

REPORT FOR DGVT ON NEW INITIATIVES IN VET (1/2009, PERIOD JANUARY-APRIL 2009)

Implementation of partial qualifications in accordance with the the Act No. 179/2006 Coll.

The Act No. 179/2006 Coll. enabled developing the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and elaborating its tools with pilots of their use in trial implementation of procedures for validation of prior learning. The Act No. 179/2006 Coll. foresees a possibility for adults to acquire partial vocational qualifications registered within the NQF, through an examination (practical or, if appropriate, oral or written as well) to compare an individual's prior learning results (his or her knowledge, skills and competences regardless the ways and settings of their acquirement) with qualification and assessment standards of respective partial vocational qualifications. NSK – „The development of the National qualifications framework supporting links between initial and further education (NQF)“, aimed at developing the general model of the NSK (National register of Qualifications) and designing particular qualification and assessment standards for complete and partial qualifications (in this phase at ISCED 3C level only). The National Register of Qualifications is under development, however, as publicly accessible register has been already provided with an on-line database (www.narodni-kvalifikace.cz). The National System of Occupations also has its web pages (www.nsp.cz). For the next ESF planning period (2008-2013), continuation of some of these system projects (esp. NSK 2) is planned for, aimed at elaborating and (if appropriate) modifying the Lifelong Learning Strategy in the CR and preparing its implementation. The NSK 2 system project is planned to start in May/June 2009. This project should continue in designing particular qualification and assessment standards for complete and partial qualifications at ISCED 3A level.

National System Projects

New Final Examination - NZZ

On 1st April 2009 a three- year project - the New Final Examination (NZZ) has been launched. It follows the Kvalita I project (Quality I) aimed at adapting final examination in VET programmes concluded by an apprenticeship certificate (ISCED 3C) to the two- tier curricular conception, similarly as it had been done before in case of the Maturita examination (ISCED 3A)

In this period, the development of individual assignments will address not only three-year apprenticeship fields (category H) but also less demanding apprenticeship fields (category E). Uniform assignments should assure that schools do not omit anything what is essential for the particular field and what students will need in their future profession. The results of examinations taken at different schools will also be more comparable. Uniform examination assignments have been developed for all three exams -written, practical and oral one. Their specifications should be to larger extent directed towards practice than before. That is why practical exams will play a central role. Here students should cope with real tasks and problem. Written and oral examinations are linked directly to present teaching documents (curricula, teaching plans) and since 2011/12 assignments will follow up to new educational programmes (framework and school). The uniform assignment of practical examination also uses an assessment standard. A uniform assignment has been developed for each field of education but it is based on the general scheme of uniform assignment. Project teams, usually composed of the representatives of three schools (administrator and two project teams), the NUOV guarantor of the particular field of education and one expert from practice (employer representatives), participate in the development of uniform assignments. These employer

representatives and expert from practice assure that requirements of the employer spheres are reflected in the content and course of examinations. Experts from practice also participate in final examinations in pilot schools as members of examination committees. In addition, they take an active part in the questionnaire research. They assess there exam standard at schools from the viewpoint of practice needs and pinpoint the problems which makes cooperation between companies and schools more difficult.

Starting school year 2009/2010 all school will be able to use uniform assignments for their final examinations. At the same time an information system of the new final examination will be created. It will gather all developed uniform assignments and methodological materials and enable schools to use them and to exchange experience between teachers and other experts.

www.nuov.cz

Curriculum S (Kurikulum)

This two-year project (prepared by MŠMT – Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in cooperation with NUOV- National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education) started on 1st April 2009. This project aims at assisting technical and vocational schools in the introduction of the curricular reform.

The VET curricular reform proceeded from pilot verification to its flat implementation. The development of all framework educational programmes (about 260) will be finished next year, i.e. first of all framework education programmes for extension courses for apprenticeship graduates will be developed. A great range of schools develop their own school educational programmes (ŠVP). On 1st September 2009, half of VET schools should start instruction (in compliance with the School Act) according to their own school educational programmes. Present practice shows that initial training for coordinators and teachers participating in the development of school educational programmes is not sufficient. Teachers and coordinators need to consult problems which they face during the development of school educational programmes. In addition, some of them are interested in the expert supervision of developed programmes.

Consulting centres will assist schools with the development of school educational programmes (per order) and subsequently with their implementation and updating. Moreover, these centres will mediate the exchange of experience between school teams and organise thematic workshops. The project calculates on the fact that these centres will operate in selected already existed institutions of continuing education, first of all VET continuing institutions which will enable them to assure a follow-up counselling, consultation and methodological assistance to schools after project termination.

The project will support various forms of cooperation between schools and social partners because it will monitor various forms of cooperation, gather and present examples of good practice. Gained information, contribution and examples will be published on the Internet; the most interesting will be published in a separate collection.

The project will also finalise the experimental verification of pilot school educational programmes which were developed within the system project Pilot S (finished in 2008). Knowledge gained in experimental verification of instruction conducted according to pilot school educational programmes and experience gained in pilot schools will be used for existing ŠVP updating. Moreover, other VET schools will be able to use ŠVP. These schools will gain impulses and inspiration which will enable them to develop own educational programme of better quality. This project is directed towards leading workers and coordinators of ŠVP development at all secondary technical and vocational schools (SOŠ and SOU) who need special advice and assistance in the development and implementation or updating of school educational programmes.

www.nuov.cz/kurikulum

Reform of tertiary education envisaged

On 26th January 2009 the government of the Czech Republic approved the White Paper of Tertiary Education. This conceptual and strategic document represents an analysis of the current state of affairs in higher education institutions and proposals of solutions to problems in the future. The real situation is rather complicated, especially due to ongoing public discussions about the newly proposed law on tertiary education and the White Paper itself.

Lifelong Learning Strategy – implementation plan

Strategy of lifelong learning in the Czech Republic is a fundamental document for other general and partial concepts and policies in this field. It represents a sustained concept of lifelong learning which was approved by the government of the Czech Republic (resolution No. 761 of 11th July 2007). Its ambition is to set achievable goals which can be promoted, especially from EU funds in the programme period 2007-2013. In addition, it should connect efforts of all interested stakeholders aiming at the implementation of lifelong learning concept. This strategy was discussed with economic and social partners so that a broad consensus in priority areas might be achieved. The strategy sets out fundamental trends in the development of lifelong learning of which support should be a priority. These strategic trends are further put into concrete measures. The implementation plan of lifelong learning (CŽU) determines responsibility for their implantation and financial backing.

On 5th January 2009 the government of the Czech Republic approved the Implementation Plan of Lifelong Learning Strategy (Resolution No.8). In this plan, lifelong learning strategy is eked out with a great range of concrete implementation measures which will serve for meeting set out targets for the 2009-2015 timeframe.

In the field of Initial Vocational Training, we can give following examples of measures of which implementation should be promoted, first of all by the projects funded from ESF Operation Programme the Education and Competitiveness:

- to promote openness and permeability among individual secondary educational programmes and also between secondary and tertiary educational programmes and their links to further education (to promote the establishment of VET centres, diversification of educational paths , modular system of VET programme organisation which would allow easier vertical and horizontal permeability and interconnection with continuing education ;
- to facilitate transition of graduates to labour market as well as their success on labour market (to promote the introduction and operation of the National Qualifications Framework (NSK); promote NSK application for the development of framework and school educational programmes and requirements for final examinations and the profile part of the Maturita examination; promote student mobility and study visits of teachers in companies; promote accessibility of individualized career counselling and guidance).