.3 <sup>b</sup> 5.3 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ -1.7	▪ -1.0

Indicator label	2010		Last available year		Recent trend (per year)		
	HR <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Yr	HR <sup>f</sup> EU <sup>f</sup>	Range	HR	EU
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)			'15	35.8 <sup>b</sup> 23.7 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ 3.3	▪ 0.1
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)			'15	87.3 83.7			
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	51.1	55.2	'15	60.7 57.3	'10-'15	▪ 1.9	▪ 0.4
<b>Overall transitions and labour market trends</b>							
Early leavers from education and training (%)	5.2	13.9	'15	2.8 <sup>u</sup> 11.0 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'14	↘ 0.5	↘ 0.7
30- to 34-year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	24.5	33.8	'15	30.9 <sup>c</sup> 38.7 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↗ 1.7	↗ 1.0
NEET rate for 18- to 24-year-olds (%)	20.6	16.6	'15	24.3 15.8	'10-'15	↗ 1.0	↘ 0.1
Unemployment rate for 20- to 34-year-olds (%)	16.8	13.1	'15	22.9 12.9	'10-'15	↗ 1.1	↗ 0.1
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)	71.6	77.4	'15	62.6 <sup>c</sup> 76.9 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↘ 1.5	↘ 0.2
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	22.7	27.3	'15	16.7 <sup>c</sup> 23.5 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↘ 1.3	↘ 0.8
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds (%)	62.1	68.6	'15	60.5 70.0	'10-'15	↘ 0.3	↗ 0.3
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	46.2	53.4	'15	39.8 <sup>c</sup> 52.6 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↘ 1.4	↘ 0.2
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2020 (% of total)			'16	92.7 <sup>d</sup> 82.8 <sup>d</sup>			

<sup>(A)</sup> UOE (UNESCO OECD Eurostat) back reconstruction of 2010 values based on ISCED (international standard classification of education) 2011 not yet available.

<sup>(B)</sup> AES (adult education survey) 2011, used as proxy for 2010 baseline.

<sup>(C)</sup> 2014 b flags in Eurostat online tables ignored on the basis of other relevant Eurostat metadata.

<sup>(D)</sup> Forecast made in 2016.

<sup>(E1)</sup> Based on 28 countries; partial information for NL.

<sup>(E2)</sup> Based on 25 countries (missing: ES, PL, RO); partial information for NL.

<sup>(E3)</sup> Based on 27 countries (missing: NL); partial information for EL, IT.

<sup>(E4)</sup> Based on 19 countries (missing: BE, DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT, SK).

<sup>(E5)</sup> Based on 21 countries (missing: DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT).

<sup>(E6)</sup> Partial information for NL.

<sup>(E7)</sup> Based on 25 countries (missing: HR, IT, UK).

<sup>(E8)</sup> Based on 23 countries (missing: BE, IE, FR, CY, UK).

<sup>(E9)</sup> Based on 22 countries (missing: DE, IE, EL, NL, SI, UK).

<sup>(b)</sup> Break after 2010, therefore baseline data not included.

<sup>(u)</sup> Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

<sup>(z)</sup> Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

<sup>(e)</sup> Eurostat: 'estimated'.

NB: EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified. Arrows ↗ or ↘ signal a positive or negative trend based on more than two data points and of magnitude 0.1 per year or more. Trends based on more than two data points but of smaller magnitude are indicated by →; trends based on two points only are marked ▪. Trends are estimated by means of regression models.

Source: Cedefop, 2017a, p. 69.

## CHAPTER 1.

# MTD 1 – All forms of work-based learning with special attention to apprenticeships

Most VET programmes in Croatia include some mandatory work-based learning, which varies in duration depending on the programme. Certain of these VET programmes are offered in the form of apprenticeships, which means that a major part takes place at a company. Apprenticeships are offered in about 60 different craft and trade occupations.

### 1.1. Policy priorities for 2016-20

For the 2016-20 period, the country's priorities in this area <sup>(2)</sup>, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training (DGVT), are two-fold:

- (a) for apprenticeship:
  - (i) revise the existing apprenticeship programmes to make them more relevant for the labour market;
  - (ii) improve the image of apprenticeship and promote it as a desirable career choice;
- (b) for work-based learning in school-based VET, raise the capacities of pilot schools for providing modern work-based learning in school-based VET programmes.

### 1.2. Main actions taken in 2015-17

#### 1.2.1. Launch of VET reform

In 2015, the VET reform started with a public consultation phase before moving to the pilot phase, which was completed in summer 2016. The reform intends to draw up the national VET framework curriculum and aims to bring VET in line with labour market needs, while emphasising work-based learning and promoting entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity.

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<sup>(2)</sup> According to a survey by Cedefop among directors general (DGVTs) for VET in early 2016.

### **1.2.2. The 2016-20 VET system development programme**

The programme (Section 3.2.1) was adopted by the Croatian government in September 2016 and a related action plan was adopted two months later by the Ministry of Education. The programme set up comprehensive reform of VET curricula. It focused on strengthening all kinds of work-based learning models (alternance schemes, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training periods in companies). It promoted stakeholder participation, especially greater involvement of employers in work-based learning and in the planning and designing of VET programmes. Incentives are given to providers of practical training places and to companies who offer capacity building to their mentors. The action plan detailed the measures, expected results, indicators, deadlines, and financial resources for the duration of the programme.

### **1.2.3. Strengthening SME involvement in apprenticeship: the *Cap4App* project**

The *Erasmus+* project *Strengthening the capacities of the chambers and partners to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to engage in apprenticeship (Cap4App)* started in October 2016. It is coordinated by the Croatian Chamber of Economy and run in cooperation with major national stakeholders and the Austrian Federal Chamber of Economy. It has a total budget of around EUR 500 000. The project aims to develop methods and criteria for choosing SMEs willing to participate in dual education, a guidebook for mentors working in enterprises, and a programme of mentor certification. It also aims to form a pool of reference experts in dual education, and to create a database of entrepreneurs and students willing to participate in such a system.

### **1.2.4. Incentives to attract learners to craft education**

During 2016, the Entrepreneurship Ministry continued the project *Scholarships for students in craft occupations*. In 2016, a total project budget of EUR 1 853 585 was granted and 1 522 students in rare craft occupations received a scholarship.

### **1.2.5. International cooperation to strengthen VET and work-based learning**

In December 2016, the Act of confirming framework agreement between the Swiss Federal Council and the Government of the Republic of Croatia on the implementation of the Swiss-Croatian cooperation programme for reducing economic and social inequalities within the European economic area was adopted. Under this, the project *Modernisation of vocational education and*

*training programmes* focuses on modernising vocational programmes for crafts and improving work-based learning as of 2017.

Also, at the beginning of 2017, the Croatian government started a joint project with Cedefop for a comprehensive analysis of the national apprenticeship system. The project includes interviews with apprentices and companies involved, as well as several exchange forums. The aim is to help national stakeholders to plan further development of the national apprenticeship scheme.

## CHAPTER 2.

# MTD 2 – Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET <sup>(3)</sup>

The agency for VET and adult education (AVETAE) was formally appointed as the quality assurance national reference point (QANRP) in 2014. A national quality assurance framework for VET which applies also to work-based learning was developed in 2011 and partially implemented in 2015. Quality standards for VET providers are established in legislation and used as a condition for accreditation (for initial vocational education and training (IVET) and continuing vocational education and training (CVET)). A methodology for internal and external evaluation and guidelines for quality standards have been devised for VET providers to promote a self-improvement culture. The agency for vocational education and training and adult education is responsible for monitoring the process of self-assessment; the national centre for external evaluation of education conducts external evaluation of education based on national exams and *State matura*. Since 2012, annual self-assessment is mandatory for all VET providers.

On the CVET side, AVETAE is responsible for monitoring and supporting adult education providers while the Ministry of Science and Education carries out

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<sup>(3)</sup> Sources:

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop):

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en>

ReferNet: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/refernet>

Priorities reported by directors general for vocational training for the 2016-20 period;

EQAVET (2016 Secretariat survey, website, newsletters): <http://www.eqavet.eu>

2016 compendium of EQAVET NRP *Erasmus+* funding;

Council recommendations on the 2016 national reform programmes:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-semester/2016/#>

Education and training monitor 2016 country reports:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor_en).

inspections. Adult education providers may carry out self-assessment through the *e-Kvaliteta* <sup>(4)</sup> online tool.

The national approach to quality assurance in VET includes a system that collects information on IVET graduates. Graduate tracking data is collected from vocational schools by self-assessment, and the national centre for external evaluation of education collects data on students that passed the *State matura* exams. The data are used when approving new enrolments (number of students), programmes, and staff recruitment. As part of VET system modernisation, the Ministry of education started in 2013 a pilot of 23 unit and learning outcome based curricula in 54 out of 300 VET providers; graduate employability data has been taken into account while developing the new curricula.

## 2.1. Quality assurance in line with EQAVET

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this matter, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, are to:

- (a) revise the current quality assurance framework (strategic and legal aspects);
- (b) draft recommendations for strengthening quality assurance based on EQAVET principles and good practice examples.

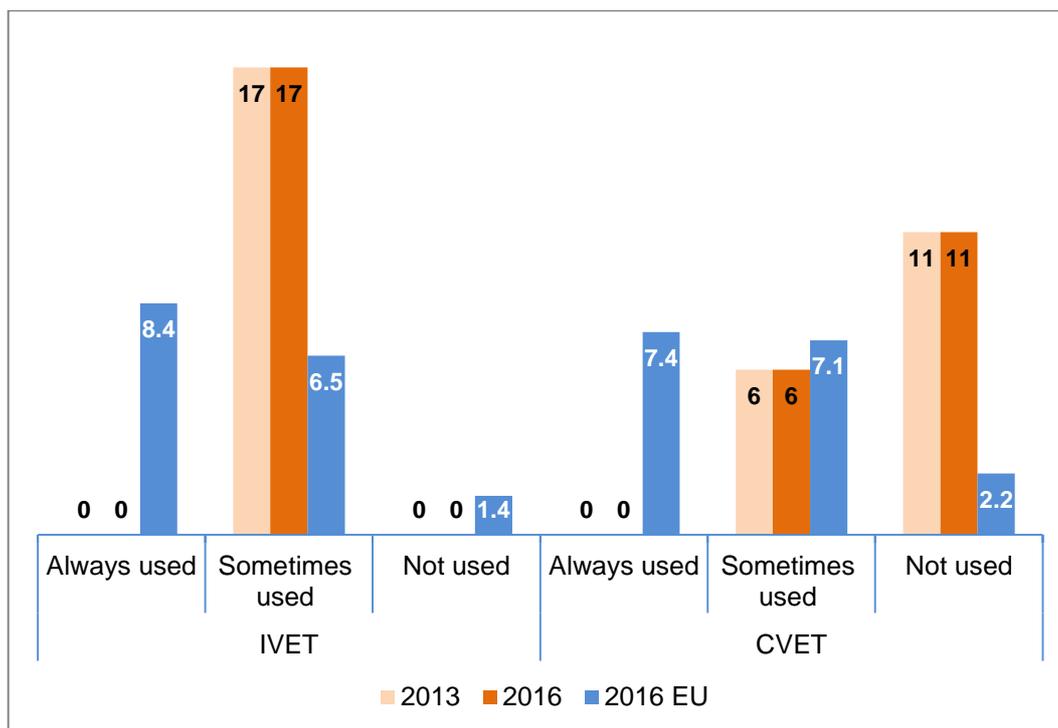
During the reporting period, action focused on improving existing quality assurance arrangements by 2018. The 2016-20 VET system development programme (Section 1.2.2) defines the measures needed to establish a unified system of quality assurance, improve the existing self-assessment process, strengthen the capacities of VET schools, and improve existing mechanisms for collecting and processing data. The QANRP is using *Erasmus+* funding to analyse the VET schools' self-assessment reports, propose improvements to the self-assessment process, and organise training seminars to increase the capacity of VET schools to perform self-assessment.

Croatia is using all EQAVET indicators to monitor the IVET system but not systematically. Most of the EQAVET indicators are not used in CVET.

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<sup>(4)</sup> <http://e-kvaliteta.asoo.hr>

Figure 1. Use of EQAVET indicators



NB: Of the 17 indicators suggested by the 2009 EQAVET recommendation, none of them was 'always used' in IVET in 2013 and 2016 in Croatia against 8.4 in the EU on average (2016).

EU average was calculated based on available information for 31 out of 35 VET systems.

Source: Cedefop calculations based on EQAVET Secretariat surveys for 2013 and 2016 data.

## 2.2. Continuous information and feedback loops in initial VET

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this matter, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to align the VET offer better with labour market needs.

AVETAE is running a project under the 2016-20 VET system development programme to develop and put in service a model for monitoring VET students on completion of formal education. It is expected that, by 2018, mechanisms for tracing students after graduation will be developed and implemented, and that the system of data gathering and processing will be improved. The system will cover both IVET and CVET.

AVETAE and the national centre for external evaluation of education piloted 23 outcome-based curricula in 2016-17. As a result of this project it was decided that 19 of them will be used as of school year 2017/18.

### 2.3. Continuous information and feedback loops in continuing VET

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this matter, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to align the VET offer better with labour market needs.

Since 2015, the national employment service has run two projects: on the development and analysis of surveys to be used for revising standards according to labour market needs in 90 occupations; and on using the results for vocational guidance and professional counselling.

In 2016, the Ministry of Labour launched a 12-month project to develop a tracking system for young people not in education, employment, or training (NEETs) (Section 3.2.2.3). The system will hold information on student enrolments in secondary and higher education and will be linked to the databases of the Croatian Pension Insurance Institute and of the Croatian employment service to establish whether, upon graduation, they are employed or active job-seekers. Data will be used to help tailor specific policies to improve transition to work or to further education and training.

## CHAPTER 3.

# MTD 3 – Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible/permeable systems, guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning

The strategy for education, science and technology adopted in 2014 aimed at strengthening the links between education and the labour market; improving progression opportunities; and setting up an overarching national framework for VET curriculum along with a smaller number of sectoral curricula that will have general, VET and optional modules, leading to different qualifications.

### 3.1. Policy priorities for 2016-20

For the 2016-20 period, the country's priorities in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, are two-fold:

- (a) for young people: ensure access to qualifications leading to employability;
- (b) for adults: increase the participation of adults (older workers) in lifelong learning.

### 3.2. Main actions taken in 2015-17

#### 3.2.1. Reform of education and training

Implementation of the 2014 strategy for education, science and technology started in 2015 with wide public consultation. In 2016, the Education Ministry appointed a committee for the development of education, tasked with preparing the legal and financial framework for the implementation of the strategy, providing advice, and ensuring continuation of the reform process. In 2017, a special expert committee for putting the strategy in practice was set up to coordinate and monitor the processes. The strategy for VET was complemented with the 2016-20 VET system development programme, adopted in 2016 (Section 1.2.2), which set up the priorities for VET development.

### 3.2.2. Guidance

#### 3.2.2.1. *The 2016-20 lifelong career guidance strategy*

The strategy was adopted in 2015. It was developed by the lifelong career guidance forum (LLCG forum), a national body for stakeholder cooperation, with the aim to establish a systemic approach to lifelong career guidance and career development and its integration in education and training. The approach is that of a coherent institutional system based on a multidisciplinary partnership that supports employability and inclusion. It is seen as a framework gathering all key stakeholders for the provision of quality information and career skills development. The strategy is also expected to help raising adult (especially the unemployed) participation in lifelong learning through adapted guidance and counselling on upskilling opportunities. An operational plan for the strategy is being developed.

#### 3.2.2.2. *E-guidance portal*

The e-guidance portal <sup>(5)</sup>, established in 2015, takes account of labour market analysis and skill needs anticipation and addresses a wide range of users, from pupils to the unemployed. It aims to provide easy access to information necessary to choose an education and training programme, look for a job, and achieve career objectives. It offers a career compass (*Kompas karijere*), a tool that enables different user groups to find targeted information.

#### 3.2.2.3. *Development of the system for tracking NEETs*

The Education and Labour Ministries and the employment service have signed cooperation and information-exchange agreements with range of partners (including the pension insurance institute, schools, colleges and universities, volunteer centres, Roma associations, centres for social welfare, public health, youth associations, crafts portals and development agencies) for a project to gather information on and track NEETs as a basis for targeted measures to support them (Section 2.3). Lifelong career guidance centres are the focal points for these activities as part of the national youth guarantee programme and the 2016-18 strategic plan of the Labour Ministry.

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(5) [www.e-usmjeravanje.hr](http://www.e-usmjeravanje.hr)

### **3.2.3. Permeability and flexibility: the 2016-20 VET system development programme**

The programme (Sections 1.2.2 and 3.2.1) elaborates the idea of more transparency and flexibility within the VET system through a new curriculum set-up composed of a national curriculum for VET and sectoral curricula. Instead of having about 200 unrelated upper secondary IVET curricula, sharing of some modules will enable better permeability for learners.

### **3.2.4. Transparency, recognition, validation**

#### *3.2.4.1. ECVET <sup>(6)</sup>*

Croatia has committed to implementing an European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET): the decision has been taken to develop a credit system for IVET and CVET compatible with ECVET to aid transfer, validation and accumulation within the national and international context (VET Act 2009; VET development strategy 2008-13; Croatian qualifications framework Act 2013). A national team of ECVET experts was established in 2011 and, since then, has been working to prepare the grounds for efficient ECVET implementation and promotion. The 2016-20 VET system development programme (Section 1.2.2) refers to improving mobility possibilities for students and teachers, including through ensuring visibility and better understanding of ECVET. A national ECVET portal <sup>(7)</sup> was developed in 2016.

#### *3.2.4.2. Validation <sup>(8)</sup>*

Croatia does not have a national validation system, and no institution is dealing with this at a national level. However, there are certain ad hoc validation procedures in different sectors, such as the master craftsman exam which validates learning outcomes mainly acquired through work experience. Formal qualifications (except for the master craftsman diploma) cannot be acquired through validation of non-formal and informal learning. The strategy for education, science and technology <sup>(9)</sup> adopted in 2014 (Section 3.2.1) recognises validation as an essential part of adult education and higher education. The Croatian qualifications framework (CROQF) Act adopted in 2013 provides for an

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<sup>(6)</sup> Source: the ECVET users' group members.

<sup>(7)</sup> [www.evet.hr](http://www.evet.hr)

<sup>(8)</sup> Cedefop, 2017b; Cedefop et al., 2017.

<sup>(9)</sup> Croatian Parliament's strategy for education, science and technology, adopted on 17.10.2014: <http://www.refernet.hr/media/1090/strategija-ozt.pdf>

ordinance on validation of non/formal and informal learning which is still under preparation. The act also stipulates that accredited quality assurance institutions will ensure the quality of procedures for recognising and validating units of learning outcomes. In the reporting period, some providers in higher education have developed internal guidelines for recognising prior learning for specific purposes. The ordinance on the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning is under development.

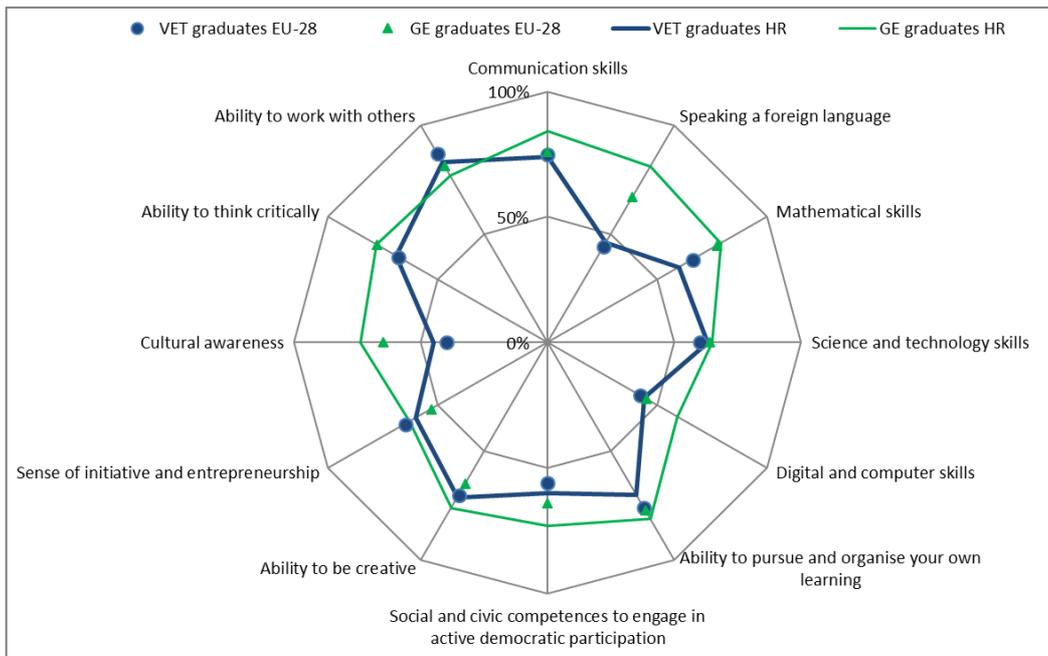
## CHAPTER 4.

# MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET

Compared with general education graduates, those who completed VET programmes feel they have stronger ability to work with others and weaker (ranked by priority):

- (a) foreign language speaking;
- (b) cultural awareness;
- (c) mathematical skills (Figure 2).

Figure 2. **Self-evaluation of acquired skills in general education and VET**



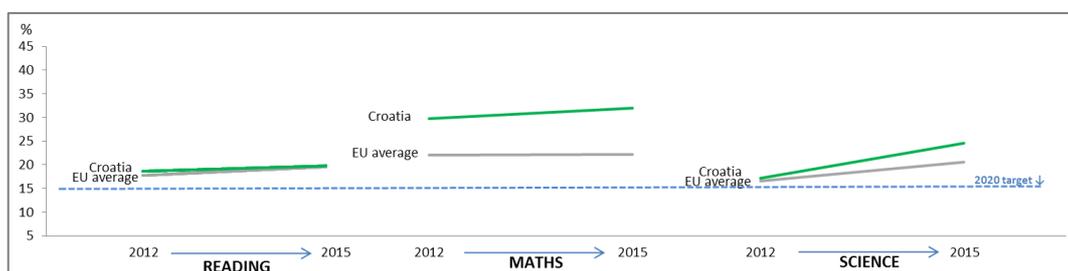
NB: GE stands for general education.

Respondents who attended upper secondary education. Interviewees were asked in summer 2016 about their overall experience in upper secondary education. Aggregated data do not take account of different types and sectors of VET and age groups of respondents.

Source: Cedefop, 2017c.

The context of key competences in 2015 was mainly characterised by an increasing share of young low achievers in reading, maths and science compared with 2012 (Figure 3). The share of low achievers in Croatia was higher, especially in maths and science, than the EU average, where the trend is similar.

Figure 3. **Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and science**



NB: Low achievement means failing level 2 on the PISA (programme for international student assessment) scale.

Source: OECD, 2014; OECD, 2016.

As VET enrolls 70% of all upper secondary learners in the country <sup>(10)</sup>, this trend is likely to be reflected in the key competences trained for in VET programmes. VET curricula promote the eight key competences defined in the 2006 EU recommendation, either through stand-alone subjects or integrated into others. VET comprises general education and vocational subjects, their respective share depending on the qualification. For example, there are around 50% of general subjects in four-year VET programmes and 20% in three-year apprenticeship programmes for crafts. The VET Act defines the share of basic competences <sup>(11)</sup> by qualification and year of studies. In the first year at least 60% of study time is devoted to basic competences, and at least 40% in the second <sup>(12)</sup>.

#### 4.1. Key competences in initial VET

The country's priority in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, is to improve key competences of teachers and in-company trainers and mentors.

Following the 2016-20 VET system development programme (Sections 1.2.2 and 3.2.1), the national VET framework curriculum and curricula for seven study fields were developed:

- (a) technology and informatics;

<sup>(10)</sup> Calculated from Eurostat, data for 2015.

<sup>(11)</sup> Which are acquired through general subject study, such as language, mathematical competence, competences in science and technology.

<sup>(12)</sup> For more information on key competences in VET see Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education, 2016.

- (b) physical and health education;
- (c) mathematics;
- (d) language and communication;
- (e) natural sciences;
- (f) arts;
- (g) social sciences and humanities.

Seven curricula for cross-curricular study fields in general education and VET were also introduced:

- (a) learning to learn;
- (b) entrepreneurship;
- (c) personal and social development;
- (d) health;
- (e) sustainable development;
- (f) use of information and communication technology (ICT);
- (g) civic education.

Most of the 2015 *Erasmus+* VET budget was used for mobility initiatives, which are considered important investment in key competence development. Mobility projects have been promoted with the main aim of strengthening key learner competences. Assessment of competences before and after the mobility period at most VET schools indicates that experience abroad has a significant role in improving them. In 2016, the main objective of mobility projects granted was supporting VET staff in acquiring digital competences.

## 4.2. Key competences in continuing VET

The country's priorities in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, are to develop new curricula on key competences.

In 2015 the Entrepreneurship Ministry established a lifelong learning for craftsmen project, which aims to include key skills and competences for exercising crafts in line with the labour market needs.

In 2015-17, in the framework of implementing the EU agenda for adult education financed by the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA, the executive agency of Directorate General (DG) Education and Culture at the European Commission), the Education Ministry has been working on a proposal for a new curriculum for basic adult education based on key competences and outcomes which will educate learners about important everyday situations.

## CHAPTER 5.

# MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors

The strategy of education, science and technology adopted in 2014 (Section 3.2.1) foresees the modernisation of teacher education and training programmes along with the development and monitoring of a continuous professional development (CPD) model.

### 5.1. Initial training for teaching/training staff in VET schools

The country's priority in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to strengthen the current legal frame and programmes for teacher training.

The 2016-20 VET system development programme (Sections 1.2.2 and 3.2.1) has measures related to entering the teaching profession, including developing occupational and qualification standards for VET teachers and introducing a (re)licensing system. Licensing and relicensing of VET teachers was already included in the strategy for education, science and technology (2014) and the act for primary and secondary education. The regulation on (re)licensing VET teachers is under development. A team of experts set up in 2015 by the national education and training council developed a framework of national competence standards for teachers in primary and secondary schools, including VET. The framework was adopted in 2016 and is intended to guide revision of teacher education programmes.

### 5.2. Initial training for trainers and mentors in enterprises

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to develop a programme for the acquisition of pedagogical competences by in-company mentors.

In compliance with the 2016-20 VET system development programme, the Croatian parliament adopted, on 15 December 2016, the Act of confirming framework agreement between the Swiss Federal Council and the Government of the Republic of Croatia on the implementation of the Swiss-Croatian cooperation programme for reducing economic and social inequalities within the European economic area (Section 1.2.5). Within this framework, the Ministry of Education is leading the project *Modernisation of vocational education and training programmes*, in cooperation with the major VET stakeholder. The main task of this project is to develop a new programme in work-based training for in-company mentors.

### 5.3. Continuing professional development for teaching/training staff in VET schools

The country's priority in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to improve the current legal framework and programmes for teacher training.

The 2016-20 VET system development programme foresees measures for improving the VET teacher CPD system; this includes professional progression opportunities and subsidised CPD activities in companies.

In 2015, 94 VET teachers (about 1% of VET teaching staff) participated in *Erasmus+* mobility projects aiming to develop teachers' knowledge and skills in the use of new technologies in vocational subjects. In 2016, 92 VET teachers participated in 36 mobility projects with the same goal. *Erasmus+* programmes are mostly the only way to provide teachers with possibilities for professional development. Funding requirements include identification of staff development needs, selection of participants, preparation and follow-up measures. On completion of projects, the learning outcomes need to be properly recognised, disseminated and widely used within the sending organisation. Staff training activities usually take the form of a work placement or a job shadowing/observation period abroad in an enterprise or another VET institution.

### 5.4. Continuing professional development for trainers and mentors in enterprises

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to support effective partnerships of all relevant stakeholders.

The 2016-20 VET system development programme includes measures related to in-company mentor CPD, through the design of a programme aiming at developing their pedagogical competences. The measures are expected to be in place in 2018.

A short programme (60 ECTS) for continuous professional development is included in the Swiss-Croatia cooperation programme for the training of in-company trainers/mentors (Section 5.2).

## Conclusion

Since 2015, Croatia has taken steps to reform and strengthen its work-based learning models and increase SME involvement, also relying on cooperation with international partners. Actions were carried out to improve quality assurance mechanisms and the information system which guides the development of VET. Initiatives have been taken to continue development of guidance mechanisms and ECVET. Key competences in initial and continuing VET are being supported. Progress is also being made towards developing the initial and continuing training of VET teachers and in-company trainers and mentors.

The actions carried out show that the main lines of the Riga conclusions and the country's policy priorities for 2016-20 are being addressed. Yet, information available to Cedefop at the time, suggests that some issues could warrant further consideration:

- (a) more systematically using the EQAVET indicators to monitor the development of VET;
- (b) finalising the implementation of the Croatian qualifications framework;
- (c) providing groups in need (such as NEETs and those in/at risk of unemployment) with targeted training opportunities.

## List of abbreviations

AES	adult education survey
AVETAE	Agency for VET and Adult Education
CPD	continuing professional development
CROQF	Croatian qualifications framework
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
DGVT	Director General for vocational education and training
ECTS	European credit transfer system
ECVET	European credit system for vocational education and training
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
Eurostat	statistical office of the European Union
GDP	gross domestic product
GE	general education
ICT	information and communication technology
ISCED	international standard classification of education
IVET	initial vocational education and training
LLCG forum	lifelong career guidance forum
NEET	not in education, employment, or training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	programme for international student assessment
PPS	purchasing power standards
QANRP	quality assurance national reference point
SMEs	small and medium-sized enterprises
STEM	science, technology, engineering and math programmes
UOE	UNESCO OECD Eurostat
VET	vocational education and training

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