



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

## A guarantee of quality in vocational education and training

Committed and competent teachers and trainers are crucial to ensuring the quality and labour market relevance of learning, both in VET schools/ centres and in companies, and whether in classrooms, in workshops, in labs and simulated learning environments, or at the workplace. Teachers and trainers are responsible for strengthening the links between education and work, establishing new curricula, providing more, and high-quality, apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning, and applying the European tools. In the coming years, VET teachers and trainers will be required to help shape quick and flexible responses to emerging needs, related both to the integration of thousands of refugees and migrants into the labour market and to the need to develop basic, digital and entrepreneurial skills. Providing teachers and trainers with access to quality professional development and support is essential to ensuring that both their technical competences and pedagogical skills are up to the highest standards.

While VET teacher and trainer professional development has been on the EU education policy agenda for many years <sup>(1)</sup>, it has not been sufficiently visible in national policies <sup>(2)</sup>. The Riga conclusions (2015) have put renewed emphasis on the issue, calling for systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuing professional development (CPD) of VET teachers, trainers and mentors. Cooperation and partnerships among stakeholders are seen as a way to support this.

<sup>(1)</sup> The *Bruges communiqué* (2010) had invited Member States to invest in and improve initial and continuing training for VET teachers and trainers by offering flexible training provision enabling them to:

- acquire the right set of competences;
- take up broader and more complex training-related tasks;
- deal with the increasing heterogeneity of learners;
- use new learning methods;
- make the most of new technologies.

<sup>(2)</sup> As stated in the *Riga conclusions* (2015).

### TEACHERS IN VET SCHOOLS AND CENTRES

01 | Teachers  
of general  
subjects

02 | Teachers of  
vocational  
theoretical  
subjects

03 | Teachers of  
practical sub-  
jects in school  
workshops or  
simulated  
learning  
environments  
(such as  
inter-company  
training  
centres)

### TRAINERS IN COMPANIES

04 | Often called  
apprentice tutors  
or mentors or  
practical training  
instructors who  
accompany  
students during  
apprenticeships  
or different types  
of placements in  
companies as part  
of school-based VET

In 2015, Cedefop asked its ReferNet partners from the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway to prepare thematic articles on the professional development of VET teachers and trainers in their countries. The wealth of information in these articles was used to prepare this briefing note and will contribute to mutual learning and dissemination of best practices:

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/teachers-and-trainers>

## Who teaches and trains in initial VET?

VET provision differs between countries, so it is more important to define teaching and training staff in terms of function and tasks rather than having a single descriptor for each group of such professionals. Four distinct categories of teachers and trainers can be identified in initial vocational education and training (IVET) across all countries (see infographic).

Some countries (Belgium, Italy, Latvia, Slovenia) have coordinators or supervisors of work-based learning (WBL) who may also be responsible for training in-company trainers (as in Finland). This function is usually assumed by school-based teachers.

Teachers and trainers are distinguished in terms of function and place of employment. Teachers generally work in VET schools and institutions while trainers are employed in companies. A teacher's main function is teaching while trainers are usually employees who, in addition to their occupational duties, accompany students during apprenticeships or other forms of work placements in school-based VET. Types and levels of qualification and their needs and rights concerning CPD are also different, with overall clearer and stricter regulations for teachers.

### Teaching professionals in school-based settings

The teaching profession is regulated in most countries. Qualification requirements are set by legislation on education or VET (Croatia, Latvia, Malta, Austria, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden)<sup>(3)</sup> or by specific regulations (Bulgaria, Estonia, Iceland, Lithuania, Poland, Romania). Some countries have established professional standards or profiles for teachers (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, the UK). Others (Lithuania, Slovenia) have defined specific requirements in vocational training programmes or curricula.

<sup>(3)</sup> The lists of countries in this briefing note are not exhaustive; countries are mentioned as examples.

Most countries require tertiary education as entry level to the teaching profession; in some (the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Iceland, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain) teachers need a master degree. In some countries, candidates need to have completed tertiary pedagogical education before teaching (Bulgaria, Estonia, Spain, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, Slovenia), while in others (the Czech Republic, Denmark, Croatia, Malta, the UK) this is not the case. In the latter, VET teachers are given a certain period of time to acquire a pedagogical qualification as an in-service training option. In some countries, candidates need to pass a professional teacher examination or get a license (Croatia, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia).

Initial teacher training is well-established across the EU. Most countries offer teacher training programmes and recognised teacher qualifications at EQF levels 5 to 8. Teachers of general subjects are trained in general teacher training programmes and teachers of vocational theory usually have a degree in a professional field such as engineering or hospitality. Some countries have specific VET teacher training programmes (Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Norway, Slovakia, Sweden).

In most countries (Belgium-Flemish Community, Spain, France, Italy, Hungary, Austria, Portugal, Finland and others), initial teacher training includes practice (traineeships) in schools under the supervision of experienced teachers. In some countries (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, UK-Wales), novice teachers start out on their career with an induction period of up to one year under the supervision of an experienced teacher.

For teachers of practical vocational subjects, lower levels of qualification topped up by professional experience can be accepted. Examples are a secondary VET or master craftsman's certificate (Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia). Initial teacher training does not generally exist for this group.

In most countries, professionals from the labour market can teach in VET, with hiring arrangements and qualification requirements being quite flexible, unless they decide to become full-time teachers. In some countries, they need to take a pedagogical training course (Croatia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia).

### Trainers in work-based settings

The availability of a mentor is often perceived as a guarantee of quality and hence a condition for companies to be accredited as a learning workplace. In-company mentors are mandatory in about half of the countries; these are mostly those with well-

established apprenticeship systems (the Czech Republic, Germany, France, Croatia, Italy, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia).

Some of these countries have recently turned their attention to in-company trainer competences, while (re-)establishing or strengthening various forms of WBL in their VET systems. Competence requirements range from a qualification in the occupation combined with a good personal record, to a qualification in the occupation combined with years of experience in the profession and pedagogical training <sup>(4)</sup>.

#### CEDEFOP'S WORK UNDER THE BRUGES COMMUNIQUÉ

Between 2012 and 2014, the European Commission and Cedefop coordinated a thematic working group on the professional development of trainers in vocational education and training (VET). Cedefop mainly focused on in-company trainers. The working group produced a set of guiding principles for the professional development of trainers in VET.

## Continuing professional development of teachers and trainers

Most countries agree that teachers should update their knowledge, skills and competences. Some have even included professional development in their strategic priorities (Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania). While the pedagogical competences of VET school teachers are generally considered adequate, most countries point to a growing need for VET teachers to keep up with the realities of industry and changing labour market needs. This includes countries with well-established apprenticeship systems. Some countries have launched projects (the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Latvia, Slovenia, Finland) or established provisions (Austria, Denmark, France, Norway, Romania) for VET teacher work placements in companies.

CPD requirements, regulation, provision and monitoring vary significantly across countries. About half of the countries have established a legal basis for teacher and trainer CPD (Austria, Belgium-French Community, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden). However, not

all of them have defined its amount, duration and expected outcomes. In some countries, CPD is a teachers' right, sometimes covered by collective agreements (Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania, Sweden); in others, it is an obligation (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, Portugal, UK-England) or a part of the school development and quality assurance processes (Bulgaria, Italy, Poland, Portugal). In Spain and Slovakia, attending CPD programmes translates into wage bonuses for teachers. In-company trainers (mentors) usually have to meet initial requirements before starting and are not obliged to undertake CPD subsequently.

School principals play an important role in ensuring that teachers undertake CPD: in most countries, they decide whether a teacher can or should undertake CPD (Belgium-Flemish Community, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Sweden, UK-England). In most countries, identification of learning needs and possible training programmes remain with individual teachers, who usually need to get their principal's approval. In Croatia, Iceland and UK-Scotland, teachers have to draw up their own development plans.

CPD provision also varies across countries. In most, accredited training courses or programmes are considered CPD, whereas there is no validation or recognition of competences acquired while teaching or training. Some countries recognise 'self-study' as a form of CPD (Sweden), which probably includes also training courses acquired independently by a teacher. In some countries, teachers can undertake their CPD in companies (Estonia, Slovenia, Finland) while others (the Czech Republic, Germany, Latvia, UK-England) have developed e-environments for teachers' professional development and exchange of good practices. Tailor-made courses in the Netherlands complement teacher competences.

Different bodies provide teacher CPD programmes depending on the organisation of education and training systems in the countries:

- higher education institutions and universities (Bulgaria, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, UK-Wales);
- teacher training institutes (Cyprus, Iceland, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia);
- in-service training institutions (Belgium-Flemish Community, the Czech Republic, Iceland, Slovakia, Romania, the UK);
- national centres or agencies working in VET (Bulgaria, Croatia, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia);

<sup>(4)</sup> For examples of competence requirements and standards as well as of training programmes for in-company trainers please refer to the *Guiding principles for professional development of trainers in VET*.

- non-state providers of adult education (Estonia, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, Sweden);
- VET schools (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, Cyprus, Malta, Slovakia, Finland);
- Municipalities (Portugal, Sweden), companies (Bulgaria, Italy) and teacher unions (Belgium).

The content of teacher CPD is usually supply-driven and not regulated. As most countries do not monitor or evaluate it, little is known about actual content. If emerging competence needs are to be covered and teachers equipped with labour market relevant skills and knowledge, much more needs to be done.

Cooperation and partnerships between VET institutions and labour market actors are seen as important in ensuring the quality and relevance of learning. Such cooperation and partnerships (Ireland, France, Finland, the UK) are not common practice but several countries have reported on individual cooperation arrangements between VET institutions and companies (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Malta, Romania). Some of these have long-standing traditions or are taking place within EU-funded projects.

## EU support

In recent years, EU-funded projects have acted as significant drivers of teacher and in-company trainer professional development. Most measures supporting VET trainers have originated in EU-funded projects <sup>(5)</sup>.

While a few countries (Belgium, Germany, Croatia, Austria, Sweden) conduct nationally funded programmes supporting teachers and trainers, many others have been making use of EU-funded projects. Projects jointly funded by the EU usually work on broader issues, such as developing learning outcome-based approaches to qualifications, creating or renewing VET standards, curricula and assessment, establishing apprenticeship schemes or supporting teacher and learner mobility. Projects also fill gaps in existing provision or try out innovative development approaches:

- professional profiles of teachers and trainers (Belgium-French Community, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Romania);
- career schemes for teachers (Lithuania, Poland);
- teacher and trainer training programmes on specific aspects to support reforms (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Romania, Slovenia, Finland);

<sup>(5)</sup> *EU, be proud of your trainers: supporting those who train for improving skills, employment and competitiveness*

- renewed in-service teacher training systems (Croatia, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovakia);
- work placements for VET teachers in companies (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Finland).

Although projects usually cover a limited scope and allow for training of a limited number of teachers and trainers, their outcomes are often impressive and can be useful to others. To reap the benefits of successful projects, these need to be identified and mainstreamed into national initiatives or further developed to allow for knowledge transfer to other sectors or countries. Sustainability plans need to be given proper attention to avoid any discontinuation of valuable initiatives once EU funding stops.

### CEDEFOP'S WORK TO SUPPORT THE RIGA CONCLUSIONS

Cedefop will systematically collect information on teacher and trainer CPD as part of its mandate to follow-up countries' progress in achieving the agreed objectives and deliverables. In 2016-18, Cedefop will contribute to the work of the ET 2020 working group on VET which focuses on the professional development of VET teachers and trainers (\*). The group will address governance and partnership arrangements between schools and companies, and discuss how professional development of teachers and trainers helps to improve quality, relevance and attractiveness of VET and contributes to implementing VET reforms in Member States. Cedefop will also organise a policy learning forum on teacher and trainer professional development and partnerships on 21 and 22 November 2016.

(\*) The group's mandate being specified in the *Education and training 2020: working group mandates 2016-18*



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