



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Directorate-General for Education and Culture

PEER LEARNING ACTIVITY ON VET TEACHERS AS CHANGE AGENTS FOR THE AUTONOMY OF VET SCHOOLS

20 – 22 October 2008, Bled, Slovenia

SUMMARY REPORT

INDEX

INDEX	1
1 INTRODUCTION	2
2 PREPARATION FOR THE PLA	4
3 THE PLA PROGRAMME	6
4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	14
ANNEX B - BACKGROUND REPORT	20
ANNEX C - NATIONAL REPORTS	34
AUSTRIA	34
GERMANY	36
ICELAND	43
IRELAND	47
ITALY	52
PORTUGAL	58
ROMANIA	60
SLOVENIA	64
SPAIN	70

1 INTRODUCTION

The third Peer Learning Activity (PLA) of the Focus group on VET Teachers and Trainers took place on 20-22 October 2008 in Bled, Slovenia. The PLA was hosted by the Slovenian National Institute for Vocational Education and training (CPI). The PLA was attended by 16 representatives from nine countries (AT, DE, EE, ES, IE, IT, PT, RO, SI). The group of participants was composed of Ministry representatives, social partners and non-governmental organisations. In addition, representatives of the European Commission, ETF and external experts to the Commission attended. The full list of participants is attached in Annex D.

The PLA was organised by the Focus Group on VET Teachers and Trainers (referred to as the 'Focus Group' hereafter) which was created within the Cluster on Teachers and Trainers, in the context of the Education and Training 2010 work programme.

PLA Objectives

The main objective of the PLA was to support peer learning across participating countries in terms of:

- Debating the different approaches to developing the roles of VET Teachers as change agents for the autonomy of VET schools;
- Reflecting on how these approaches could be transferred to the context of VET teachers and schools in the different national settings; and,
- Formulating proposals to support policy development in relation to the changing roles of VET teachers and schools.

This PLA was designed to provide a means of examining the role of VET teachers as change agents in situations of increasing school autonomy. The activity was structured to focus on this key issue through four themes:

- The meaning of autonomy in VET;
- Support mechanisms and instruments for VET teachers in their new roles;
- Teachers' perspectives on their new roles in the framework of more autonomous schools; and,
- Exploring new relationships between teachers and management by focusing on new roles for headmasters.

The PLA group explored the Slovenian VET system as a point of departure for the discussions. The Slovenian system is currently undergoing important changes. It is moving from a highly regulated situation to one in which significant responsibilities are being devolved to schools.

Purpose of this report

The aim of this summary report is to outline and summarise the key issues and discussion points that were raised during the PLA in order to support wider national and European discussions about the changing roles of VET teachers in the context of more autonomous VET schools. The summary report provides an outline of the structure of the PLA and presents the key discussions, conclusions and recommendations made.

It is intended that this report be used to support the work of the Commission in disseminating the results of activities of the Focus Group to Member States and other stakeholders.

Structure of the report

The report comprises four sections:

- An outline of the context in which the issue of the role of VET teachers as change agents for the autonomy of VET schools was explored, based on the Background Report prepared for the PLA, which introduces the relevant issues associated with the topic;
- An outline of the PLA programme, the types of activities undertaken by the participants and the issues addressed;
- The conclusions and key messages arising from the activity; and,
- Recommendations for action at European level for consideration by the European Commission.

Annexes contain a description of a survey undertaken in the course of the PLA, the Background Report prepared for the PLA, the national reports from nine countries submitted in view of the PLA, and the list of participants.

2 PREPARATION FOR THE PLA

Context

In the current evolving socio-economic context, schools are required to be more responsive to the needs of society, employers and learners. Such needs for responsiveness imply a certain degree of autonomy.

Resulting from a continuous process of increasing school autonomy - observed in most European countries for several years - teachers are more often called to adopt new roles not directly related to teaching and training. For example, new emphasis is being placed on course and programme delivery, facilitation of learning, mentoring and the structuring of learning programmes in terms of expected learning outcomes. There is evidence¹ that many countries have developed policies that are moving towards increased school autonomy leading to greater flexibility for training pathways and for training provision.

In this changing environment, VET teachers find that they are assigned new roles related to curriculum design and development, planning and teamwork and engaging with employers, promotion of schools and recruitment of learners. In the process of rendering more autonomous VET schools, teachers, together with school management, are becoming central actors in implementing national reforms.

At the European level, teachers' new roles relating to increased school autonomy constitute a major concern in the frame of the Lisbon Strategy.

The need to improve the quality of teaching as a key factor in raising educational attainment levels and achieving the Lisbon goals was recently pointed out in a Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament in August 2007. This Communication particularly stressed that *'as schools become more autonomous and open learning environments, teachers assume ever greater responsibility for the content, organisation and monitoring of the learning process, as well as for their own personal career-long professional development'*.

One of the central priorities of the Slovenian presidency of the Council of the European Union during the first half of 2008 was also to examine such issues more closely, as a prerequisite for the promotion of a more creative and innovative atmosphere in schools.

In this context, the Focus Group on VET Teachers and Trainers (operating within the Cluster on Teachers and Trainers, in the framework of the Education and Training 2010 work programme) identified the need to explore the topic of 'VET teachers as change agents for the autonomy of VET schools' and the Slovenian authorities hosted a PLA for this purpose.

The Background Report

Prior to the PLA, each participating country was asked to provide a brief national report addressing the following issues:

- the challenges teachers encounter in relation to their new roles;
- the role of school management in the framework of school empowerment of teachers and the main difficulties of implementing such changes in VET schools;

¹ From Eurydice study on "Levels of autonomy and responsibilities of teachers in Europe", p.10.

- the links between greater autonomy of teachers, support to schools/teachers and quality assurance; and,
- the possible policy responses to these issues.

Guidelines were provided for national reports, based on a set of key questions:

- In your country, is there a trend towards more autonomy for VET schools or for VET teachers?
- What level of autonomy do VET teachers or VET schools have in relation to:
 - o Curriculum design;
 - o Planning of VET delivery and development of learning and teaching materials;
 - o Developing learning/teaching methods and design of assessment methods and criteria;
 - o Management of schools including financial management and staff management such as: defining working time, working conditions and employment contracts, tasks required from teachers, etc.; and,
 - o Interaction with employers or other stakeholders, including promotion of training to future students.
- Is there a difference between autonomy of teachers and schools in VET and those in general education?
- What challenges or problems have arisen in your country in relation to VET teachers' autonomy?
- How have the teachers responded to these new roles and do they feel confident /competent/supported enough to deal with the new challenges?
- What measures and policies are in place to support VET teachers in these new roles, e.g. in terms of continuing professional development or collaborative structures?
- In cases where teachers or schools have autonomy in some of the areas above, how is consistency and quality at national levels ensured (e.g. use of national standards, external evaluations, use of national curricula, compulsory quality management systems for schools, the roles of school inspections)?

A background report was produced on the basis of these national reports. It synthesises the responses from the countries to the key questions, draws general conclusions and identifies overarching trends and issues to be addressed in the PLA. The background report can be found in Annex B. The individual national reports are presented in Annex C.

3 THE PLA PROGRAMME

This PLA was designed to provide a means for examining the role of VET teachers in situations of increasing autonomy, exploring whether and how VET teachers can be 'change agents' in moving towards more autonomy for VET schools. The PLA group was able to use the Slovenian VET system as a laboratory. This is a system in dynamic change, from a highly regulated situation to one in which significant responsibilities are being devolved to schools.

The PLA group was resourced with a background report summarising the national reports provided by participating countries, which had been forwarded to participants before the PLA and can also be found in Annex B.

Summary of the programme

The PLA was led by Metka Zevnik (National Institute for Vocational Education and Training, Slovenia) and Dagmar Ouzoun (European Commission); some individual sessions were chaired by members of the Focus Group and the final session by Bostjan Zgonc of the Ministry of Education and Sport, Slovenia. The activities took place over three days, during the course of which a wide range of inputs was made available to the group for consideration:

- The background report prepared from the national reports contributed by eight countries;
- A national report from Spain presented at the PLA;
- Inputs by several Slovenian contributors; and,
- Inputs from other countries: Austria, Romania, Italy and Germany.

The inputs to the PLA from Slovenian experts combined to provide a comprehensive understanding of the VET system in Slovenia and to illustrate the successes and challenges of introducing more autonomy into the operation of VET schools. These inputs dealt with:

- The VET system in Slovenia;
- Current reform of VET programmes;
- Quality assurance and its implications for VET teachers;
- Training of VET teachers; and,
- Research on school autonomy in Slovenia and new support mechanisms.

These inputs were augmented by a visit to a VET centre in which the perspectives and experiences of three VET schools were outlined and discussed. At a session at the Ministry for Education and Sport in Ljubljana the management perspective on the introduction of more autonomy into schools was explored.

The programme provided the PLA group with opportunities for participant reflection and exchange on topics/activities/themes presented and for development of conclusions and recommendations for future work at European level.

End-of-session and end-of-day summaries of participants' discussions were made, enabling the discussion to be refocused as necessary and providing a framework for the following activities. All of these elements contributed to the discussions and deliberations of the group and helped to form the key messages and recommendations that arose from the proceedings.

Themes addressed in the PLA

The PLA programme comprised sessions structured to address four themes:

- The meaning of autonomy in VET;
- Support mechanisms and instruments for VET teachers in their new roles;
- Teachers' perspectives on their new roles in the framework of more autonomous schools; and,
- Exploring new relationships between teachers and management by focusing on new roles for headmasters.

Theme: The meaning of autonomy in VET

This key issue was explored mainly in the context of the Slovenian system, but with additional inputs from the Austrian, Romanian, Italian and German systems. The group received an overview of the VET system in Slovenia², comparing VET as it was during the previous centralized system with its contemporary organisation and outlining the new vision for VET in Slovenia. Another input set out the main points of the current reform of vocational education programmes in Slovenia, explaining the aims of the reform process and its implementation arrangements. Key aspects of the reform that relate to the autonomy issue are the shift towards learning outcomes-based programmes, the introduction of an open element in the curriculum allowing for 20% of the curriculum to be planned at the level of the school and the requirement for teachers to adopt teamwork roles. The first experiences of the change were outlined, addressing dilemmas and unanswered questions arose.

An input on quality assurance addressed the implications of increased responsibility for quality assurance for VET teachers in the context of increased autonomy. Issues that have arisen in this context in Slovenia include the need to establish the appropriate balance between self-evaluation of schools and external evaluation. The evaluation issues were further elaborated in an input on the German experience.

Discussion

In discussions on this theme, varying perspectives on the meaning of autonomy emerged, reflecting the range of perspectives already noted in the background report:

- Levels and kinds of autonomy vary very much between and across areas of VET activity such as curriculum design, pedagogy, school management etc.;
- The level and kinds of autonomy experienced in VET schools seems to be quite different in situations where VET is understood to be an element or option within secondary education and, by contrast, where VET is understood to be a post-secondary entity;
- There is a concern that vocational schools, if they become more autonomous, will become more like higher education institutions and thus lose their responsiveness to the needs of the economy and the world of work; and,
- There are many reasons why teachers might be reluctant to embrace increased autonomy: it can have the effect of significantly changing their role and the nature of the teaching occupation.

² Presentation augmented by the 2008 CEDEFOP publication, 'Vocational Education and Training in Slovenia – short description'.

The discussion on the matter of quality assurance drew attention to how, in situations where curricula are developed at the level of the school and designed to support learners to achieve required learning outcomes, quality assurance can become the framework through which the State manages the system, instead of the former arrangements of fixed curricula, centralised examinations etc. Another issue highlighted in this discussion was the necessity to consider how the role of school inspectors interface with new quality assurance processes: the role of the inspector may also have to change in situations of increased autonomy – for example, inspectors could have a new role in setting guidelines for internal or school-based evaluations and in monitoring evaluation outcomes.

Theme: Support mechanisms and instruments for VET teachers in their new roles

This theme was explored with the assistance of three inputs:

- A paper describing the education and training of teachers in the Slovenian VET system and addressing implications for the training process of new roles emerging for teachers;
- An outline of recent research on school autonomy in Slovenia and new support mechanisms; and,
- Presentations from IT and RO outlining support mechanisms and instruments used in other European Countries.

Discussion

Discussions on this theme revealed many concerns about the supports needed if teachers are to adopt a role as change agents towards increased school autonomy:

- In-service training or continuing professional development is not enough to meet the challenges of increased autonomy: it is necessary to change initial teacher training;
- In many countries there is already a wide range of teacher training and development programmes, but it is often not clear how these can contribute to addressing the particular issues for teachers arising out of increased autonomy. Many teacher training programmes are focused on subject-specialist skills and competence, whereas increased autonomy of schools requires all teachers to adopt new practices, for example in teamwork;
- Teacher development supports need to be developed on a whole-school basis to avoid a situation where there are differential levels of competence in taking on the roles required in a changing school;
- Where autonomy is devolved to schools, some aspects of the system still need to be coordinated at a central level: at the very least it is necessary for ministries to monitor the fulfilment of devolved responsibilities;
- Increased autonomy for schools is easier to introduce in the context of a general system reform and in the case of smaller systems: it is difficult to re-direct a big ship; and,
- Some countries are in a position to deploy EU structural funds to develop support measures for teachers, but others are not.

Mechanisms and approaches were identified that can be used to support VET teachers in their adaption to new situations and new roles:

- Visiting experts;

- Modules in initial teacher training;
- Peer learning teams;
- Expert groups to develop new tools, new processes etc.; and,
- Whole school planning.

The issue of additional pay for extra duties is always an issue, but there are ways to deal with this, particularly if it is addressed on a whole-school basis – for example, by allocating some teachers time to undertake development work or other activity that will benefit the whole institution. A strategy from the Italian experience was described: schools are allocated an ‘innovation voucher’ that can be used to support developmental activity and change processes.

A key issue raised in this discussion was whether VET teachers want to adopt new roles and particularly roles that involve non-classroom activity. Some countries, notably Portugal, described situations in which such roles were rejected by many teachers, no matter what supports were made available to assist them. The question was raised: are teachers to be change agents or are they to be forced to change?

Theme: Teachers’ perspectives on their new roles in the framework of more autonomous schools

This theme was introduced in a visit to the BioTechnical school centre at Naklo. Presentations were made by headmasters and teachers from three VET schools: the Biotechnical Centre Naklo, the School Centre Velenje and the Vocational School for Catering and Tourism Radovljica. These presentations generally described a positive experience of how teachers have adapted to new roles in contexts of change and development, although many difficulties and issues were acknowledged.

Discussion

In discussion on the presentations, certain aspects of practice were identified that have particular significance in considering the changing roles of teachers:

- The Naklo school centre is a big, ‘multiplex’ institution offering a range of different programmes, so that teachers are working in a varied environment within an overall management structure;
- Teamwork is promoted and supported as a normal activity rather than as a novel or innovative practice;
- A policy of formulating individual plans for learners is feasible because of team-working (principal, school counsellor, class teacher, subject teachers, all collaborate);
- Teacher assemblies are an important aspect of coordinating the roles of individual teachers into a cohesive school policy and action plan; and,
- Liaison with business and industry is considered to be an intrinsic aspect of the work of VET schools.

The key feature of the Naklo centre that was taken forward into the further deliberations of the PLA group is that it provides a collaborative environment in which teachers can contribute their particular expertise in an effective way for the benefit of the learners.

Theme: Exploring new relationships between teachers and management by focusing on new roles for headmasters

This theme was explored through a seminar on the experiences of headmasters in implementing reforms on autonomy of VET schools and in managing changes in

VET teachers' roles. From within the PLA group, contributions were made by headmasters from Germany and Slovenia, followed by a round table discussion to which several Slovenian headmasters contributed. The session addressed a range of issues:

- role of teachers in promoting VET;
- role of teachers in cooperation with industry and labour market;
- defining working time and working roles;
- professional development of teachers;
- self-evaluation and quality assurance in schools; and,
- European support by funding.

Discussion

Key points emerging from the round table were:

- Autonomy cannot be ordered: it can only work if a new culture is shaped within the school;
- Autonomy cannot mean anarchy: in most situations it is necessary to make change while maintaining equilibrium, a workable balance between regulation and autonomy;
- A key issue is the changing role of school leadership and this is as important as the role of the teacher; and,
- An outcome of the process of changing to more school autonomy will be a new definition of what a teacher is and what they do

Reflection and analysis

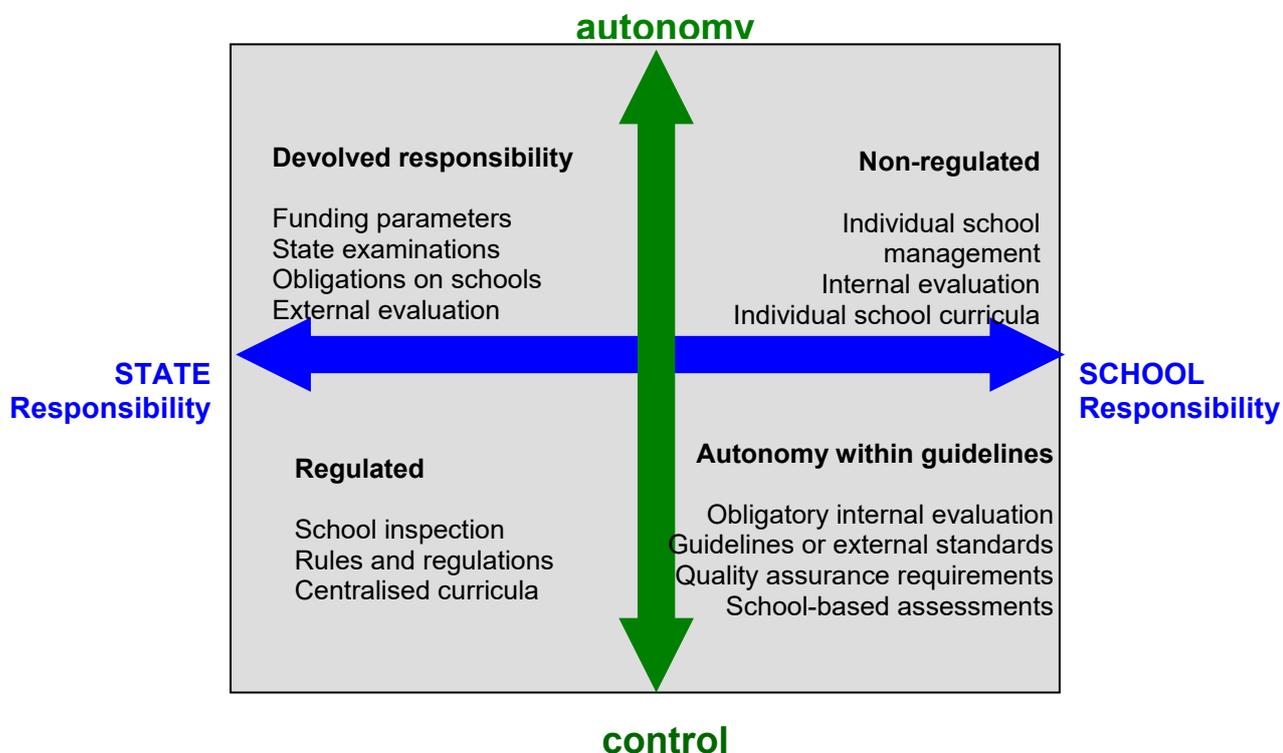
The PLA programme included three workshop sessions, providing a structured process through which the group could clarify their common understanding on the meaning and actuality of autonomy for teachers and schools and sublimate this perspective along with the learning from the Slovenian experience to identify key messages arising from the activity and to develop recommendations for the European Commission.

Workshop 1

The first workshop was structured around an exploratory activity using an instrument to analyse levels and kinds of school autonomy. Originally developed by members of the Focus Group during the course of preparation for the PLA, this instrument was further developed and deployed as a basis for exploring the different national situations across the countries participating in the PLA³.

³ Based on figure 3 "Reformansätze im Spannungsfeld von Verantwortung und Initiative" in Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung (Eds.): Berufsbildende Schulen als eigenständig agierende lernende Organisationen. Stand der Weiterentwicklung berufsbildender Schulen zu eigenständig agierenden lernenden Organisationen als Partner der regionalen Berufsbildung (BEAGLE). Forschungsbericht von Matthias Becker, Universität Flensburg, Georg Spöttl, Universität Bremen, Ralph Dreher, Universität Flensburg, unter Mitarbeit von Carl-Heinz Doose. Bonn: BLK 2006 (Heft 135), p. 20 (Download <http://www.blk-bonn.de/papers/heft135.pdf>)

Instrument to analyse the balance of responsibility and autonomy



The diagram provides a means of analysing the balance between autonomy and control on the vertical axis and the location of responsibility (in the school or external) on the horizontal axis, providing four quadrants that enable various situations of autonomy to be positioned. The quadrants define autonomy in terms of

- **Regulated situations**, in which schools operate within rules and regulations and responsibility lies outside the school and typically with Ministries or other State agencies. Centralised curricula, national regulations and agreements, and school inspection processes are associated with this scenario. An example in Italy is that the conditions of service for teachers are regulated through agreements between social partners at the national level.
- **Devolved responsibility**, in which ultimate control is retained outside the school, but responsibility for implementation is devolved to the school. Control is typically exerted through measures such as funding parameters, centralised examinations, external evaluation and obligations for schools. An example is that the Chambers control the curriculum in the German Dual System through centralised examinations and training directives, while leaving flexibility for teachers with regard to individual content.
- **Autonomy within guidelines**, in which broad parameters are set at national or system levels and schools develop their own plans and strategies within these guidelines. Arrangements typically associated with this scenario include obligatory internal evaluation, externally-set outcome standards and quality-assurance requirements, and school-based assessment. An example in Ireland, within post-secondary VET, is that assessment of learning outcomes is planned and administered at the school level within the framework of guidelines agreed

between the school and the qualification awarding body as part of an overall quality assurance validation.

- **Non-regulation**, in which schools have independent responsibility for their activity. This scenario may apply to various aspects of the work of the school, including school-based curricula, internal evaluation processes under school control and individual school management processes. In many countries – for example, in Portugal – teachers have independent responsibility for the selection of teaching methodologies and materials.

In the workshop, participants analysed the level and kind of autonomy experienced by VET teachers and schools in their countries in relation to five aspects of VET, extending and clarifying the information presented in the background report. The diagram provided a visual representation of the level of autonomy experienced in nine countries. This activity indicated that teachers and schools already experience high levels of autonomy in relation to selection and development of teaching materials (in eight out of nine countries), selection of teaching methodologies (six out of nine), liaison with the labour market and business sector and promotion of the school and its programmes (five out of nine). On the other hand, high levels of regulation attached to management processes (five out of nine), funding and finance, and curricula (five out of nine). There was also a significant cluster of instances of school autonomy within guidelines, or in cooperative contexts, across all five aspects of VET activity – for example, where schools are responsible for devising assessment processes within the guidelines set by awarding bodies. The exploratory activity is described in detail in Annex A.

Workshop 2

In a second workshop, building on the common understanding developed in the survey process, the group began to develop a cohesive perspective on how the roles of teachers and the increasing autonomy of schools can be coordinated to achieve the maximum possible positive effect. It was acknowledged that increased autonomy is not a worthwhile objective if it simply means the dispersal of duties from the centre, resulting in more responsibility being placed on the school and ultimately on the teacher. It was also established that most teachers already experience significant autonomy in relation to their own professional practice and that school autonomy can sometimes be seen as subverting the independent role of the individual teacher.

Looking at the four kinds of autonomy represented on the survey diagram it was felt that the way forward should be to encourage and promote movement towards the approach of developing increased autonomy within guidelines, in which the role of the teacher can evolve in the context of the school as a 'learning organisation'. This approach can be defined as a collaborative model of autonomy, placing the focus on developing the school as a change-oriented entity in which the roles of teachers can evolve rather than on seeking to deploy teachers as agents of change. A strategy based on this conceptual model would contain measures to encourage and support schools to become holistic, integrated learning organisations, in which teachers can develop their own roles as active, self-improving professionals participating as collaborative agents in the change process of the school as a whole. The policy can be summarised as 'developing collaborative autonomy in the context of the VET school as a learning organisation'. The VET school as a learning organisation should be understood as a holistic, integrated and organic entity comprising teachers, school management, students and parents.

The concept of the VET school as a learning organisation was further developed to take account of the need for VET to be relevant to the world of work and integrated into the local and regional business and enterprise environment. A key rationale for

increased VET school autonomy is the increasing demand for customised VET programmes to meet the developing needs of business and industry. Scenarios were described setting out how this can be achieved, notably an example from Italy of how VET schools and businesses can collaborate to develop 'communities of practice'. A comprehensive model emerged of the VET school as a holistic, integrated and organic entity comprising teachers, school management, students, parents and also, as an essential element, involving local and regional businesses and enterprises as partners in communities of practice. Collaboration should begin with the strategic planning process of the school and extend through programme planning, curriculum development, materials development and the many operational processes involved in the work of a VET school so that teaching, learning and liaison with the external environment are integrated elements in a whole-school approach.

Workshop 3

The third workshop was the final session of the PLA. In this session, key concepts already developed by the group were elaborated and adjusted, to develop conclusions and recommendations for action at the European level. These are set out in the section on 'Conclusions and Recommendations' below.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on the inputs from the various sessions in the PLA and refining the emerging concepts through discussion, the group developed a number of conclusions and key messages that should be considered in relation to VET policy at national levels. Some of these messages were further developed to provide recommendations for action at the European level.

The overarching conclusion of the PLA can be summarised as follows:

It is unrealistic to rely only on teachers as the primary agents of change for school autonomy. Instead, the emphasis should be on developing a new, collaborative model of autonomy in VET schools, placing the focus on the school as a change-oriented entity in which the roles of teachers can evolve rather than on seeking to deploy teachers as agents of change.

In addition the PLA concluded that:

- It cannot be assumed that increased school autonomy will necessarily be welcomed by teachers, whose own sense of individual professional autonomy may be challenged by the need to engage in teamwork, planning and ex-classroom activities. It is proposed as good practice that changes in the school approach be introduced in the context of an organic and holistic school development process;
- An outcome of the process of changing to more autonomy in VET schools will be a new understanding of what a VET teacher is and what they do; this may lead to the need for a new definition of the teacher's role as expressed in work contracts, in the range of activities considered to be part of the teacher's role, in arrangements for acknowledging and remunerating work outside the classroom;
- National standards (e.g. outcome-based qualifications) can lead to school-based curricula, but not automatically. Responsibility for curriculum design may still be centralised. Devolution of this responsibility to schools is a separate policy issue;
- There is a need to involve the business and enterprise sector as an active partner in any processes to foster autonomy in VET schools, as it is essential that VET programmes be designed to address the learning outcomes required in the real workplace and that the school approach be developed in this context ;
- Higher autonomy of VET schools is a prerequisite for delivering customised VET programmes to increasingly individualised target groups and to meet the developing needs of business and industry. Raising the level of autonomy of VET schools therefore contributes to the attractiveness of VET;
- The shift towards school autonomy needs to be carefully planned and implemented in a concerted, coordinated process: this process always takes considerable time and should not be rushed; and,
- If increased autonomy for VET schools is to be effectively introduced, all key players - including teachers and also school managers - need support in adapting to the changed situation. This support should include appropriate professional development as well as consultative and familiarisation measures where new approaches are being introduced. While some of these supports can be provided at the higher system level, much can be done within the school to ensure that all players are adequately prepared for change.

Messages for national policy-makers

The key message from the PLA for national policy-makers is based on the idea that increased autonomy for VET schools should not be seen as an overt objective in itself; rather, it should be the outcome of a more holistic development of VET schools into a new kind of educational resource. The group identifies as a positive strategy that schools be encouraged and supported to become holistic, integrated learning organisations, in which teachers can develop their own roles as active, self-improving professionals participating as collaborative agents in the change process of the school as a whole. **The policy can be summarised as ‘developing collaborative autonomy in the context of the VET school as a learning organisation’.** In this concept, the VET school as a learning organisation should be understood to be a holistic, integrated and organic entity comprising teachers, school management, students, parents and also, as an essential element, involving local and regional businesses and enterprises as partners in communities of practice. Collaboration should begin with the strategic planning process of the school and extend through programme planning, curriculum development, materials development and the many operational processes involved in the work of a VET school so that teaching, learning and liaison with the external environment are integrated elements in a whole-school approach. The message for policy-makers is that VET schools operating on this model would be able to become autonomous and take on significant responsibility for their ongoing development.

Further developing this concept, the group suggests that:

- New modes of evaluation and performance monitoring, appropriate to the ‘school as a learning organisation’, will be required: for example, school-based arrangements for quality assurance may need to be monitored by an external body. These developments have implications for structures at system level such as school inspection;
- In the VET school as a learning organisation, business and enterprise should be involved as collaborative partners and as customers for education services as well as employers of the graduates of the school;
- School management is a vital element in the process of developing a school into a learning organisation. Principals and managers need appropriate authority as well as the necessary resources to enable them to effectively lead fundamental change processes; and,
- E.U structural funds should be considered as a potential key resource in providing material support to the process of introducing an environment of increased autonomy into VET schools.

Recommendations to the European Commission

The PLA group developed a number of recommendations for action at the European level. These recommendations build on the concept of ‘developing collaborative autonomy in the context of the VET school as a learning organisation’, as set out in the key message for national policy makers in section 4.1 above. This concept is proposed by the PLA group as the appropriate approach to promoting school autonomy.

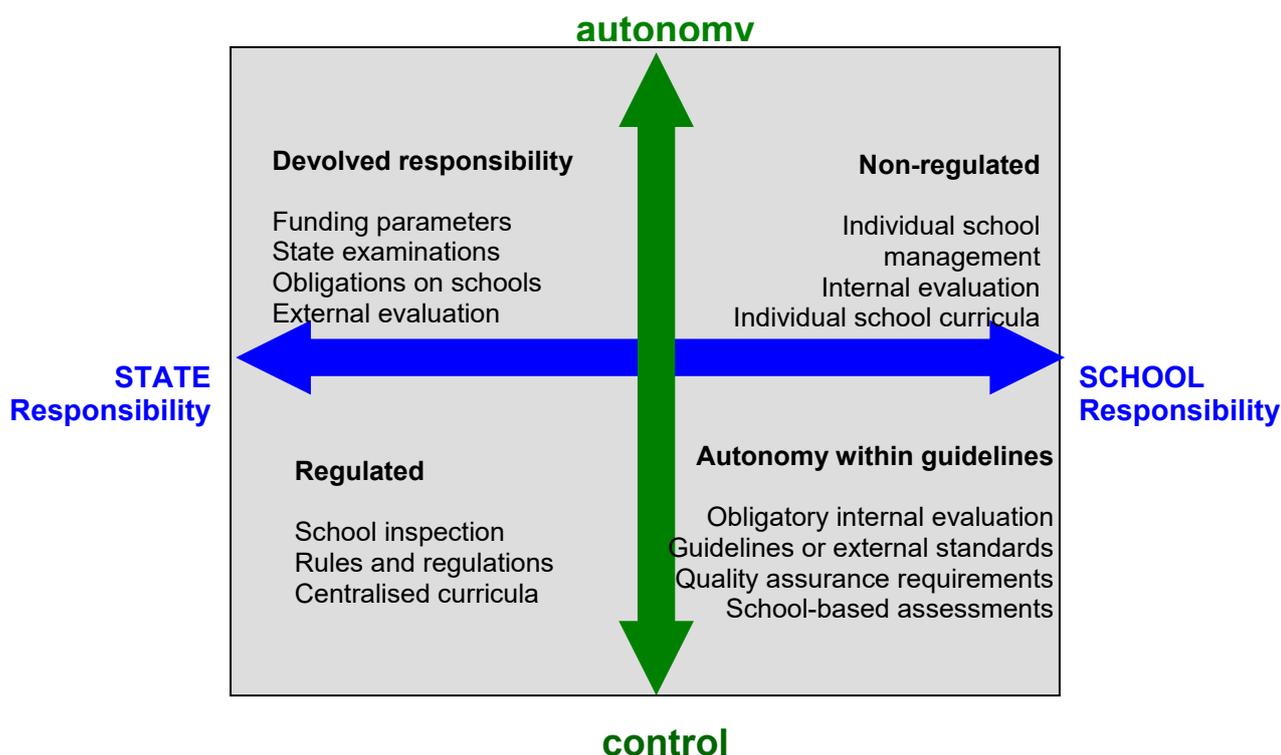
- The holistic model of the VET school as a learning organisation needs to be identified and supported as a ‘target group’ in European policy;
- The new definition of ‘collaborative autonomy in the context of the VET school as a learning organisation’ should form the basis of all further and ongoing policy formulation in the area of VET school autonomy;

- A wide variety of training and professional development initiatives will be required for many actors in the process of implementing collaborative autonomy in the context of the VET school as a learning organisation;
- Training and financial support will be necessary for all actors involved if schools are to engage in collaborative communities of practice with business and enterprise; and,
- The business and enterprise sector should participate as embedded partners in any future and ongoing activities at the European level to promote the holistic model of the VET school as a learning organisation.

ANNEX A: Exploring levels and kinds of autonomy

An instrument to analyse levels and kinds of school autonomy was produced by members of the Focus Group⁴ in the course of preparation for the PLA on VET teachers as change agents for the autonomy of VET schools. This instrument was further developed and deployed as the basis of an exploratory activity undertaken during the PLA:

Instrument to analyse the balance of responsibility and autonomy



The diagram provides a means of analysing the balance between autonomy and control on the vertical axis and the location of responsibility (in the school or external) on the horizontal axis, providing four quadrants that enable various situations of autonomy to be positioned. The quadrants define autonomy in terms of:

- **Regulated situations**, in which schools operate within rules and regulations and responsibility lies outside the school and typically with Ministries or other State agencies. Centralised curricula national regulations and agreements and school inspection processes are associated with this scenario.
- **Devolved responsibility**, in which ultimate control is retained outside the school, but responsibility for implementation is devolved to the school. Control

⁴ Based on figure 3 "Reformansätze im Spannungsfeld von Verantwortung und Initiative" in Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung (Eds.): Berufsbildende Schulen als eigenständig agierende lernende Organisationen. Stand der Weiterentwicklung berufsbildender Schulen zu eigenständig agierenden lernenden Organisationen als Partner der regionalen Berufsbildung (BEAGLE). Forschungsbericht von Matthias Becker, Universität Flensburg, Georg Spöttl, Universität Bremen, Ralph Dreher, Universität Flensburg, unter Mitarbeit von Carl-Heinz Doose. Bonn: BLK 2006 (Heft 135), p. 20 (Download <http://www.blk-bonn.de/papers/heft135.pdf>)

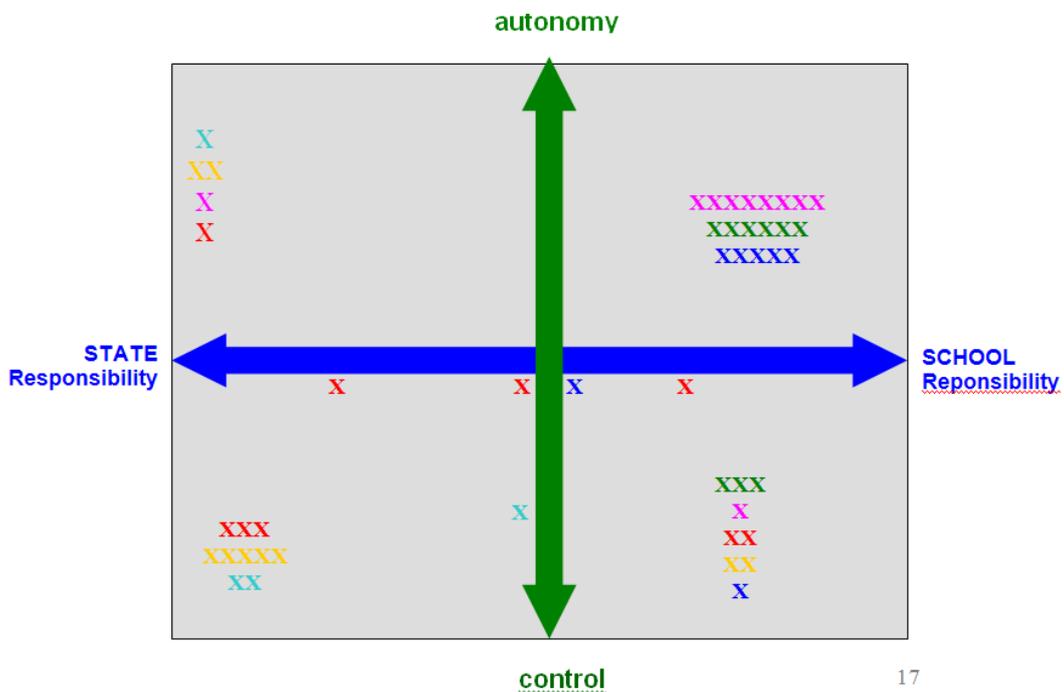
is typically exerted through measures such as funding parameters, centralised examinations, external evaluation and obligations for schools.

- **Autonomy within guidelines**, in which broad parameters are set at national or system level and schools develop their own plans and strategies within these guidelines. Arrangements typically associated with this scenario include obligatory internal evaluation, externally-set outcomes standards and quality-assurance requirements and school-based assessment.
- **Non-regulation**, in which schools have independent responsibility for their activity. This scenario may apply to various aspects of the work of the school, including school-based curricula, internal evaluation processes under school control and individual school management processes.

To extend and clarify the information assembled from the national reports, an exploratory activity was undertaken in the course of the PLA, in which participants analysed the level and kind of autonomy experienced by teachers in VET schools in their countries in relation to five aspects of VET:

- Curriculum design;
- Materials development;
- Methodologies;
- Management (including funding and finance); and,
- External liaison (with employers, promotional activity etc).

A visual representation was used to illustrate the level and kind of autonomy experienced in nine countries, For some countries it was found necessary to make a distinction between autonomy in relation to assessment methodologies (often highly regulated) and teaching methodologies (generally less regulated). The outcomes are illustrated in the following diagram.



Key

- X Curriculum design
- X Materials development
- X Teaching methodologies
- X Assessment methodologies
- X Management
- X External liaison (with employers, promotional activity etc)

Outcome of the exploratory activity:

The diagram illustrates how teachers and schools experience high levels of autonomy in relation to selection and development of teaching materials, selection of teaching methodologies, liaison with the labour market and promotion of the school and its programmes. On the other hand, high levels of regulation attach to management processes, funding and finance, and curriculum. Assessment methodologies are generally subject to external control, contrasting with teaching methodologies, which are generally non-regulated. There is a significant cluster of instances of school autonomy within guidelines across a range of aspects of VET activity. A small number of transitional situations are reflected, in which responsibility for activities is moving between quadrants, generally away from high regulation and towards non-regulation (illustrated on the diagram by Xs positioned close to the axes).

Annex B - Background Report

PEER LEARNING ACTIVITY ON VET TEACHERS AS CHANGE AGENTS FOR THE AUTONOMY OF VET SCHOOLS

20 – 22 October 2008, Bled, Slovenia

INTRODUCTION

This paper is a Background report for the Peer Learning Activity (PLA) on “VET Teachers as change agents for the autonomy of VET schools” organised by the European Commission (DG EAC) in cooperation with the Slovenian National Institute for Vocational Education and Training. The PLA is organised within the framework of the focus group on VET teachers and trainers.

The PLA will take place in Bled between 20 and 22 October 2008. Its objective is to exchange experience, stimulate discussions and achieve mutual learning on the new roles and challenges of VET teachers resulting from an increased autonomy of VET schools.

This background report is to serve as an information source on national policies and practices addressing the above-mentioned issue. It consists of a synthesis of information provided by countries participating in the PLA.

Prior to the PLA, the European Commission asked each country to submit a national report addressing:

- the challenges teachers encounter in relation to their new roles
- the role of school management in the framework of school empowerment of teachers and the main difficulties of implementing such changes in VET schools
- the links between greater autonomy of teachers, support to schools/teachers and quality assurance
- the possible policy responses to the above issues.

The national reports also explore new possibilities for interaction with the labour market and how this impacts on VET teachers in the context of increased school autonomy.

National reports received by the 20th of June 2008 are attached in Annex A. These reports cover the following seven countries: Austria (AT); Germany (DE); Ireland (IE); Italy (IT); Portugal (PT); Romania (RO) and Iceland (IS).

European context

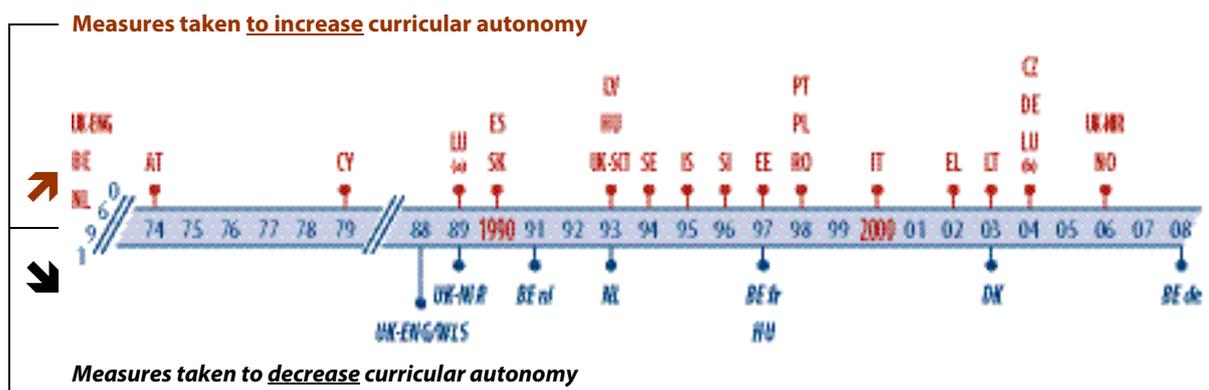
In the current evolving socio-economic context, schools are required to be more responsive to the needs of society, employers and learners. Such need for responsiveness implies a certain degree of autonomy.

Resulting from a continuous process of increasing schools' autonomy observed in most European countries for several years, teachers are more and more called to face new roles evolving away from teaching and training (new emphasis being on course and programme delivery, facilitation of learning, mentoring and knowledge/use of learning outcomes).

As Figure 1⁵ below shows, many countries have developed policies moving towards increased school autonomy leading to greater flexibility of training pathways and of training provision. It should be noted that this Figure primarily refers to general education. However, the trends observed are presumed to also apply to initial VET in most cases since nationwide reforms generally concern both general and initial vocational education

VET teachers see themselves assigned new roles related to curriculum design and development, planning and teamwork and engaging with employers. In the process of rendering more autonomy to VET schools, teachers, together with school management, are becoming central actors in implementing national reforms.

Figure 1: Dates of major reforms that have increased or decreased the autonomy of teachers (ISCED 1 and 2) between 1950 and 2008



(:) BG and IE

At the European level, teachers' new roles relating to an increased schools' autonomy constitute a major concern in the frame of the Lisbon Strategy.

Improving the quality of teaching as a key factor in raising educational attainment levels and achieving the Lisbon goals was recently pointed out in a Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament of August 2007. This Communication particularly stressed that *'as schools become more autonomous and open learning environments, teachers assume ever greater responsibility for the content, organisation and monitoring of the learning process, as well as for their own personal career-long professional development'*.

One of the central priorities of the Slovenian presidency of the Council of the European Union during the first half of 2008 was also to examine such issues more closely, as a prerequisite for the promotion of a more creative and innovative atmosphere in schools.

⁵ From Eurydice study on "Levels of autonomy and responsibilities of teachers in Europe", p.10.

Together with the other PLAs generated by the Cluster “Teachers and Trainers” and embedded in the Education and Training Work programme 2010, the Bled PLA on “VET teachers as change agents for the autonomy of VET schools” constitutes further evidence of the EU’s concern.

NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

This section provides a synthesis of the national reports received from the following seven countries: Austria (AT); Germany (DE); Ireland (IE); Italy (IT); Portugal (PT); Romania (RO) and Iceland (IS). These reports addressed a range of issues in response to a set of key questions developed by the working party established to assist the Slovenian authorities in preparing for the PLA.

Is there a trend towards more autonomy for VET schools or for VET teachers?

Most of the national reports describe situations of increasing autonomy for VET schools and teachers. The exception is Austria, where no concrete developments are reported although there is an emerging debate on this issue; however, it is noted that teacher autonomy in Austria is already high in relation to the actual teaching process.

Several national reports describe how increasing autonomy of schools and teachers is associated with reforms or re-organisations in the VET system generally. These reforms are typically designed to make VET more flexible and responsive to changing needs, sometimes forming part of wider developments in the education system generally. In situations of general reform, the trend towards more autonomy appears to be a product of wider systemic change rather than an objective in itself. The German report describes how a transformation of VET schools into (regional) centres of VET is leading to a growing self-responsibility of schools and a shift in the roles of teachers. Recent legislation in Iceland introduces increased autonomy in planning new programmes/pathways for all upper-secondary schools, including VET schools. The Italian report explains how recent legislation and associated regulations have defined the principles and degrees of autonomy for all schools, so that functional autonomy at school level operates within the parameters of national targets, goals and organisational standards. In Romania the VET system has been reconstructed and modernised, so that VET schools now have significant autonomy in relation to planning the range of vocational programmes on offer, educational and pedagogical organisation and setting up projects and partnerships with different stakeholders at local and regional level. Slovenia reports ongoing systemic reform of VET that includes strengthening the autonomy of schools and teachers.

In some countries the trend towards increased autonomy for VET schools and teachers is driven by reforms in the qualifications systems, whereby VET curricula are designed to assist learners in achieving the specified learning outcomes for a qualification. Ireland and Romania illustrate how the introduction of outcomes-based qualifications involves schools and teachers in processes such as curriculum design, assessment and quality assurance.

Some reports stress the variability of the rate of change towards autonomy in various elements of the VET systems. In some cases, this effect derives from differing regional approaches. In other cases it is apparent that change may be slower where VET is part of general education provision, whereas more rapid change is seen where schools are operating in closer association with the labour market. The question arises whether it is appropriate for the PLA to consider the level of autonomy associated with VET programmes as well as with schools and teachers, as the delivery mix of some institutions includes VET programmes embedded in

upper-secondary provision as well as other VET programmes that are post-secondary in nature, with varying arrangements for autonomy and responsibility arising. The Irish report, while indicating a general trend towards more autonomy, describes different scenarios for VET in upper secondary schools and for schools offering post-secondary VET programmes: the latter institutions typically operate in a more autonomous environment. Portugal describes how vocational schools have pedagogical autonomy and organisational independence, whereas secondary schools, also offering vocational education, are centralised – although legislative proposals currently under public discussion would introduce increased autonomy in this sector. On the other hand, the operation of training centres, offering courses in the apprenticeship system, is highly centralised in Portugal.

Several reports make separate mention of the autonomy of VET schools and VET teachers. Even where institutional autonomy is comparatively weak, the reports generally indicate that VET teachers have significant autonomy in relation to the design and implementation of the teaching and learning process. The expanding role of the VET teacher in the context of increasing school autonomy is mentioned. The Romanian report notes that, in addition to taking responsibility for pedagogical and curricular design, VET teachers are involved in liaison with employers, setting up projects, arranging student mobility and in the development and testing of new approaches and methods.

The level of autonomy of VET teachers or VET schools

The level of autonomy experienced by VET teachers and VET schools is described under a number of headings in each report. In general there is evidence that VET schools and teachers enjoy considerable autonomy in programme planning and in the selection and development of teaching materials and methodologies. The extent to which curriculum design is located at the level of the school varies considerably, and similar variation is seen in the arrangements for assessment design. Interaction with employers is included in the remit of many VET schools, but involvement in the promotion of training appears to be the exception rather than the rule. Responsibility for financial and staff management seldom rests with the schools and then only in the context of central guidelines or governing conditions.

Autonomy in curriculum design

All of the reports indicate that curriculum design for VET programmes is a complex process involving various stakeholders including ministries, social partners, schools, teachers and professional associations, and qualifications awarding bodies. In most countries there is a strongly centralised element in curriculum design, to ensure that consistent standards are set and maintained: the ways through which VET schools and teachers participate in the design process vary considerably, even between different systems within one country.

In some cases, a dimension of the curriculum design process takes place at the level of the school within national or regional guidelines or within a national framework curriculum. In Iceland a National Curriculum Guide (NCG) is set by the Ministry for each VET programme and, on the basis of the NCG, each school publishes a school curriculum guide. In Ireland, most vocational curricula are derived from the learning outcomes required for qualifications: the awarding body for vocational awards sets standards for a qualification and it is then a matter for the school to design programmes to support their students to achieve these standards, within the framework of a validation agreement with the awarding body. This process places significant responsibility on the school in terms of curriculum design.

In other countries, the curriculum is essentially designed on a central basis, but there is a component allowed for local design in relation to which schools have significant

autonomy. Slovenia describes how framework national curricula are modularly structured so that they can accommodate elements that are designed at the school level to adapt to local needs. In Italy, vocational schools implement centrally-defined curricula, but these allow for additional elements to be developed at the school level. The VET curricula in Romania also comprise national and local components. In both Italy and Slovenia the proportion of the curriculum designed at school level is specified at 20%.

Several reports note that there are structures to enable VET teachers to participate in the curriculum design process at the national or regional level. This can be through the identification of specialists such as the Fachleiter (senior teachers) in Germany or through representation by professional bodies or teacher associations. As for the elements of curriculum that are designed at the level of the school, the reports make it clear that teachers are heavily involved in this. Iceland notes that, as the provisions of new legislation are implemented, there will be much more need for an active engagement on behalf of all teachers in the work of curriculum design and development. Slovenia points out that the development of local curriculum components involves teachers, employers and students in working together.

Autonomy in the planning of VET delivery and development of learning and teaching materials

Most of the reports indicate significant levels of autonomy at school level in the planning of VET delivery, although in Germany and Austria the structure of delivery is largely prescribed. Within the school sphere of responsibility there are differing arrangements for the involvement of the individual teacher: in some cases there is strong collegiality.

In the development of learning and teaching materials the autonomy of the individual teacher is described as very strong in most reports. The level of autonomy ranges from the Austrian situation where schools and teachers have some freedom in choosing from lists, to the examples of Iceland and Ireland where it is common practice for teachers to develop their own materials or adapt existing resources.

Autonomy in developing learning/teaching methods and in the design of assessment methods and criteria

Most of the reports address this question and indicate that responsibility for choosing and developing teaching approaches and methodologies lies firmly with the individual VET teacher.

The situation with regard to assessment is much more varied. Several reports suggest that schools and teachers have a high level of autonomy in relation to assessment, but do not elaborate on this statement. It is not clear from some reports whether the responses refer to ongoing assessment within the classroom or to assessment for the award of certificates or qualifications. In general, where assessment towards an award is described, reports indicate that the school and the teacher operate within the framework of conditions or guidelines set by an external body. In Germany, the examinations are the responsibility of the Chambers, but teachers assess for general subjects under guidelines set down by the regional authorities. In Ireland, vocational qualifications are awarded by two dedicated 'awarding bodies'. One of these (the State Examination Commission) administers centralised examinations that incorporate an element of teacher-based assessment. The other (the Further Education and Training Awards Council) devolves responsibility for assessment to the schools, subject to validation agreements and quality assurance arrangements

Autonomy in management of schools including financial management and staff management (defining working time, working conditions and employment contracts, tasks required from teachers, etc.)

The reports indicate few situations in which responsibility for financial and staff management rests with VET schools. Where such devolution of responsibility does exist, it is only in the context of central guidelines or governing conditions. For example, most reports point out that working time and conditions and employment contracts are defined on a national level as part of wider collective bargaining processes; otherwise, these conditions are enshrined in legislation or in labour code. However, some reports note that changes are planned or are under way that may result in schools having more autonomy in financial and personnel management. The German report describes how the introduction of working hours accounts for VET teachers offers school management the opportunity to be more flexible in the assignment of teaching personnel.

Some reports note that boards of management have responsibility for financial reporting and for recruitment, but these functions are always within strong national or regional operational guidelines.

Role in interaction with employers or other stakeholders, including promotion of training to future students.

It is clear from the reports that interaction with employers is an accepted part of the remit of vocational schools and teachers in all countries; indeed, it is a required function in many cases. There is much variation in the extent to which this interaction is at the level of the school as an institution, at the level of the individual VET teacher or a responsibility of a department or programme group. In Portugal, there is far less interaction with employers by secondary schools providing VET than is the case with training centres where such interaction is very strong. Iceland also notes a wide variation between schools in this respect, noting that collaboration with the labour market is not yet a part of the defined role of teachers but that changes in this situation are included in legislation.

Few reports address the issue of schools engaging in the promotion of training. The Irish report points out that teachers are often required by school management to promote VET programmes to prospective students, particularly in vocational schools providing post-secondary programmes. This can entail developing promotional materials for dissemination to prospective students, providing information at career events and meeting with students in groups or individually. The German report notes that some VET schools are now offering CVET courses on the private regional educational market. The Icelandic report highlights interesting initiatives - taken by individual VET school/teachers - encouraging students to undertake VET programmes by personal visits to their former schools and making presentations. Examples of cooperation between school levels allowing pupils in the last grade of compulsory school to take individual modules in a VET school on a voluntary basis are also mentioned.

Is there a difference between autonomy of teachers and schools in VET and those in general education?

Several reports state unequivocally that there is no difference between autonomy of VET teachers and schools and those in general education. In other reports the assertion of similarity is conditioned by comments indicating that vocational teachers and schools are more likely to take up opportunities for autonomy and capitalise on the freedom available to them. The German report notes that VET schools are said to be more innovative and faster in taking up reforms. The Italian report suggests that, from the organizational point of view VET schools are more autonomous in

fostering links and cooperation with companies and other local organisations; it cites the involvement of vocational schools in the formation of “training and technology poles”, joint boards linking together VET schools, Local Authorities and enterprises to promote local economic and industrial development. The Romanian report identifies that, in practice, VET schools and teachers are more active and benefit more from their autonomy than those in general education.

Other reports identify significant differences between the autonomy available to VET schools and teachers and their equivalents in general education – and indeed between sectors within VET. In Portugal, the level of autonomy varies between the vocational schools (flexible and independent), secondary schools offering VET (centralised) and training centres (highly centralised). The Irish report illustrates different regimes of autonomy and responsibility for VET practitioners in the secondary system and their equivalents involved in the provision of post-secondary VET programmes: both types of programme may be delivered in the same school. This complex scenario arises because the level of autonomy is related to the nature of the programme rather than to the institution and is conditioned by the requirements and procedures of the awarding body for the qualification to which the programme leads.

The Icelandic report suggests that, while the general answer is that there is no difference, it may be that vocational schools and teachers are a little less likely to experience autonomy in practice because the curriculum guidelines of VET programmes tend to be more strictly defined than the general ones, thus giving a smaller space for the autonomy of teachers and schools.

Problems and challenges relating to VET teachers' autonomy

Aside from Austria where such issues do not really apply since school autonomy is limited, all national reports point out problems and/or challenges relating to VET teachers' autonomy.

The most commonly cited problems refer to the lack of a proper preparation that would enable VET teachers to cope with their growing responsibilities. This is particularly the case in Italy, Romania and, to a lesser extent, in Germany.

The Italian report additionally insists on the need to provide schools with the necessary skills and capabilities to cope with the new situation.

In Romania, aside from the fact that the initial training of VET teachers is not yet correlated with all the developments of the VET system, another major problem is that of the decreased attractiveness of the profession. The combined lack of motivation and training tends in practice to reduce the benefits and advantages of the autonomy.

In a few cases, problems are linked to States' particular structural features. This is notably the case in Germany. While the actual situation cannot be comprehensively judged due to the ongoing reform process and the lack of necessary financial instruments and qualified staff in VET schools, one of the most crucial issues is that the Länder authorities are currently not seriously willing to entirely delegate their responsibilities to the schools.

In Portugal, the main problem is rather linked to the lack of real career for VET teachers (individual contracts not based on collective bargaining or agreement, many freelancers, etc) than to a consequence of school autonomy.

In Ireland, while no specific problems are highlighted, the main challenge resides in initial and on-going CPD professional training to teachers. A proper use of the

National Framework of Qualifications is expected to lead to an increased professionalization of VET teachers.

In Iceland, strengthening the professional identity of VET teachers as such, the writing/reflecting of their competences combined with the issue of the definitions of the teachers working time are considered one of the biggest challenges for the development of vocational education and training in the future.

Teachers' feelings and responses relating to their new roles

As described above, reforms relating to VET schools' and teachers' autonomy are ongoing in many countries. Such situation generally leads to a mixture of feelings (from positive to negative ones – e.g. leading to the lack of VET teachers supporting the ongoing reforms) among VET teachers (as in Germany, in Italy, in Romania and, to a certain extent, in Iceland).

While Portuguese VET teachers tend to consider their new roles as a big issue (affecting not only themselves but every VET profession and organisations), Irish ones seem to be the most enthusiastic as regards innovation, new approaches to learning and ongoing CPD.

With the exception of Ireland where the SLSS (second level support service) added to teacher unions/organisations have been clearly identified as the main tools to support schools and teachers adopting new challenges, concrete responses allowing them to cope with the new challenges are not specifically pointed out in the national reports. The German report solely focuses on the fact that encouragement and support provided to the teachers at school level may play a decisive role for development while Iceland insists on the need to look collectively at professional competences and different groups of VET teachers. In Romania, despite an initial heterogeneity of feelings, teachers are mostly considered confident about their capabilities to deal with the new challenges as long as they are supported and assisted, and their performance valued and recognised.

Measures and policies to support VET teachers in their new roles

Nationwide measures and/or policies are pointed out in almost all national reports.

Depending on the country, these may be implemented through whole programmes (innovation programme called „innovelle-bs“ <http://innovelle-bs.lernnetz.de> in Germany), strategies (as “The development Strategy for Initial and Continuous Training of the Teaching Staff and of the Education Managers” in Romania) or national plans (such as the national plan for CPD of teachers in Italy that among others focuses on VET teachers' intensive training, refresher courses, use of new ICT technologies).

In Portugal and Iceland, the most common measures are operated through governmental funds. While such measures are solely addressed to those teachers in the education system CPD in Portugal, Iceland offers various types of funds. The most common ones are respectively those for the planning and implementation of in-service training of all teachers in upper secondary schools and these for the production of learning/teaching materials and for developmental projects in the schools (aiming at innovation in pedagogic/didactics, introduction of new study programmes or modules, etc).

Public consultations/commissions or national working groups may also be mentioned as they generally precede measures as such. The Irish and Italian reports particularly insist on those specific tools. A specificity of the Irish consultation resides on the fact that it took place with VET teachers to identify training and other needs.

The main outcomes were that the training was firstly tailored specifically to meet those needs and then monitored/evaluated by providers and participants.

In Italy, a national working group/commission was set up by the Ministry of Education created to develop technical and VET schools reform.

Among the countries covered, Romania is both implementing measures through its “Strategy for Initial and Continuous Training of the Teaching Staff and of the Education Managers” and planning others for further developments. Relating to ongoing measures, the use of transferable credit system to ensure a professional dynamic appears has to be underlined. Measures planned for further developments include legislative proposals meant to encourage teachers to regularly update existing skills and develop new ones and the revision of the study programmes for teachers’ initial training.

Ways to ensure consistency and quality at national level where autonomy is offered to teachers or schools

From the national reports considered, consistency and quality are generally assured through a combination of national curricula, state examinations and school inspection on the one hand and via a comprehensive quality assurance procedure (including self assessment and external evaluation procedures) on the other hand.

This particularly occurs in Germany, in Ireland and in Romania. The procedures/tools used may however considerably differ from one level of education, programme or course to another. In Ireland, the ways to assure consistency and quality differ for instance between post-primary VET and VET programmes leading to FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Council) awards. In Germany, since national curricula exist only in the dual system, quality assurance procedures are consequently far from being homogeneous throughout the entire VET provision. Additionally, a clear distinction operates between external evaluation (which rather serves control purpose) and internal evaluation (focused on development). By the end of 2006, all *Länder* had adopted one or other approach. In the meantime, the role of school inspection is seen as progressively fading.

In Romania, the quality assurance mechanism (based on self assessment and external monitoring processes) operates for school management while the training standards for qualifications and national curriculum are rather used for training programme and curricular design.

The case of Iceland is interesting as there is neither school inspection nor compulsory quality management systems. Each upper secondary school is actually supposed to introduce procedures for the evaluation of school activities on the basis of the National Curricular Guidelines. Three VET schools/comprehensive schools have however introduced ISO 9001 quality management system and more schools are on their way to introduce such systems.

While quality assurance procedures are institutionalised in different forms in the above-mentioned countries, a few countries have launched projects and experiences but those have not lead to a nationwide quality assurance practice yet. This is notably the case in Italy where tools such as proposals for national standards, external evaluation and quality management are implemented only in some regions. In Portugal, in addition to experiences mostly addressed to ‘quality’ of procedures, there are some efforts from the national inspection body to motivate schools to do internal evaluations.

Finally, despite a very limited degree of school autonomy in Austria, the QIBB initiative (i.e. a voluntary self-evaluation tool for schools) may be underlined.

CONCLUSIONS

Overarching trends/key issues

Deriving from the situations described in the national reports, the issues below may contribute to enriching the discussions at the PLA:

Since autonomy seems to be greater in the case of VET programmes that are outside the secondary school system, it may be a trend that increasing autonomy derives from the kind of programme a teacher is delivering rather than the kind of school in which they work. Is it appropriate for the PLA to consider the level of autonomy associated with VET programmes as well as with schools and teachers?

It is apparent that solutions to getting VET systems to act more proactively in knowledge-based societies are not likely to be found via 'teacher driven' processes alone (as more autonomy appear to be a product of wider systemic change). Nevertheless, it is also clear that the role of the teacher is a key element in how VET systems operate and that a better awareness of their needs and their potential strengths in the global dynamic is crucially needed. Considering that the lack of proper preparation enabling VET teachers to cope with their growing responsibilities is claimed as a factor leading to decreased teachers' motivation (and tending, as a matter of fact, to reduce the benefits and advantages of increased autonomy), it may be valuable to discuss whether the responses to that lack of motivation are, for instance, to be found in:

- A proper/extensive use of National Qualifications Frameworks? If so, how to foster the use of outcomes-based qualifications in order to better involve teachers and schools in various processes (e.g. curriculum design, assessment, quality assurance)?
- As some good practices showed that nationwide consultation processes involving teachers lead to innovative programmes and strategies (such as learning opportunities tailored to emerging employment roles and situations) should VET teachers be more systematically involved in such ex-ante processes?
- As more rapid changes towards autonomy are seen where schools are operating in closer association with the labour market, should a deeper interaction between VET teachers and employers be more systematically encouraged? If so, how?

The section below includes further key issues that have been tackled and that could be envisaged as potential exchanges of good practices.

Lessons that can be applicable to other countries

The questionnaire invited respondents to set out examples of policy or practice from their own countries that might be useful to other countries in considering issues such as how autonomy of VET teachers can

- be a driver of innovative approaches to VET
- benefit diverse groups of learners (including vulnerable groups)
- contribute to successful interaction with employers
- support good quality of VET provision and improve the attractiveness of VET

- support the attractiveness of the VET teachers' profession
- contribute to the mobility of VET teachers

Many of the responses did not provide concrete examples; instead, the reports addressed each of these topics and provided comments on how increased autonomy of VET schools and teachers can be of benefit, or summarised national policy in relation to these matters. Some reports also identified key issues that may arise in moving towards more autonomy for schools and teachers. The main points from the responses are gathered and presented below as a compilation of comments, issues suggested for consideration during the PLA and examples proposed from which lessons can be drawn.

Innovative approaches

Comments:

- For increased autonomy to result in innovative activity, it is vital that 'more autonomy' should lead to more autonomy for teachers themselves: it is not sufficient to merely delegate responsibilities of the ministries and public authorities to the VET school or its governing body.
- The introduction of professional teachers (e.g. in the fields of design and media) contributes to innovative thinking in schools.
- School autonomy requires teachers to have a professional approach to work and a readiness to shift away from routine work. A greater freedom can lead to original solutions in education organisation (e.g. intensive and demanding periods of commitment, modular teaching structures, external job placements for students, etc.).
- For increased autonomy to result in real innovation, there are preconditions: suitably trained teachers, gradually implemented changes and, most importantly, suitable and constant support of the schools.

Issues

- It can be misleading to consider that the autonomy of teachers in itself (unless it is considered in relation to other factors) can strongly influence the issues listed in this section. These issues are systemic; the solutions do not work without teachers, but are not 'teacher driven'.
- Autonomy does not mean that a school or teacher should act alone: autonomy should include the potential and licence to form productive partnerships with colleagues, with other schools, with wider stakeholders.

Benefit to diverse learner groups

Examples:

- The Portuguese report suggests that the model of vocational schools in Portugal is a successful experience in providing benefits to diverse groups of learners (including vulnerable groups).
- In Slovenia, the new open national curriculum and the preparation of the local school curriculum enables the schools and the teachers to make an easier and more efficient adjustment to the various groups of pupils, including the weakest students for whom individual plans have to be prepared.

Interaction with employers

Examples

- The Portuguese report suggests that the model of vocational schools in Portugal is a successful experience in supporting interaction with employers.
- The Romanian report mentions a model of specific training for VET teachers for establishing partnerships with employers for the development of local curriculum and the practical training of the students in enterprise
- Cooperation of schools and employers must not be defined only in principle or as a requirement. The scope of practical training in the working process has to be increased in new educational programmes. In Slovenia, the key innovation is the open curriculum, which is not defined on the national level, but by the individual schools in cooperation with the employers in the local area. Thus a space has been left open where cooperation between employers and the school can be concretized on a local level.

Improved quality and attractiveness of VET

Comments

All VET courses should lead to recognised qualifications

Issues

What is meant by 'autonomy for VET teachers?' if it means something different to autonomy for other teachers it may contribute to VET being seen as 'different' and 'second best'.

Examples

The Icelandic report describes how VET teachers have managed to encourage pupils to enter VET programmes at upper secondary level by personal visits to their former schools, and giving interesting introductions.

Enhance the VET teachers' profession

Comments

- When teachers are granted more flexibility and autonomy to bring in their own ideas and skills this is beneficial for the profession and raises its attractiveness to people from other teaching disciplines and fields of work.
- VET teachers can exploit increased autonomy more effectively if they are supported with appropriate training and development opportunities: this should be incorporated into initial VET teacher training and into CPD and should include training in curriculum development, alternance arrangements to enable teachers to spend time in industry
- The introduction of autonomy in schools will lead to an enhancement of teachers' professionalism

Examples

The Romanian report mentions teachers training programmes focused on different aspects of the learning process, development of learning and teaching materials, integrating ICT in the learning process, curriculum design, quality assurance.

VET teacher mobility

Issues

What kind of mobility are we aiming at? Within Europe or within the profession?

Examples

The Leonardo da Vinci programme VET PRO (Romania) supports mobility of VET teachers – credits are awarded for the continuing training of the teachers and the professional training is recognised and valued for in-career progression.

What would benefit countries to learn from the PLA in Slovenia

In the responses under this heading, most reports stress that the primary benefit expected is the learning from the exchange of perspectives and experiences from the participants, resulting in insights into various change processes and the challenges encountered and overcome. There is particular reference to the opportunity to learn from Slovenia's recent experience in reform of the VET system and in how the changes under way are affecting the roles of VET schools and teachers.

Some reports express the hope that the PLA will illustrate examples of how school autonomy was implemented and how schools and teachers reacted. What impact did the change in governance have on job satisfaction of teachers, organisational culture change at schools etc.? What effect did it have on associated system elements such as educational standards and external/internal monitoring tools?

Some issues related to the role and status of VET teachers are a key concern:

- How can autonomy of VET teachers be supported by instruments and training?
- How are autonomy of VET teachers and the attractiveness of the profession related and how can the latter be further improved?
- How are autonomy and mobility of VET teachers related?

Other reports focus on the need to explore the implications of increased autonomy for teachers and for school management: for teachers, in relation to recruitment, career paths, salaries, CPD, recognition of individual merit and professional status, quality-oriented staff hiring policies; for school management, in relation to the role and the power of VET schools principals, financial autonomy, governance and school boards, forms of cooperation and competition between VET schools.

Some reports mention the hope that an opportunity will be provided to explore methodologies for use of teacher and school autonomy to

- increase the attractiveness of the VET teachers' profession
- improve interaction with employers
- address the needs of diverse groups of learners

The Slovenian report captures the key overall concern emerging from the group of reports, that the PLA should enable participants to gain insight into the process by which autonomy is transferred from the national level to the level of teachers and schools in European countries.

ANNEX C - NATIONAL REPORTS

These reports were prepared by participants to the Bled PLA for their respective countries.

AUSTRIA

General Overview	
In your country, is there a trend towards more autonomy for VET schools or for VET teachers? Please describe the developments in this area.	<p>From an international comparative perspective the Austrian school system has a very limited degree of school autonomy with respect to financial and personal matters. As in almost all countries school and teacher autonomy is relatively high in the fields of concrete working / teaching in the classroom.</p> <p>Despite a recently emerging debate about more school autonomy in Austria, no concrete measures or developments have been undertaken so far.</p>
What level of autonomy do VET teachers/VET schools have in terms of curriculum design, planning, management of schools (including financial and staff management), interaction with employers or other stakeholders?	<p>Curriculum design is done by the central authority (ministry) in full-time VET schools and colleges. But the so-called curricular autonomy of schools is of particular importance. It provides, on the one hand, autonomy to the school (teacher) to select between special focuses as set down in the curriculum (they comprise up to 50% of the entire instruction from the 3rd year of the 5-year VET colleges). In addition, an average of 5% of weekly lessons can be set freely by the school. Furthermore, optional educational provision, such as optional subjects, may be specified within the scope of the school's autonomy to provide major occupational qualifications for practice, for example.</p> <p>Schools and teachers have freedom in choosing learning material and in assessment procedures.</p> <p>There is no autonomy for schools with respect to financial and staff management.</p> <p>Interaction with employers is in the responsibility of the individual school or teacher. Often VET schools have rather close links to the larger regional employers with respect to the main subject / focus of the vocational education they provide. There is an initiative in place since some years ("educational clusters") whose aim is to strengthen cooperation between schools and enterprises.</p> <p>Social partners are directly involved in designing the occupational profiles of apprenticeships.</p>

<p>Is there a difference between autonomy of teachers and schools in VET and those in general education?</p>	<p>The framework structure of the curricula sets out a large scope of design. As against other school types, VET college curricula do not consist of a core area with basic content and an extension area with current content, but – due to the substantial proportion of current content – it only lays down core areas (which in most cases are formulated concisely and very openly), with state-of-the-art implementation left to the respective school's and teacher's freedom of design.</p>
<p>Key issues and possible solutions</p>	
<p>What challenges or problems have arisen in your country in relation to VET teachers' autonomy as described above?</p>	<p>Except for the partly curricular autonomy there is a very limited degree of school autonomy.</p> <p>The expectations towards the teachers of VET schools get higher and higher every year. They have to increase the quality of teaching, developing new programmes in different areas of technology. They have to secure the special trademark "practice-orientation of VET schools" through the combination of theoretical education and occupation related practice. In spite of all new challenges the financial resources of a school and the remuneration remain the same.</p>
<p>How have the teachers responded to these new roles and do they feel confident /competent/ supported enough to deal with the new challenges?</p>	<p>Experience and commitment of the teachers is essential for successfully implementing their educational function.</p> <p>Therefore The support and encouragement provided to the teachers on school level, but also from the "Landesschulräte" on the provincial level and the support provided from the central level is very important for the further development</p>
<p>What measures and policies are in place to support VET teachers in these new roles? Is this support specific to VET teachers and if yes how?</p>	<p>In fulfilment of their responsibility towards all stakeholders the Austrian VET schools and colleges decided to assure and further develop their quality in accordance with uniform principles (Quality Manifesto of 15th April 2005). The implementation of this manifesto is conducted on the basis of the <i>Quality Management System</i>, which builds on recognised principles of quality management. This is part of the Austrian VET Quality Initiative QIBB (www.qibb.at)</p>
<p>In cases where teachers or schools have autonomy in some of the areas above, how is consistency and quality at national level ensured?</p>	<p>The cornerstones of VET Q-System are medium- and short-term plans on the basis of school and work programmes, regular and systematic evaluation, accountability by publication of annual quality reports, and agreement on development and implementation objectives within the framework of management and performance reviews. Like the QIBB, the Q-System is not limited to the school level but also covers the provincial level (school inspection) and the national level (General Directorate for Vocational Education and Training of the Federal Ministry for</p>

	Education, the Arts and Culture). This ensures that processes affecting several organisational levels are also included in the quality management process.
Conclusions	
What lessons have been learned in your country that can be applicable to other European countries?	Generally no overall lessons can be learned because of the limited school autonomy. Some interesting features can be seen with respect to QIBB and the existing contacts between schools and enterprises (as well as educational clusters).
What would be beneficial for your country to learn from the PLA in Slovenia?	Comparative information of how school autonomy was implemented and how schools and teachers reacted. What impact did the change in governance have on job satisfaction of teachers, organisational culture change at schools etc.? Development and implementation of corresponding system elements (e.g. educational standards, external/internal monitoring tools).

GERMANY

General Overview	
In your country, is there a trend towards more autonomy for VET schools or for VET teachers? Please describe the developments in this area.	<p>Preliminary remark</p> <p>Germany is divided into 16 federal states (<i>Länder</i>). The Constitution (<i>Grundgesetz</i>) provides that competence for school education lies with the <i>Länder</i> Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs. This responsibility both entitles and obliges them to cooperate with one another and to work together with the Federal Government. The Ministers of Education and Culture of the <i>Länder</i> cooperate in a Standing Conference (<i>KMK</i>) to ensure a certain measure of uniformity and comparability, especially in school and higher education policies. Decisions of the Standing Conference are recommendations and only become legally binding when passed by individual <i>Länder</i> parliaments. The <i>Länder</i> have committees for vocational training, with equal representation of employers, employees and the highest <i>Länder</i> authorities. They advise the <i>Länder</i> governments on vocational training issues in schools.</p> <p>Due to Germany's federal system there is no common national approach with regard to reforms. Therefore the measures undertaken in order to reach similar aims differ considerably from state to state.</p> <p>Initial VET in Germany is provided in two different systems:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Dual System training based on federal law (Vocational Training Act) in which both VET teachers and VET trainers are involved. The theoretical part of VET is carried out by part-time VET schools and the programmes delivered have to fulfil both federal as well as <i>Länder</i> requirements. - The Full-time School-Based Training in which only VET teachers are involved. Here theoretical and practical training in all courses completely lies in the responsibility of the <i>Länder</i>. <p>Developing vocational schools and the quality of training on offer through delegating more autonomy is at the heart of reform efforts in Germany. There is a very high variety of reform initiatives in the federal states.</p> <p>Two main developments can be observed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The transformation of VET schools into (regional) centres of VET leading to a growing self-responsibility of schools and an extension and a shift of the tasks for those working there. Delegating financial responsibilities by giving VET schools more freedom in budgetary allocation is one key element. This path is being followed to a different extent in the individual <i>Länder</i>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The introduction of quality management systems / evaluation processes at VET schools.
<p>What level of autonomy do VET teachers/VET schools have in terms of curriculum design, planning, management of schools (including financial and staff management), interaction with employers or other stakeholders?</p>	<p>Curriculum design</p> <p>In the Dual System teachers at vocational schools are responsible for the theoretical part of vocational training. They teach part-time courses in their subject fields and assess student (apprentice) performance.</p> <p>There is a framework curriculum drawn up in line with the training directive for every recognised training occupation. In view of the speed of technological and organisational change, many training directives are revised every few years. They are structured along typical areas of work in the profession trained (<i>Lernfelder</i>) and require the cooperation of various disciplines / subject teachers. They leave quite some flexibility for the teachers with regard to individual content and choice of method as long as the requirements of the intermediate and the final examination at the chamber are met.</p> <p>Training directives ensure a uniform national standard and include, for example, stipulation of the name of the training occupation, the duration of training, the framework training plan (breakdown of subjects and timing) and the examination requirements. The timing and content of the vocational-school aspect of training is coordinated with the framework training plan for in-company training.</p> <p>Courses defined by the <i>Länder</i> authorities like general subjects as politics, economics, foreign languages etc. are based on framework curricula which likewise leave some flexibility for the</p>

	<p>teachers with regard to individual content and choice of method. Experienced teachers may be promoted to become <i>Fachleiter</i> (senior teachers) in their subjects where they can also take part in school management and develop the curriculum within the boundaries provided by the <i>Länder</i> authorities.</p> <p>Planning of VET delivery and development of learning and teaching material</p> <p>Under a <i>KMK</i> decision (Standing Conference of Ministers for Education and Cultural Affairs of the <i>Länder</i>) (<i>Rahmenvereinbarung über die Berufsschule</i> of 15 March 1991: www.kmk.org/doc/beschl/rvbs91-03-15.pdf), part-time vocational schools in the dual system must provide at least 12 hours teaching a week, normally eight hours for vocational subjects and four hours to general subjects such as German, social studies/business studies, religious education and sport. Appropriate account is also to be taken of foreign language teaching, depending on its importance to the training occupation concerned. Vocational schools decide on how to allocate teaching in consultation with training enterprises, the schools inspectorate and the competent industrial bodies. The aim of the various organisational forms is to ensure that trainees spend as much time in the enterprise as possible while, at the same time, allocating teaching in a way that is tenable in terms of both pedagogics and the psychology of learning.</p> <p>Some <i>Länder</i> intend to give VET schools more autonomy with regard to the delivery and choice of VET programmes, including also the area of CVET.</p> <p>Learning and teaching material is developed by a number of about 30 publishing houses specialised on VET, and VET teachers are often involved as authors. Furthermore some sector organisations as well as individual companies develop and offer material. VET schools and teachers are usually free to choose the material they want to work with and to develop their own material.</p> <p>Developing learning/teaching methods and design of assessment methods and criteria</p> <p>Enterprises and vocational schools conduct training, but the Chambers (competent bodies) are responsible for holding examinations. To this end, the Chambers have to set up examination committees for each occupation which comprise at least three members (one representative each of employers and employees and a vocational schoolteacher). The examination certificate is issued by the Chamber. The structure of examinations is laid down by individual training directives which are applicable nationwide and specify a uniform standard.</p> <p>Performance in general subjects, such as languages and mathematics, is evaluated within the framework of school reports. Teachers assign marks according to assessment methods and</p>
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	<p>criteria laid out by the <i>Länder</i> authorities. They are free in the choice of learning and teaching methods.</p> <p>Public Institutions of Teacher Education promote the development and use of new methods of learning both for the classroom as well as for teachers' own professional development.</p> <p>Management of schools including financial management and staff management such as: defining working time, working conditions and employment contracts, tasks required from teachers, etc</p> <p>The school-based element of dual vocational training is financed by <i>Land</i> and local authority public funds. The <i>Länder</i> bear the costs of internal school affairs (e.g. supervision of schools, implementing curricula, teacher training, teachers' pay), and local authorities are responsible for financing external school affairs (e.g. construction, maintenance and renovation of school buildings, ongoing management, procurement of teaching and learning resources). A recent tendency is to give VET schools a little more freedom in budgetary allocation but usually the respective accountability remains with the school board and not the VET school itself.</p> <p>The responsibility for staff matters is and remains part of the sovereignty of the <i>Länder</i> authorities. Teachers are recruited, appointed, supervised, promoted and assessed by them. In the course of the reforms this responsibility is however now being partly – more or less - shifted to the headmasters at the VET schools themselves. (Before the headmaster was a supervisor but did not have any disciplinary rights.)</p> <p>Due to the introduction of working hours accounts for VET teachers heads of schools are more flexible than before with regard to the assignment of their teaching personnel. In order to offer the range of courses asked for within the dual system and to be able to develop new ones (i.e. additional qualifications and programmes of a length of only six months) this flexibility is a prerequisite.</p> <p>With regard to the eventually temporarily heightened burden / work load for individual teachers, the employee representations at school level will have to assume higher responsibility.</p> <p>Interaction with employers or other stakeholders, including promotion of training to future students</p> <p>As part of a general trend in education The <i>Länder</i> have continuously developed their activities in <i>general</i> education in order to communicate a basic knowledge of the world of business and commerce. This has also taken place outside of lessons, for example, via model businesses set up by pupils (<i>Schülerfirmen</i>) or cooperation projects between the schools and the world of</p>
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	<p>business and commerce. More and more courses in VET outside the Dual System include practical labs in companies.</p> <p>Within the Dual System the co-operation with companies and regional stakeholder has a long tradition and is an institutionalised requirement (see explanations above).</p> <p>As part of the reforms towards more autonomy of VET schools, some pilot schools exist that have the permission to offer CVET courses on the private regional educational market. A prerequisite for that is, however, that they firstly fulfil their public educational mandate and then do so by additionally generated funds.</p>
<p>Is there a difference between autonomy of teachers and schools in VET and those in general education?</p>	<p>Here again the answer may vary from region to region and between individual schools. Officially both school types are being encouraged to become autonomous schools (“selbstständige Schule”) and there are no major differences with regard to the formal prerequisites. Due to their proximity to the world of work and the co-operation with their partners in the companies, VET schools, however, are said to be more innovative and faster in taking up reforms. In comparison to general schools they are also more flexible because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) they mostly deal with older students who can speak for themselves. (VET Teachers rarely deal with parents – for better or worse.) b) the curriculum of most VET subjects leaves more freedom with regard to topics and choice of learning and teaching materials (Due to the rapid change of technologies etc. in the various professions trained, the materials cannot be as standardised as in general education.) <p>there is a growing demand for courses providing additional qualifications.</p>
<p>Key issues and possible solutions</p>	
<p>What challenges or problems have arisen in your country in relation to VET teachers’ autonomy as described above?</p>	<p>It is very difficult to comprehensively judge the actual situation because the reform process is in full activity and there is a multitude of parallel developments. Altogether it can be said that there are many very progressive and positive examples with regard to individual schools. On a general level, however, the reform initiatives are not highly supported by the actual people concerned. Most teachers do not feel an active part of the change process and rather wait what will happen.</p> <p>The <i>Länder</i> authorities (the state) are actually not seriously willing to entirely delegate their responsibilities to the schools.</p> <p>The high density of new decrees and all the legal enactments due to the reforms actually impede the reform process and further sustain the usual top-down process.</p> <p>Although there is a definite trend to delegating financial responsibilities, many VET schools are not prepared for that and do not dispose of the necessary instruments nor qualified staff.</p>

	<p>Due to the reforms VET schools and VET teachers have to meet higher expectations with regard to quality of teaching, cooperation with external regional partners, economic development etc. while the resources available to them and the remuneration remains the same.</p>
<p>How have the teachers responded to these new roles and do they feel confident /competent/ supported enough to deal with the new challenges?</p>	<p>About one third of all VET teachers is optimistic about the school reforms and actively supports and identifies with them. Another third is neutral and the last third openly opposes the whole process.</p> <p>At first many teachers were quite enthusiastic about the new developments but then they slowly realised that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) VET schools do not actually have the legal ample scope to act as autonomously as desired with regard to the new tasks b) the implementation of the school programmes did not only result in more multifaceted and extensive tasks but due to the opening of the schools also in a new role for the teacher – As a school developer he or she is now playing a personal part between the poles of the <i>Länder</i> authorities and their public mandate, of the individual school and of the various regional stakeholders and private partners. <p>Significant differences between VET schools working under similar conditions show that encouragement and support provided to the teachers at school level plays a decisive role for development.</p>
<p>What measures and policies are in place to support VET teachers in these new roles? Is this support specific to VET teachers and if yes how?</p>	<p>VET schools need support structures to deal with the heightened responsibility and the extended scope of tasks but so far only very few of the <i>Länder</i> have planned to install such support regularly and extensively.</p> <p>From 2001 till 2005 a nationwide innovation programme, called „innovelle-bs“ http://innovelle-bs.lernnetz.de, dealt with diverse questions concerning the professional development of VET teachers. It was specifically designed for VET and altogether 28 pilot projects were carried out in 12 <i>Länder</i>. Since comparable programmes are not visible at the moment, at least a broader transfer and implementation of the results should be encouraged.</p>
<p>In cases where teachers or schools have autonomy in some of the areas above, how is consistency and quality at national level ensured?</p>	<p>National curricula exist only in the Dual System. They are not planned for other VET courses.</p> <p>For several subjects also taught in VET schools national standards related to the various qualification levels exist. Within the next years final school examinations in all <i>Länder</i> will be based on these standards.</p> <p>We need to distinguish between external evaluation which rather serves control purposes, and internal evaluation, focused on development. At VET schools external evaluation started to be introduced by some <i>Länder</i> in 2004 and until the end of 2006 all</p>

	<p><i>Länder</i> had adopted one or the other approach. It has been institutionalised in different forms: school inspections, quality agencies and school visits. There are striking differences in the degree of (in)dependence of the evaluating authority.</p> <p>Internal evaluation: Once a <i>Land</i> has decided either for the system of EFQM or the Swiss Q2E (Quality through development and evaluation) it can be said that internal evaluation is applied. Internal evaluation focusing on development has older roots than the external one. First projects started in the late 90s as a reaction to the dominant yet small attempts of internal school development based on organisational learning.</p> <p>The role of school inspection is undergoing significant changes. Its influence is fading as other auditors - not always sufficiently qualified in VET matters - gain importance. While consultancy and advisory tasks become increasingly important, resources are scaled down and only provide for the implementation of evaluation, controlling and external examinations.</p>
Conclusions	
<p>What lessons have been learned in your country that can be applicable to other European countries?</p>	<p>a) School development has to lead to more autonomy of teachers themselves. It is not sufficient to delegate responsibilities of the ministries and public authorities to the governing body of the VET school. This means to only replace the function of the public authority by the school, results in many conflicts at school and prevents the active participation of the teachers in the change process.</p> <p>The activities on the very bottom level of the individual schools are a decisive factor. If teachers are granted real opportunities to carry out personal ideas and projects this is extremely beneficial for the school as a whole. Their motivation is a central element for innovation. This motivation can, however, only be secured and maintained if there is a high degree of reliance concerning the institutional frame of reference / from the top level. If policies change all the time and promises of future development are not kept, this is extremely corruptive.</p> <p>b) VET schools have already used the new autonomy / scope for development in order to intensify their co-operation with the various partners involved (chambers; youth and welfare services, job centres, educational institutions etc.) when it comes to the integration of disadvantaged and other specific groups. They explore new ways and the ESF support in this area has also been very useful.</p> <p>c) The reforms so far have not had any particular impact on the interaction with the employers because in the German Dual System the co-operation between part-time VET schools and companies has always played an essential role.</p> <p>d) / Although there are many good examples and individual support projects with regard to the question of autonomy, sustainable support systems are mostly still lacking.</p> <p>e) When teachers are granted more flexibility and autonomy to bring in their own ideas and skills this is beneficial for the</p>

	<p>profession and raises its attractiveness also for people from other fields of work and disciplines.</p> <p>f) What kind of mobility are we aiming at here? Mobility within Europe, i.e. spending periods of time abroad for training or other purposes, or mobility within the profession, i.e. between position as trainers in companies and teachers in schools? We do not have an answer to any of those questions yet.</p>
<p>What would be beneficial for your country to learn from the PLA in Slovenia?</p>	<p>Since we do not have a lot of experience concerning some of the issues included in the questionnaire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can autonomy of VET teachers be supported by instruments and training? • How are autonomy of VET teachers and the attractiveness of the profession related and how can the latter be further improved? • How are autonomy and mobility of VET teachers related? <p>Here we are especially looking forward to receiving new ideas from other countries.</p>

ICELAND

General Overview	
<p>In your country, is there a trend towards more autonomy for VET schools or for VET teachers? Please describe the developments in this area.</p>	<p>On May 29, 2008 the Icelandic Parliament (Alþingi) adopted a new law for all Upper Secondary Education. According to the law, VET schools like other schools are given increased autonomy in planning new programmes/pathways. Curricular guidelines developed by the upper secondary schools will, after being authorised by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, be a part of The National Curriculum Guide. Furthermore the VET-schools shall be responsible for the whole study process of the VET student, also the in-service training. This means that the VET-schools are obliged to find a training place for the student and guarantee that a training contract be signed.</p>
<p>What level of autonomy do VET teachers/VET schools have in terms of curriculum design, planning, management of schools (including financial and staff management), interaction with employers or other stakeholders?</p>	<p>Curriculum design</p> <p>A National Curriculum Guide (NCG) is set by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture for each VET programme. VET teachers often take part in the development of the NCG together with representatives of the social partners and they, like other interested parties, are invited to bring their comments forward during the hearing period. On the basis of the NCG each school publishes a school curriculum guide. The teachers participate more or less actively in the development of the school guide. In line with the provisions of the new legislation described above there will be much more need for an active engagement on behalf of all teachers in the work of curriculum design and development</p>

	<p>than before. The schools have three years to adapt to the new requirements. The new policy shall be fully implemented by the school-year 2011-12.</p> <p>Planning of VET delivery and development of learning and teaching materials:</p> <p>Planning of VET delivery is a responsibility of an individual teacher or a group of teachers of a certain VET programme on the basis of the NCG and the school working guide. In many areas of VET there is a lack of adequate textbooks and other learning and teaching materials in Icelandic. This means that many VET teachers have to be engaged in finding relevant materials, translating or producing/writing themselves. In most areas of VET teachers have an organised forum for exchanging of views and experiences on curriculum, VET delivery and learning/teaching materials. There are governmental funds that pay moderate grants both to the running of the teachers associations as such and for the development of learning/teaching materials.</p> <p>Developing learning/teaching methods and design of assessment methods and criteria:</p> <p>The individual teacher is and has always been free to choose learning/teaching methods and he or she is also responsible for the evaluation/assessment of the student's achievements and competences in individual modules. In certified trades external Journeyman's examinations committees are responsible for the final examinations.</p> <p>Management of schools including financial management and staff management such as: defining working time, working conditions and employment contracts, tasks required from teachers, etc.</p> <p>Upper secondary schools in Iceland are run by the state. Each school is an independent operating unit and receives annually special budget allocations. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture make proposals for budget allocations for each school on the basis of its approved instructional and financial estimates. The level of autonomy of financial management for the school in question is limited to this framework.</p> <p>The principal is responsible for the employment of teachers and can have a considerable impact on their working conditions in general. However, staff management is highly limited by collective bargaining agreements between the state and the teachers union which is very strong in Iceland. The working time of the teachers and what kind of tasks can be required from them is rather strictly defined in the collective bargaining agreement. During the last 2-3 years the bargaining parties are gradually approaching a common understanding that more flexible definitions of teachers working time is feasible. This is a prerequisite for the implementation of the new law and must be a crucial matter of the next collective agreement.</p> <p>Interaction with employers or other stakeholders, including promotion of training to future students.</p>
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	<p>There are big differences between schools in this respect. Some schools, not least smaller schools outside the capital city, are closely connected to the local industry while others are less. Collaboration and interaction with training companies or others on the labour market is not a part of the defined working time of VET teachers, but this will be an important matter in the future according to the new law.</p>
<p>Is there a difference between autonomy of teachers and schools in VET and those in general education?</p>	<p>The general answer to this question is NO! Both groups of teachers have the same rights and obligations. They belong to the same Teachers Union, work under the same collective bargaining agreement and work side by side in comprehensive upper secondary schools, with both vocational and academic programmes, which are the most common form of upper secondary schooling in Iceland. If there in fact is a difference in autonomy of these two groups of teachers, which we do not have any scientific evidence of, it might have two possible explanations. First, the curriculum guidelines of VET programmes tend to be more strictly defined than the general ones and thus gives a smaller space for the autonomy of teachers and schools. Second, the two groups might think and act differently in the respect of autonomy as a consequence of different educational and socio cultural background.</p>
<p>Key issues and possible solutions</p>	
<p>What challenges or problems have arisen in your country in relation to VET teachers' autonomy as described above?</p>	<p>The autonomy and the new role of the VET teacher in general, as described in the introduction to this questionnaire, seems to be closely related to the development of a strong professional identity of the VET teachers. In Iceland, it is common that the professional identity of VET teachers is closer related to the trade or field of specialisation than the teacher profession as such. This may at least partly be understood by the fact that the education in the field of specialisation and the education and training of VET teachers in Iceland is separated in time. The specialisation comes first and the teacher training course (of 1-2 terms) often many years later.</p> <p>Thus, strengthening the professional identity of VET teachers as such may be one of the biggest challenges for the development of the vocational education and training in the future.</p> <p>Strengthening the writing/reflecting competences of the VET teachers represent another but related set of challenges. In the work of the upper secondary schools last decade or so on school working guides and self evaluation of different school activities it has become apparent that VET teachers in general are neither very experienced in text writing nor verbalizing their reflections about their work as VET teachers.</p> <p>A third set of challenges is connected to the definitions of the teachers working time (see Q2).</p>

	<p>Last not least, scientific knowledge of the teaching and the teachers of VET in Iceland is badly needed. There is a forum for educational research of compulsory schooling but no such forum or tradition exists for the upper secondary school level in Iceland, neither in the area of VET nor general education.</p>
<p>How have the teachers responded to these new roles and do they feel confident /competent/ supported enough to deal with the new challenges?</p>	<p>The VET teachers as a group have seemingly not yet changed their definitions or understanding of their profession according to new roles. However, among them there are and always have been individuals with strong professional identity as VET teachers who have acted like entrepreneurs. That means people who take initiatives to new projects, methods and solutions, introduce new techniques, reflect continually on own practice, have great impact on curriculum development, produce learning/teaching material, are active in international cooperation with colleagues etc. It is important to look collectively at professional competences like these in VET schools and different groups of VET teachers and build up a support system to help them to deal with the new challenges.</p>
<p>What measures and policies are in place to support VET teachers in these new roles? Is this support specific to VET teachers and if yes how?</p>	<p>Besides the initial teacher training of VET teachers, there is a governmental fund for the planning and implementation of in-service training of all teachers in upper secondary schools. VET teachers should be encouraged to seek more grants and make better utilization of this fund. A VET teacher, who has worked as such for at least five years, can, like any other teacher at upper secondary school level, request a special study leave for the purpose of improving his/her knowledge and teaching ability. The Ministry may grant him/her a study-leave of up to one year with full salary. There are also governmental funds for the production of learning/teaching materials and for developmental projects in the schools, aiming at innovation in pedagogic/didactics, introduction of new study programmes or modules, etc. The federation of Icelandic employers have established a new fund especially for the development of VET.</p>
<p>In cases where teachers or schools have autonomy in some of the areas above, how is consistency and quality at national level ensured?</p>	<p>The National Curricular Guidelines set national standards for the education in question. Each upper secondary school shall introduce procedures for the evaluation of school activities, including instructional and management practices, relations within the school and connections with external parties. At five-year intervals an outside party shall carry out an assessment of the school's self-evaluation methods. There is no school inspection in Icelandic schools and no compulsory quality management systems. However, three big VET schools/comprehensive schools have introduced ISO 9001 quality management system and more schools are on their way to introduce such systems.</p>
<p>Conclusions</p>	

<p>What lessons have been learned in your country that can be applicable to other European countries?</p>	<p>Examples could be mentioned as of how professional VET teachers have brought about innovations in their schools under feasible conditions, e.g. in the fields of design and media. How VET teachers have managed to encourage pupils in compulsory schools to enter VET programmes at upper secondary level by personal visits to the former schools, giving interesting introductions. And, how VET teachers have managed to help immigrant students to adapt to a new school and a new life in a new country.</p>
<p>What would be beneficial for your country to learn from the PLA in Slovenia?</p>	<p>Most of all exchanging of experiences and views and learning from the Slovenians and other participants about challenges, problems, support systems and solutions related to increased autonomy of VET teachers and VET schools and the overall changing role of VET teachers and trainers in Europe.</p>

IRELAND

<p style="text-align: center;">General Overview</p>	
<p>In your country, is there a trend towards more autonomy for VET schools or for VET teachers? Please describe the developments in this area.</p>	<p>Context of VET in Ireland:</p> <p>In Ireland, the delivery of VET is viewed by the government to be a lifelong and training priority to support all aspects of skills training for economic development and expansion. Initial VET is delivered as part of the post-primary curricula in second-level schools for students from 12-18/19 years. It is afterwards delivered in Further Education and Third Level colleges, in Education and Training centres and in Companies. 82% of students complete Leaving Certificate (LC) at 17/18. Students who leave the formal education system at 16+ have the option of entering Apprenticeship training in some Trades (IVET). Many trades now favour recruiting apprentices who have completed LC. Another area of vocational education is the Youthreach programme. This programme is delivered in out-of-school centres for education. This programme contains elements of VET, work experience modules for students in companies and job placement.</p> <p>These responses therefore refer to two main areas of vocational education in Ireland: vocational programmes within the 'second level' or 'post-primary' school system and post-second-level vocational programmes commonly known in Ireland as Post Leaving Certificate or 'PLC'. PLC programmes are also delivered within post-primary schools. Advanced VET training with a strong emphasis on technology skills is available in Third Level Colleges (Levels 6-10 on the National Framework of Qualifications) The diversity of provision in VET from initial to advanced is designed to accommodate all levels of VET and meet all demands in the national economy.</p>

	<p>The trend is towards the Department of Education and Science encouraging more autonomy and responsibility, both for schools and for teachers. This process is comparatively slow in the case of the vocational options available for students within the post-primary school programmes. Here the emphasis is still strongly on centrally-defined curricula. However, even in this context, the vocational options available place far more emphasis on the completion of project work, the investigation of career options, engagement in work experience, and on locally-designed and administered on-going assessment than is the case, with the main academic programmes. The development of new programmes such as the Transition Year Programme (TY) [which students can take as a bridging year between junior and senior cycles] allows teachers to design curricular inputs that include engaging with many aspects of VET. These include; work-experience modules for students in companies, visits to industry and the development of skills in ICT and VET projects. Teachers are required to take the lead in designing, managing and assessing these inputs in TY. The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme which is provided for students who wish to progress to further education (PLC) programmes or to employment places a heavy emphasis on VET skills. Teachers of LCA teach a centrally designed curriculum, but at school level LCA modules can be designed within set criteria to meet students' needs.</p> <p>Four new technology subjects (T4) have recently been introduced to the Leaving Certificate. This strategy and new curricula are intended to increase interest in the field of technology using new methodologies, CAD and a range of other ICT supports. VET teachers were consulted prior to the introduction of these new subjects, have inputted to the design of content and have been trained to teach and evaluate these new 'T4' subjects.</p> <p>The trend in Ireland towards school and teacher autonomy is more marked in the case of the PLC and Youthreach programmes and in other areas of IVET (including apprenticeship training). This is driven largely by the reform of the qualifications system in Ireland that has been under way since 2001, with the introduction of a National Framework of Qualifications (NQF). Under this reform, most VET qualifications are now awarded by a specialist awarding council (the Further Education and Training Awards Council, or 'FETAC'). FETAC sets standards for each award and it is then a matter for the school (as the 'provider') to design programmes to support their students to achieve desired awards. This process places significant responsibility on the school (to set up systems for curriculum design, assessment and quality assurance etc.) and on the individual teacher, while allowing both school and teacher much more autonomy in terms of programme content, methodologies etc.</p>
<p>What level of autonomy do VET teachers/VET schools have in terms of</p>	<p>Curriculum design</p> <p>See response to question 1 above.</p>

<p>curriculum design, planning, management of schools (including financial and staff management), interaction with employers or other stakeholders?</p>	<p>Teachers (including teachers of VET) input to the development, reform and design of curricula through the representation and participation of Teachers' Associations on the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) www.ncca.ie . The inspectorate for second level which is subject based, also contribute expertise to curriculum design and are represented on all NCCA committees.</p> <p>It should be noted that, in the case of post-second level vocational education and the apprenticeships, another key influence on curriculum design is that of the relevant social partners or labour market sector. FETAC award standards are designed with the close involvement of these stakeholders. In addition, schools engaging in post-secondary vocational education typically develop strong local links with employers and work to incorporate employers' requirements into their programmes.</p> <p>Planning of VET delivery and development of learning and teaching materials</p> <p>In general, teachers in Ireland have significant autonomy in these matters and VET teachers and schools in particular take responsibility for delivery planning. The extent to which materials are locally designed would vary according to the subject involved, but it is common practice for VET teachers to develop new materials and adapt existing resources, and professional networks exist to support this activity. Responsibility for selection of appropriate materials from the ranges commonly available is always at school level and is often devolved to the individual teacher.</p> <p>Teachers' Associations at regional and national level play a part in dissemination of good practices. The second-level Department of Education and Science Inspectorate which visits schools in an advisory as well as an evaluation role also promote the use of new learning and teaching methodologies. The Second Level Support Service (SLSS) www.slss.ie provides training and support for schools and teachers introducing new curricula in all subjects including VET. The Second Level Development Planning Initiative (SDPI) www.sdpi.ie provides support for school planning. Within schools subject departments are expected to plan delivery of programmes, engage in self-learning, share resources and expertise, disseminate good practice and co-operate to complete students' assessments.</p> <p>Developing learning/teaching methods and design of assessment methods and criteria</p> <p>Choice of learning/teaching methodology is a matter for the teacher, and as with materials design it is not unusual for VET teachers to develop new approaches and for schools to support this. In the case of vocational options with post-primary</p>
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	<p>programmes, assessment arrangements are designed on a national level, by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). Teachers in second level schools operate within DES guidelines, NCCA curriculum guidelines and criteria, and the requirements of the State Examinations Commission (SEC. www.examination.ie and FETAC www.fetac.ie</p> <p>In the case of programmes leading to FETAC awards, assessment arrangements are a responsibility of the school, subject to validation by FETAC in the course of establishing quality assurance agreements.</p> <p>Management of schools including financial management and staff management such as: defining working time, working conditions and employment contracts, tasks required from teachers, etc.</p> <p>Most second level schools are funded by the State and each school's management is required to operate within DES guidelines for schools and set regulations. These regulations include length of school year, tuition time and working conditions for schools staff. Teachers are paid directly by the State but are then managed directly by school management. Each school has a board of management that is responsible for the use of funding, the selecting and employing teachers and their roles. Most teachers employed are required to only teach within their own specialist areas. They are required to be registered teachers and to engage in continual professional development (CPD) to keep their skills updated.</p> <p>Interaction with employers or other stakeholders, including promotion of training to future students</p> <p>At national level, employer, trade unions and teachers are all represented in the design of national curricula and in the development and maintenance of the qualifications framework and the FETAC awards system.</p> <p>At local level, VET teachers and schools commonly develop close links with employers. This process is particularly strong in the case of PLC programmes. These links typically involve a range of cooperative activities: employer input into curriculum design, opportunities for work experience for students, employer inputs into career guidance processes and arrangements for recruitment.</p> <p>Teachers are often required by school management to promote VET programmes to prospective students. This is particularly the case of promoting and advertising PLC courses. This can entail developing materials for dissemination to prospective students, advertising literature for schools, providing information at career events and meeting with groups of students or one-to-one.</p>

<p>Is there a difference between autonomy of teachers and schools in VET and those in general education?</p>	<p>In general yes. VET programmes in post-primary accord more autonomy to the teacher in curriculum and delivery design than is the case with the more academic programmes. Teachers engaged in post-secondary VET have more autonomy and responsibility in most aspects of their work, as described in the response to point 2 above.</p>
<p>Key issues and possible solutions</p>	
<p>What challenges or problems have arisen in your country in relation to VET teachers' autonomy as described above?</p>	<p>The need was identified in the past for VET teachers to receive comparable initial and on-going CPD professional training to teachers of other subjects at post-primary. This has professionalised VET and raised the status of VET teachers in the formal education sector. The NQF is now facilitating this process.</p> <p>VET teachers/trainers in other sectors are now expected to engage in on-going CPD.</p>
<p>How have the teachers responded to these new roles and do they feel confident /competent/ supported enough to deal with the new challenges?</p>	<p>The SLSS is available to support schools and teachers adopting new challenges. Teachers Unions and Teacher organisations are also providing support.</p> <p>VET teachers have enthusiastically welcomed innovation, are introducing new concepts and approaches to learning and are engaging in on-going CPD to up-date skills.</p>
<p>What measures and policies are in place to support VET teachers in these new roles?</p> <p>Is this support specific to VET teachers and if yes how?</p>	<p>Is this support specific to VET teachers and if yes how? Consultation took place with teachers to identify training and other needs. Training was tailored specifically to meet these needs. Training is being monitored and evaluated by providers and participants.</p>
<p>In cases where teachers or schools have autonomy in some of the areas above, how is consistency and quality at national level ensured?</p>	<p>In post-primary VET, consistency and quality are assured through a combination of national curricula, state examinations and school inspection: this is the same process as obtains throughout post-primary education generally.</p> <p>In the case of VET programmes leading to FETAC awards, consistency and quality are assured through a comprehensive quality assurance procedure developed by FETAC as an integrated element in its system of qualifications. The process requires providers to agree quality assurance arrangements with FETAC in order to register as recognised providers. A registered provider can then design a programme, which they then submit to FETAC for validation that it adequately addresses the requirements for a qualification. Delivery of the programme can then proceed: the provider monitors and evaluates their implementation of the QA arrangements. FETAC monitors and</p>

	evaluates the quality of the programme and services, leading to review of the programme validation and ultimately review of the QA agreement with the provider.
Conclusions	
What lessons have been learned in your country that can be applicable to other European countries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important that States identify and clarify what is meant by 'autonomy' for VET. If VET is allowed to become separated from mainstream post-primary schools it may be weakened by inadequate resourcing and funding, and be viewed as 'second best' education. • VET for vulnerable groups should be tailored to meet specific needs, be challenging, labour-market focussed and be delivered in a mainstream context. All VET courses must supply recognised accreditation that supports mobility. • VET teachers should be empowered to become the real drivers for change. They should be encouraged to input directly to the design of curricula and receive high quality initial and on-going CPD training for their roles. Training for VET teachers should include quality time spent in industry and in close liaison with employers and employer organisations. • Autonomy for VET and support for its effectiveness demands the establishment and maintenance of close links with employers, industry and all stakeholders in the economy. Companies should be invited to assist in the design of courses and to invest in on-going training for workers that is sourced from VET schools. • All participants in VET should have assistance to make successful transitions to further education, training or employment. <p>Mobility for VET teachers: The NQF supports VET to have comparable status. Quality initial and on-going CPD training gives credibility and status to VET teachers.</p>
What would be beneficial for your country to learn from the PLA in Slovenia?	<p>It will be beneficial for Ireland to participate in the PLA to share good practice, contribute to discussions with the participating states and learn from Slovenia's experiences of reforming VET systems. This exchange of views and the learning that will result will provide insights into various change processes and the challenges encountered and overcome.</p> <p>Lastly, Ireland would like to assist Slovenia to develop VET systems that will provide the continuing support for its future expansion of economic expansion.</p>

ITALY

General Overview	

<p>In your country, is there a trend towards more autonomy for VET schools or for VET teachers? Please describe the developments in this area.</p>	<p>According to several recent laws (since 1997) and Ministerial Decrees (mainly intended to implement the new School Act, according to law no.53/2003), in Italy the main trend is towards more autonomy for schools than for teachers.</p> <p>In particular, the basis of school autonomy is laid down by art. 21 of Law no. 59 /1997. This law define the principles and degrees of autonomy for all schools: except for the financial autonomy (economic resources are allocated at a central level by the State) and teachers' recruitment, the organization, educational and research autonomy is granted to all schools. As said before this Regulation does not envisage the power to recruit teachers among the powers devolved to individual schools: teachers are hired by the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>In 1999 a "Regulation on organization and teaching autonomy of schools" was issued. Furthermore, this Regulation specifies that it is up to the Ministry of Education to define the framework of fundamental subjects to be taught (core curriculum), learning standards and curriculum organization criteria. Hence, all schools are required to achieve the same general targets, goals, educational objectives and the national organization standards. Schools enjoy a functional autonomy and are free to design and provide training, in compliance with the powers devolved to Regional authorities and with the tasks and roles transferred to Local Authorities.</p> <p>The educational autonomy of each school is based on the "Piano dell' Offerta Formativa /POF" (Training supply plan). The POF sets out the curriculum design, the extra-curricular education and organization activities to be performed by a school. It must balance the national curriculum dimension with the "local" level of freedom granted to schools. This document is drafted by the Teachers' Board, it is published and it is provided to students and to their families upon their enrolment.</p> <p>The organization autonomy includes new staff management opportunities. New rules and national collective bargaining of teachers introduce a few although cautious "liberalization" provisions in the recruitment of staff. By means of specific network agreements, the mobility and exchange of the teaching staff among the various schools is promoted, also with the possibility to hire external professionals, especially in the field of technical and vocational education.</p> <p>Finally , the Regulation issued in 1999 better defines the roles, competencies and responsibilities of the various professionals involved in the governance of educational autonomy, in order to highlight the central role played by teachers (individually and especially collectively) in the drafting of the training supply plan.</p> <p>Concerning teachers each one has a broad teaching autonomy and is responsible for the design and implementation of the teaching and learning process for the classrooms and students under their control. Teachers are free to choose pedagogical methods and learning materials for students. This autonomy is balanced by different school bodies, such as the Teachers' Board, one of the most important educational bodies.</p>
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<p>What level of autonomy do VET teachers/VET schools have in terms of curriculum design, planning, management of schools (including financial and staff management), interaction with employers or other stakeholders?</p>	<p>In 2007 a few specific regulations were approved concerning Italian vocational schools (law 40 dated 2.4.2007 and Ministerial Decree DM no.41 dated 25.5.2007) providing more education and organization autonomy, especially with reference to the total number of teaching hours (through a modular organization), teaching staff, student services (especially guidance support).</p> <p>In particular, a reduction from 40 to 36 hours of classes a week is envisaged. Vocational schools implement the curricula – defined at central level by the Ministry of Education according to a top-down approach - whereas the additional learning activities can be carried out according to the 20% autonomy scheme allowed to schools.</p> <p>The human resources allocated to schools will allow them to maintain a high training level with a special link to labour-oriented subjects and local needs. They shall also play a role in providing guidance, helping disadvantaged students and enhancing areas of excellence envisaged by the additional learning activities. Furthermore, within the overall education organization framework, a special accent will be laid upon the laboratory-based methodology, which better suits the cognitive requirements of vocational schools' students.</p> <p>Teachers are more autonomous in planning VET offer and developing learning and teaching materials. They are also completely free in choosing learning/teaching methods.</p> <p>Teachers are free in defining assessment methods and criteria to evaluate students learning outcomes. They are free in defining learning and student assessment tests. Final judgements can be discussed and/or changed by majority by Class Council. Teachers must comply with national standards and adopt national test procedures envisaged only by “the examination taken on completion of upper secondary education” (the vocational school leaving certificate) or regional test procedures envisaged for the completion of vocational qualifications or vocational diplomas.</p> <p>VET schools principals are not allowed to decide on working time, working conditions and employment contracts, teachers' tasks, etc., because these matters are regulated through a collective bargaining at national (or at regional) level. VET principals can choose to give to teachers special functions/roles (i.e. school departments' coordination, students' guidance, initiative addressed to disadvantages students needs) and even reduce teaching working time.</p> <p>VET school principals and teachers are free to promote interaction with employers or other stakeholders: it depends from relationships, agreements and the prestige of VET school in the territory.</p>
<p>Is there a difference between autonomy of</p>	<p>From the legal point of view, all secondary schools are similar (see Q.2). Instead from the organizational point of view VET</p>

<p>teachers and schools in VET and those in general education?</p>	<p>schools are more autonomous in fostering links and cooperation with companies and other local organisations as well as in promoting actions to develop occupational profiles responding to the local occupational needs. For example, in the year 2008 the so-called “training and technology poles” have been launched, i.e. joint boards linking together VET schools, Local Authorities and enterprises in order to promote the dissemination of the scientific and technical culture in a stable and systematic way, as well as measures for the economic and industrial development of the country. These “training and technology poles” will allow many VET schools to manage a broad and diversified range of training provisions on more qualification levels (with qualification certificates equivalent to three- four- and five-year-long courses, as well as to post-graduate higher education diplomas).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Key issues and possible solutions</p>	
<p>What challenges or problems have arisen in your country in relation to VET teachers’ autonomy as described above?</p>	<p>The main problems are: on the one hand, “teachers’ educational autonomy” might have encouraged teachers’ individualism or voluntarism, whereas on the other hand it can sometimes be seen as a problem for teachers working in groups and inter-disciplinary activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school autonomy provides teachers with both new opportunities and demands: their responsibilities increase, they must make decisions on important aspects of school life (organization, curriculum), new external relations open up, and they are accountable for students’ performance and (possibly) improvement. For this purpose, every school must be equipped with a responsible organization structure; it must be able to interpret a dynamic design in continuous interaction with the external environment. All this entails the need to provide schools with the necessary skills and capabilities to manage processes that increasingly more often go beyond the walls of the school itself. To respond to these new needs it is necessary to enhance all the in-house resources and ask teachers (at least the most motivated ones) to broaden their scope of action and to deal not only with their class-related problems, but also, to a certain extent, with the whole school problems. <p>The main challenges are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to read changes at technological, cultural, social and professional level in order to design new curricula and methods and to improve educational offer • how to promote the school quality development and assure innovations (also by introducing ICT tools) <p>how to improve the involvement of local stakeholders in building and renewing educational offer.</p>
<p>How have the teachers responded to these new roles and do they feel</p>	<p>According to a few national surveys (in particular the Second IARD survey on teachers in Italy, in 2000), at least three groups of teachers have been identified: a teachers minority (about 20%) is open to challenges and is confident to face it; another group</p>

<p>confident /competent/ supported enough to deal with the new challenges?</p>	<p>(about 30%) is absolutely sceptic and reluctant to innovation, the remaining part of teachers is available to play new roles demanding a support and claiming new working conditions. Yet, it would be wrong to interpret autonomy only as a juridical and regulatory affair, which is especially demanded by stakeholders outside the school (i.e. institutions, the community, the market). School autonomy must contribute to improve training opportunities for all students. Hence, it should be regarded as a cultural and professional process that concerns, first and foremost, school actors, and their ability to carry out a professionally and socially recognized job. Autonomy can also turn into an opportunity to unlock professional energies, in the light of a robust cultural and educational perspective. Autonomy is probably the most effective and suitable reform that is likely to develop a "thinking" culture within the school (from an educational, design and organization point of view).</p>
<p>What measures and policies are in place to support VET teachers in these new roles? Is this support specific to VET teachers and if yes how?</p>	<p>The reform of Italian secondary schools is at a stand. Teachers' collective bargaining regulates only wages and working conditions and does not deal with new functions and roles. Therefore CPD actions can be organized only at local level or at school level. This framework involves all teachers. In 2007 the Ministry of Education created a national working group/commission (set up according to Law 40 of 2007) to develop technical and VET schools Reform. This working group proposed also a national plan to CPD of teachers: a few "support actions" including intensive training, reskilling and refresher courses for teachers involved in the curriculum and education reform processes.</p> <p>The main subjects of training programmes for VET teachers and schools promoted by the Ministry of Education were related mostly to ICT tools for didactics and quality assurance (school self-evaluation or ISO approach).</p> <p>Ministry of Education (law no. 448 dated December 23rd 1998) has also foreseen special support for schools appointing school teachers and principals with specific tasks. in compliance with the provisions laid down by the law on school autonomy. The following main areas have been covered by the this support activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education support area, aimed at the implementation of autonomy (support to training planning, joint initiatives between different types of schools, flexible school hours organization, training and refresher courses for the teaching staff, education innovation, training quality and assessment projects, international projects, guidance projects and other initiatives aimed at raising the compulsory schooling level etc.); • support area for the implementation of autonomy at a local level (documentation, consulting, monitoring and info desk activities, etc.); • support area addressed to individual needs and student involvement (adult education, health education, school integration of the disabled, equal opportunities between

	<p>men and women, fight against drop-out, students' provincial councils, complementary and supplementary activities);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inter-institutional liaison area (links between school and the labour market, education and higher integrated training, relations with the community); <p>management and organization area, including the IT support (organization of school bodies, schools networking, use of new ICT technologies).</p>
<p>In cases where teachers or schools have autonomy in some of the areas above, how is consistency and quality at national level ensured?</p>	<p>There are many interesting projects and experiences in Italy such as proposals for national standards, external evaluation, quality management, but only in some Regions there is a real implementation (i.e. competence standards in Piemonte, Lombardia, Emilia-Romagna, external evaluation in the Autonomous Province of Trento, quality management system was adopted by some technical schools).</p>
<p>Conclusions</p>	
<p>What lessons have been learned in your country that can be applicable to other European countries?</p>	<p>In Italy the development of VET teacher's autonomy goes towards a "cooperative model", above all as a driver of innovative approaches. The development of several "communities of practice" (composed not only by teachers, but also by other professionals) will improve also the attractiveness of VET teachers' professions. School autonomy requires teachers to have a professional approach to work and readiness to shift away from routine work. A greater freedom can lead to very original solutions in education organization (intensive and demanding periods of commitment, a modular teaching structure, external job placements for students, etc.). Flexibility is essential to foster the customization of pathways to meet the ever increasing students' demands towards the integration between the various training opportunities.</p> <p>The introduction of autonomy in school, once organization risks are overcome, will lead to an enhancement of teachers professionalism and create a more favourable learning environment, thus allowing teachers working in team to play a central role, to undertake the initiative and to exercise "thinking autonomy".</p>
<p>What would be beneficial for your country to learn from the PLA in Slovenia?</p>	<p>For Italy is important to get to know and to exchange best practices on teachers functions (and competences), organizational models, professional tools (at technological and pedagogical levels), partnership models between VET school and labour market.</p> <p>In particular, concerning teachers' autonomy it would be interesting to verify the existing experiences of the other countries in the following area: recruitment (of teachers and experts), career paths (also linked to "variable wage" quotas),</p>

	<p>salaries, CPD, recognition of individual merit and status profession, quality-oriented staff hiring policies.</p> <p>With reference to schools' autonomy it would be useful to discuss on: the role and the power of VET schools principals, financial autonomy, the Governance and the existing joint school boards, forms of cooperation and competition between VET schools.</p>
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PORTUGAL

General Overview	
<p>In your country, is there a trend towards more autonomy for VET schools or for VET teachers? Please describe the developments in this area.</p>	<p>The VET system in Portugal depends on two ministries: Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity.</p> <p>Vocational schools depend from the ministry of education and have pedagogical autonomy. Most of courses last three years and trainees can enter only when basic education is completed. They are of private initiative and are very flexible institutions with strong leaderships.</p> <p>State owned secondary schools also offer initial vocational education. However, the rules for these courses are the same applied to secondary schools, this is, they are centralised.</p> <p>For these secondary schools there is a law, currently under public discussion, whose object is autonomy, administration and school management. However, the transfer of competences from central to school level is to be object of a contract for each school.</p> <p>Training centres depend from the Ministry of Labour and most of their courses are in the apprenticeship system, although they offer training for jobs. Training centres have all their activity ruled at central level (from the National Institute for Training and Employment), either curricula or duration of placements.</p>
<p>What level of autonomy do VET teachers/VET schools have in terms of curriculum design, planning, management of schools (including financial and staff management), interaction with employers or other stakeholders?</p>	<p>Vocational schools have autonomy in every item, although there is a national core curriculum they have to follow.</p> <p>VET that occurs in the state owned secondary schools is centralised in what concerns: Curriculum design, Management of schools including financial management and staff management. Working time, working conditions, employment contracts, tasks required from teachers as well as planning of VET delivery is decided at central level.</p> <p>Teachers have autonomy in the development of learning and teaching materials; developing learning/teaching methods and design of assessment methods and criteria.</p> <p>Interaction with employers or other stakeholders, including promotion of training to future students is not a main issue for most of secondary schools, although there are a few good practices.</p> <p>Training centres also work with a national centralised framework. In these centres the interaction with employers is very strong and most of courses offered include placements for trainees.</p>

<p>Is there a difference between autonomy of teachers and schools in VET and those in general education?</p>	<p>See answer provided to point 1 above.</p>
<p>Key issues and possible solutions</p>	
<p>What challenges or problems have arisen in your country in relation to VET teachers' autonomy as described above?</p>	<p>The main and serious problem with teachers in vocational schools is not a consequence of autonomy: they do not have a career. Their working contracts are individual and they are not object of collective bargaining or agreement. Many of them have an annual contract and many are contracted as a kind of 'free lancers', just to teach some modules along the year.</p>
<p>How have the teachers responded to these new roles and do they feel confident /competent/ supported enough to deal with the new challenges?</p>	<p>New roles and new challenges is a big issue that doesn't affect only teachers, but affects every VET profession as well as organisations. CEDEFOP developed a study last year – in the framework of TTnet – on VET profiles. May be CEDEFOP can make it available for the PLA, as a background document.</p>
<p>What measures and policies are in place to support VET teachers in these new roles? Is this support specific to VET teachers and if yes how?</p>	<p>For those teachers in the education system continuing professional development is compulsory and state financed, although there isn't specific training for VET teachers. For the others, the continuing professional development depends on individual or the employers initiative.</p>
<p>In cases where teachers or schools have autonomy in some of the areas above, how is consistency and quality at national level ensured?</p>	<p>There are more experiences in the area of certification of quality (mostly addressed to 'quality' of procedures), than experiences and strategies envisaging improvement of quality – either at local or system level. There are some efforts from the national inspection body to motivate schools to do internal evaluations. However it is not a wide practice yet.</p>
<p>Conclusions</p>	
<p>What lessons have been learned in your country that can be</p>	<p>It can be misleading to consider that the autonomy of teachers (when considered without being in relation to other factors) can strongly influence the items referred. These items are systemic, do not work without teachers, but are not 'teachers driven'.</p>

<p>applicable to other European countries?</p>	<p>The model of vocational schools is a successful experience in what concerns (at least) 2 the mentioned items: Beneficial to diverse groups of learners (including vulnerable groups), and successful in interaction with employers.</p> <p>Vocational schools cannot be started by individuals. They have a regional dimension and have to 'owned'/promoted by regional bodies: municipalities, associations of employers, associations of unions, associations of regional development ... These means that employers are inside the system. As said before, there is a national core curriculum, but there is also part of the curriculum that is negotiated between the ministry of Education and the promoters, what involves the stakeholders in the development of training. Placements are compulsory but flexible in their duration and organization.</p> <p>Vocational schools have the highest rate of employment of youngsters who complete their initial training.</p> <p>On the other hand, vocational schools are small when compared to state owned schools. The biggest ones have around 300 trainees. This means the possibility of a personal relationship.</p> <p>Teachers are usually very motivated and highly involved in the school educative project. Special attention paid to trainees helps them to re-construct not only their project of training but also their project of life.</p>
<p>What would be beneficial for your country to learn from the PLA in Slovenia?</p>	<p>Difficult to answer in advance, since I don't know enough of VET in Slovenia. Having in mind other similar experiences in the European context I would say the main benefit is the collective thinking/learning. European experiences and contexts are so diverse that there will be opportunities to consider new approaches and extend knowledge on the theme of the PLA.</p>

ROMANIA

<p style="text-align: center;">General Overview</p>	
<p>In your country, is there a trend towards more autonomy for VET schools or for VET teachers? Please describe the developments in this area.</p>	<p>During the last 10 years VET system in Romania has been reconstructed and modernized with support of different programmes and projects. The developments were focused on following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing the attractiveness and flexibility of VET system by creating alternative training pathways, offering opportunities for a better insertion on the labour market and continuing studies, enabling the academic and vocational recognition • creating a strategic planning mechanism for a better correlation between the training offer and the labour market needs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a better correlation between the training programmes and the competences required by the labour market • a better correlation between the qualifications provided in secondary and postsecondary education and Higher Education • revision of the qualifications provided by VET system (learning outcomes based) and the corresponding curricula (modular approach) • introducing a quality assurance system, focused on self-assessment and external monitoring, in line with CQAF. • supporting the VET teachers to fulfil their different roles <p>For implementing all these changes in the VET system the roles of VET schools and teachers are essential, therefore one of the main results of the reform is an increased level of autonomy at provider level.</p> <p>The fields where VET schools have a high level of autonomy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vocational offer planning • educational and pedagogical organisation • setting up projects and partnerships with different stakeholders at local and regional level <p>The fields where VET teachers have a high level of autonomy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pedagogical methods used • design of the training programme organisation at school level based on the sector requirements for the qualifications provided (the training standards represent the sector requirements for each qualification) • design of the local curriculum component (in partnership with the employers) • setting up projects, mobility for students, testing and experimentation of new, innovative pedagogical approaches and methods <p>In the future we envisage a positive evolution of the autonomy of VET schools and teachers under the decentralisation process to be implemented. The autonomy will be extended mainly to the financial field, and teachers' recruitment process.</p>
<p>What level of autonomy do VET teachers/VET schools have in terms of curriculum design, planning, management of schools (including financial and staff management), interaction with</p>	<p>Curriculum design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The national component of the curriculum is centrally designed and based on the training standards requirements; therefore there is no autonomy for this. • The local component of curriculum is totally under the VET schools and teachers responsibility; so a high level of autonomy. The proportion of curriculum designed at school level is about 20%. <p>Developing learning/teaching methods</p> <p>The teachers have a high degree of autonomy for design of the learning/teaching methods. In order to support them a number of</p>

<p>employers or other stakeholders?</p>	<p>guidelines for the development of curriculum auxiliaries and learning materials for different modules of training have been developed.</p> <p>Design of assessment methods and criteria</p> <p>The assessment requirements/criteria are stipulated in the training standards and they should be followed for the assessment with certification purposes (for certificate/diploma award).</p> <p>For the design of assessment methods the teachers have a higher level of autonomy as long as these are in line with the training standards requirements.</p> <p>Management of schools</p> <p>Working time, working conditions and employment contracts are regulated by the labour code; therefore at school level there is no autonomy for setting up specific regulations. There is a high level of financial management for the extra budgetary resources of the schools.</p> <p>Interaction with employers or other stakeholders - high level of autonomy</p> <p>VET schools in Romania cooperate with the employers and other stakeholders for different issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. planning of educational offer – is based on labour market surveys investigating the future needs for qualification 2. organising the practical training of the students enrolled in VET programmes 3. providing educational services for the community 4. developing projects for the development of the human resources in the region 5. promoting the VET offer at local and regional level
<p>Is there a difference between autonomy of teachers and schools in VET and those in general education?</p>	<p>According to the regulations in place there is no difference between autonomy level of teachers and schools in VET and those in general education, but in practice we noticed that VET schools and teachers are more active and benefit from their autonomy than those in general education.</p>
<p>Key issues and possible solutions</p>	
<p>What challenges or problems have arisen in your country in relation to VET teachers' autonomy as described above?</p>	<p>The main problem is linked with the initial training of VET teachers which is not yet correlated with all the developments of VET system.</p> <p>Another issue, with a greater negative impact, is the decreased attractiveness of the profession; therefore the incoming teachers are not at all motivated to stay in the system and leaves as soon as they have the opportunity, VET system being characterised by an increased level of staff fluctuation during the last years.</p>

	<p>In practice these aspects have a great impact at school level, reducing the benefits and advantages of the autonomy, since the teachers are not motivated or trained for fulfil their roles.</p>
<p>How have the teachers responded to these new roles and do they feel confident /competent/ supported enough to deal with the new challenges?</p>	<p>The great majority of teachers are both understanding and accepting the fact that they have different roles in VET system, sometimes more difficult and complex than the general education teachers. They also feel confident about their capabilities to deal with the new challenges as long as they are supported and assisted, and their performance valued and recognised.</p>
<p>What measures and policies are in place to support VET teachers in these new roles? Is this support specific to VET teachers and if yes how?</p>	<p>Key policy</p> <p>The drawing up of “The development Strategy for Initial and Continuous Training of the Teaching Staff and of the Education Managers” ensuring a professional dynamic by using the transferable credit system.</p> <p>The measures in place for supporting VET teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing professional development through training programmes and courses on different topics like: student centred learning, school – enterprise partnership, development of curriculum and learning materials, quality assurance, participative management, working with students with special educational needs. • Creating VET schools networks on different fields and topics in order to support the peer learning activities within the system and to promote the exchanges of good practices. • Programmes for supporting mobility of VET teachers. • Schemes to support teachers continuing professional development through European Social Funds. <p>Measures planned for further developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative proposals meant to encourage teachers to regularly update existing skills and develop new ones. • Revision of the study programmes for teachers’ initial training <p>Proposals for improving the methodology of assessment of teachers’ performance and defining criteria for career evolution in accordance with the new VET teachers’ roles.</p>
<p>In cases where teachers or schools have autonomy in some of the areas above, how is consistency and quality at national level ensured?</p>	<p>Consistency and quality assurance at national level is assured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In case of the training programme and curriculum design and provision the general framework is assured by the training standards for qualifications (setting up the sector requirements for the desired level of the learning outcomes and assessment of students achievements) and national

	<p>curriculum (setting up the principles for organising the learning process)</p> <p>In case of school management the quality assurance mechanism is compulsory at school level; two components ensure the consistency at national level: the self-assessment process (based on national set-up indicators) and external monitoring process. All VET schools are accredited by the National Quality Assurance Agency, according to national criteria and indicators.</p>
Conclusions	
<p>What lessons have been learned in your country that can be applicable to other European countries?</p>	<p>Examples of good practices that could be applicable to other European countries</p> <p>Interaction with employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific training for VET teachers for establishing partnerships with employers for the development of local curriculum and the practical training of the students in enterprise <p>Ensure good quality and improve attractiveness of VET:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers training programmes focused on different aspects of learning process, development of learning and teaching materials, integrating ICT in learning process, curriculum design, quality assurance • Setting up the network of schools for exchange of experience and good practices. Peer learning activities for teachers are organised within the network. <p>Mobility of teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leonardo da Vinci programme VET PRO supporting mobility of VET teachers – credits are awarded for the continuing training of the teachers and the professional training is recognised and valued for the progression in career.
<p>What would be beneficial for your country to learn from the PLA in Slovenia?</p>	<p>Response:</p> <p>Method to increase the attractiveness of VET teachers' profession</p> <p>Successful methods for interaction with employers</p> <p>Methods for addressing diverse groups of learners</p> <p>Innovative approaches for VET.</p>

SLOVENIA

General Overview	
<p>In your country, is there a trend towards</p>	<p>At the end of the 1990 when the first phase of the reform has been completed the system of vocational education was much</p>

<p>more autonomy for VET schools or for VET teachers? Please describe the developments in this area.</p>	<p>centralised and strictly prescribed. With the new starting points for the preparation of educational programmes in Vocational Education and Training in 2001 as well as with the implementation of the new financing system Moffas in 2004 the process of strengthening the autonomy of schools and teachers has began.</p>
<p>What level of autonomy do VET teachers/VET schools have in terms of curriculum design, planning, management of schools (including financial and staff management), interaction with employers or other stakeholders?</p>	<p>The VET programmes were traditionally structured; they were made of three loosely connected curricular parts: general subjects, professional-theoretical subjects and practical training. They were all strictly prescribed on a national level. Evaluations showed that although the pupils acquired a lot of theoretical and academic knowledge, they did not apply the acquired knowledge to solving key problems in their profession.</p> <p>The pupil's generic, vocational and key competences were also badly developed e.g.: methodological competences, problem solving, social and communication skills, learning to learn. Dropout remained high, especially in lower and secondary vocational education. A lot of pupils also left school after 2 or 3 years of education and remained without any formal qualifications due to the fact that they did not finish all 3 to 4 years of education. The share of adults lacking basic vocational education but with a lot of practical experiences was also high. The system of Vocational Education and Training remained centralised and strictly prescribed on the national level (100 percent prescribed curriculum, kinds of assessment, distribution of goals and hours by grades). Despite the establishment of the system of teacher training and vast seminars little has changed in vocational schools, classes remained primarily frontal, there was still a lack of cooperation between the teachers as well as developmental and innovative activities in schools.</p> <p>The following goals were pursued in reformation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving flexibility and responsiveness of VET by preparing modular and openly structured as well as credit assessment of educational programmes. These measures are supposed to enable quick responses to the new needs of the labour market; they also enable the adult's acquirement of the National Vocational Qualifications and partly gain education. • Clearly defined learning outcomes in the form of acquired vocational and key competences • Curricular planning on the national level, where framework educational programmes are prepared as well as partly transferring the decisions to the school level (preparation of school curriculum, syllabus with distribution of hours, open curriculum, executive models) and strengthening developmental role of schools and autonomy • Reducing drop-out rate, individualization and support of the individual at learning

	<p>In 2002 Slovenia almost completely reformed educational VET programmes or prepared new ones. They have been designed on the basis of vocational standards and the needs of economy</p> <p>New framework national curricula are modularly structured; they incorporate competences and credit evaluation. They enable the acquirement of basic general and vocational knowledge and gradually with the chosen modules special knowledge as well. 20% has been left open to suit the regional/local needs, which encourage cooperation between schools and the local companies. The framework for the new programmes is prepared and the expected earning outcomes are determined in the sense of acquired vocational competences (the stress is on the connection of theory and practice, training in companies is obligatory), upgrading of the key competences and general knowledge for which standards of general knowledge have been prepared. Learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) of the individual modules have been determined and also the number of highest number of credit points that can be achieved. The new programmes have been structured in a way, that they enable easier vertical and horizontal transfer between the programmes and improved connection between the initial and further education and training. Weaker pupils who aren't able to finish education can acquire a National Vocational Qualification certificate on the basis of the modules they finished. Connection between the school and the certificate system also enables the adults to acquire a certificate through the certification of non-formally gained knowledge. The certificate aids at further education. An important novelty is the obligatory preparation of the school curriculum, which is prepared by each school on the basis of the framework national curriculum and in accordance with the analysis of the school environment. It is a process – developmental school document in which the school designs its vision, strategy, indicators for observing improvements, determine pedagogical-didactical concept annual educational process (planning, realization, evaluation), a plan of assessment and validation of knowledge is also included, as well as development of intercurricular competences and the mechanism of support for individual for learning. Members of the programming teacher's team, employers and pupils are involved into planning of the school curriculum. Open national documents open developmental and innovative space for schools.</p> <p>In our opinion in the past five years important developmental work has been done in order to prepare new conceptual and methodological basis for the educational programmes which are based on competences, openly structured and who represent an important basis for improving the quality of VET and also the autonomy of schools and teachers. Slovenia has been implementing pilot programmes since 2004; in the school year 2008/09 all programmes will be implemented.</p> <p>The whole reform of the programmes was designed in partnership with important social partners, companies, schools, faculties and the Ministry of Education and Sport. Apart from</p>
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	<p>preparation and implementation of new programmes, new rules also emerged (e.g. new Rules on Assessment of knowledge and in accordance with the needs of the school a new system in support of schools and teachers emerged)</p>
<p>Is there a difference between autonomy of teachers and schools in VET and those in general education?</p>	<p>No. General schools and its teachers are also becoming more and more autonomous. Reformation in high schools is progressing similarly than in vocational schools. New curriculum is more openly structured and is implementing a new way of financing.</p>
<p>Key issues and possible solutions</p>	
<p>What challenges or problems have arisen in your country in relation to VET teachers' autonomy as described above?</p>	<p>Realization of the teacher's autonomy is conditioned by the teacher's professionalism. The teachers have to engage into the life learning process and thus develop their knowledge in all fields of the educational process; the teachers have to be knowledgeable about their field, about psychological and pedagogical factors of an individual's development, as well as civil literacy. The teacher's autonomy is restricted by the legislation, rules, and national catalogues of knowledge as well as with the exam catalogues which are oriented towards goals and processes. The teacher is thus cast into a more and more responsible role; he is autonomous in professional execution of the pedagogical process. On the other hand the current school policy emphasises the importance of the equal opportunities principle, which demands from the teacher to consider all pupils in the learning process and ensure them the exact same chances for success. The teachers' professionalism is thus the basic condition for the realization of the principle of autonomy. The state has to provide sufficient amount of supplemental material, professional guidelines and training on all required fields. The teacher's work has to be suitably evaluated in accordance with the tasks brought by the autonomy.</p> <p>There is a shortage of trained experts who would be able to facilitate the training programmes therefore progress is slow. There is also a lack of suitable literature (for vocational didactics); research should also be quickened as well as mechanisms in order to motivate the teachers for developmental work.</p>
<p>How have the teachers responded to these new roles and do they feel confident /competent/ supported enough to deal with the new challenges?</p>	<p>The teachers are facing a demanding task, which requires a multitude of professional training, developmental work, supplemental material and the acceptance of the new role of an autonomous teacher. The teachers' acceptance of the autonomy in Slovenia varies, some view it as a challenge, a lot of them are pointing out the need for extra training, that the organization of work in schools also need to be altered, that the teacher's work has to be re-evaluated.</p>

<p>What measures and policies are in place to support VET teachers in these new roles?</p> <p>Is this support specific to VET teachers and if yes how?</p>	<p>Since 2004 we support every professional teacher's team in VET in schools with training and counselling. Training is mostly connected with the curricular planning and assessment of knowledge. Executive curriculum is a novelty; it is planned by the professional teachers' team. It is composed of 2 basic elements: pedagogical-didactical school concept, which is concretized in the annual preparations of the educational process. (Kurikul, 2006, str. 53)</p> <p>Our meetings with the professional teachers' team last for about a year – once a month in the form of training and counselling and also later if needed. We follow the school processes regularly and form professional recommendations on the basis of the observations, as well as further training and counselling for individual professional teachers' team</p> <p>Apart from participating in training and counselling in the past few years the teachers have been included into significantly more various developmental projects, which are realised in the schools and are financed by several EU financial sources.</p> <p>Reformation of the high schools and primary schools are progressing in a similar fashion.</p>
<p>In cases where teachers or schools have autonomy in some of the areas above, how is consistency and quality at national level ensured?</p>	<p>The educational programmes have nationally approved competences and aims for individual subjects and modules. Each school prepares minimum standards of knowledge based on the catalogues of knowledge. The programmes of Vocational Secondary Education (4 year) are finished with the final examination of an individual educational programme in the form of partly external vocational matura. The programmes of Vocational Secondary Education (3 year) are finished with internal final examination. The School inspection is responsible for checking the legitimacy of the execution of the tasks of an individual school. Headmaster is responsible for the quality of teaching from the pedagogical point of view. The school has to set up a system of quality assurance, the so called quality committee, made up of representatives of teachers, employers, pupils and parents. Self evaluation must be performed regularly by the schools and a report on quality has to be posted on the website annually.</p>
<p>Conclusions</p>	
<p>What lessons have been learned in your country that can be applicable to other European countries?</p>	<p>Evaluation shows that opening of curriculum, preparation of the executive curriculum, more responsibilities in assessment of knowledge makes room for innovations and team work in schools. But the following preconditions have to be fulfilled: suitably trained teachers, who gained knowledge in accordance with new possibilities, gradually implemented changes, and most importantly suitable and constant support of the schools. External support of the institutions is thus cast into a new role.</p>

	<p>New open curriculum and the preparation of the school curriculum enables the schools and the teachers an easier and more efficient adjustment to the various groups of pupils, including the weakest students for whom individual plans have to be prepared. Folder of learning outcomes emphasizes formative assessment and documentation of learning outcomes of individual pupils.</p> <p>Cooperation of schools and employers must not be defined only in principle or as a requirement. The scope of practical training in the working process has been increased in the new educational programmes. The biggest novelty is the open curriculum, which is not defined on the national level. It is defined by the individual schools in cooperation with the employers in the local area. Thus a space has been left open where cooperation between employers and the school can be concretized on a local level.</p>
<p>What would be beneficial for your country to learn from the PLA in Slovenia?</p>	<p>Through PLA we would like to get insight in the transfer process of autonomy from the national level to the level of teachers and schools in other European countries. It is our belief that together we can build a new vision. How to form further support for the teachers and schools in order to improve quality in the schools?</p>

SPAIN

General Overview	
<p>In your country, is there a trend towards more autonomy for VET schools or for VET teachers? Please describe the developments in this area.</p>	<p><i>Organic Law of Education – Title V</i> <i>Royal Decree 1558/2005 regulating the basic requirements for Integrated Professional Training Centres</i></p> <p>Integrated Vocational Training Centres are the last link upon which all the actions and instruments laid out by the Organic Act on Qualifications and Vocational Training must be materialized. These centres are regarded in the Organic Act as those which implement their vocational training offer with some training activities aiming at the acquisition of Diplomas and Certificates of occupational standards referring to the National Catalogue of Occupational Qualifications. The Act also lays upon the hands of the Educational Administrations of Spanish autonomous regions the responsibility for the creation and official permission of these centres, under the legal requirements they settle. Nevertheless, the flexible and open approach of this article to the creation of this type of centres is quite suitable, though the vital importance of these centres to develop all the formative actions scheduled in the Act is not clearly enough pointed out.</p> <p>The main objectives of the integrated Vocational Training Centres are two:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the qualification and even re-qualification of people as part of the drawing-up of their personal lifelong learning process. • the creation of a space for cooperation, dialogue and interaction between the Vocational Training System and the production system. <p>Integrated Professional Training Centres are those which offer the two subsystems of Vocational Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education System (intermediate and higher) • Training for the Labour Market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Occupational (for the unemployed) ○ Continuous Training (job training) <p>This subsystem has 2 actions: supply and demand</p> <p><i>Royal Decree 229/2008 regulating the National Reference Centres in Vocational and Educational Training</i></p> <p>National Reference VET Centres are those in which innovation and experimental actions in VET are implemented, specialized in different productive sectors.</p>
<p>What level of autonomy do VET teachers/VET schools have in terms of curriculum design,</p>	<p>In Spain Schools have full autonomy for current expenses. With regard to the private funds there is only a certain degree of autonomy to seek donations and sponsors and to obtain funds to hire installations.</p>

<p>planning, management of schools (including financial and staff management), interaction with employers or other stakeholders?</p>	<p>Integrated VET Centres and Reference Centres have much broader autonomy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Curriculum design:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is regulated for the Education System cycles which issue a Diploma of VET or a Certificate of Professional Standards. • Free for any other training ➤ <i>Planning of VET delivery and development of learning and teaching materials</i> <i>Autonomous</i> ➤ <i>Developing learning/teaching methods and design of assessment methods and criteria</i> <i>Autonomous</i> ➤ <i>Management of schools including financial management and staff management such as: defining working time, working conditions and employment contracts, tasks required from teachers, etc.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is regulated for the Education System. • Headmaster is designated by both, the Education and Labour Administrations • Teachers are government employees, working conditions are regulated, as well as required tasks. • Free for the second subsystem ➤ <i>Interaction with employers or other stakeholders, including promotion of training to future students</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No representation in the general education system • Integrated VET Centres and National Reference VET Centres: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ They are part of both, the Labour and Educational Administrations. <p>Stakeholders are represented in the Social Council of the Integrated and Reference Centres.</p>
<p>Is there a difference between autonomy of teachers and schools in VET and those in general education?</p>	<p>VET is provided both in Centres of general secondary education or in two other types of centres, as explained above, INTEGRATED CENTRES and NATIONAL REFERENCE CENTRES.</p> <p>Autonomy of teachers in general secondary centres is very limited</p> <p>Autonomy in the other centres is much broader and has been designed to be managed more autonomously.</p>

Key issues and possible solutions	
What challenges or problems have arisen in your country in relation to VET teachers' autonomy as described above?	<p>Integrated VET Centres were created in 2006, which means very little time.</p> <p>There are more than a hundred all over Spain.</p> <p>Since the implementation of these centres is responsibility of the Autonomous Communities, results are varied and different and therefore, difficult to assess</p>
How have the teachers responded to these new roles and do they feel confident /competent/ supported enough to deal with the new challenges?	<p>Teachers' responses are varied depending on the implementation in the different Autonomous Communities.</p>
What measures and policies are in place to support VET teachers in these new roles? Is this support specific to VET teachers and if yes how?	<p>In the general education system, teachers can apply for the most adequate training demands like all other teachers. They can design their training to be approved in the Teachers' Training Plan.</p> <p>Integrated and Reference VET are considered elite centres and they should be a reference for VET all over Spain. They are provided with a higher budget and they are of a special preference in their running, which includes Teachers' Training demands.</p>
In cases where teachers or schools have autonomy in some of the areas above, how is consistency and quality at national level ensured?	<p>All those centres are immersed in a Quality EFQM model, through ISO 900 and 14000 rules.</p>
Conclusions	
What lessons have been learned in your country that can be applicable to other European countries?	<p>The two recent initiatives in Spain can be applicable to other countries in Europe. The National Reference Centres are particularly interesting because they have been created to implement innovation and experimentation. This is a particular concern in European centres for the year 2009.</p>
	<p>Response:</p>

What would be beneficial for your country to learn from the PLA in Slovenia?	Get to know what other countries are working on and try to adapt the positive experiences to our VET Education System
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