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Lifelong Learning Strategy 2011

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Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

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Lifelong Learning Strategy 2011

1. Prologue

The Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak republic for the period 2010 - 2014 recognized the concept of lifelong learning as the only possible answer of a responsible political representation. The government therefore aims to ensure that every citizen has equal access to quality lifelong learning opportunities after school, during the working process and in the retirement.

Due to the ascending dynamics of the society acknowledges also the National Reform Programme of the Slovak republic 2011 - 2014 the ever increasing importance of lifelong learning, especially further education. The effective lifelong learning system will enable an easy access of citizens to flexible expansion and deepening of their qualification skills, in order to increase their versatility in the labour market, their personal development and their quality of life. The re-evaluated and updated lifelong learning strategy will in the first place contain measures for the systematic reduction of information inequality in further education. The creation of freely available educational content will increase the level of key competences of citizens which will help to enable them to apply to the labour market. They will be supported by further education activities aimed at personal development and quality of life.

The Government of the Slovak republic approved the Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy in April 2007 (thereinafter the "Strategy 2007") with a perspective to its fulfilment in 2015, which identified a number of key priorities to support lifelong learning system in the Slovak republic. However, in the half-time implementation period of this strategy we have to acknowledge that not all priorities have been accomplished and the fulfilment of some priorities have not even started yet.

One of the outcomes of the Strategy 2007 is Act no. 568/2009 on lifelong learning adopted in December 2009, which established several important institutes for further development of lifelong learning, such as accreditation of qualification standards, recognition of learning outcomes, monitoring and predicting educational needs. These tools have not yet been put into practice, mainly due to the non-implementation of a system project to promote further education, within which these tools should have been developed. Likewise, concentrated and coordinated action of all stakeholders was not achieved in adequate measure.

The main stakeholders of the lifelong learning system are citizens themselves, educational institutions, guidance and counselling centres, employers, craft and trade associations, but also local and regional governments, recruitment agencies and NGOs. These actors must be involved in the identification, development and application of the mentioned tools.

The main aim of the Lifelong Learning Strategy 2011 (thereinafter the "Strategy 2011") is to support creation of the conditions for a transition to a functioning lifelong learning system for all. Strategy 2011 is therefore focused on the most problematic areas of lifelong learning in the Slovak republic, which influence its further development.

The building of lifelong learning principle is encouraged also by further conceptual and strategic documents at national level. The Concept of the Future Direction of the Regional Education in the Slovak republic is a detailed look at the issues of education in primary and secondary schools. The orientation on a highly skilled workforce and human resources in research and development is captured in the Updated Long-term Objective of the State Science and Technology Policy until 2015 (Phoenix Strategy), but also within the approved strategy Minerva 2.0, which makes a significant contribution to development of knowledge-based economy in Slovakia.

The process of the innovation of Strategy 2007 started in 2011. The purpose of the strategy innovation was to focus on developing key competencies as well as the competencies of an individual that enable him/her to develop his/hers qualifications and personal growth. The strategy will help the learners to continually complement their education in order to be employable, to be properly integrated into society and to develop personally. At the same time the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak republic (thereinafter the "Ministry") invited major players to take part in the process of identifying the main priorities and objectives of the Strategy 2011 and into the process of creating an expert group composed of representatives of employers, personal and guidance and counselling institutions, experts on formal and further education as well as the Ministry experts.

The expert group has gradually identified several key problem areas that should be appointed in the new strategy and that should be resolved with the predetermined tools. At the same time the expert group was supposed to bring into the lifelong learning system new and current features which would through the system tools help to develop the educational potential of an individual and entire society.

Key Problem Areas – Priorities of the Strategy 2011:

1. Attitude and motivation of an individual towards the lifelong learning
2. Approximation of the educational outcomes towards the employers' needs
3. System and structure of the guidance and counselling services with an emphasis on the adult population
4. The level of competencies of an individual for his professional and personal development: financial literacy, entrepreneurship, communication in foreign languages, digital literacy and active citizenship
5. Funding of further education

Cross-sectional priorities of the strategy are: the measurement of learning outcomes which is covered in a separate chapter of the strategy and validation of the achieved level of education through validation of professional competence.

In terms of the document structure, the first part describes the state of the lifelong learning system with emphasis on its outcomes and implications for society and individuals in key problem

areas identified by the expert group¹. These will be defined by measurable indicators, charts and graphs that describe the current situation. This section also identifies the departmental regulations, which should be modified in relation to the implementation of the Strategy 2011.

The second part gives an image - a vision how should the lifelong learning system in Slovakia work in its different segments and levels. In this part we focus on the priorities and objectives identified by the Strategy 2007 and their desired future condition. It focuses on the available and relevant content of the education for employers, which should be provided by educational institutions. It identifies the causes and proposes solutions to the low motivation of adults to learn through life. It focuses on general education, and acquired competencies of individuals, identifying their current level and suggests possibilities of their increase in favour of the development of the knowledge based society. It recalls the need to develop a guidance and counselling system for adults who are interested in life-long learning, while it also offers its development in form of career guidance and counselling centres at the regional level.

Fulfilling the priorities of the strategy vision will be possible to monitor through a set of main and additional indicators which will be evaluated in 2014, 2017 and 2020. In the third part we introduce the system tools that give the current lifelong learning system the necessary dynamics and the extent which a globalized society requires.

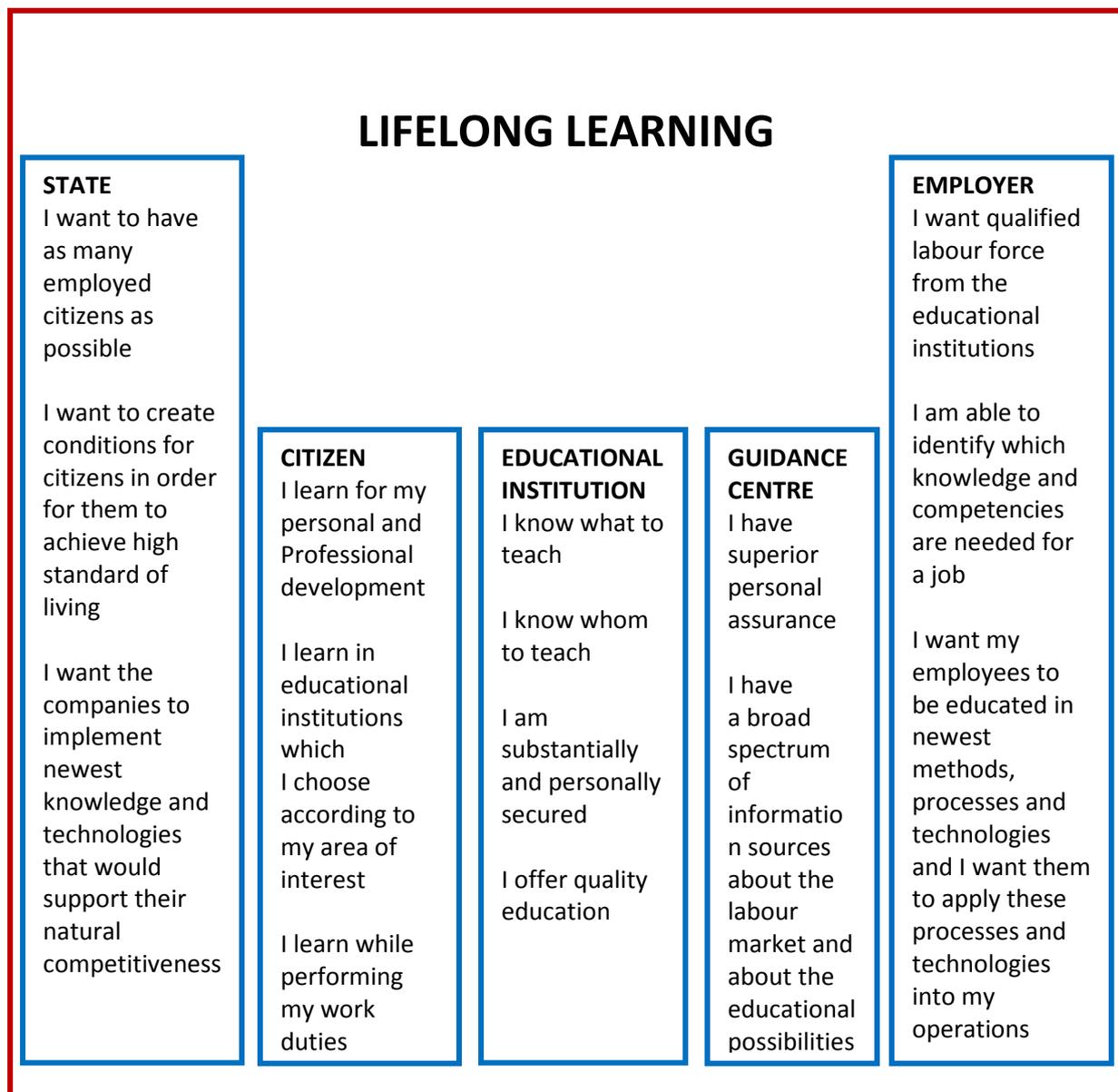
The annex presents updated terminology in the field of lifelong learning as well as a list of monitored indicators measuring the success of the implementation of the Strategy 2011.

¹ See „Key Problem Areas – Priorities of the Strategy 2011“ on page 2.

2. Current State Analysis – what impact has the state of lifelong learning on individuals and society?

For an effective setting of lifelong learning system tools as well as the Strategy 2011 itself it is necessary to have the knowledge of the current situation in selected areas in which we are trying to achieve success. The analysis identifies initial conditions in selected areas through measurable indicators by which we plan to measure success in achieving the strategy objectives.

When analysing the initial conditions we attempt to name the current situation and back it up with available data in the areas of concern identified by an expert group for lifelong learning strategy innovation. It is important to focus on overall situation in Slovakia, with reference to the strategy stakeholders (citizens, employers, schools, educational institutions, educational institutions for further education, guidance and counselling centres) – how are they affected with the current situation, how do they affect the current situation, what options are available for them etc.



Citizen is a key element in lifelong learning. Based on the needs of employers he/she obtains a qualification which will enable him/her to assert him/her in the labour market. In case there is a necessity to obtain new or expand an existing qualification, the guidance and counselling centre will help him/her to find a suitable learning activity, that will enable him/her to achieve an upgrade of his/hers knowledge, skills and competencies.

Employer communicates with educational institutions and provides information on current and future needs for skills and competencies that graduates have to master in order to perform their work activities. Employers carry out further education of their employees through educational institutions.

Guidance and counselling centre is available for anyone who displays interest towards his personal (civil) and professional (specialized) development. It provides guidance and counselling services focused on career guidance through individual consultations and group activities, it has current information on the requirements of the labour market and educational opportunities offered by updating knowledge, skills and competence. Guidance and counselling centre uses counselling techniques for individual and group work with clients.

Educational institution provides education according to the labour market needs and according to personal development requirements of the citizens. It is in close contact with the employer and the counselling centre in order to share knowledge for the provision of quality and demand-driven services.

State creates legal and economic conditions for other stakeholders in order to develop the lifelong learning system. It creates conditions so that all groups have access to lifelong learning. It encourages the cooperation between educational institutions and employers in order to achieve a high level of employment of citizens, which gives them a higher quality of life.

The role of measurable indicators is to monitor developments in the area of interest chosen on a timeline that will enable to evaluate the added value of the Strategy 2011 for individuals and other stakeholders as well as the benefits of the system tools in achieving the objectives of the strategy. The indicator should also enable monitoring of the trends in chosen areas of interest, provide statistically verifiable data and allow comparison with developments in other countries.

Table No 1 indicates semi-annual trends in educational distribution of the economically active population of the Slovak republic.

Table No 1: Economically active population (15+) according to education - comparison 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Education	2008		2009		2010	
	Number (in thousand)	%	Number (in thousand)	%	Number (in thousand)	%
Population 15+ together	2 700,4	100	2704,3	100	2716,7	100

No formal education	0,2	0	-	-	0,4	-
Primary education	166,3	6,2	160,6	5,9	151,6	5,6
Secondary technical/ vocational schools (less than 3 years)	871,5	32,3	857,0	31,7	833,5	30,7
Secondary vocational schools without school leaving exam	67,6	2,5	62,0	2,3	68,5	2,5
Secondary vocational schools with school leaving exam	139,2	5,2	112,6	4,2	100,2	3,7
Secondary education	112,7	4,2	114,4	4,2	113,1	4,2
Secondary vocational education	915,7	33,9	940,5	34,8	928,3	34,2
Upper secondary education	20,0	0,7	20,0	0,7	17,3	0,6
First stage of tertiary education - Bachelor studies	29,1	1,1	44,2	1,6	53,7	2,0
First stage of tertiary education - Master studies	370,9	13,7	384,8	14,2	441,7	16,3
Second stage of tertiary education	7,3	0,3	8,2	0,3	8,3	0,3

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak republic, Results of the Labour Force Survey, 4/2008, 4/2009 a 4/2010

Basic distribution of the economically active population can be identified by the achieved level of education defined by acquired school leaving exam or by completion of university studies. The proportion of people at working age that have completed university studies increases. In 2008, there were 1 111 thousand people without school leaving exam (40, 9%). 1 193 thousand people passed school leaving exam but didn't complete the university education (43, 9%). 413 thousand people finished the university studies (15, 2%).

Between 2009 and 2010 we can notice a growing trend of people with completed university education, on average there is an increase of more than one percentage point per annum (2009: 16, 1%, 2010: 18, 6%). The increase between 2008 and 2010, reached over 20%. This was due to the recovery of the labour market, which in post-crisis period saw increased demand for labour force, preferably with university education. This increase was reflected in a decline in the number of the economically active population with school leaving exam but with no university education (2009: 43, 9%, 2010: 42, 7%), but especially in the number of people without the school leaving exam (2009: 39, 9%, 2010: 38, 8%). In the second case is the decrease more pronounced, the difference between 2008 and 2010 reaching nearly to 6 per cent.²

² The present analysis covers data for the fourth quarter of the year (2008, 2009, 2010)

2.1 The attitude and motivation of an individual towards lifelong learning

Motivation is one of the basic prerequisites for functioning of the strategy tools. It determines the active interest of an individual towards his professional and civic development in the lifelong learning system. Motivation is closely linked with the uniqueness of a man; therefore incentives of each individual may vary. More attention is paid towards school and further education motivation and in terms of qualification also towards the professional and civic education.

Motivation towards school (formal) education has traditionally a very strong impact on the individual. This form of education strongly resonates throughout the entire society. It enables to gain a level of education (qualification), which opens the door to the labour market. It is also proved by very strong position of the Slovak republic within the frame of the early school leaving indicator. Furthermore, this method of qualification gain also supports the possibility of obtaining an additional level of education provided by primary and secondary schools.

Further education does not have the same appeal for individuals. At present, it does not lead to gaining a degree or qualification that would enable individuals significantly increase their opportunities in the labour market. In addition, there is no real possibility to recognize the learning outcomes, the result of which is that this form of education lacks appropriate significance and importance. Lack of mechanisms for the recognition of the learning outcomes for the further education compared with the school education that would be based on as yet absent qualification standards, have a demotivation effect on individuals. Instead of give them an opportunity to prove what they know and are able to do; they have to prove their knowledge with some kind of degree acquired through the school (formal) education

Today, 90% of programmes in further education are professionally-oriented. These are programs specifically designed for the needs of employers, who are in this case also the only reference for the individual who is interested, if the new knowledge gained in further education will be also useful in his work. The employer evaluates the quality of professional training of individuals for the specific profession.

In case of civic education the best reference is the individual himself as well as the society in which he lives. The level of social skills acquired by education is reflected in his active interest in social events, the extent of health care, environmental sustainability, but also the perception of global economic and political connections. It characterizes the level of social maturity and preparedness of a human for the life in society.

2.1.1 Attitude and motivation towards school (formal) education

An increasing proportion of university graduates compared to secondary education in years 2000, 2005 and 2010 is clearly a sign of increased interest in university education, respectively interest in the degree proving this education. The main motive for such decisions is shown primarily in the tables no 7 and 8, which point to better long-term remuneration of the university graduates compared to secondary schools graduates. The gross salary of a secondary school graduate is around 60% of the salary of a master studies graduate.

A very important aspect of motivation in achieving the university level education is undoubtedly the unemployment rate of university graduates, which has maintained on a very low level in the long-term. Table No 4 also shows the rate of a long-term high unemployment of low skilled citizens, which is the highest within the EU.

Table No 2: Comparison of the number of students and a number of university graduates in 2000, 2005 and 2010.

Year	Students full-time study	Students external study	Students post-gradual study	Graduates full-time study	Graduates external study	Graduates post-gradual study
2000	93 587	34 982	7 779	14 570	5 327	429
2005	115 798	65 253	10 739	21 132	10 189	1 022
2010	131 121	69 771	12 182	43 872	26 509	2 878

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education

Table No 3: Comparison of the number of all secondary school graduates (secondary grammar, conservatories, schools, vocational schools, secondary schools of other Ministries, special secondary schools) in 2000, 2005 and 2010

Year	Graduates – full-time study	Graduates - external study
2000	83 826	7 305
2005	78 554	3 130
2010	71 924	4 700

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education

As shown in tables No 3 and 4, the motivation in school education (with the aim to achieve the highest possible level of education) is very high. The tables clearly show that people perceive the added value of the achieved education level.

Table No 4: The average unemployment rate by level of education (ISCED levels³) between 2003 and 2010 (age 15 to 64 years)

Year (average rate) %	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
ISCED								

³ ISCED - International Standard Classification of Education: 0 – pre-primary education, 1 – primary education, 2 – lower secondary education, 3 – (upper) secondary education, 4 – post secondary non tertiary education, 5 – first stage of tertiary education, 6 – second stage of tertiary education

ISCED 0_2	47,1	52,1	53,4	48,6	45,1	39,6	41,7	44,3
ISCED 3_4	15,9	17,0	14,4	11,8	9,4	8,1	11,5	14,1
ISCED 5_6	4,4	5,9	5,0	3,3	4,1	3,6	4,3	5,8

Source: Labour Force Survey 2011, Eurostat

Table No 4 provides transparent information on the development of the average unemployment rate by the level of attained education. While university graduates have long kept its unemployment rate at 4, 5% (average for the monitored years); the unemployment rate on the lower level of attained education is at least twice as high. People with no or low qualifications achieved in recent eight years the average unemployment of 46, 5% (average for the monitored years).

Table No 5: External education at the universities

Number of external students	Year						
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total	53018	63160	76120	78283	76 962	70 873	64 690
Thereof women	34529	42722	51620	54790	53 482	47 516	44 006

Source: Separate of the Statistical Yearbook – Education in Slovak republic. Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education, Bratislava 1997 – 2010

The number of external university students rose continuously until 2007, since then it has started to descend. This is mostly due to the demographic decline, but also due to the growth of interest in full-time study. Interest in the external form of education implies a strong motivation in relation to the acquisition of university level education. It indicates the attempt to acquire a formal university qualification (degree) regardless of the possibility to succeed in the labour market with the secondary school qualification.

Table No 6: Part-time adult education (external study) at secondary schools

Počet externých študentov	Rok			
	2003	2004	2005	2006
Spolu	13 632	14 095	12 607	11 651
Z toho ženy	8 495	8 064	6 990	6 676

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education, 1999 – 2006

In contrast, according to the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education only less than 0, 5% of the adult population achieves education on the level of the school leaving exam in

school education. Whereby, less than half of these adults are actually able to achieve this level of education (4,511 persons in 2010).

Sociological research⁴ conducted in the years 2008 - 2010 in Slovakia on a representative sample confirmed that education does not belong to important values when only 13, 22% of respondents considered education and dissemination of knowledge to be important. Education was placed at 16th place out of 20 at a value chain of the respondents. This decline in the significance of education in the ranking compared to the period before 1989 may be due to the fact that people do not see the practical importance of education as such (in contrast with the acquired degree), whereas only a third of respondents believe that education has a significant impact on the quality of life. The lowest proportion was observed in the group of people with university education.

A comparatively large group of people - just under a third - also believe that school education, further education program or requalification scheme has prepared them for the performance of their profession. As we found out (from this research as well as other researches and statistics that we present later) the biggest problem to motivate people towards education are within the group of people with the low qualification. Within this group, only half of the citizens were willing to declare that they would complete their education if it was necessary.

Table No 7: Relationship between attained level of education and earnings achieved in 2008 and 2009

Average nominal gross earnings (EUR) according to the education and year		
	2008	2009
Average in Slovak republic	773,02	803,33
Primary education (ISCED 1)	493,03	501,64
Secondary technical/ vocational schools (less than 3 years) (ISCED 3)	602,90	600,96
Secondary vocational schools without school leaving exam (ISCED 3)	590,06	612,01
Secondary vocational schools with school leaving exam (ISCED 3)	715,83	725,13
Secondary education (ISCED 3)	735,11	791,50
Secondary vocational education (ISCED 3)	758,68	764,00
Upper secondary education (ISCED 5)	807,11	835,03
First stage of tertiary education - Bachelor studies (ISCED 5)	900,05	928,67
First stage of tertiary education - Master studies (ISCED 5)	1 205,11	1 255,72
Second stage of tertiary education - Tertiary education (ISCED 6)	1 276,74	1 305,76

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak republic, 2010

⁴ Sociological research of the Corporate Consulting Group 2008 – 2010 performed on a representative sample of 5000 respondents regarding their attitude towards lifelong learning.

Table No 8: Relation between attained education level and earnings divided into private and public sector in 2010

Main Occupations Category	Private Sector		Public Sector		Average
	EUR/month		EUR/month		EUR/month
	Men	Women	Men	Women	
Slovak republic	930,36	716,96	791,92	654,79	773,50
Primary education (ISCED 1)	615,18	463,52	484,84	365,27	482,20
Secondary technical/ vocational schools (less than 3 years) (ISCED 3)	685,96	497,42	527,45	384,65	523,87
Secondary vocational schools without school leaving exam (ISCED 3)	650,14	511,47	597,65	430,05	547,33
Secondary vocational schools with school leaving exam (ISCED 3)	816,56	623,86	782,84	549,44	723,06
Secondary education (ISCED 3)	914,49	698,71	762,70	614,28	747,55
Secondary vocational education (ISCED 3)	916,47	724,80	697,40	633,47	743,04
Upper secondary education (ISCED 5)	1147,41	851,55	770,61	755,87	881,36
First stage of tertiary education - Bachelor studies (ISCED 5)	1331,65	863,55	802,60	681,75	919,89
First stage of tertiary education - Master studies (ISCED 5)	1677,88	1292,08	931,04	816,24	1179,31
Second stage of tertiary education - Tertiary education (ISCED 6)	2254,97	1444,54	1102,59	1046,30	1462,10

Source: Information system on average earnings, 2nd Trimester, Trexima

The relationship between the level of attained education and a graduate's salary is not directly proportional. In terms of motivating people to obtain the university degree we have to correct the relationship between the earnings and position themselves in the labour market – what type of work do they exercise according to the main occupations category.

In order to illustrate that a university educated person does not necessarily have to hold an adequate position we use the output of a sociological survey of the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education. It was carried out in 2007 on a sample of 15 000 graduates. The result of the survey was that a third of university graduates did not require university education for their job.

2.1.2 Attitude and motivation towards further education

Mapping of the motivation of the Slovak population will be in this section confronted with findings that can be applied across the entire Europe. They confirm the general rule that the higher level of education an individual has, the more he educates himself through further education. As it is often pointed out, those people who need further education the most often don't take part in education at all and vice versa.

First of all, Table No 9 will show us clearly the most negative figure for Slovakia, which is being presented in the EU benchmarks and progress indicators (adult participation in lifelong learning in Slovakia was in 2010 at 2.8%, while the EU average was 6.5 percentage points higher -

9.3%, highest rate had Denmark - 31, 6%). Tables No 10 and 11 show results from other surveys measuring adult participation in lifelong learning and they show a significantly different reality in Slovakia.

Table No 9: Participation rate in lifelong learning according the highest educational level attained (ISCED levels) between 2003 and 2010 (age 15-64)

Year (average) %	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
ISCED (TOTAL)	3,7	4,3	4,6	4,1	3,9	3,3	2,8	2,8
ISCED 0_2	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
ISCED 3_4	3,0	3,4	3,7	3,2	3,0	2,6	2,2	1,8
ISCED 5_6	12,4	13,6	13,6	11,6	11,0	8,9	7,0	8,2

*n – immeasurable value, Source: Labour Force Survey, Eurostat

This survey practically denied participation of the low-skilled in further education; however the next two surveys show that the participation is around 4% respectively 11%. Nevertheless, we have to point out that none of the data obtained in these three surveys is favourable for Slovakia and that we still need support tools to improve the current situation.

The survey confirms the fact that with increasing level of education increases also the interest in further education. However, general results of this survey show that Slovak republic has a long-term decrease in participation, even in case of people with university education. In both monitored groups the participation descended in the reporting period by an average of 40%.

Table No 10: Further education participants and graduates by highest level of education attained (2009)

<i>Highest level of education attained</i>	<i>Number of participants</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number of graduates</i>	<i>%</i>
Primary education (ISCED 1)	10 118	4,31	4 742	3,49
Secondary technical/ vocational schools (less than 3 years) (ISCED 3)	7 559	3,24	6 431	4,74
Secondary vocational schools without school leaving exam (ISCED 3)	6 235	2,66	4 818	3,55
Secondary vocational schools with school leaving exam (ISCED 3)	9 161	3,91	7 158	5,27
Secondary education (ISCED 3)	33 630	14,34	19 064	14,04
Secondary vocational education (ISCED 3)	35 347	15,07	25 655	18,90
Upper secondary education (ISCED 5)	2 927	1,25	1 456	1,07
First stage of tertiary education - Bachelor studies (ISCED 5)	11 716	5,00	8 277	6,10

First stage of tertiary education - Master studies (ISCED 5)	115 308	49,17	56 255	41,44
Second stage of tertiary education - Tertiary education (ISCED 6)	2 480	1,06	1 882	1,39
TOTAL	234 521	100,00	135 738	100,00

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education, 2010

These data gives us information about the prevalence of university graduates to participate in further education. In the segment of secondary school graduates are individuals with school leaving exam far more active than people without school leaving exam.

Table No 11: Participation rate in lifelong learning by ISCED 1997 qualification

ISCED	Participation in %
ISCED 0_2	14,2
ISCED 3_4	38,4
ISCED 5_6	56,8
TOTAL	44

Source: Adult Education Survey, Eurostat 2007

Tables No 9, 10 and 11 describe significant differences in various measurements of adult participation in lifelong learning. These are caused by differences in methodology of monitoring, collecting and evaluating the data. In our point of view the situation in Slovakia is most accurately described in the Adult Education Survey (Table No 11). The interest in this survey does not result only from the fact that in this survey Slovakia is ranked on one of the highest positions within the EU, but mainly because of the chosen methodology for monitoring and data collection (annual basis).

If we previously pointed out low rates of some educational groups, let us have a look at some of the reasons responsible for this state. The Adult Education Survey, which is one of the most quoted surveys in this strategy, looked specifically on the barriers and their impact on non-participation of adults in further education programmes. We are therefore monitoring the price of education, conflicts with work schedules and the most general barrier - unformed conditions for further education.

At this point, we highlight two implications and challenges for setting the strategic tools - financial instrument for further education programmes support (up to 46% of this segment indicates the price as an obstacle in their further education) and the need for a more flexible organization of education programmes because as much as 31% (for this group this is a high number) of university graduates indicates this fact as an obstacle. Table No 12 helps to identify various obstacles in further education.

Table No 12: Obstacles interfering with participation in lifelong learning programmes

Obstacles in education (results in %)		
ISCED	Educational programme was incompatible with work schedule	Respondents who wanted to participate but didn't have conditions for it
ISCED 0_2	-	68,7
ISCED 3_4	16,8	61
ISCED 5_6	31,4	41,4

Source: Adult Education Survey, Eurostat 2007

The survey suggests that the major obstacle of participation in further education is the creation of appropriate conditions. These conditions relate in addition to time perspective, also to the accessibility of the locality and the form of provided education. They significantly influence the population of adults with primary and secondary education. Results of the Adult Education Survey showed that over 60% of adults did not participate in further education due to improperly created conditions. In the group of adults with university education 40% did not participate because of improperly created conditions. In this population group, a busy schedule has to be taken into consideration as an obstacle for further professional development of an individual.

The multimedia platform is the support tool of innovated strategy built on the principle of freely available and integrated content. It is a solution for the further education of individuals in space, time and pace that best suits their individual needs.

Decreasing rate of participation of younger generation (15-19 years and 20-24 years) in further education programmes – a notified problem of neighbouring EU countries as well as Slovakia. (Table No 13) - is partly shown in figures provided by the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education which measurements and statistical findings are often quoted in this document. We will see what will the upcoming years show, but in any case, these trends should be captured in this strategy in their early stages and set the appropriate solutions.

Table No 13: Participation of adults in further education programmes by age

Age structure	Year								
	2004	2005	2006	2007 number/%		2008 number/%		2009 number/%	
15 - 19	14,87	11,50	10,55	21 677	11,76	19 097	10,54	16 421	6,43
20 - 24	14,64	12,49	11,20	25 795	13,99	22 592	12,47	18 864	7,38
25 - 29	15,87	14,31	14,95	31 666	17,17	29 380	16,21	34 606	13,54
30 - 34	15,80	15,33	17,03	32 547	17,65	30 704	16,94	71 705	28,06
35 - 39	15,55	15,00	15,75	27 558	14,95	30 089	16,60	65 270	25,54
40 - 49	14,05	18,56	19,07	27 519	14,93	29 994	16,55	38 324	15,00
50 - 59	7,99	11,84	9,93	15 798	8,57	16 249	8,97	7 625	2,98
60 and more	1,23	0,96	1,51	1 817	0,99	3 120	1,72	2 707	1,06

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education, 2007, 2008 and 2010

Table No 13 identifies a group of adult population according to the extent of their involvement in further education. We can see that the number of learners in the group of 15 to 19 year olds decreases while it increases in the group of learners between 30 - 40 years of age. In the group of learners after the 50th year of age the number remains permanently low.

2.1.3 Conclusion on attitude and motivation

..in school education

Current situation: Although Slovak republic has within the European Union a very low percentage of early school leavers (in 2009 about 4.6%) on the "other side" of the educational system – is the percentage of people with university education only 17.6%, which is one of the lowest numbers in the EU.

It is a good signal that this number increases substantially each year as we fulfil one of the main indicators of Europe 2020 strategy. University education received in school education is a strong motivating factor. It is characterized by higher salaries and low unemployment rate. The question remains whether the labour market is able to absorb the growing number of university graduates. And also whether it is possible to keep university graduates salaries at current levels.

In addition, motivation towards school education is reinforced by the existing options for additional completion of primary education, which takes place in primary schools in compliance with relevant laws.

Background: It is important to be able to use this segment of the workforce appropriately, so that they are placed on positions that require university qualification. At the same time we need to send a clear signal to those who have no aspirations to complete university education that they are qualified and the labour market is able to provide them with a relative certainty.

Monitored indicators: the percentage of economically active population with university education, the wages level of people with university education, the unemployment rate for population with secondary school education.

.. in further education

Current situation: The level of participation of the adult population in further education appears to be less positive. With the exception of a relatively high participation of university graduates, the rest of the adult population seems to avoid further education. The most common barriers appear to be the cost of the education and time when the educational programmes are organized. The principal obstacle to participation in further education is the low acceptance by employers or in other words, further education learning outcome does not guarantee a higher salary or better employability. It is not considered to be an equivalent to a degree or vocational education certificate.

Background: In this context it is necessary to implement several measures that should, if not reverse, then at least stabilize the current unflattering situation:

1. Further education has to respect the interests of employers on the content and extent of qualification standards for particular positions.
2. It is necessary to establish a grant scheme for low-skilled and unskilled groups that would support further education.
3. Transfer a significant part of the theoretical training in further education from contact hours to distance learning via internet, and thus reduce the cost of further education.
4. Monitor educational needs in relation to the most desirable professions in the labour market and at the same time to identify the most desirable competencies and skills for the future labour market as well as the future competencies and skills for the labour market.

Viewed indicators: the percentage of adults participating in lifelong learning, the percentage of low-skilled people participating in lifelong learning, barriers to further education (financial, time)

2.2 Inconsistency of graduates' skills and the labour market demand

Another area that deserves attention is the mismatch of knowledge, skills and competencies of graduates in relation to the demand of employers. It is expected that the education will meet the demands and needs of society (personal development of individuals) and the labour market. Employers require - in terms of quality and quantity of labour - workers with high levels of practical skills, theoretical knowledge and personal competencies (especially technical, scientific, information, management, law and business) that are supplemented by individual moral maturity.

Education and training of an individual for the labour market takes several years. However, the labour market is changing and evolving more rapidly. Employers often indicate that the graduates on the labour market are not prepared for their needs and that schools do not offer education in the required structure of education and teaching courses. The labour market is overflowed with graduate of some education programmes. On the other hand, schools argue that do not have a reasonable estimate of the quantity and quality of graduates and that changes in educational content and the structure of curricula and course take a few years. Immediate level of non-compliance should be reduced by retraining courses. However, currently they perform this role only to a limited extent, primarily because they are not focused on reducing the level of mismatch between the structure of training programmes and labour market needs.

At present, the mismatch of labour market needs and education manifests itself primarily in the inadequate structure of secondary schools and universities graduates. Some secondary schools put out graduates who head straight for the unemployed agency because their profile is non-utilisable in the labour market. On the other hand, universities produce graduates who are able to get employed but they do not need university education for their work. They can be described as "over-qualified". In this case they take up jobs intended for secondary school graduates many of whom become unemployed or they continue in their studies at the university.

The aim of this strategy is to highlight the need to reduce the number of students studying at universities, especially looking back at one of the Europe 2020 strategy main goals – to increase the proportion of population aged between 30-34 years who have completed a university degree or equivalent level of education to at least 40 %. More serious is however the fact that a growing number of university-educated population is not in accordance with the labour market requirements for secondary school qualifications. There is a subsequent lack of these qualifications in the labour market.

The existing lack of compliance skills of graduates and the labour market demand can be characterized by the total number of unemployed vocational education (secondary school) graduates (with or without school leaving exam). In May 2010 there were 17,577 young people, which represented almost 23 % of total unemployment rate of graduates in that specific year.

This means (in proportion to the number of registered job vacancies – 5543) that one third of graduates do not have the necessary skills, according to which the employer would accept a graduate for this position. This situation confirms that education obtained in a particular field of expertise is not a guarantee that a graduate will find an appropriate working position.

Table No 15: Data on unemployment rate of graduates from secondary schools, secondary vocational schools with school leaving exam and secondary schools without school leaving exam⁵ according to specialization groups of education in 2005 and 2010

Specialization groups of education	Secondary school 2005/09	Secondary school 2010/05	Secondary vocational school (SLE) 2005/09	Secondary vocational school (without SLE) 2010/05	Secondary school (without SLE) 2005/09	Secondary school (without SLE) 2010/05
Technical specializations	2270	2101	3729	2761	3949	3061
Agricultural – forest and VET specializations	828	482	576	209	439	231
Medical and pharmaceutical specializations	345	235	0	-	48	13
Social specializations and services	4532	3455	2201	2476	2301	2032
Culture and Art	215	378	158	111	40	32
TOTAL	8696	6651	6664	5557	6778	5369

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education and Labour office, Social Affairs and Family

The table compares the number of unemployed graduates in different fields of education. More detailed look at the data reveals that in the group of technical specialization most of the graduates are unemployed in the special technical, the electrical and transport specializations. Unemployment in these specializations reaches up to 43 % of the total unemployment rate of graduates of technical specializations.

The critical situation is also in the agricultural and social fields. The first mentioned group of specializations takes a share of 18 % of the total number of unemployed graduates from secondary vocational schools. Among the social specializations there is an alarming situation in the field of economics and organization, commerce and services. The number of the unemployed in these specializations exceeded in May 2010 the number of 3,200 graduates, which represents 14.4 % per cent share of the total unemployment rate of secondary vocational schools graduates.

⁵ Considering that since 2009 secondary vocational schools do not exist in the educational system of the Slovak republic (only secondary schools) the data identification was based on the graduates of the educational and teaching specialization courses, which are still present in the statistics.

Table No 15: Development of the unemployment rate of the graduates from secondary grammar schools, secondary schools, secondary vocational schools with school leaving exam and secondary schools without leaving exams in years 2002 to 2010

Year (average)	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Secondary grammar schools	7,50%	4,70%	3,80%	3,30%	2,80%	2,30%	2,90%	4,40%
Secondary schools	21,00%	16,00%	12,10%	10,20%	8,30%	7,00%	9,40%	15,40%
Secondary vocational schools - SLE	23,80%	16,40%	14,20%	10,40%	9,00%	12,60%	23,30%	23,80%
Secondary schools - without SLE	26,00%	16,30%	13,90%	10,10%	8,40%	11,50%	20,70%	26,00%

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education and Labour office, Social Affairs and Family

The table shows that very narrow and specifically oriented secondary school graduates with vocational certificate are the most vulnerable in times of the labour market crises. Tailor-made work force loses its competitiveness at the first signs of economic downturn (see annual variations since 2006).

One solution is to extend the competence profiles of graduates, respectively their innovation, since the problem could be the incorrectly predetermined profiles or also the lack of interest of the employers in specific positions. The answer to this question could be provided by a communication platform strategy.

Table No 16: Employment of university graduates in the same or related field as their study specialization

Achieved educational level	Percentage of graduates
Master studies	72 %
Bachelor studies	44 %

Graduates who need university education for their work:	
What they studied:	50 %
In related field:	20 %
Different from their specialization:	30 %

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education, 2007. (questionnaire survey on 15 000 respondents)

A third of university graduates do not at all require university education for their first job (secondary education would be sufficient). During the first year 40 % of the graduates changed their job mainly because it did not correspond with their education. This survey was carried out by the Institute of information and prognoses of education only in 2007 and in accordance with the Strategy 2011 needs it should be carried out again in 2014.

2.2.1 Conclusion on the inconsistency of the graduates' skills and the labour market demand

Current situation: Based on the previously mentioned statistical findings we can conclude that some secondary school graduates lack the sufficient placement on the labour market and that university graduates are being employed in jobs that do not require university education. The society lacks the motivation of the young people to study at secondary vocational schools because the employers prefer to hire university graduates. Some secondary schools and universities have only a low level of respect towards the demands of the labour market in specific specializations (sectors), for example in mechanical and electrical engineering.

The non-existent qualification standards create too much room for schools to determine the profile of graduates as it suits them, not the customer - the employers. This can be applied perhaps more to universities than to secondary schools. The situation requires removal of the existing information asymmetry between schools and employers, that means increasing the amount of information about the quality and structure of the education provided, which will better meet the needs of the labour market.

If we take a closer look at the rising percentage of the unemployed secondary school graduates in the times of crisis and layoffs, it could signal another fact - that a university graduate with a wider focus and generally applicable competencies will always be more perspective for an employer than a specifically qualified secondary school graduate with or without a school leaving exam. Motivation of universities to improve the quality of the provided education programmes seems to be a problem, despite the fact that this approach can lead to devaluation of the university degree.

Background: Regardless the levels of education we should prefer those key competencies and professional skills (within the lifelong learning system) that are transferable within the industry, but also from one industry to another and which create preconditions for constant adaptation to labour market needs.

Currently, the educational institutions (especially in the school (formal) system) have to realise for whom they are educating their graduates and have to define outputs - the qualification standards through which their graduates could apply for a position in the labour market. An essential complement to the training in the lifelong learning system is further education which however cannot only be a tool that "corrects" the errors from school education and is helping to retrain people from one qualification to another.

Therefore, the Ministry in collaboration with employers and educational institutions will participate in defining the qualification standards (National Qualifications Framework) in the following structure: "knowledge, skills, competencies," which will then form the core curricula at various levels of education. Qualification standards within the NQF will be applicable within the entire sector, not only for the selected employers.

Monitored indicators: the percentage of university graduates working in jobs that require only secondary education, the ratio of unemployed secondary school graduates and available positions and the ratio of unemployed secondary school graduates to university graduates

2.3 Career guidance and counselling

Currently, the main providers of guidance and counselling services in the Slovak republic are the Ministries of Education, Science, Research and Sport and of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. In the education sector the career guidance and counselling is provided primarily within the educational counselling through educational consultants whose work is methodically directed by centres of pedagogical-psychological counselling and prevention and as well as by special pedagogical counselling centres. Career guidance and counselling is one of the main activities of centres of pedagogical-psychological counselling and prevention, whose clients are students finishing primary and secondary schools. These centres however usually do not offer counselling services for the adult population. The universities provide information and advisory services related to the study and positioning of the students in practice, to job seekers, to study applicants and.

Within the Ministry of Labour, Social affairs and Family the guidance and counselling services within the labour offices are aimed to tackle problems associated with finding a job. In accordance with the Act No 5/2004 on employment services provide the labour offices information and counselling services to citizens, jobseekers and employers on career choices, employment opportunities, including changes in employment and employee selection and adaptation of an employee in his new job. Information and counselling services are also services in providing information and expert advice on the requirements for professional skills and practical experience necessary to carry out work activities in various jobs in the labour market according to the National Occupations Framework, the employment opportunities in Slovakia and abroad, the prerequisites for profession, the possibilities and conditions for participation in activation programmes, conditions of entitlement to unemployment benefits and conditions for participation in the partnerships established to promote employment development within the office district.

According to the Employment Services Act, the labour office may provide the jobseeker professional services that are aimed at addressing the problems associated with finding a job, creating harmony between his personal capacities and requirements job administration, with influencing the decision-making and behaviour of a job seeker as well as influencing his social and work adaptation. Labour office can provide professional guidance and counselling services within the individual counselling or group counselling.

The current system of career guidance services in Slovakia does not cover the needs of all citizens who could be of potentially interested. The value of the provided guidance information is

reduced mainly due to low interconnection of information resources. Career guidance focuses mainly on the current problem of the client but it does not perceive his career development in the longer term. Guidance and counselling services at schools are understaffed. They are usually oriented on the study progress and only minimally developing career perception of students that would go beyond school education.

The expertise of the provided career guidance and counselling depends on personal assurance. At schools, it is provided by educational (pedagogical) counsellors and teachers (besides their pedagogical duties) who however do not always have the appropriate competencies. Information resources that should assist them in their activities are fragmented, difficult to orient in and often also outdated.

Career guidance and counselling for adult population (working citizens eventually citizens in post-productive age) is an uncovered area within the department of education. An adult (regardless of his employment), but also a graduate has no possibility to seek counsel if he wants to grow professionally, but also if he is interested in a change of career orientation or he is at the beginning of his career.

In this context it is necessary to point out that the primary responsibility of the individual for their personal development remains in his hands. The guidance and counselling centres network, one of the tools of the strategy, should offer an individual qualified guidance services in career guidance so that he is able to develop personally and professionally. Table No 17 points to the information sources where candidates seek advice on further education.

Table No 17: Sources from which people interested in education obtained information about education possibilities

Information source	Data in %
Internet	77
Family member, neighbour, colleague	41,7
Educational institutions	20,7
Employer	21,4
Guidance centre	3,5
Mass media	63,4
Books	50,2
Other	6,9

Source: Adult Education Survey, Eurostat 2007

Today, three out of four adults look for information on further education on the Internet. The exponential growth of information content on the Internet within individual providers of further education causes confusion and fragmentation of the content, which lacks integration into the form of a counselling tool. In the career guidance for adults this requirement could be enabled by an integrated information system, which would provide identical information to prospective clients in remote parts of the country as well in the career guidance centres.

In addition, only 3.5 % per cent of people stated that they acquired information on education from the guidance centre. We can say that a group of people with low qualification and lack of IT is the main target group for information and advisory activities. This can be seen as an area for development of the guidance services, one of the tools of the innovated Strategy 2011 and an opportunity to provide comprehensive lifelong learning guidance.

The career guidance and counselling strategy is primarily focused on the profit for the most vulnerable groups in the Slovak labour market - people without or with low qualification. The data in table No 18 describe a clear trend that the higher acquired level of education the more accessible information on further education opportunities. We can see that this increase is notable with the rising level of education.

Table No 18: Access to information on education based on the achieved educational level

ISCED	Number of people who had access to required information
ISCED 0_2	11,2
ISCED 3_4	33,1
ISCED 5_6	56,9

Source: Adult Education Survey, Eurostat 2007

Especially people with low qualification need higher individual care in the field of further education in order to gain professional and personal development. In this group, only every tenth citizen declares that he has access to required information that helps to facilitate his future orientation.

Career guidance and counselling is well-founded for all population groups with all levels of educational attainment. It is an appropriate and effective tool for reducing the information inequality, for increasing people's access to information on further education and also a unique tool that provides personal contact of the professional advisors and individuals with low qualification who is interested to grow professionally and personally.

The aim of career guidance is to assist individuals in deciding on educational issues, professional training, career choice and career development in any phase of their lives. Career guidance is a form of education, in which should be every individual actively involved (self-analysis,

motivation, goal setting, finding of solutions, overcoming of barriers, developing skills and competencies). Career guidance has a wide variety of methods that are important in deciding and finding optimal solutions.

2.3.1 Conclusion on career guidance and counselling

Current situation: The lasting current state in career guidance and counselling can be characterized as a system suffering from the lack of internal resources, but also from the lack of external support, cohesion between the labour market and low priority career of the career guidance. Career guidance and counselling at universities is on the rise, but there are big differences in quality and scope in provided guidance services. In comparison with universities with higher ranking are these services still relatively underdeveloped.

Career guidance and counselling system is absent also in further education of adults. Providing of information about career and education pathways of adults through further education programmes is characterized by its fragmentation on the internet without a guarantee of quality. At present in Slovakia there is no possibility for an adult to get independent and relevant information about opportunities for career growth through further education.

Background: Around the world we can find a lot of functional and highly efficient models of further education (adult education). In order to compare our system to a different one we have used "the Finnish model". This system implements compulsory subjects directed in the labour market orientation. The subjects are aimed at final year students on various school levels with sufficient range and qualified teachers. Solution of the problem in adulthood has to be coherent with the foundations laid during the primary and secondary education.

Slovak republic does not necessarily need to take the "Finnish" way, however it is clear that the Slovak educational system has to guide the students towards responsible choice of career path and teach them to perceive reality and labour market needs. The system needs to accentuate the quality of information (and teachers) provided to students as well as adequate amount of time dedicated to this problem. In relation to the adult population it is essential to enable creation of information and advisory services (for example creation of an integrated information system) and contact guidance centres (centres for career guidance for adults).

Monitored indicators: the number of guidance and counselling centres for adults, the number of clients in career guidance centres for adults, the proportion of adults with qualifications at ISCED 0 to 2 who had access to information on further education, the number of clients in an integrated information system, the percentage of very satisfied or satisfied clients, the number of clients who found a new job (adequate to education) 6 months after the consultation

2.4 Funding of further education

The expert group on innovation of the lifelong learning strategy highlighted the lack of a financial instrument that would encourage individuals to participate in further education. This

condition was noticed also by the European Commission in the Evaluation of the National Reform Programme 2011 – 2014. EC indicated what this support tool should look like.

The European Council then adopted the recommendations which specifically state that the Slovak republic has to develop a framework of incentives for individuals and employers to encourage participation of people with lower education in the lifelong learning process.

Financial factor is a basic tool for higher motivation of individuals to increase their qualification and personal development. This was also confirmed by the Adult education survey. (Table No 12 and 19), which identified the barriers to further education of the individual.

Table No 19: Barriers interfering with the participation on the further education programmes

Educational barriers (results %)	
ISCED	High price of the education programme (participant could not afford it)
ISCED 0-2	45,9
ISCED 3-4	20,7
ISCED 5-6	13,1

Source: Adult Education Survey, Eurostat

Looking at the Table No 19 we can identify the barriers to the education of people with low or no qualification. Almost half of the participants declare that further education is out of reach for financial reasons. Table No 20 helps to further identify the financial barrier to further education and further education funding structure.

Table No 20: Further education funds in SR in 2009

Education funds	EUR	%
Participants	12 609 756,69	26,68
Private Companies	12 003 068,85	22,54
Public Sector	5 930 312,75	11,14
In that: Labour Office, Social Affairs and Family	3 065 739,96	5,76
Resources from municipality budget	658 386,94	1,24
Resources from Self-governing region	1 887 472,81	3,54
From state budget	6 662 730,15	12,51
Resources of foundations and non-profit organizations	597 624,92	1,12
Resources from EU funds	14 944 646,84	28,06

Other	503 206,31	0,94
TOTAL:	52 251 346,51	100,00

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education, Information system on further education

Table No 20 illustrates the fact that the financial state and local government subsidy is only around 60% of the amount of resources spent on further education by the individuals. The state and local governments have in this case a possibility to bring about a change that would promote lifelong learning of its citizens through rising financial resources provided through appropriate support schemes.

Looking at the level of support from the structural funds one can gain the impression that this resource is among the significant supporters of further education. This source is however unstable and unsustainable in the long-term. It is risky to rely on the support of these funds. This is documented by comparison of the year 2009 with the years 2007 and 2008. In 2007 only 115 580 Euros from structural funds (respectively 336,400 Euros in 2008) were allocated on further education. Compared with 2009 (which is captured in the table No 20) it was only 0,7 % in 2007 and 2 % (2008).

Looking at the table No 21 we can see the ordinal difference in the amount of money spent on education by participants themselves. In regard to disposable income of people with low or no qualification it is not surprising that the average amount spend on education is only 15 Euros. However, when looking at a group of people with secondary education it can clearly be seen that on average they spend less than one tenth of the total investment they are willing to pay for school education.

Table No 21: Amount of resources (in EUR), that 1 participant spent in 2007 on further education and training – statistical measurements according to highest education level attained

Year 2007	School (formal education) (EUR)	Further (adult) education (EUR)
ISCED		
ISCED 0_2	-	15
ISCED 3_4	355	34
ISCED 5_6	487	72

Source: Adult Education Survey, Eurostat

2.4.1 Conclusion on funding of further education

Current situation: General view on the state of funding of further education in the Slovak republic shows that, in comparison with the financing of school education, further education is

significantly undersized. In this context it is significant that the state along with local governments falls significantly behind in funding further education for the participants - individual clients and employers. This is most noticeable within the group of low-skilled and unskilled people who state in long-term the price of the education programme as the biggest obstacle to their further education. In connection with the state of motivation, we have to point out that the participants are much more motivated to invest in school (formal) education than in further education.

Background: The aim of the strategy is to create opportunities for further education funding that would encourage people to take part in lifelong learning.

Monitored indicators: the investments from state budget and municipal budgets (including structural funds) in further education, the investments in further education by employers themselves.

2.5 Development of individual competencies

The fifth area identified by the expert group is the need to develop individual skills. The topic of key competencies development was also covered in the Lifelong Learning Strategy adopted in 2007, but only at a low level and it did not develop their necessity or the method of their acquisition.

The development of key competencies is conditioned by ambiguity of the fact which competencies are considered to be the key ones. There are several approaches to the definition of key competencies. For the purposes of this document we apply the recommendation of the European Union⁶, which defines eight key competences⁷. Expert working group identified the need to develop the following skills: communication in foreign languages, digital competence, entrepreneurship and active citizenship. The fifth competence that is being addressed is financial literacy, which is in general a part of active citizenship and entrepreneurial skills.

The standard for selection of these competencies as the key ones for the development of the lifelong learning is based on the principle that education as such should not only refer to the fulfilment of professional development of an individual, but also to develop an individual personality of a citizen and help him to find a place within the society.

Development of individual competencies brings asset to active life as well as higher quality of life. Key competencies in general have a high added value for an individual, which result mainly from their portability. It means that they can be fully applied in personal live and in work activities of an individual. Their advantage is that they increase the flexibility of an individual within the labour market (an individual can position himself in various jobs). At the same time key competencies develop personal side of an individual. Key competencies support the acquisition of basic social and civic values of an individual and help him to improve his overall orientation within the society and in

⁶ Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council, 18th December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC)

⁷ Key competencies: Communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression.

different life situations. They help to prepare a young individual for adult life and help adults to develop social skills and foundation for further education within the lifelong learning system.

2.5.1 Communication in foreign languages

The knowledge of foreign languages opens a way for individuals to gain new knowledge within the field of his interests but also new opportunities for employment. At present almost all working positions in the Slovak labour market require at least basic knowledge of one foreign language (mainly English). Language skills of an individual have gradually become a mandatory part of his qualification. Moreover, communication in foreign languages opens up non-negligible possibilities for an individual to position himself in the international labour market.

In 2011 the Institute for Public Affairs published a study which was based on the results of a representative sociological survey conducted in March 2011 on a sample of 1086 Slovak citizens aged 15 years +.

The vast majority – 95 % of Slovakia's population believes it is important to speak English, while 67 % believe it is necessary and 29 % believe it is essential. To speak German is considered important by 88 %, of which 33 % considers it necessary and 55 % essential.

Table No 22: Level of communication in foreign languages

Level of communication in foreign language	A little	Very good or good
Russian	54%	5%
German	49%	7%
English	46%	14%
French	7%	
Italian	4%	
Spanish	3%	

Source: Institute for Public Affairs

A closer look at the research results demonstrates that communication in foreign languages on a communicative level that allows to converse in a foreign language is on a very low level (such knowledge has mastered only an average of 8.6 % of respondents). Reducing the difference between the basic language knowledge and the advanced knowledge is one of the goals that can be fulfilled through the Strategy 2011 especially by multimedia platform that should provide freely available educational programmes.

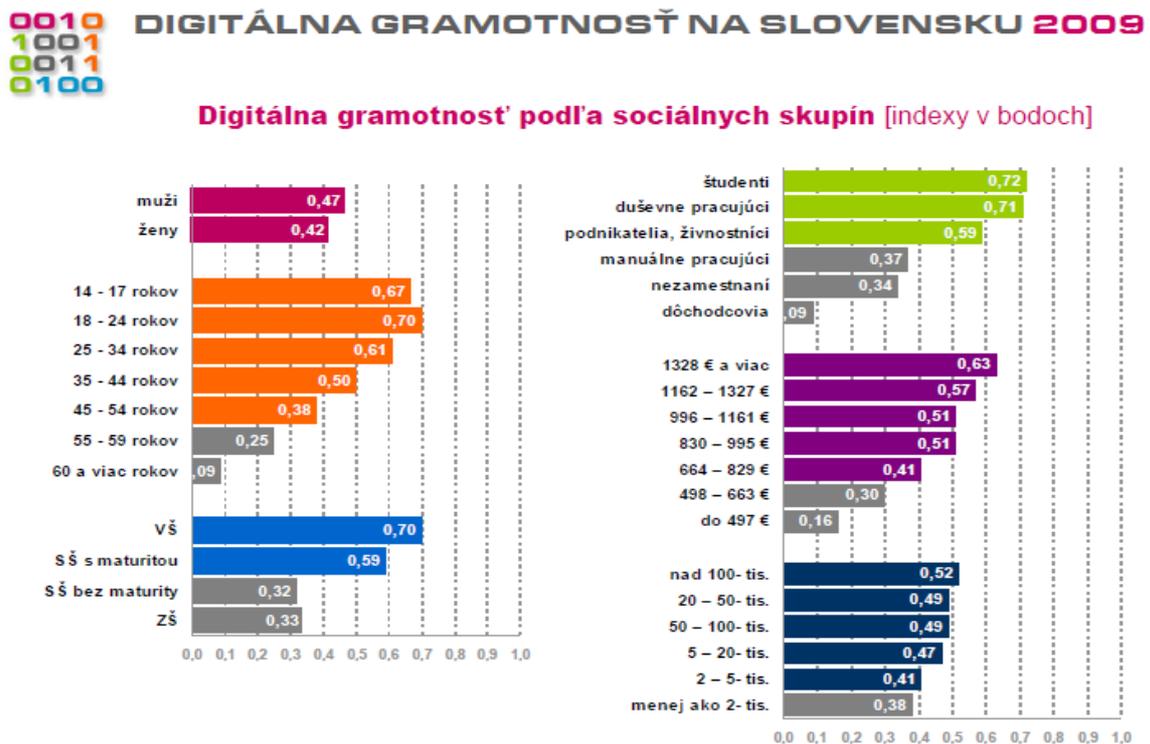
2.5.2 Digital literacy

Digital literacy is the ability to understand and use different formats of information from different sources, which are presented through information and communication technologies. Although the increase of digital literacy is one of the absolute priorities of the EU, Slovakia has a number of parameters in which we more or less lag behind.

Index of digital literacy, which is measured by the Institute for Public Affairs, consists of 27 indicators (questions that respondents are being asked). It measures the level of the ability to work with modern information and communication technology, its applications and services.

While in 2005 had the digital literacy index value of 0.33 points, it increased to value of 0.37 in 2007 point respectively to 0.44 points in 2009. In other words, the digital literacy of the Slovak population over 14 years now reaches 44 out of 100 possible points, as indicated in the chart No 1.

Chart No 1: Digital literacy in Slovak Republic in 2009



Source: Institute for Public Affairs, 2010

The chart shows that in regard to the digital competences are most vulnerable older people, manual workers and unemployed citizens. Digital partition of the society deepens. On one side is the younger, more educated, more skilled and socially stronger urban population. On the other side is

the older, less educated, lower skilled, economically inactive (pensioners, unemployed) and socially weaker rural population. While the first group is continuously learning and improving, the second remains stuck in one place.

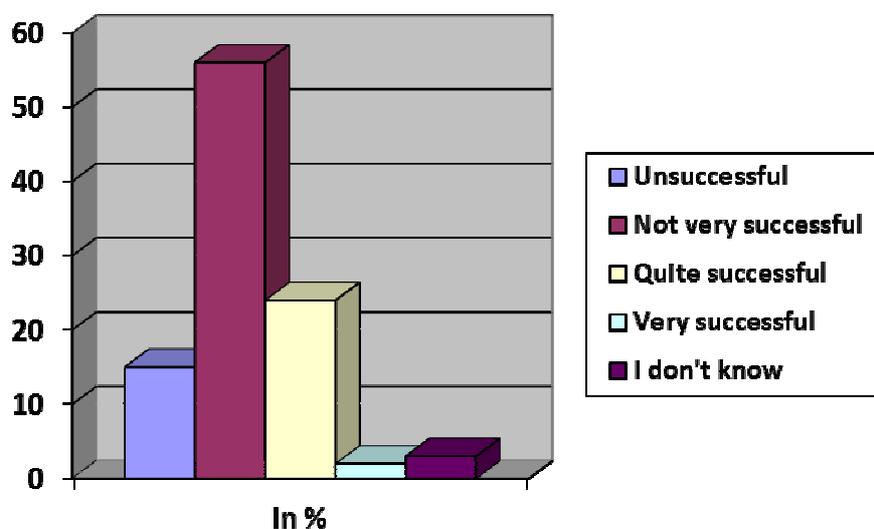
2.5.3 Entrepreneurial competencies

Entrepreneurial education is not only (in the strict sense) knowledge about establishment of companies, but as competence it involves initiative and entrepreneurship, which covers ability of an individual to change ideas into action, as well as creativity, innovation and risk-taking and also the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives.

Entrepreneurial competencies develop awareness of daily lives of individuals so that they are aware of the context of their work and are able to take advantage of the opportunities available to them. This competence also develops peoples' skills focused on project management, individual work and teamwork, but also the ability to assess and identify strengths and weaknesses and to evaluate and accept possible risks.

According to the European survey on entrepreneurial skills (chart No 2), which also involved Slovak Republic, 70 % of entrepreneurial subjects believe that the development of entrepreneurial skills of individuals is on al low level. In particular, they lack skills needed for obtaining a job (such as confidence, presentation skills, motivation, driving force and teamwork). Furthermore, 83 % of Slovak respondents believe that the education system in Slovakia is not successful in developing business skills of individuals. One of the problems are teaching methods. Currently school class is often the last place where people have the opportunity to learn about entrepreneurship, competition and innovation.

Chart No 2: Respondents' views on the success of entrepreneurial skills programmes in school education at primary and secondary schools



Source: European Survey on Entrepreneurial Competencies, 2011

It is possible to achieve effective development of these skills in school (formal) education through systematic support of activities, which help the students manage (so called) training firms and through them help the students to solve real as well as simulated projects. The development of this competence for adults cannot be achieved by the same means.

An adult individual requires an individual approach, taking into account his work, social and family aspects. Therefore, the multimedia platform, which is a system tool of the Strategy 2011, will also contain programmes focused on the development of entrepreneurial skills.

2.5.4 Active citizenship

The area of active citizenship is seen as a set of activities that develop personal movements in society (at work and during leisure time). The essence of active citizenship is both an interest in public affairs (motivational aspect), the ability of an individual to present and defend his interests (competency aspect) and the ability to achieve real results and impact (practical aspect). Finally, in terms of civil society it is important how citizens behave towards one another in public space. In this sense, the concept of civil society means the same as the "civilized" society. The following table shows the activities and indicators of active citizenship.

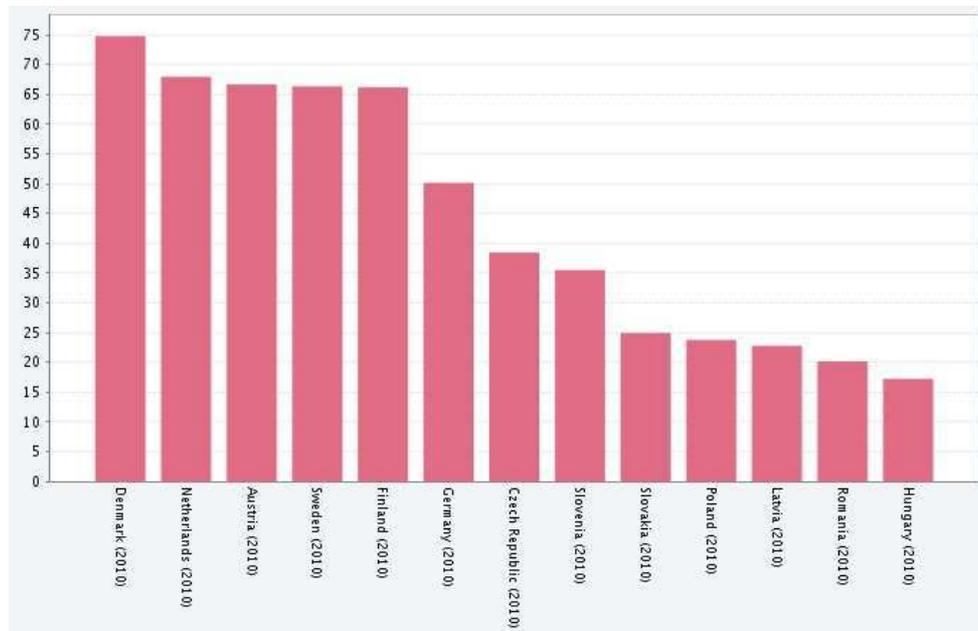
Table No 23: Areas and indicators that characterize active citizenship

Areas	Indicators
Participation on active citizenship	Work for volunteer or charity organizations
	Membership in a political party
	Work for a political party or a different organization
Tolerance, trust, openness	Opinion that immigrants enrich cultural life of a country
	Opinion that gays and lesbians have right to live their life according to their ideas
Social activities	Meetings with friends, family and colleagues
	To be surrounded by people you can talk to about personal matters
Sport activities	Participation on sport and leisure activities
Going to ballet, dance performances, opera, cinema, concerts, museums	Participation on education through cultural activities

Source: European Lifelong Learning Indicators, The ELLI Index Europe 2010

Index of lifelong learning is a set of four areas concerning the learning - learning within the school education system, learning in working life, learning within the social cohesion and learning as a part of personal growth. Active citizenship is a part of personal growth of individuals.

Chart No 3: Comparison of countries in the area of active citizenship development



Source: Source: European Lifelong Learning Indicators, ELLI Index Europe 2010

In the monitored index reached the Slovak Republic value of 24.91 points. That means that we belong (along with Poland, Latvia, Romania and Hungary) among those countries that achieve the absolute lowest values in the field of active citizenship within the EU.

The level of active citizenship competence in Slovakia is almost half less than the average of other European countries. In comparison with some countries (Denmark, Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, and Finland) is the competence level even lower.

2.5.5 Financial literacy

Financial literacy is defined as the ability to use knowledge, skills and experience to effectively manage own financial resources in order to ensure the financial security of an individual as well as his household.

The financial literacy standard for primary and secondary schools was introduced in 2009. The implementation of national standard for financial literacy began the process of raising the awareness in this area. It is now necessary to focus on the second phase of the financial education,

which is an extension of education of pupils, students, teachers, with special focus on the adult population.

Initial parameter that describes the current status of competence level of this particular competence is the Slovak Banking Association survey conducted in 2007. This survey on financial literacy was carried out on respondents between 18 to 75 years with the aim to obtain information about the state of financial literacy among the population.

The achieved overall financial literacy index was 0.56 points (in the range 0 to 1), which refers to an average knowledge of personal financial issues among the adult population.

Table No 24: The index of financial literacy on socio-demographic groups

Socio-demographic groups with the lowest financial literacy index level	
Primary education	0,43
Unemployed	0,47
Individual households	0,47
Households with income lower than 330 Euros	0,44
Pensioners	0,48

Source: Slovak Banking Association, 2007

The financial literacy index gives us a picture of the knowledge level on banking and financial services issues. The total value of the index (0, 56) reflects the extent to which does an adult in Slovak Republic understand financial market operations (deposit, credit, account management, ATM card operations etc.), which are commonly encountered in everyday life of an individual.

This value represents the average knowledge of the mentioned problems among the adult Slovak population. The index is balanced between the sexes and also with regard to the size of settlements, in which the individual resides.

There are however differences in the age distribution. Population aged between 26 to 45 years and with the university education has the best knowledge in this area. The group with the lowest level of knowledge within the financial literacy field are people with low education level as well as low-income groups.

2.5.6 Conclusion on key competencies

Current situation: The key competencies today are considered to be prerequisite conditions for placing oneself within the society, in personal life and also within the labour market. Selected competencies identify weaknesses in their acquisition as well as on their use. They identify the most vulnerable target groups in the labour market as well in social life. In summary, state of the acquisition respectively use of these competence reflects an important aspect of the state of knowledge society - the quality of human resources. For status indicators we selected those competencies that point to negatives however we (deliberately) did not highlight the positives which certainly could be identified but which are not relevant for the purposes of this document.

Background: We identified weaknesses of each of the five core competencies that will be corrected by strategy system tools, in particular by the multimedia platform. The multimedia platform will provide free educational content necessary for the acquisition of the key competencies. It is important to note that the process of change of this part of the strategy will be the slowest, whereas it is necessary to raise an intense interest from the population itself. People have to find (with the help of stakeholders) right motivation and environment in order to be able to improve themselves.

Monitored indicators: sociological survey on communication in foreign languages, digital literacy and financial literacy index, lifelong learning index - personal growth of individuals, European entrepreneurship survey.

2.6 PIAAC - Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

This analytical part of the strategy adequately confirmed the fact (which afflicted the Slovak Republic for decades) that the field of further (adult) education can only utilize a small quantity of relevant national statistics and almost no quality ones. Slovak Republic is trying to change this negative trend with its participation in an important OECD project - an international assessment of adult competencies (PIAAC).

Another motive that decided about the participation of the Slovak Republic in this project – was the need to diagnose inadequacies of the educational system in generating the required competencies (based on the evidence of the demanded and real levels of competences of adults).

Implementation of the project will allow to:

- Identify and measure cognitive and work competencies enhancing social and economic success;
- Evaluate the impact of these competencies on social and economic results of selected population groups and across the Slovak Republic;

- Measure the performance of the education system and vocational training system in generating the required competencies;
- Identify and clarify tools that increase the level of competencies.

PIAAC survey is carried out in several countries with the aim to detect the level of cognitive skills and working competencies of adults needed for success in social and economic life in the 21st century. The survey is dealing with the reality of how are our citizens able to work with comprehensive information mainly in electronic form and solve problems using information technology in work and everyday life.

The results will provide information about how is the Slovak as well as the EU population ready to compete in the international labour market. It gives the possibility to compare different groups of people working in various fields, who received respectively attained different levels of education.

PIAAC will also evaluate how skills relate to the socio-economic success of individuals as well as entire countries and will bring information about how the education systems succeed in conveying the necessary competencies and how to increase the effectiveness of educational policies and measures. The survey monitors:

- The use of peoples' skills in work and employment (such as computer skills, teamwork, proper communication, taking responsibility, the ability to correct mistakes, technical skills) ;
- Cognitive skills (ability to use and process information, solve problems, think critically, act logically, read and comprehend, write to express oneself, to use mathematical knowledge, organize work effectively) ;
- Causes and consequences of the acquisition and loss of skills;
- Relation between skills and social-economic success of individuals and entire countries;
- The success rate of education systems in conveying the necessary skills;
- Ways to increase the effectiveness of educational policies and measures.

In terms of research methodology is PIAAC carried out as a household survey. Respondents are asked to complete a questionnaire either on computer or manually (with the aid of paper and pen). The questionnaire contains the following features: basic information about each respondent; literacy testing; numeracy testing; testing problem solving ability in high-tech environment; using skills at work.

2.7 Legislative amendments to strengthen lifelong learning system

To ensure a functional lifelong learning system it is necessary to achieve interconnection and cooperation of the educational subsystems. Based on the analysis of the current environment it is important to pay attention especially to the education on primary and secondary schools as well as to further education.

In order to achieve the full application of lifelong learning principle, recognition of further education and increase of the compliance of the graduates with the needs of employers, it is necessary that the Act No 245/2008 on education and training (School Act) will respond to the need to create qualification standards and to integrate the principles for identification of learning outcomes into the education system at primary and secondary schools.

In the first place, it is necessary to harmonize the output profiles of graduates with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). In addition, educational programmes at primary and secondary schools should be oriented to the output level of knowledge, skills and competencies of their graduates.

For the unification of the communication with the stakeholders in the field of interconnection of the education and the labour market it is necessary to harmonize the existing coordination structure for vocational education and training with the sector councils within the National Occupation Framework project. Unified communication platform supports the coordination of the actors themselves and increases their motivation to actively participate in defining and forecasting of the education needs. The integration of sector councils would however require adjustments of the Act No 184/2009 on vocational education and training.

The aim of these changes is to create a single platform of sector councils in the Slovak Republic, which would serve not only the needs of the vocational education but also the lifelong learning. At present this requires negotiation and closer cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic.

3. Lifelong Learning Vision

"To enable everyone to learn throughout their lives – to provide more information about learning opportunities, more affordable and quality education, more skills development opportunities of an individual in personal and professional scope for a better quality of life."

Lifelong learning (principle of lifelong learning of an individual) is essentially a systemic approach towards education from early childhood until active life in the senior age, which encompasses the area of active interaction and integration of the individual in the society and his internal fulfilment of personal interests. Lifelong learning is focused on a learning individual who has access to the school education (guaranteed by the Constitution of the Slovak Republic) as well as to further education while maintaining the principles of quality and equality of all ages and regardless of his education.

The main objective of the Strategy 2011 is to strengthen the individual's awareness of the need of permanent education, which provides him with skills and competencies for sustainable employability; for success in society and for development of his personal interests.

This objective is divided into four key priorities of the vision:

3.1 Lifelong learning will be attractive to every citizen of the Slovak Republic and supported by all stakeholders involved.

3.1.1 Reduction of information asymmetry acts as a central player in the implementation of the lifelong learning strategy. It underlies the motivation of all of us to participate or not to participate in education. It also underlies the input of the stakeholders in the support of the lifelong learning system. It can mobilize, where negative experiences or traditions do not create favourable conditions for participation in lifelong learning.

3.1.1 Each person entering the educational journey with the aim to build his career will have information about the status of the (future) profession in the labour market; about employment possibilities; about the average salary of the particular profession in different regions.

3.1.1.2 Schools or educational institutions integrated in the school network or accredited in the Slovak Republic will publish all relevant information about themselves as an education provider; about the success rate of their graduates in the labour market; about the inter-connectivity of the graduates' profiles and the labour market needs as well as the satisfaction ranking of graduates.

3.1.1.3 Employers shall provide within the activities of sector councils all relevant information on current and future needs in the form of the required knowledge, skills and competencies for particular working positions or group of working positions.

3.1.1.4 Counselling centres will provide career guidance and counselling services and objectively inform clients about the real situation / offers of the education system as well as in the labour market. They will assist individuals in deciding on education issues, professional training, employment options and career development in any phase of their lives.

3.1.1.5 The state will in collaboration with the regional governments create conditions for citizens, schools, educational institutions, employers and counselling centres so that they will be able to gain all necessary information for their adequate functioning within the lifelong learning system.

3.1.2 To motivate people to take part on lifelong learning means also to guarantee that employers will accept also those skills, competencies and knowledge which they gained in further education or work experience. Schools and educational institutions will offer their educational programmes also in parts (modules) and will regularly update their content in relation to the needs of employers.

3.1.3 To establish a system for recognition of learning outcomes means also to build a network of authorized institutions with the authority to verify the learning outcomes that would involve schools and employers' representatives. Individuals would be able to obtain a qualification certificate.

3.1.4 To promote the necessity to take part in lifelong learning so that individuals could imagine the impact of education on their success in employment and on the overall quality of their lives.

3.2 Schools and further education institutions will provide in co-operation with employers education relevant to the labour market and for success in society.

3.2.1 System of communication between schools and employers will be based on mutual information of each other on the knowledge, skills and competencies needed in the labour market. Employers will be represented in the sector councils where they will help to identify required knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to perform each working position.

3.2.2 Cooperation of employers in the sector councils with schools and educational institutions in relation to the future labour market needs will be implemented by **identification of sectoral requirements on future knowledge, skills and competencies.**

3.2.3 In order to ensure a complex exchange of information between employers and schools will be **necessary to ensure the permanent feedback on employers' satisfaction with schools and educational institutions** graduates (school and further education alike).

3.3 Guidance and counselling services will be available for everyone who has expressed interest in career orientation and orientation in educational paths (possibilities)

3.3.1 Creation of an **integrated guidance and counselling system** for the purpose of providing guidance and counselling services in order to unify information about job vacancies, salaries, unemployment and other relevant information about the labour market.

3.3.2 To establish **guidance and counselling centres network** for people with little or no ICT skills with the **possibility of direct contact with career counsellors** for the purpose of further education and career paths consultation.

3.3.3 For the purpose of education and guidance and counselling services development, which will reflect the real situation in society; engage in projects that map the level of acquired skills of adults; especially PIAAC which will provide valuable information on the cognitive skills (reading and mathematical literacy) as well as on the area of problem-solving in high-tech environment and the use of acquired skills at work. The results of this project will be a unique source of information for the Slovak Republic about the orientation of guidance services as well as the alignment of the content of those educational programmes that lead to the acquisition of key competencies for the sustainable employability.

3.4 Lifelong learning barriers will be removed so that each citizen can educate himself every time his skills and competencies should become useless in the labour market.

3.4.1 To create a space that will provide educational programmes for the **development of universal skills** transferable within the whole labour market; respectively usable in support of quality of life of every citizen. The real verification usefulness of these competence will take place directly in practice (e.g. use of ICT technologies) or in life situations, in which it will be necessary to demonstrate them (e.g. tolerance of other fellow citizens within the frame of the active citizenship competence).

3.4.2 Create the conditions for the **systematic funding of further education**, which will support people in lifelong learning and in their efforts to complete or update their knowledge, skills and competencies that will help them attain a qualification needed for success placement in the labour market.

4. System tools of Strategy 2011

Creation of system tools, which is incorporated in this strategy, needs in the first place to respect the efforts to increase the motivation of an individual to participate in lifelong learning; approximation of labour market requests and educational system; increase of the level of guidance and counselling services as well as the level of key competences of Slovak citizens. Implementation of system tools requires in the initial phase increase of financial costs that will be paid for by the EU structural funds. Their next sustainability will be financed from the state budget.

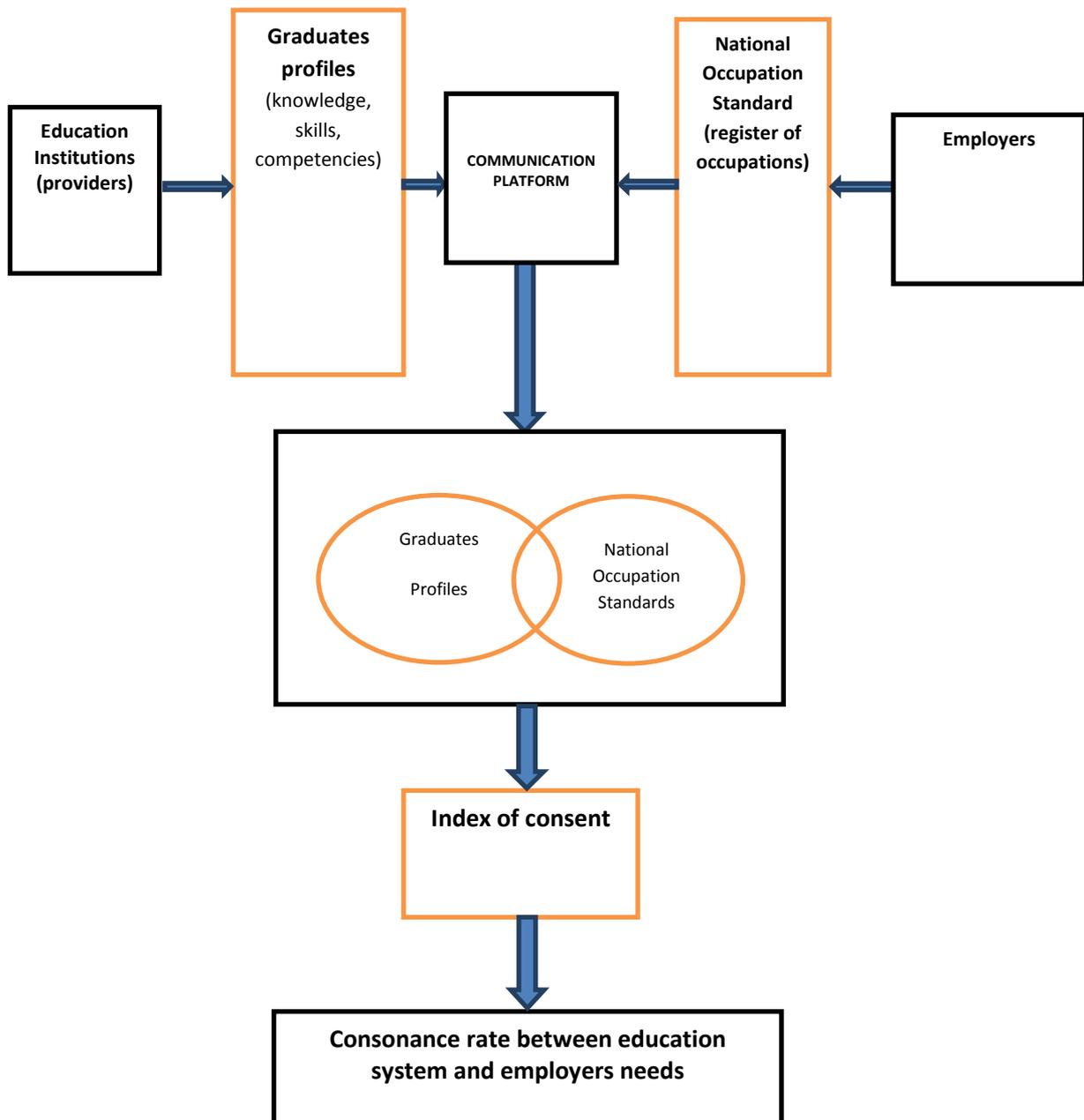
4.1 Communication platform for educational institutions and employers

For the purpose of linking education to employment it is necessary to intensify communication between educational institutions and employers as such. In order to build on existing concepts and efforts it is necessary to create space for improving of the long-term cooperation of these parties. There is currently no integral and transparent system which would provide a comprehensive platform for communication between employers, schools and further education providers that would support individual motivation of individuals to be engaged in further education.

In order to create an effective communication tool and fulfil the ambitions mentioned above it is necessary to create unified concept for schools, universities and further education providers and thus to transform state educational programmes, curricula and further education programmes into a consistent format in terms of learning outcomes and to establish validation and recognition of learning outcomes.

This communication platform will represent a complex communication environment for educational institutions and employers as well as information environment for individuals. Communication platform outputs will be applicable not only in school but also in further education namely through qualification and assessment standards of the corresponding specializations of education. Qualification standards will be the prototype for creation of further education programmes.

The aim is to unify the learning outcomes so that graduates of the same specialization (but from different schools and regions) can enter the labour market with the same profile, i.e. level and structure of knowledge, skills and competencies. Thanks to the single graduates' profile it will be clear which key competencies can an individual obtain in the school education system, which can be obtained in further education and how can these knowledge, skills and competencies be verified.



Communication platform will also enable employers' to evaluate the extent to which graduates of the particular schools meet the requirements for individual work positions under existing employment standards (outputs of the National Occupation Framework project). They can indicate missing elements of the qualification standard (in spite of the fact that it is declared by school in its graduate profile).

This method will enable to compare learning outcomes declared by schools and specific requirements of employers. It will expose the actual strengths and weaknesses of the school preparation for occupation according to various sectors of the economy (not only at national but also at regional level) as schools will be involved in the communication platform in term of the regional scope. The mutual comparison will enable to create an index of consent between the employers' needs and individual items of the graduates' qualification standards. This will identify the discrepancy

between knowledge, skills and competencies of graduates and the requirements of employers for particular working positions.

The benefit of the communication platform for employers will be a unique space for interpretation of comprehensive requirements for labour force, which will be transformed into the content of the school and further education.

The benefit for schools lies primarily in the feedback for their further improvement. They will receive comprehensive information on the preparedness of graduates for the labour market, their success in the labour market and also the extent of employers' satisfaction with the competence profiles of graduates. For schools and educational institutions, it will mean an opportunity for improvement; a clear orientation on the employers' needs and incentives for improving the education and enhancement of educational programmes with specifics which graduate can apply in the regional labour market or in particular economy sector.

The benefit for an individual will be a clear summary of what is the educational institution able to teach him. It will make it easier for him to get oriented in the levels of gained qualification; about the verification of acquired knowledge, skills and competences and about the institutions which can recognize the learning outcomes. At the same time, this solution overcomes the existing situation in which two graduates of the same specialization but from different schools or other regions do not enter the labour market with the same profile, i.e. with the same level and structure of knowledge, skills and competencies. Thanks to the single description of the graduates profiles it will be clear which key competencies is an individual able to obtain within the school system, which can be added in further education and how can these knowledge, skills and competencies be verified.

With regard to current trends and processes which are the EU countries undergoing at the moment it will be essential to develop and implement a comprehensive system of qualification and validation standards linked to the National Qualifications Framework levels. These standards need to specify what level of knowledge, skills and competences is necessary in order to obtain a qualification and what criteria (organizational and methodological procedures, material, technical and special requirements) is necessary to meet in order to verify and validate the attained competence. Creation of this system will enable to build on the outcomes of National Occupation Framework – (occupation standards) that define the description of the professional skills and practical experiences required to perform work activities in the workplace. Building on the outcomes of this project will also strengthen sustainability of the communication platform outcomes. The purpose of this project is to secure the inter-connection between education and employment.

4.2 Multimedia platform

Tendencies of the 21st century society development are still adjusting to the growing need for the creation, processing, use and distribution of information. Information is becoming a dominant factor in all spheres of economy, society in general as well as in the life of an individual. Direct response to this trend is creation of systems which bring together information that will be accessible and sufficiently transparent to individuals. This will allow convenient and effective selection on the user side and sufficient possibilities and capacity for the transmission of information on the provider's side.

Multimedia can be understood as an instrument that shifts information ever closer towards the user (via internet, mobile technologies, data centres etc.) Focus of multimedia on priority human

senses of perception (vision and hearing) meets the requests for convenience and easy access as well as distribution of information. Internet, which is currently the most widespread and most common form of transfer and exchange of information, creates an excellent "breeding ground" for the use of multimedia. In the future we can expect an increasing number of people (also from the lower income level groups) who will have smart phones which will enable to develop new and transferable applications usable in lifelong learning.

System solution to this is to increase the ICT equipment in school facilities and creation of digital educational content within the school education, which got currently started. But so far no one has moved systematically towards the creation of a digital platform that would comprehensively promote further education (interconnected with the guidance and counselling for adults) and would be usable for non-school forms of learning. In addition to the low participation of population in lifelong learning through internet contributes this state to the necessity of multimedia platform creation, which would eliminate these inadequacies.

Within the Strategy 2011 implementation will be created a platform that will unify the already existing educational content in multimedia form and process simple and user-friendly way of orientation in a multimedia database also in relation to individuals with lower level of computer literacy. Such multimedia content has to emphasize personal attitude of an individual and his option of making decision about particular educational programmes that are important to his personal and career growth, employment and educational opportunities, living standard and quality of life.

Multimedia platform predetermined in this way should serve primarily as a forum for the promotion and publication of existing educational content focused on selected key competencies - communication in foreign languages, digital competence, social and civic competences and entrepreneurship. It will develop these competences into educational programmes that will be consequently provided on the platform. In addition, the platform will summon already existing educational programmes in one place. These are programmes which were originally created as outputs of various educational projects and activities of NGOs. In this context, the platform will also identify available programmes from abroad. Multimedia platform will also take into consideration that existing educational programmes can be in various formats.

Multimedia platform will also support the creation of educational groups and networks within the frame of which it will be possible to share experiences from the educational process.

Subject oriented educational content will help to increase the competence level of individuals who will be able not only to increase their qualification but also to raise their employability, their own personal potential as well as the quality of life (for example seniors, and disadvantaged population groups).

4.3 Career guidance and counselling

The aim of creation of these services is to stimulate demand and supply in providing of the career guidance and counselling services. In order to meet these needs it is necessary to build guidance and counselling centres network that will provide information, advice and recommendations in the area of career guidance and counselling as well as further education to adult population.

The aim of guidance and counselling centres is to supplement the missing link in guidance and counselling services for adults, so that each individual can have the opportunity to participate

and benefit from guidance and counselling services and in designing and building of own career path. They will also offer individuals the possibility to find a better position within the labour market. Important features of guidance and counselling services are: quality of advisors and adequate premises, their amenities, layout, database containing options and active institutions of further education, occupation standards, quick access to information about education, possibility to compare the content of the offer of education.

Building a system of career guidance and counselling through the establishment of uniform methodological standards, establishment of qualification standards and consultants' evaluation standards and building a network of guidance and counselling centres is one of the conditions for the development of further education, positioning of an individual within the labour market, employability and prevention of social exclusion of individuals within society. The prime concern is to use the potential of existing guidance and counselling centres that are successfully established between citizens and have trained personnel.

4.3.1 Guidance and counselling information system

These requirements should be fulfilled within a well-built integrated information system that would provide guidance and counselling services regardless of the manner, time, place and period of life, so that also the candidate from remote parts of the country can receive the necessary information.

Integrated information system will be able to identify occupations that require skills and knowledge similar to current or former client's work. This will offer client possibility to position himself within the labour market, information about local education and training possibilities or working possibilities. In order to achieve profiled career guidance and counselling it is necessary to define standards of guidance and counselling services for citizens and provide appropriate tools for determination and measuring of the guidance and counselling services quality. Guidance and counselling will be based on evaluation of individual potential of every client according to which it will be possible to prepare an offer for further professional development of an individual (guidance and counselling services client).

4.4 Financial tool - support of further education

One of the objectives of the Lifelong Learning Strategy adopted in 2007 was to evaluate the financing of further education in Slovakia, with an emphasis on multi-source financing and introduce legislation that would introduce a sustainable model. Strategy 2011 aims to highlight the need for a financial instrument to support individuals which would motivate them to participate in further education.

In its evaluation of the National Reform Programme for the years 2011 - 2014 the European Commission recommends creating of incentives framework for individuals and employers that would encourage participation of people with lower education in the lifelong learning process. For better orientation it is necessary to include existing and functioning models in selected countries.

Table No 25: Selected further education funding models

Country	Support scheme	Target group	Detailed specification
Scotland	Individual educational accounts	People with low qualification	Allowance can be used in every educational institution that offers adequate education and training (this differs from individual to individual), i.e. adequate and applicable for their needs
Italy, Germany, Austria	vouchers	Selected population groups	Principle of co-financing from European Social Fund and a deposit of an individual. Check on a particular amount (500 €) will receive chosen groups of population that will use this money on their further education.
Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Spain	Sector training funds	Small and medium enterprises employees	Based on special fund contribution which will ensure education according to needs of particular sectors.

Strategy 2011 does not propose a specific financial instrument, which could be applied in the Slovak Republic. It, however, brings the attention to the fact that the establishment of financial support framework for further education will help to increase people's interest in their professional development, which is necessary for improving the quality of human resources in Slovakia. The criteria that should be viewed in the context of this financial instrument are: support of the sustainability tool, personal commitment and individual experiences of other countries with support financial tools. Further development of financial support tools will be subject of the further the implementation of this strategy.

5. Recommendations

Recommendations are a general summary of the most important measures to be implemented in the future in order to fulfil the vision of the strategy. Fulfilment of these measures is primarily responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. Detailed elaboration of these recommendations will be listed in the Strategy's 2011 Action Plan.

5.1 Create an environment in which educational institutions will inform their clients about all relevant facts according to which they can decide on their future educational path (further education).

5.2 Develop activities for legislative and institutional unification of representation of employers - sector councils - in communication with the state so it will prevent the creation of their duplicate structure.

5.3 Develop activities that would include qualification standards into state and school educational programmes.

5.4 Establish a network of institutions authorized to recognize the further education learning outcomes.

5.5 Develop a sustainable system of communication between educational institutions and employers to exchange information about knowledge, skills and competencies needed in the labour market.

5.6 Create an integrated system of career guidance and counselling, consisting of databases informing about educational opportunities and labour market.

5.7 Build a sustainable network of career guidance and counselling centres for adults to enable direct consultation with professionals.

5.8 Establish a platform for the provision of freely available educational programmes leading to the acquisition of skills necessary for personal and professional development.

5.9 Use the results of the PIAAC project to identify competence level of adults in their working life.

5.10 Develop activities for creation of a financial tool to support further education.

5.11 Develop activities aimed at closer alignment of the activities of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak republic in order to implement efforts to enhance the employability of citizens to avoid duplication and conflicting solutions to this problem.

5.12 Establish assumptions and possibilities that would help to prepare decisions and solutions supporting the development of lifelong learning in close co-operation with main stakeholders, i.e. educational institutions, guidance and counselling centres, employers, professional and trade associations, recruitment agencies, non-governmental associations and representatives of local governments.

Annex 1

Terminology

Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning is a summary of all the activities that take place during life of an individual in order to improve knowledge, skills and abilities. Lifelong learning as a fundamental principle of education applied in the educational system of the Slovak Republic consists of school, further and other education that follows-up on the level of education attained in school education.

School Education

School education and training (also referred to as "formal education") is carried out in kindergartens, primary schools, secondary grammar schools, secondary schools, vocational schools, conservatories, schools for children and pupils with special educational needs and studying in accredited programmes at universities. Successful completion of school education leads to acquirement of a level of education.

Further Education

Further education (also referred to as "informal education") is an education in educational institutions of further education, which builds on the school education and allows to obtain partial or full qualification or supplement, renew, extend or strengthen skills of an individual acquired in school education or satisfy the interests and obtain the competence to engage in the life of civil society. Successful completion of further education does not lead to acquirement of the level of education. Part of further education is also continuing education which is a process of enhancing, upgrading and expanding of knowledge, skills and competencies needed as a prerequisite for pursuing professional activities in the selected working position.

Other Education

Other education (also referred to as "informal learning") is a lifelong acquisition of skills from daily experience, from the environment and contacts. It is learning outside educational institutions, which runs in the family, at work or leisure and may not be deliberate or conscious.

Career Guidance and Counselling

It is a complex guidance and counselling services provided to focus on various disciplines. It helps individuals of any age in deciding on issues of education, training, employment options and career development in any phase of their lives.

Guidance and Counselling Centre for Further Education

Centre, which provides information and guidance and counselling services available to individuals of all ages, promotes and supports the values of further education, provides the necessary assistance for effective participation in education and helps to achieve the best results in education, life and career.

The Educational Programme

Educational programme is a comprehensive programme for establishing and verifying the fulfilment of the objectives, content, methods and forms of educational process, its evaluation, organization and management. Educational programme can be divided into modules.

Qualification Standard

It represents the sum of knowledge, skills and abilities required for acquisition of a partial and full qualification.

Classification of Occupations

It is a division of occupations into classes mainly according to the nature of work, complexity, responsibility and skill demands of work. It was created according to the ISCO - 88, adopted by the International Labour Organisation and allows international comparison. The object of classification is an occupation, i.e. specific work activity, performed by the employee that is his main source of labour income. In the following period will be used according to the Commission Regulation No 1022/2009, the revised classification ISCO-08, which is based on the type of work and skills.

National Occupation Standard

It is a comprehensive description of the current requirements of employers on vocational skills and practical experience necessary to perform specific work activity on a workplace.

People with low qualifications

People with low skills are considered to be persons with qualifications at ISCED level 0, 1 and 2.

Annex 2

List of the main indicators monitoring the success of the strategy

- Percentage of adults participating in lifelong learning
- Percentage of low-skilled people participating in lifelong learning
- Percentage of adults who declare obstacles in further education (financial, time)
- Number of career guidance and counselling centres for adults
- Number of clients in career guidance and counselling centres for adults
- Financial literacy index
- Lifelong learning index - personal growth of an individual
- European entrepreneurship skills survey
- Digital literacy index
- Sociological research on communication in foreign languages

List of secondary indicators monitoring the success of the strategy

- Percentage of economically active population with university education
- Unemployment rate of population with secondary education
- Percentage of university graduates working on positions for secondary school graduates
- Ratio of unemployed secondary school graduates to available jobs
- Ratio of unemployed secondary school graduates compared with university graduates
- Investment from national budget and municipal budgets (including structural funds) in further education
- Investment in further education by the employers themselves
- Proportion of adults with qualifications at ISCED 0-2 level, who had access to information on further education
- Percentage of satisfied or very satisfied clients with the quality of customer service
- Number of guidance and counselling centres clients, who found a job adequate to their education up to 6 months after the consultation