



EUROPEAN
ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION
OF ADULTS

Country Report on Adult Education in SLOVAKIA

Helsinki, 2011



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Please cite this report as: EAEA (2011): *Country report Slovakia*. (Helsinki). www.eaea.org/country/slovakia. Date of Access.



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Introduction

This Report covers the situation of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in Slovakia. It is divided into two sections. The section *Policy and Politics* gives an overview of the key policy currently in force, and also outlines the main legislation or political situation in the country. *Structure and Providers* gives a more detailed look at the organizational structures, and also outlines the main adult education providers, mainly looking at non-formal and informal learning.

We want to thank our members for their contributions to this reflection on the adult education situation in Slovakia as far as possible as of 2010/2011. Inevitably there will be new things emerging within the ever changing situation of adult education, but we believe the majority of the information provided will be relevant and useful for the foreseeable future. However, to keep the resource accurate and up to date we are open to suggestions to improve the texts. If you feel there is something you can add about your country please contact us via email at [eaea-info\[at\]eaea.org](mailto:eaea-info@eaea.org).



Overview

Adult Education in the Slovak Republic, seen as 'lifelong learning', aims to enable and encourage every citizen to access education. The system of Adult Education contains **further professional** education, **special interest** and **civic education**. The aim is that continuing education should be **accessible to all** citizens, and the framework - common to a number of European countries - is divided to 'formal' and 'non-formal'. The formal system provides the so called "**second chance or second education**" pathway, for adults without basic schooling to receive primary or secondary education. Non-formal education covers the broad number of alternative education opportunities, which are mainly focused on specific target groups or interests.

In past years the government of the Slovak Republic issued the **Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance** for the period 2007-2013. The main goal of this strategy is the formation of the system of lifelong learning and of lifelong guidance which would enable **flexible** access, and to encourage students to repeatedly come back into the system to access education. This includes the provision of a system of **counselling and guidance services** throughout life in order for people to obtain the best possible education for their needs, and to promote and encourage the use of lifelong learning opportunities. [1]

Politics and Law

The main ministerial body in lifelong learning is **The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport** of the Slovak Republic which is the central body of the state administration for elementary, secondary and higher education, educational facilities, lifelong learning, science and for the state's support for sports and youth. [1]

In Slovakia everybody who has an interest in education has the right to it at any age, according to their abilities and interests. Legislative framework is bound by several acts, most recently Act No. 568/2009 on lifelong learning. This Act regulates lifelong learning (in which further education is connected to the levels and grades of education achieved in school education), conditions of further education programmes accreditation, rules and **procedures for certification and recognition** of educational outcomes, and the national qualification framework. It also regulates the systems of monitoring and predicting educational needs in further education, and systems for granting licences to hold exams for validating professional competences. [2]



The Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 5/2004 of the Law Code on employment services, as amended, regulates **education and training of the labour market** for job applicants.

The employers' responsibility for the improvement of qualification of their employees is regulated by the Labour Code, in which are also mentioned the general conditions for adult education. The Labour Code also regulates the **provision of study holidays**, where an employee may take days off (with the agreement of the employer) to participate in education and examinations. [3]

Further legislation related to adult education includes [4]:

- Act No. 312/2001 of the Law Code on civil service (and with changes and supplements to some acts) regulates the improvement of **qualifications for civil servants** as well as provision of work concession.

- In the area of adult education there are also other specific legal norms in force to regulate preparation and education for specific **professional occupations needing special skills** (e.g. for the field of fire-protection, operation at ground communications, etc.).

Future trends/key concerns/directions

In Slovakia one of the future necessities is the validation and **recognition of both formal and non-formal education** to obtain education required for **employability in the labour market**. So far this has been addressed in part by Act no. 293/2007 (Collection of Laws) on Recognition of Professional Qualifications [5], which should support the development of the **National Qualification Framework (NQF)**. Necessary decisions about the process of the development of the NQF in the Slovak Republic are already being made at the level of the Ministry of Education Science Research and Sports of the Slovak republic and on governmental level. The process started in 2008 is expected to be completed by 2013. The development of the NQF will be the core activity of the process of implementation of the **European qualification framework (EQF)** in Slovakia. [6]

Structure overview

There are two main central bodies which govern further professional education, lifelong learning, and formal education. They are **The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport** of the Slovak Republic, [7] and **The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family** of the Slovak Republic. [8]



The Ministries provide for the **funds from public resources**, particularly for the provision of employment policy. The Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family [9] provides for (in co-operation with educational institutions) adult education for the **unemployed**, and also regulates the activity of its regional labour agencies, who provide consulting services for unemployed applicants of jobs and those threatened by unemployment. It is also currently involved in the proposal for a **national system of occupations**, which will be a starting point for determining educational and evaluation standards in the National Qualifications Framework.

Key Providers/Main institutions/Sources for Adult Education

There are various providers in Slovakia, including governmental institutions, civic associations and non-profit organisations which offer courses and study programmes for participants in various topics depending on their interests and specialism.

According to records of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic - Infostat (2010) [10] there are **currently around 2500 providers** engaged in the provision of education, although the delivery of education is not carried out to full extent by all of them. Some **professional sectors also have their own educational institutions** which provide for education of employees falling under the competence of the sector and according to special rules.

Formal education

Continuing education in **secondary schools and higher education** institutions is directed firstly by the content of the formal education system; only with a slightly different scope (for example the courses are mostly shortened).

Vocational education and career related training

In-company education is solely related to the needs of the employer, for instance for specialisation, innovation education, or retraining. Private institutions, educational institutions of civic associations provide varied educational options, according to interest of the participants, who then also pay for the education. [11]

Company institutes can also have their own **education centres** depending on their size, including their own lecturers and organisational staff. Private educational institutions, especially smaller ones, only have educational managers. [12]



Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

- AIVD

As previously mentioned, in Slovakia there are a large number of non-profit adult education organisations. The main institution is the **Slovak Adult Education Institutions Association (AIVD)**, which organises itself as a non-governmental, apolitical, non-profit, voluntary organisation. The AIVD currently has around 120 members, mainly institutions of adult education (or their departments) and some key individuals. AIVD also publishes the Journal of the Further Education (Slovak: Vzdelávanie dospelých. [13])

- Agroinštitút Nitra

Agroinštitút Nitra is the educational institution involved in the development of continuing education strategies and concepts in the **Agriculture sector**, particularly related to food production. Agroinštitút Nitra has its own centre of continuing education mainly focused on the agricultural sector and is one of the most important adult learning institutions focusing its training policy particularly on agricultural and rural development. Training content and international project activities are orientated towards: agrarian policy and legislation, implementation of the EU regulations into agricultural practice (so called cross-compliance), rural development, transfer of scientific research outputs and technologies into agricultural and food production, professional growth of agricultural advisers and vocational subject's pedagogues, and information-communication technologies. They work to promote **international co-operation** and involvement in projects, which they see as significantly contributing to a transfer of international knowledge and experiences into agricultural practice in Slovakia. It also creates a space for the transfer of modern methods into a training process. [14]

Universities

Several universities co-operate in the field of adult education and many have also opened **lifelong learning centres**.

- **The Slovak University of Technology** is a public non-profit organisation with a long history, which has its own Institute of Life-long Learning. It was established in 2000 and comprises 5 divisions: the Continuing Education Centre, the University of the Third Age, the Language Centre, the French Centre and the Centre for Distance Learning; with a combined annual participation of approximately 2000 students. Besides teaching adults and senior learners these institutes also develop **strategies and policies, websites** for educational content and educational videos. [15]



- **The University of Zilina** has also established an institute of continuing education. It is a centre providing a system of continuing education for all ages, with a **qualitative system of study support** which follows the **latest trends in technology and science**. It is an integral part of the University of Zilina and offers complex services in the area of further training, including the **co-ordination of open and distance education in its region**, widening the existing co-operation with Zilina institutions of higher education, private education institutes and local government. They also carry out needs assessments marketing, management of distance education in its region, delivery of distance education courses and programmes, and guidance information and consulting services in relation to university services in its region. Finally they work with the preparation of the systems of life-long and continuing education in co-operation with local firms and industrial enterprises. [16]

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