



Main challenges and trends in VET in the EU

Links between VET and higher education

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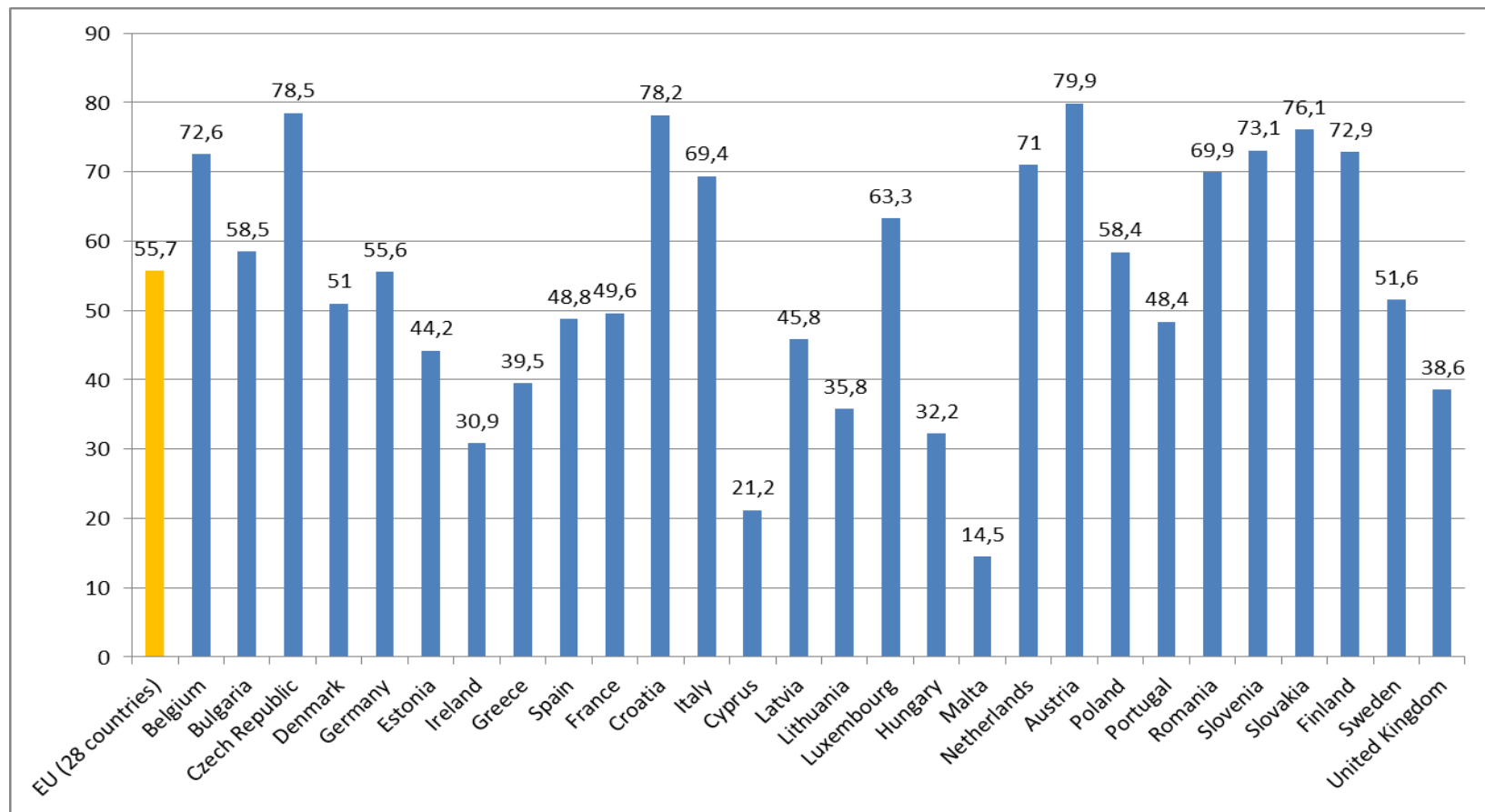
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Features of VET systems in the EU

- ✓ **Initial VET – typically at upper secondary level age 15/16-15/19 – around 50% of young people in VET**
- ✓ **CVET – labour market oriented training for adult population**
- ✓ **Governance structure with involvement of social partners (employers, trade unions) in different bodies (committees, councils, etc.)**
- ✓ **School-based and work-based systems (depending on a structure of economy)**
- ✓ **Usually well-developed network of VET providers**
- ✓ **Efforts to fulfil dual objective of responding to the needs of economy but also personal development of individuals**

Participation in VET



Students enrolled in vocational upper secondary education, 2012, as a % of all students enrolled in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3)

Main challenges

- ✓ **Great differences between VET systems across EU countries (with very well developed ones in DE, AT, DK, NL)**
- ✓ **Low attractiveness – VET often regarded as a second choice option of young people**
- ✓ **Quality and relevance to labour market needs – skills shortages**
- ✓ **Low share of work-based learning – involvement of companies in provision of training**
- ✓ **Early leaving from VET**
- ✓ **Low levels (compared to higher education) of international mobility**



Bruges Communiqué – "the EU 2020 VET agenda"

- ✓ **Part of overall structural reforms under the Europe 2020 framework**
- ✓ **Vision, strategic objectives, short-term deliverables**
- ✓ **VET by 2020:**
 - **High quality initial VET**
 - **Flexible systems of VET based on a learning outcomes approach which cater for validation of non-formal and informal learning**
 - **European education and training area with transparent qualifications systems**
 - **Substantially increased opportunities for transnational mobility in VET**
 - **Attractive and inclusive VET**
 - **Easily accessible and high-quality lifelong information, guidance and counselling services**
 - **Easily accessible and career-oriented continuing VET**
- ✓ **VET high on policy agenda – contribution to decrease (youth) unemployment**
- ✓ **Europe 2020 country specific recommendations 2014 (22 Member States)**

Current policy priorities

- ✓ **Dual systems + other work based learning (European Alliance for Apprenticeships)**
- ✓ **Quality and labour market relevance (including quality assurance, teachers and trainers, balance between short-term needs of economy and long-term adaptability of individuals)**
- ✓ **Efficient governance (involvement of social partners and cooperation partnerships between VET providers and companies)**
- ✓ **Emerging trends – excellence of VET (links to economic development and innovation strategies, new types of partnerships, higher VET, innovative use of ICT, new funding models)**



Increase attractiveness of VET

Future policy priorities – 2015 - 2020

- 1. Work-based learning**
- 2. Quality assurance in VET and feedback loops to both I and CVET**
- 3. Access to training and qualifications through both I and CVET**
- 4. Strengthening key competences in both I and CVET**
- 5. Professional development of VET teachers and trainers**

VET and HE – policy context

- **The Bruges Communiqué - Member States to develop or maintain post-secondary or higher VET at EQF level 5 or higher and to contribute to achieving the EU headline target of 40% with tertiary or equivalent education.**
- **promote flexible pathways between VET, general education and higher education and enhance permeability by strengthening the links between them.**
- **Member States as part of efforts to build excellence in VET.**

VET and HE - Excellence agenda

- ✓ **Aligning VET with regional/local economic development / innovation policies**
- ✓ **Permeability and development of higher VET to respond to emerging skills shortages**
- ✓ **Strengthening partnerships and networks between companies, VET providers and higher education institutions (new types of partnerships)**
- ✓ **Innovative use of ICT (OER, ICT based simulations)**
- ✓ **Entrepreneurship**

'Higher VET' – features and trends

- ✓ **Very dynamic** field of E&T (industry), but still rather a grey zone / trends of "academisation" and "vocationalisation"
- ✓ In general, **very good labour market outcomes** (employability, transitions, wages)
- ✓ **Differences across countries** of what is considered as higher VET (content, providers, types of programmes, funding schemes, interest of policy makers and labour market demand)
- ✓ **No clear definition and place in national qualifications landscape** (post-secondary VET, short-cycle programmes, professional higher education, professional bachelors programmes, higher VET, dual higher education, etc.)
- ✓ **No clear links to institutions** - Providers vary from traditional universities, universities of applied sciences, companies, upper secondary VET schools; and may be public or private institutions.

'Higher VET' – features and trends

- ✓ **Demand** for this type of learning is often driven by industry and business needs in specific sectors, often facing skills shortages or emerging skills requirements
- ✓ **Work-based learning, dual learning, applied research** projects are usually a very strong element of this type of learning.
- ✓ **Governments** can have **control** over this field of education and training mainly through accreditation processes for higher education and funding as well as development of national qualifications framework.

VET and HE – permeability & social inclusion

- ✓ **Lifelong learning** - VET at higher qualification levels contributes to permeability in E&T systems as it is very often a bridge to higher education or a natural progression pathway for vocational secondary graduates.
- ✓ **Continuing training** pathway for adult workers and non-traditional students who return to training in order to update and increase their skills.
- ✓ **Social inclusion and equity** - providing a pathway for students from a lower socio-economic background, "higher VET" can play the role of a social lift, giving a chance to young people who would probably not progress to more academic studies.



Thank you for your attention!

More information

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/index_en.htm