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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein

Foreword

'Level 5-The Missing Link' is an intriguing title for this new publication of EURASHE for those not versed in the qualifications terminology. It rightly points to an existing lack in the National Qualifications Frameworks, at least in some countries in the European Higher Education Area (formerly 'Bologna'). The implementation of the two- (later three) cycle structure also had to incorporate the level that is the link between secondary and higher education, and this for reasons explained below.

It is a great merit of the two researchers, Magda Kirsch and Yves Beernaert, co-authors of the report, that they have taken up the challenge of mapping a sector of (higher) education in a variety of countries, which often have just this in common, that they are among the 47 that signed the Bologna Declaration, but otherwise have such different education systems and structures that make comparisons of levels and programmes extremely difficult. This certainly for a level that in many countries led an existence of its own, outside the remit of higher education authorities.

The authors had done so before, when in 2003 they made the Europe-wide survey of "existing tertiary short cycle (TSC) education in Europe" also on behalf of EURASHE, and similarly commissioned by the European Commission. Unlike with the previous publication they are now surveying those training courses that qualify as an intermediate step within the first cycle of higher education only, thus wisely leaving aside those other short qualifications that could not claim to be part of higher education.

Within the constraints of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission the authors had to limit the scope of the survey to those countries eligible for funding, thus leaving aside other countries, such as the Russian Federation, Georgia, Ukraine, etc. that would then be the object of another study, in order to make the picture of the state-of-art of 'Level Five' in the EHEA complete.

As the authors themselves point out, there are various reasons of an economic, social and personal nature which have made it obvious that this fifth level could not be overlooked in the national qualifications frameworks, after it had rightly found its place in the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. Indeed the Bergen Ministerial meeting of Ministers (2005) had enabled countries to embed ISCED Level Five in the first cycle, thus effectively integrating it into the Bachelor-Master structure, on the basis of a compromise phrase in the Ministerial Communiqué, which stated "within national contexts, the possibility of intermediate qualifications". Besides which the economic agenda of the European Union contributed to the growing success of the intermediate qualification, by building upon a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("ET 2020"), in order to meet Europe's 'many socio-economic, demographic, environmental and technological challenges" in the years ahead.

It also became more and more clear that for an individual learner, the intermediate qualification could be a help for social advancement, through a qualification that enables a first entry in the labour market, and in addition may lead to a further qualification.

I am therefore confident that this comprehensive report will reach a variety of audiences, including our colleagues from the Bologna Follow-up Group, and all those who are looking for arguments that demonstrate the valuable contribution of intermediate qualifications to lifelong learning.

Stefan Delplace

Secretary General EURASHE

Acknowledgements

We are deeply grateful to the representatives of the ministries of education and the institutions that have taken the time to fill in the Eurashe 2010 questionnaires.

Our heartfelt thanks go to the representatives of ministries that have taken the time to read the drafts of the country descriptions and who have made suggestions to improve some of the contents. Similarly we thank the experts, Rosita Van Meel of ETF and Richard Thorn of IOTI who have taken the time to read the comparative chapters with the conclusions and recommendations and who have come up with suggestions to improve the contents of these chapters. Special thanks go to Hans Daale, the external evaluator of the project, who has relentlessly given advice to the two experts in drafting and finalising the comparative part of the present study. We also want to address our special thanks to Richard Thorn and Durmus Günay who wrote an example of good practice. We are grateful to CEDEFOP for allowing us to use some of their reports, especially on qualification frameworks in Europe and on skills needs and demands.

We are also very grateful to the members of the Administrative Board of Eurashe and the regional coordinators who have given their support to collect the information necessary to draft the present report. We also thank Paddy Carpenter who has taken the time to review, at short notice, the English of the study.

We finally also thank Stefan Delplace, the secretary-general of Eurashe, and the project manager, Iva Voldanova, for the support they have given us over the past year.

Without the support of all those colleagues it would have been impossible to finalise the present study within the deadlines originally set.

Magda Kirsch & Yves Beernaert

1. Table of Content

Part I: Comparative study

Executive Summary

Objectives of the study

The general objective of the present comparative study was to make a detailed analysis of existing Short Cycle Higher Education as an intermediate level of the first level of higher education (or at level 5 of the EQF) in 32 of the Bologna signatory countries: the 27 member states of the European Union, the EFTA countries and Turkey. One of the specific objectives was to find out what changes had taken place in the short cycle higher education landscape since 2003 when the former EURASHE study on SCHE was made. Another objective was to see to what extent the development and implementation of SCHE is contributing to the implementation of the strategic framework Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) of the European Union and the objectives outlined in the Leuven Communiqué of 2010 after the meeting of the ministers of higher education. Overall, the comparative study attempts to highlight the major developments in SCHE over the past 7 years, focusing on similarities and differences across Europe.

Some of the key questions addressed are: have more countries developed SCHE? Is it always seen as an intermediate level within the' first level of higher education? Is it always situated at level 5 of the EQF? What is the profile of the students and the lecturers in SCHE? What is the contribution of SCHE to lifelong learning? Is SCHE seen as a means of progression towards further degree studies? How are SCHE institutions cooperating with industry and other social partners? What about student and teacher mobility and internationalisation in SCHE? What about QA in SCHE? What about employability, multilingualism, active citizenship and social commitment in SCHE? The authors have tried to address these key questions in the present study.

SCHE is gaining ground in Europe

SCHE - level 5 studies are definitely gaining ground compared to the situation in 2003. At the moment 19 of the European countries (or regions) studied do have SCHE – level 5. A few of those countries have just started up SCHE - level 5 studies and others intend to do so in the near future. **1,694,080 students at least** are studying in SCHE-programmes. **Especially non-traditional and mature students are increasingly participating in SCHE.**

However, **although in most countries studies at level 5 are also SCHE, this is not always the case.** Indeed in some countries there are level 5 studies or training of a professional nature which are not considered to be SCHE as they are not an intermediate level within the first level of higher education. In yet other countries two parallel systems exist with on the one hand SCHE – level 5 studies (within HE) and on the other level 5 professional higher education which is not considered to be part of higher education. All together qualifications at level 5 remain quite blurred in some countries. We are thus even going in some countries towards a **new binary system at level 5** with on the one hand SCHE and on the other qualifications at level 5 that are mainly focusing the labour market.

SCHE has found its rightful place in higher education

SCHE can be considered to be the missing link between secondary and higher education. The fact that the Bologna process has led to the introduction of the Qualifications Framework for the EHEA (**including, within national contexts, the possibility of intermediate qualifications**) has definitely enhanced the status of SCHE. **SCHE enables students to climb the ladder of higher education step by step.**

In the majority of countries surveyed students can use most of the credits earned in SCHE to progress to degree courses. In some countries students can even use all the credits earned to progress to a bachelor's award. The minimum students can transfer is 30 ECTS. Sometimes the number of credits depends on the articulation between programmes.

In all countries providing SCHE there is specific legislation either as part of HE legislation in general or as a separate legislation for SCHE level 5 studies.

SCHE is provided in a wide variety of settings

In most cases SCHE level 5 is organised by the State and provided by various public education providers but in some cases it is organised by private providers. In both cases it may sometimes be organised in cooperation with sectoral or professional organisations, with chambers of commerce, with individual companies, with trade unions etc.

SCHE level 5 is provided by various public education providers such as universities, university colleges, universities of applied sciences, regional technical institutes, further education or adult education organisations or even upper secondary schools. In all countries surveyed SCHE is subsidised by the State or other authorities. In some cases there may be some (indirect) funding by companies.

The fact that SCHE is provided in such a wide variety of settings enhances the opportunities of non-traditional learners to participate in higher education. However, it is also to be noted that although SCHE is offered in a wide variety of settings, HEI are very often the awarding or responsible organisation or body.

SCHE meets the demands of the labour market

The main objective of level 5 SCHE studies is professional specialization focusing on employment. It must be stressed that SCHE level 5 studies always clearly lead to a vocational HE qualification; this means that every student who has obtained a SCHE level 5-certificate or diploma has a qualification that enables him or her to apply for a job at that level on the labour market.

Although the bulk of the study programmes offered in SCHE are in the area of business studies, administration, building, catering and hospitality, engineering and mechanics, it is interesting to point out that new programmes are being developed in areas such as logistics, ecology, forestry, security,

entrepreneurship, wine sales, aquaculture, driving instructor, aircraft mechanics etc. This indicates that SCHE is a thriving sector which quickly responds to the needs and demands of industry.

It is therefore not surprising that in most countries the employability rate of students is good and therefore SCHE could contribute to reducing youth unemployment.

SCHE develops strong partnerships between public authorities, higher education institutions, students, employers and employees, trade unions, chambers of commerce

In all countries SCHE level 5 HE has a very strong focus on cooperation with industry and other economic and social partners. In some cases cooperation with companies is compulsory. The key argument to do so is the need to have more highly educated and trained technicians that are required by industry and who respond to the explicit needs of industry.

As SCHE studies try to respond swiftly to demands of industry and as SCHE studies are employment-oriented it is obvious that collaboration with industry and business in designing the programmes and curricula and in defining the learning outcomes is very strongly targeted. This collaboration with industry takes different forms: representatives of industry sit on management boards of institutions or in regional programme committees, they are involved in external QA panels or they sit on examination boards for final exams and last but not least industry offers placements or internships.

Many lecturers in SCHE also have strong links with industry as the majority of institutions have representatives of industry teaching at their institution.

SCHE enhances employability and the employment rate of the students

There is a genuine need for students with a SCHE diploma or certificate and most of them find a job fairly easily within a reasonable period after their studies. This study also reveals that students are employed at their level as highly skilled technicians in various kinds of jobs. The fact that SCHE focuses on immediate and concrete employment results in industry being closely involved in outlining the contents of level 5 SCHE studies. It also results in the fact that SCHE-courses put considerable emphasis on employability in various ways.

Employability is focused upon especially by stressing vocational competences, by taking industry needs into account while setting up programmes and drafting curricula, by regularly adapting curricula to the needs of industry, by using a modular approach, by placements or internships and by using innovative pedagogical methods (such as projects in cooperation with industry) etc.

Employability is definitely also enhanced by the fact that in most countries SCHE institutions have a mixture of lecturers with an academic and a professional profile. In some countries legislation states that a certain percentage of lecturers have to have a professional profile appropriate to the professions for which training is provided. This also means that the teachers with a professional profile very often combine education with work in a company, which means they are very well aware of the latest developments in the profession concerned.

Although it is generally believed that multilingualism helps to enhance the employability of graduates the attention given to multilingualism in SCHE is minimal. Placements abroad and foreign guest lecturers are appreciated to promote multilingualism but a minority of SCHE institutions and ministries consider offering language courses to be useful. Multilingualism is definitely not an issue in English-speaking countries.

SCHE makes lifelong learning a reality

It should be stressed that the development and the implementation of SCHE contributed greatly to the implementation of this key objective. As has been demonstrated in the study, many of the students in SCHE are **non-traditional and mature students who return to education at a later stage in life,** thus enabling them to make lifelong learning a reality. An important number of these mature students combine work with education and training.

Although entry requirements in most countries are similar to those for other levels of higher education (a secondary school certificate) access requirements for SCHE programmes usually also provide more flexibility either through recognition of prior learning or through testing of adult or mature students.

Provision of SCHE is also quite flexible through part-time learning, dual learning and blended learning systems including ODL, time-tables meeting the needs of the learners etc. This proves that most countries see SCHE- level 5 in a lifelong learning perspective focusing on flexible access and flexible learning pathways. Notwithstanding the fact that many countries offer flexible learning pathways the majority of the students are still full-time students. However in a few countries the majority or a considerable percentage of students are part-time students. Those who study part-time are in most cases adult or mature students who may already be working. In those cases they combine work and learning.

SCHE is not only seen as an opportunity to widen access to higher education but also to stimulate their progress towards a bachelor's degree at a later stage. Legislative frameworks are provided in most countries to enable this. The credits students get recognized when pursuing their studies differ according to the country.

SCHE promotes equity, social cohesion and active citizenship

Europe needs more highly educated and trained people and SCHE can make a major contribution to this. It should be highlighted very strongly that SCHE is a unique opportunity to attract more students (and especially students of a socially disadvantaged background) and widen access to higher education. Although there are more women participating in SCHE, men seem to participate more in SCHE programmes than they do in other higher education programmes. Thus SCHE could contribute to **reducing growing gender inequity in higher education**.

SCHE is definitely contributing to **widening participation in higher education** and to enhancing social cohesion and equity as more disadvantaged students and more mature students are involved in

SCHE. Although hardly any data are available the majority of ministries and institutions think that compared to other levels of education there are **more disadvantaged students in SCHE**. The majority of respondent institutions providing SCHE even think that disadvantaged students are over-represented in SCHE. The lack of data as to underprivileged students shows that efforts still have to be made to improve and enhance data collection in certain areas. Finally the lack of information as to concrete diversity policies implemented within HEI in many countries also needs to be addressed.

Active citizenship and social commitment is promoted by several institutions in various ways: by engaging students in local social projects, by teaching corporate social responsibility, by implementing a sustainable development policy or by collaborating with NGOs. However, only a small number of institutions have a diversity charter promoting the involvement of disadvantaged students.

SCHE enhances creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship

SCHE-institutions are open to new technologies and innovation. As shown in the list of recently introduced programmes it is clear many programmes are state-of the art and responding to new trends (e.g. green jobs) and new technologies. Moreover several institutions provide programmes that enhance entrepreneurship and many of them teach entrepreneurship as a subject.

Without any doubt, the fact that many lecturers are entrepreneurs themselves and that creative pedagogical methods are used (e.g. projects in companies) enhances creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship among the students.

SCHE contributes to the implementation of the EQF and the NQFs

The introduction of the QF-EHEA and the EQF have led to countries restructuring their higher education structure and in some countries this has led to the introduction of SCHE and in others to upgrading vocational programmes in higher education to bachelor programmes.

Most, if not all, of the countries concerned, are reflecting on level 5 of the EQF while implementing their NQF. In some cases they are wondering how to fill in level 5 of the EQF in their NQF.

Virtually all countries have developed or are developing their NQF but the referencing in most cases has not yet been finalized. This results in some countries still not having decided where to position certain professional higher education / training courses. In some cases it is still undecided whether to put these studies at level 5 or level 6 of the EQF. In other cases it is not yet clear whether some post-secondary vocational programmes should be considered as level 4 or level 5 SCHE programmes.

SCHE makes mobility and internationalisation a limited reality

It is quite remarkable that the majority of the countries that have SCHE still express the workload in years. Typically the programmes cover two-year full-time study. Only a few countries

express the workload in ECTS credits ranging from 90 to 150 ECTS credits. Exceptions as to the length and the workload of programmes concern mainly nursing programmes.

In the majority of countries having SCHE the curriculum is a mixture of theory, practice (within the HEI) and a work placement.

The Diploma Supplement is only generally used in 13 of the 20 countries that have SCHE. This is the case because they are legally obliged to do so. In a few cases they are invited to use it. The majority believe that the Diploma Supplement facilitates transition to degree studies or access to the labour market or internationalisation.

The majority of SCHE institutions stress that SCHE lecturers participate in various mobility programmes such as Erasmus, Leonardo, Comenius, Grundtvig or regional programmes (e.g. Nordplus for Scandinavian countries). SCHE students participate mainly in the Erasmus and Leonardo mobility but have difficulties to do so, mainly as the SCHE studies are short which makes it difficult to integrate mobility periods into the programmes.

Mobility tools such as the learning agreement and the transcript of records under Erasmus and the training agreement under Leonardo are used by an important number of SCHE institutions but more information is still needed to have them more widely used. Europass mobility documents are only used by a small group as most SCHE lecturers and students are involved in Erasmus mobility.

SCHE institutions are mainly involved in Erasmus and Leonardo projects. Some are involved in Comenius and some adult education or further education institutions organising SCHE are involved in Grundtvig projects. An important group of SCHE institutions is still involved in no cooperation at all. This is very often due to the fact that they are small and have little time and HR to invest in internationalisation. The staff also lacks language skills and sometimes motivation to get involved. SCHE students from a disadvantaged background have no or little financial means to get involved. Working students can also not participate in long-term mobility.

SCHE contributes to improving the quality and efficiency of education and training

Half of the respondent SCHE institutions carry out internal quality assurance (self-) evaluations and mostly because they are obliged to do so. Furthermore in all countries (except one) there is always some kind of external quality assurance. However in several countries it is still the case that the external quality assurance agencies are yet to be the independent agencies as defined by ENQA.

Most of the countries have accreditation but in three of those the accreditation is ex ante which means the SCHE programmes have to be accredited before being introduced. Also here accreditation is not always carried out by independent agencies.

Although already a lot of efforts are being made this is an area where there is still room for improvement especially as far as internal quality assurance and independent bodies for external quality assurance and accreditation are concerned.

SCHE is contributing to **efficiency in higher education** as it may help **reduce drop-out rates** of students at other levels of higher education as in most countries there is articulation between secondary VET-courses and SCHE.

The awards granted still vary greatly across Europe

The titles, degrees, certificates or diplomas awarded are quite different in nature and in terminology. The great variety of terms used fails to enhance the transparency and readability or user friendliness of the awards granted.

SCHE contributes to reaching the objectives of the 2020 ET strategy and of the Leuven Communiqué

For all the reasons given above it can be stated that SCHE contributes to reaching most of the **objectives of the 2020 ET strategy and of the Leuven Communiqué 'Learning for the future: higher education priorities for the decade to come'.**

The situation concerning SCHE is changing continuously

As a number of countries have not introduced their NQF some of them are still in doubt whether some of the post-secondary vocational courses and programmes organised in their country will be positioned at level 5 or at level 6 of the EQF. Others hesitate whether their level 5 training programmes will also be SCHE. Moreover, some countries that do not organise SCHE at the moment might do so in the near future. This means that the present report can only be seen as a state of affairs at the end of 2010 and that the situation might change considerably in the near future.

1. Introduction

1.1. Objectives of the study

The present EURASHE study, commissioned by the DGEAC[1] of the European Commission sets out to assess the impact on short cycle higher education of its inclusion on a voluntary basis into the EHEA-QF and also the impact on SCHE of the developments concerning the EQF for LLL and the NQF.

Contrary to the previous study the present comparative study concentrates on short cycle higher education at level 5 of the EQF for LLL and does not include developments at post-secondary level that are not considered to be higher education. The study also focuses on the link between the implementation of an NQF and the occurrence of SCHE. Moreover it also attaches more **importance to lifelong learning, the needs of the labour market, the collaboration of employers with institutions providing SCHE and to the employability** of the students. The study is also somewhat more limited than in 2003 when all the (then) Bologna signatory countries were involved. This time only the 27 member-states of the EU, the EFTA[2] members (Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Liechtenstein) and Turkey were surveyed. The decision to limit the study to those countries was a proposal of the Commission. In total 35 countries or regions were surveyed as Belgium has three different Communities that are responsible for education and as also for the UK England, Wales and Northern Ireland and on the other Scotland.

The study tries to find out what the main developments concerning short cycle education at level 5 were in Europe. Which countries that did not provide SCHE in the past have adapted their legislation, have developed SCHE and consider SCHE as a part of their higher education system now? Which countries are planning to implement SCHE in the future and what other developments are taking place concerning short cycle higher education in Europe?

The study also sets out to assess whether and how SCHE can contribute in general to achieving the objectives of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020').

- Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality;
- Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training;
- Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship;
- Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship,

and the objectives of the Leuven Communiqué 'Learning for the future: higher education priorities for the decade to come' in particular viz:

- Striving for excellence in all aspects of higher education,
- Social dimension: equitable access and completion,

[1] Directorate General Education and Culture
[2] European Free Trade Association

- Lifelong learning and in view of lifelong learning developing strong partnerships between public authorities, higher education institutions, students, employers and employees
- The development of national qualifications frameworks
- Employability of students
- Mobility of students, early stage researchers and staff with an improved participation rate from diverse student groups.
- Attractive working conditions to attract highly qualified teachers to higher education institutions,
- Improved and enhanced data collection
- Multi-dimensional transparency tools
- New and diversified funding sources and methods

1.2. Structure of the report

The report consists of two parts. The first part is a comparative study and the second provides detailed country chapters. There is also a short version of the report that is limited to the comparative part. The full report can also be downloaded from the EURASHE website.

In the first chapter of the study the objectives and the scope of the study are set out. The second chapter drafts the context of the study with the background, the socio-economic context and the place of SCHE in different meta-frameworks. In chapter three the methodology used to collect the data is described as well as the problems met by the researchers.

The cornerstone of the study is the fourth chapter where the cross-country results are given, starting with an overview of the presence or the introduction of SCHE in the countries surveyed, the presence of an NQF and the link between them. Some attention is also given to the occurrence of level 5 in countries without SCHE. This chapter of the study then dwells on the organisation of SCHE with legislation, the main objectives of SCHE, the collaboration with employers when designing curricula and defining learning outcomes. Furthermore an analysis is made of where SCHE is provided and how it is funded, the entry requirements and the qualifications received, the duration of SCHE or the ECTS earned, the curriculum and the fields of study or programmes offered in SCHE and the flexibility of the provision. The study continues by looking at the two progression routes for SCHE-graduates. On the one hand it assesses the employability of SCHE graduates and how this is enhanced and, on the other, at the possibilities to transfer to bachelor degree studies. Attention is also given to the profile of students and lecturers with a special focus on the social dimension of SCHE. The next part dwells on aspects of transparency that contribute to the mobility of SCHE- students and graduates. Quality assurance and accreditation as well as the use of ECTS and diploma supplement are focused upon. This part ends with the international collaboration of institutions providing SCHE and mobility of students and teachers in SCHE. Lastly attention is given to collaboration with industry as well as its involvement in the local community.

In chapter five some examples of good practice are given to illustrate how SCHE can contribute to widening participation in higher education and to enhancing lifelong learning. An example of good

practice is also given on how institutions providing SCHE can be supported to enhance quality assurance as well as the quality of SCHE-courses.

In chapter six the conclusions are drawn and recommendations made to the EU-Commission, the member states and the SCHE providers on how to enhance SCHE.

In the second part of the study a description is given of the higher education structure in the countries surveyed. A focus is also put on the situation concerning the introduction of an NQF. For countries offering SCHE the organisation of SCHE is also described, as well as access to SCHE and progression to degree courses or the labour market. The profile of students and teachers, quality assurance and accreditation, internationalisation, employability and multilingualism of graduates and collaboration with industry and the local community are also briefly described. In the country chapters some attention is also given to post-secondary education when there is no SCHE but a thriving post-secondary vocational or professional sector and especially when countries have expressed their intention to introduce SCHE in the future. The full study (including the country chapters) can be downloaded from the EURASHE website.

2. Context of the present study

2.1. Background of the report

In 2003 the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), representing professional higher education in Europe carried out a Europe-wide survey of existing tertiary short-cycle (TSC) education in Europe (Kirsch, Beernaert, & Nørgaard, 2003),[3] commissioned by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture in preparation for the 2003 Berlin Bologna Conference. Prior to the 2003 Berlin Conference of the European Ministers responsible for Higher Education, short-cycle programmes and qualifications were not considered to be within the framework of the Bologna Process. According to the study, TSC education in the European Union member states, the countries of the European Economic Area, Croatia and Turkey represented, together with postsecondary education (i.e., ISCED level 4 programmes standing between upper-secondary and tertiary programmes), more than 2.5 million students.

The study demonstrated that tertiary short-cycle programmes and qualifications were an integral part of the European higher education landscape involving a considerable portion of students. As such, tertiary short-cycle or sub-degree education in Europe could no longer be excluded from the Bologna Process. It contributed to the European Area of Lifelong Learning by expanding the range of higher education courses from which students could choose, and it enhanced lifelong learning through flexible learning.

Following the Berlin Bologna Conference and as a result of the study on TSC, Ministers invited the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) 'to explore whether and how shorter higher education may be linked to the first cycle of a qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area' (Bologna Process: Berlin, 2003). The Ministers also asked the BFUG to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area that would encompass the wide range of flexible learning paths, opportunities and techniques, and would make appropriate use of the ECTS credits. At the same time they encouraged Member States to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, describing qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile and they stressed the important contribution of higher education (HE) in making lifelong learning (LLL) a reality. In January 2005 EURASHE organised a seminar in Amsterdam on the topic of SCHE which resulted in a memo introduced with the BFUG.

The Qualifications Framework for the EHEA was adopted by the higher education ministers at the 2005 Bergen Conference (Bologna Process: Bergen, 2005). The framework comprises three cycles (**including, within national contexts, the possibility of intermediate qualifications**), generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles. The short cycle within the first cycle refers to qualifications typically including or represented by approximately 120 ECTS credits – within national contexts. (Bologna Process: Bergen, 2005). With this communiqué, short-cycle higher education seems to have found its rightful place

within the EHEA. Nevertheless, the organisation and recognition of the short-cycle qualifications within the first higher education cycle remains voluntary. The adoption of these intermediate qualifications is still just "a possibility" "within national contexts"[6] (Bologna Process: Bergen, 2005, p. 2).

A second framework, the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF for LLL) was adopted by the European Parliament and Council in April, 2008. Contrary to the QF-EHEA, the EQF for LLL is an overarching lifelong learning framework, incorporating all educational levels and qualifications. All countries are encouraged to relate their national qualifications systems or frameworks to the EQF for LLL by 2010 (on a voluntary basis) and to ensure that all new qualifications issued from 2012 onwards carry a reference to the appropriate level of the framework. Thus the EQF for LLL should be seen as a translation device between the national qualifications frameworks. It also shifts the focus away from the traditional approach, which emphasized learning inputs, such as the length of a learning experience or the type of institution, to the learning outcomes. It also encourages lifelong learning by promoting the validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning (European Commission, 2010).

Thus, qualifications frameworks that relate to higher education in Europe are found at two levels: one developed within the Bologna process and adopted for the EHEA in 2005, and one at the national level, expressed in national qualifications frameworks that are compatible both with this overarching QF-EHEA and with the EQF for LLL. Short-cycle higher education programmes are placed at level five of the EQF for LLL and as an intermediate level of the first cycle of the framework for the EHEA. Although the descriptor in the QF-EHEA for short-cycle higher education (within or linked to the first higher education cycle) is not identical to the descriptor for level 5 of the EQF for LLL, they correspond and are compatible with each other (Bologna Process: London, 2007).

Lastly, the Leuven Communiqué, "The European Higher Education Area in the new decade", (Bologna Process: Leuven, 2009) stressed amongst other things that 'access into higher education should be widened by fostering the potential of students from underrepresented groups and by providing adequate conditions for the completion of their studies.' It also stressed the importance of lifelong learning and the employability of graduates.

2.2. Socio-economic context

In its Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020') the Council of the European Union emphasizes that 'Education and training have a crucial role to play in meeting the many socio-economic, demographic, environmental and technological challenges facing Europe and its citizens today and in the years ahead.' (2009/C 119/02).

According to the unemployment statistics of Eurostat, the youth unemployment rate (those aged under 25) was 19.8 % in the euro area and 20.2 % in the EU-27 in August 2010[3]. Although this rate fell in both the euro area and the EU-27 for the second consecutive month (Eurostat), this still presents an enormous challenge for the EU-27. Another group that is strongly affected by unemployment is the group of low-skilled workers where the employment rate stands at 50%

[3] http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics

compared to 85% for those with high skill levels and 75%, for medium skill levels according to the report on 'New Skills for New Jobs: Action Now', a report by the Expert Group on New Skills for New Jobs prepared for the European Commission (European Commission, 2010).

The same report (European Commission, 2010) indicates that several countries are still faced with shortages and skill gaps in the labour market. It also points out that nearly one third of Europe's population aged 25-64 (around 77 million people) have no, or low, formal qualifications. According to the Cedefop forecasts (Cedefop, 2010) the labour force with low-level qualifications is projected to fall by around 15 million. On the other hand the share (%) of technicians and associate professionals in the labour market will continue to rise to nearly 20% by 2020 according to Cedefop and the need for service workers and shop and market sales workers to 15%.

In view of high youth unemployment and huge levels of unemployment of low-skilled or unskilled workers on the one hand and the labour market need for highly skilled professionals (inter alia technicians and higher technicians) on the other hand, short cycle higher education might play a crucial role in matching the needs of the labour market with an adequate supply of young well-trained professionals.

Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, stressed in one of her interventions that: 'Vocational training has a strategic role to play in helping our economies get out of the crisis and in putting us back onto a sustainable growth path' SCHE which often covers higher vocational or higher professional education definitely contributes to this[4].

2.3. Many NQF's still under construction

The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning recommended to Member States that they should use the European Qualifications Framework as a reference tool to compare the qualification levels of the different qualifications systems. It also recommended that they should relate their national qualifications systems to the European Qualifications Framework by 2010, in particular by referencing, in a transparent manner, their qualification levels to the levels of the EQF set out in Annex II of the Recommendation, and, where appropriate, by developing national qualifications frameworks in accordance with national legislation and practice[5] . Many countries are at present working on the referencing of their NQF. Thus, the Netherlands invited an international committee led by Brian Maguire (as expert from HETAC) to look into the compatibility in 2008 – 2009. This committee concluded that the compatibility does indeed exist. However, only sixteen out of the 35 countries or regions surveyed had introduced their NQF at the end of 2010. Moreover, only three reports referencing national qualifications frameworks to the European Qualifications Framework

[4] Education Policy Conference "Linked Learning: can options in Postsecondary VET make a difference?" Torino (Italy), Sala Europa 25 & 26-10-2010, ETF; see also: http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/EmbedEvent_EN?OpenDocument&emb=/eventsmgmt.nsf/%28WebEventsR%29/43902EE8C9258EDCC12576F5004A19BF?OpenDocument&LAN=EN

[5] Official Journal of the European Union, 6.5.2008, C 111/3 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:111:0001:0007:EN:PDF

were published on the website of the European Commission (Ireland, Malta, and the frameworks for the United Kingdom).

As a result some countries could not yet position their post-secondary professional education on the EQF for LLL. Some could not decide whether it would become a professional bachelor at level 6 or whether it would be positioned (as SCHE) at level 5. Others hesitated between level 5 and level 4. This means that in the near future several changes are still bound to take place as countries rethink their educational systems while working on their NQF.

2.4. Several meta-frameworks in use

Another problem the researchers encountered was **the confusion between ISCED, the EQF for LLL and the QF for EHEA**. It should, however be pointed out that the three meta-frameworks serve different purposes. Thus, ISCED[6] is primarily an instrument suitable for assembling, compiling and presenting statistics of education with a distinction between levels and fields.

<table>
<tr><th>EQF</th><th colspan="2">QF EHEA</th><th>ISCED</th><th></th></tr>
<tr><td>8</td><td>Third cycle</td><td>Ph.D.</td><td>6</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>7</td><td>Second cycle</td><td>Master</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">6</td><td rowspan="2">First cycle</td><td>Bachelor</td><td>5A</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>professional bachelor</td><td rowspan="2">5B</td><td rowspan="3">Most blurred zone of qualifications</td></tr>
<tr><td>5
Higher education & vocational / professional qualifications</td><td>Short Cycle within the 1st cycle</td><td>Various titles, degrees</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>Some Higher Vocational qualifications organised by HEI</td><td></td><td>4
Post-secondary non-tertiary</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td>3</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td></td><td></td><td>2</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Figure 1: Comparison between EQF– QF-EHEA- ISCED

As mentioned above, the main purpose of the QF-EHEA is to harmonise higher education systems in Europe by introducing common degree structures with an approximate number of ECTS credits to be earned , thus enhancing transparency, recognition and mobility. Lastly, the EQF is a reference tool to compare the qualification levels of the different qualifications systems and to

[6] International Standard Classification for Education
http://www.uis.unesco.org/TEMPLATE/pdf/isced/ISCED_A.pdf

promote both lifelong learning and equal opportunities in the knowledge-based society, as well as the further integration of the European labour market.

It was obvious that for a number of respondents this distinction was not clear (notwithstanding the clarifications given in the questionnaires). Thus, especially (but not exclusively) institutional respondents confused the ISCED 5B with level 5 of the EQF for LLL.

To add to the confusion, some vocational or professional bachelor programmes or bachelor programmes with a vocational /professional orientation are positioned at level 6 of the EQF for LLL and at ISCED 5B while the same ISCED level is also used for tertiary education at level 5 (or even 4) of the EQF.

Indeed, it is difficult to distinguish in ISCED between SCHE programmes at level 5 and vocational bachelor programmes at level 6. As far as educational levels are concerned ISCED 1997 defines level 5 as the "first stage of tertiary education (not leading directly to an advanced research qualification)[7]" and when differentiating between ISCED Level 5 A and ISCED 5B the text continues "Qualifications in category 5B are typically shorter than those in 5A and focus on occupationally specific skills geared for entry into the labour market, although some theoretical foundations may be covered in the respective programme....it has a minimum of two years' full-time equivalent duration but generally is of two or three years[8]"

As a number of countries cannot position their higher education programmes on the EQF and as they have not developed an NQF yet they will often turn to ISCED 97 to indicate the educational level of programmes. Because as well the EQF as the QF-EHEA provide more levels than ISCED it is obvious that this creates confusion. Moreover the distinction has to be made between on the one hand ISCED and QF EHEA and on the other EQF. The former are referring to educational levels whereas the latter refers to qualification levels that can be used in as well an educational as a labour market context. Lastly, it is also clear that many institutions offering SCHE are not familiar with the Dublin descriptors for the QF-EHEA and the descriptors for EQF.

2.5. Level 5 is not always SCHE

Although the descriptors for level 5 and the descriptor for the higher education short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle), developed by the Joint Quality Initiative as part of the Bologna Process, are not identical, they are regarded as being compatible with each other[9]. As the 2007 London Communiqué 'Towards the European Higher Education Area: responding to challenges in a globalised world' states: 'We [the Ministers] are satisfied that national qualifications frameworks compatible with the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA will also be compatible with the proposal from the European Commission on a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning.[10] '

[7] UNESCO (2006 –re-edition) ISCED 1997- International Standard Classification of Education, p. 19 http://www.uis.unesco.org/TEMPLATE/pdf/isced/ISCED_A.pdf
[8] UNESCO (2006 –re-edition) ISCED 1997- International Standard Classification of Education, p. 35-36 http://www.uis.unesco.org/TEMPLATE/pdf/isced/ISCED_A.pd
[9] See annex 2 of the European Recommendation on the EQF : http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/rec08_en.pdf
[10] http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/Bologna/documents/MDC/London_Communique18May2007.pdf

The EQF document thus asserts compatibility for the higher levels of the EQF with the QF-EHEA but although the learning outcomes of certain EQF levels correspond to the cycle descriptors of the QF-EHEA and clear cross-referencing was carried out at levels 5 to 8[11] , not all countries that have developed higher vocational programmes at level 5 of the EQF consider these to be equivalent to SCHE.

It should not be forgotten that on the one hand the two frameworks have similarities: they are both meta-frameworks covering a wide scope of learning and trying to enhance transparency and they both focus on quality assurance and support lifelong learning and labour mobility.

On the other hand they also serve different purposes. The main objective of the QF-EHEA is to harmonise higher education systems in Europe by introducing common degree structures with an approximate number of ECTS credits to be earned, thus enhancing transparency, recognition and mobility whereas the EQF is an overarching framework that relates systems to each other and is mainly a translation device[12].

The descriptor for level five of the EQF is not identical to the descriptor for short cycle qualifications within the first cycle. Indeed the purpose of the EQF is different from that of the framework of the European Higher Education Area. According to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning[13] the EQF should be used "as a reference tool to compare the qualification levels of the **different qualifications systems** and to promote both lifelong learning and equal opportunities in the knowledge-based society, as well as the further integration of the European labour market, while respecting the rich diversity of national education systems[14]". In annex 1 of the text the term 'qualification' is defined as 'a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.' This means that the qualification can be given by others than educational providers (e.g. sector bodies). The EQF is therefore **much more market-oriented** than the European Higher Education Area Framework.

The two qualifications frameworks (EQF and QF-EHEA) are also not explicitly linked as students or workers who progress from level 6 to level 7 do not automatically progress from Bachelor's to Master's degree. This does not entail any consequences for students in SCHE but it might entail consequences for workers who have been qualified at level 6 of the EQF by their sector body but do not have the formal qualification of a Bachelor. It is therefore worthwhile comparing the two descriptors.

In the comparative table below, the descriptor for the EQF level 5 is compared to the Dublin descriptor for the higher education short cycle (within the first cycle) of the qualifications framework for the European higher education area. As can be seen the former is more generic and broader as the EQF encompasses all forms of learning: not only learning in higher education institutions but also more vocational qualifications acquired through formal, informal and non-formal learning. There is therefore

[11] European Commission (2008). *Explaining the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning http://62.77.61.20/asp/RAP/RAP_SendAllegato.asp?Id=18*
[12] European Commission (2008). *Explaining the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning* http://62.77.61.20/asp/RAP/RAP_SendAllegato.asp?Id=18
[13] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:111:0001:0007:EN:PDF
[14] Id.²

no reference to the number of ECTS credits to be earned. The Dublin descriptors put more focus on the learning and on the progression towards the next stage of learning.

As mentioned in the report of the Irish Bologna Expert Conference on "National Qualifications Frameworks and the European Overarching Frameworks: Supporting Lifelong Learning in European Education and Training", many stakeholders are confused about the (co-)existence of two meta-frameworks. The two meta-frameworks are in fact a reflection of the traditional divide between higher education and vocational/ professional education[15].

Short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle) Qualification		***Level 5 of the EQF***
Learning outcomes	***ECTS credits***	***Learning outcomes***
Qualifications that signify completion of the **higher education short cycle (within the first cycle)** are awarded to students who: – have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon general secondary education and is typically at a level supported by advanced textbooks; such knowledge provides an underpinning for a field of work or vocation, personal development, and further studies to complete the first cycle; – can apply their knowledge and understanding in occupational contexts; – have the ability to identify and use data to formulate responses to well-defined concrete and abstract problems; – can communicate about their understanding, skills and activities, with peers, supervisors and clients; – **have the learning skills to undertake further studies with some autonomy.**	Approx. 120 ECTS credits	LO relevant to Level 5 within EQF include: - "comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge; - a comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems; - exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; - review and develop performance of self and others[16]"

When presenting the EQF in 2007, Michel Feutrie, the then president of EUCEN[17] mentioned that the first five levels of the EQF follow a vocational logic whereas levels 6, 7 and 8 are drafted according to the Bologna (higher education!) logic[18]. Also in the Dublin descriptor for short cycle higher education the logic of higher education was not followed, according to some countries because there is too much of a focus on employability. This is why amongst others Germany refused to adopt the

[15] http://www.nqai.ie/documents/QualificationsFrameworksConferenceFinalReport130910.pdf
[16] http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/BPStocktaking9May2005.pdf,
[17] EUCEN: the European Association for University Lifelong Learning
[18] *ww.ef.uni-lj.si/projekti/eucen/gradivo/Presentation_Michel_Feutrie.ppt*

short cycle within the first cycle because according to the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK):

> "The essential difference between DDs[19] and QR DH[20] lies in the level of the short cycle. A corresponding logic cannot presently be found in the German higher education system. Although there are - e.g. in the training of educators - approaches towards assigning technical college training to the short-cycle system. However, these training programmes only actually manage to clearly meet the objective of employability. A direct continuation of the studies for a Bachelor's degree – with full credit – is not foreseen, neither in systematic nor institutional terms[21]."

As a result a number of countries such as Finland do not have short cycle higher education but the national committee which has prepared the proposal for the Finnish National Qualifications Framework has proposed to place some VET qualifications at NQF/EQF level 5 (see chapter for Finland). This means that the distinction has to be made between countries having SCHE at level 5 of the EQF and a number of countries where SCHE is not part of the higher education structure as understood in the QF-EHEA but where level 5 (EQF) vocational education is offered.

[19] Dublin descriptors
[20] Qualifications Framework for German Higher Education
[21] BMBF (2008). *Report on the compatibility of the "Qualifications Framework for German Higher Education Qualifications" with the " Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area"(2008).* p. 25
http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/qf/documents/NQF_Germany_self-certification_English.pdf

3. Methodology

3.1. Questionnaires sent out by regional coordinators

The methodology used has been the one announced in the grant application. The corner stone of the comparative study were the online-questionnaires: one very short one (questionnaire A) was intended for all countries covered by the study and its main aim was to find out which countries are offering SCHE or intend to introduce it in the future.

Online questionnaire A	Filled out by all countries – ministries – associations-institutions
Online questionnaire B	Filled out by ministries – associations and institutions in countries providing SCHE
Online questionnaire C Institutional questionnaire Similar to but shorter than questionnaire B	Filled out by institutions providing SCHE

The second one (questionnaire B) was to be filled out only by countries having SCHE. The questionnaires were drafted by the researchers together with the steering committee of EURASHE consisting of the four regional coordinators, members of the Executive Board of EURASHE, the project manager of EURASHE and the external evaluator.

The questionnaires were sent out by four regional coordinators to the ministries of education. The questionnaires were also forwarded to the members of the Board of EURASHE and to a number of institutions or organisations such as ADIUT (Association des Directeurs des IUT in France), IOTI (Institutes of Technology Ireland), the Association of Slovene higher vocational colleges etc.

To facilitate the task of the respondents the English questionnaires were translated into French, thus giving the opportunity to a maximum number of people to read and fill in the questionnaires in their own language or a foreign language they know. Later, a shorter institutional version of the English questionnaire (questionnaire C), mainly intended for institutions was also posted on the EURASHE website. The English versions of the questionnaires have been added as an annex to the study.

As mentioned above the questionnaires were sent, on the one hand to national contact points (virtually always ministries) and, on the other to institutions or associations. Originally it was the aim of the researchers to receive information through the questionnaires from all the ministries concerned. In fact twenty-eight national contact points filled out the first questionnaire intended for all countries surveyed. Some other ministries reacted by mail. There was a particular problem in Southern Europe where because of miscommunication only a few ministries filled out the questionnaire. However, the researchers managed to contact all ministries concerned and collect the information either through

mails, telephone interviews or face-to face interviews. In fact, information was received from all ministries of the countries surveyed.

The second questionnaire was filled out by twenty ministries. Three countries filled out this questionnaire although the situation concerning SCHE is unclear (LI, BG, CZ) and three ministries from countries where SCHE is provided did not fill out the questionnaire for administrative reasons (BEFR, LU, PT). In fact 17 ministries out of twenty from countries providing SCHE filled out the questionnaire and three others responded through interviews and mails. One country posed a particular problem (Sweden) because although they originally stated having SCHE, and filled out the questionnaire accordingly they revoked this at the very last moment and stated that they have two-year higher education programmes leading to a university diploma but considered as level 6 (EQF). They also mentioned that they do not make any distinction within the first cycle between university diploma, bachelor and professional degrees. This means that eventually only 19 countries stated that they have SCHE.

The researchers would have liked to have received five institutional responses from each of the countries concerned, with the exception of those countries that had only recently introduced SCHE (BEFR, BENL) and those that were too small to have a wide range of institutions (CY, IS, LU, MT). For Central and Eastern Europe and France this objective was reached. It could also be considered that responses from Latvia and Norway were sufficient. However, there was a problem in reaching institutions in the UK and in Southern Europe (ES, PT). The latter did fill out the questionnaire for administrative reasons and the former were rather reluctant to fill out the questionnaire. This means that central and eastern European countries are over-represented in the institutional sample whereas especially southern Europe and the UK are under-represented. However as well in the UK as in Portugal the questionnaire was filled out by organisations representing the institutions or information was received through them (Universities UK, Foundation Degree Forward, Guild UK, Portuguese Coordinating Council of Polytechnics). Thus, the view of the institutions was taken into account as well in the country chapters as in the comparative part of the study.

Ninety respondents filled out the first questionnaire (A), twenty-nine of them were representatives from ministries of education (two different ministries filled it out for Slovenia). After data cleansing eighty-three usable questionnaires remained of which fifty-four were from associations or institutions. The second questionnaire (B) intended for countries having SCHE was filled out by seventy-four respondents (including the institutional questionnaire), twenty of them representatives from ministries. These included a number of countries where the situation was unclear (BG, CZ, LI). The decision was taken to exclude the responses from Bulgaria and Liechtenstein from the data set used to draft the comparative chapters on SCHE in Europe as it became clear following a number of contacts by e-mail and telephone calls that Liechtenstein does not have SCHE but only further education programmes that have not been included in the qualifications framework for higher education. As far as Bulgaria is concerned the former SCHE-programmes now include 180 ECTS and are called professional bachelor programmes. At the very last moment the data from the Swedish ministry were also excluded from the data set used to draft the comparative chapter on the countries having SCHE.

Because several Czech institutions still consider that they provide SCHE and because also the ministry filled out the whole questionnaire all the Czech questionnaires were taken into account. After data cleansing forty-nine questionnaires from institutions remained.

The responses from ministries were used to define the presence of SCHE, all aspects of the legislation (including, where relevant cooperation with industry), the link to EQF and QF-EHEA, QA and accreditation, use of ECTS etc. The responses from associations and institutions were mainly used to define the profile of students and staff, to see in how far SCHE-providers and their students participate in mobility and other international programmes, what the employment rate is of graduates, how institutions collaborate with industry, what their social commitment is etc. The list of responses received per country can be found as an annex to the report.

3.2. Interviews

The researchers carried out a number of interviews, either with representatives from ministries, or with Bologna experts and SCHE-providers. This was necessary as the ministries from some countries failed to fill out the questionnaires or only reacted very late. These interviews helped us to understand the local situation in some of the countries surveyed, especially when questionnaires had not been filled out or when the situation was unclear. The results of these interviews were used to complete the data for the comparative chapters. The list of people interviewed can be found in an annex.

3.3. Desk top research

In order not to make the questionnaires unnecessarily long, desktop research was carried out to describe the higher education systems of the countries concerned as well as progress on the NQF. For the former, Eurybase[22] was used and for the latter the 2010 CEDEFOP report on national qualification frameworks in Europe[23] and the report of the Irish Conference on Qualifications frameworks[24]. Furthermore, based on information made available by ministries, legislation concerning SCHE was consulted. The list of reports and legislation used can be found in the bibliography.

3.4. Drafting of the country chapters

The country chapters were based on desk-top research (*inter alia* Eurybase, CEDEFOP reports, legislation of countries concerned) and on the results of the questionnaires. These were submitted for approval to the respective ministries or education departments. For the countries that did not fill out the questionnaire a report was drafted based on desktop research, legislation of the countries concerned and, where possible, interviews. The texts were then submitted for approval to the ministry representatives of the respective countries. When approved the texts were finalised. So far, thirty-

[22] http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/eurybase_en.php
[23] CEDEFOP (2010) . *The development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe*
[24] HEA (2010). *National Qualifications Frameworks and the European Overarching Frameworks: Supporting Lifelong Learning in European Education and Training*

three country-representatives reacted to the texts. Thirty-one countries have approved the draft texts, sometimes after some amendments. One country (Sweden) has rewritten the report because they considered the information they gave in the questionnaire to be erroneous. A few countries were also asked to draft an example of good practice. Three countries reacted positively (BEnl, IE and TR). The country chapters can all be found in the second part of the study.

3.5. Drafting of the comparative chapter

The comparative chapter was drafted, based on desk-top research, the questionnaires, the interviews and the country chapters. The draft text was submitted for comments to a number of experts on SCHE amongst others the external evaluator, the regional coordinators, representatives from ETF and some ministry representatives.

3.6. Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the comparative chapter, conclusions are drawn on the present situation of SCHE in Europe and on how SCHE contributes to reaching the strategic objectives of the strategic framework of cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) and to working on the action lines of the Bologna process in general and the objectives of the Leuven Communiqué 'Learning for the future: higher education priorities for the decade to come' in particular. Special attention is given to quality assurance in SCHE, widening access to higher education and the social dimension of SCHE, mobility of SCHE and last but not least to the employability of SCHE graduates and how collaboration with employers can contribute to this.

Finally a number of recommendations on how to enhance short cycle higher education and increase its transparency and impact are given to the EU Commission, to the member states to the higher education providers and to EURASHE.

3.7. Problems encountered

3.7.1. Confusion between ISCED, QF-EHEA and EQF

As already mentioned before, the fact that many countries have not introduced their NQF and the confusion between the different meta-frameworks caused a lot of problems for the researchers. Certain countries could not or did not want to position some programmes yet.

3.7.2. Terminological difficulties

The researchers also encountered terminological difficulties. Although a definition was given in the questionnaire the term **short cycle** higher education is still not always recognised as referring to the intermediate cycle within the first cycle of the QF-EHEA. In a very small number of countries the term still refers to the bachelor's cycle as opposed to the (unified) master cycle. Other respondents,

especially providers, use the term short cycle when a course has a short duration irrespective of the fact that its learning outcomes correspond to the Dublin descriptor for the short cycle within the first cycle of the QF-EHEA.

Furthermore, a number of countries make the distinction between vocational and professional education. Thus, e.g. in Switzerland but also in Lithuania the term vocational is used for secondary education whereas the term professional is used for post-secondary or higher education.

Moreover quite a number of countries still make the distinction between higher and tertiary education. The OECD, in a recent report, [25] refers to the distinction as being more or less obsolete.

> *"Over 40 years ago tertiary education, which was more commonly referred to as higher education, was what happened in universities. This largely covered teaching and learning requiring high level conceptual and intellectual skills in the humanities, sciences and social sciences, the preparation of students for entry to a limited number of professions such as medicine, engineering and law, and disinterested advanced research and scholarship. These days, tertiary education is much more diversified and encompasses new types of tertiary education institutions (TEIs) such as polytechnics, university colleges, or technological institutes[26]."*

However, although the structural borderlines between "higher" and other "tertiary" education get blurred, the delineation between a cognitive more rigorous "higher education" and anything beyond secondary education did not cease to exist[27]. According to Teichler (2004) the borderlines of a higher education system are blurred by two additional factors. On the one hand the fact that although higher education institutions specialized on teaching and possibly research are still the main providers of higher education, other institutions such as service companies and chambers of commerce, might also offer higher education programmes and on the other hand the fact that research is also undertaken outside higher education institutions. The latter factor is not relevant for this study.

Also the terms used to indicate SCHE vary across the countries surveyed from Foundation degree to Associate degree, Higher (National) Diploma, University Diploma etc. Therefore the term SCHE will be used throughout the study. Thus the term "SCHE" will indicate programmes which are situated by the ministries of Education or Higher education at Level 5 of the EQF and are also seen as an intermediate level within or linked to the first cycle of the QF-EHEA and which are organised by universities, colleges of higher education, so-called polytechnics, further education colleges or adult education colleges or even upper secondary schools.

3.7.3. Difficulties in collecting information

The system of regional coordinators turned out not to be as efficient as hoped for. Moreover, many ministries were slow to react. This was possibly due to the fact that it was sometimes difficult to identify the person who was in charge of SCHE. . Sometimes the country-representatives contradicted each other, disagreed about certain issues or even revoked what their colleagues had stated.

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[25] OECD (2008). *Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society. OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education: Synthesis Report.*
[26] Id.
[27] Teichler, U. (2004). *Changing Structures of the Higher Education Systems: The Increasing Complexity of Underlying Forces.* Kassel: Centre for Research on Higher Education and Work

In certain countries or regions particular logistical difficulties were encountered resulting in failure to complete the questionnaire. These reasons included, but were not restricted to, institutional ambivalence to questionnaires, work pressures and problems with the online questionnaire. These problems were partially overcome by the reissuing of the questionnaire and extensive follow up contacts. However, any follow up surveys in the future must consider the efficacy of overreliance on questionnaires as this form of data collection appears to be increasingly receiving negative reactions.

3.7.4. Lack of consistent data

There is still an important lack of consistent data concerning the participation and graduation rates in higher education. Some countries like Belgium Flanders calculate the participation rate in higher education at the level of all 18-year olds, others at the level of 18-21 or 18-25 year-olds. The same problem was encountered when reference is made to mature students. Several countries define mature or adult students in a different way. It is also difficult to collect data on SCHE-students through OECD reports. Most OECD publications only take into account ISCED 5A and 6 students when referring to participation rates in higher education. Also in the figures of Eurostudent only 5A students are taken into account. To add to the confusion the same studies, e.g. professional bachelor studies are sometimes recorded as ISCED 5A and in other cases as ISCED 5B. Moreover SCHE studies are also usually referred to as ISCED 5B.

3.8. Considerations for further studies

There are many aspects of the study that are worthwhile further expanding upon but that did not fit within the scope of the present study. If given this opportunity the researchers would definitely collect the information themselves and not rely on others. They would also make the questionnaires for the institutions much shorter, just focusing on institutional aspects. The researchers would also consider using more face-to-face or telephone interviews to gather information with less reliance on online surveying, as noted above.

Moreover, they think that EURASCHE should create a database with contacts at ministries but also contacts in institutions that are willing to fill out questionnaires or willing to give information through interviews or focus group discussions.

4. Cross-country results

4.1. Presence of SCHE/ level 5 in the countries surveyed

As was already mentioned above, not all countries consider short cycle higher education to be similar to level 5. Moreover more than half of the countries surveyed have not introduced their NQF yet and are still wondering at what level to position certain studies. An attempt was therefore made to list for all the countries surveyed whether the NQF had been introduced and how many levels were implemented and whether an NQF was under construction and how many levels were foreseen. The most important question was to know **whether a short cycle was provided within the higher education structure of the country or whether the country intended to introduce SCHE.**

Country	NQF	Introduce	under devel	SHE at level	EHEA/SCHE	when	PS links	PS no links	Intention
AT			8		no SCHE			(5?)	no
BEDE			8	(5?)	no SCHE yet		(5)		yes
BEFR			8	(5)	SCHE	2009			yes
BENL	8	2009		5	SCHE	2009			yes
BG			8	(5?)	no SCHE?	1999			unclear
CH					no SCHE		(5?)		unclear
CY			8	(5)	SCHE	1970's			yes
CZ			8	(5,6?)	no SCHE	1995			unclear
DE			8		no SCHE			(5?)	no
DK	8	2003		5	SCHE	1997			yes
EE	8	2008			no SCHE yet			(5?)	yes
ES			8	(5)	SCHE				yes
FI					no SCHE			(5)	no
FR	5	?		3	SCHE	1966			yes
GR			8		no SCHE			?	no
HU			8	(5)	SCHE	1998			yes
IE	10	2003		6	SCHE	1970's			yes
IS			(7)	(4)	SCHE	1990			yes
IT			?		no SCHE yet		(4 /5 ? EQF)		probably
LI			?		no SCHE		(5)		unclear
LT			8		no SCHE			5	no
LV			8	(5)	SCHE	2001			yes
LU			8	(5)	SCHE	?			yes
MT	8	2007		5	SCHE	2005/2006			yes
NL	8	2010		5	SCHE	2006			yes
NO			?	?	SCHE	1970's			yes
PL			?		no SCHE			?	no
PT	8	2010		5	SCHE	?			yes
RO			8		no SCHE			(5)	no
SE			?	?	no SCHE		(5)		no
SI			8	(6.1)	SCHE	1996			yes
SK			8		no SCHE			?	no
TR			8	(5)	SCHE	?			yes
UKEW	8	2001		HND + FD L5	SCHE	70's FD 2002			yes
UKSC	12	2001		8	SCHE	70's			yes

Figure 2: Presence of NQF, SCHE, level 5 EQF: ()= planned, ? = unclear

Where SCHE is provided and integrated in higher education respondents were asked at what level of the NQF/EQF it is positioned or foreseen and whether the descriptor for this cycle is based on the Dublin descriptor for SCHE, on the descriptor for level 5 of the EQF or on both these descriptors. All countries were also asked whether they have post-secondary vocational education at level 4 (or higher) of the EQF having links or no links with higher education. For the countries not having SCHE they are also indicated.

4.1.1. Countries with short cycle higher education

The countries taken into account for the comparative part of the study are only countries where short cycle higher education is clearly perceived as higher education and where it has been integrated or is being integrated into the higher education framework of the country concerned. As the situation is constantly changing in several countries surveyed this means that this table is only a snapshot of the present situation.

All together 19 countries or regions (the different Communities of Belgium, the different member countries of the UK and the different regions of Spain having their own ministry of education) indicated that they have SCHE according to the Dublin descriptor for the intermediate cycle within the first cycle of the QF-EHEA. Moreover the Czech Republic stated on the one hand that they do not yet have SCHE but on the other as well the ministry as the tertiary vocational education institutions filled out the questionnaire as it is not certain yet whether they will become SCHE at level 5 or professional bachelors at level 6. In this way the Czech Republic was also taken into account. Only these 20 countries or regions (BEnl, BEfr, CY, CZ, DK, ES, FR, HU, IE, IS, LV, LU, MT, NL, NO, PT, SI, TR, UK EWNI, UKSC) will be taken into consideration for the rest of the study.

Three countries have indicated that they intend to or might introduce SCHE in the future (BEde, EE, IT). This means that the majority of countries surveyed now have SCHE or are intending to introduce it.

In most countries SCHE is organised nationally. However, in Belgium, Spain and the UK education is either organised by the communities (Belgium), the regions (Spain) or the different countries within the United Kingdom. In Spain legislation is the same for the whole country but provision might differ according to the region. In order to enhance the readability of the report the term countries will be used even when referring to different entities (communities or regions) within the above mentioned countries.

It is clear from the table above that several countries do not see SCHE as an element of lifelong learning and do not associate lifelong learning with higher education as they indicate that they have post-secondary having no formal links with higher education (AT, DE, EE, FI, GR, RO).

This is confirmed by the EUA[28] Trends 2010 report where in the executive summary the section on responding to the challenges of lifelong learning, widening participation and access starts by stating that *" by the majority of European countries, lifelong learning is considered as a set of activities provided outside mainstream education..."*[29]

[28] European University Association

[29] Sursock, A., Smidt, H. et alia (2010). *Trends 2010: A decade of change in European Higher Education*. Brussels: EUA p. 8

Although, as far as the countries surveyed this is not the majority it is clear that as the report states national authorities together with HEIs should "*connect policies in order to create accessible, flexible and transparent student-centred learning and to monitor and evaluate implementation continuously. This is necessary in order to ensure that all education provision is seen within a lifelong perspective and in specific national, regional, local and institutional contexts.*"[30]

However, in spite of its plea for lifelong learning the report does not mention SCHE once. This is clearly an indication that SCHE is not a priority for most traditional universities represented by the EUA.

4.1.2. Introduction of SCHE

When looking at the dates when SCHE was introduced we can distinguish three groups. On the one hand France, the English speaking countries (IE, the UK), Norway and Cyprus that introduced SCHE in the sixties or seventies. A second group, mainly Central or Eastern European countries (BG, CZ, HU, SI) but also Iceland (1990) and Latvia (2001) introduced SCHE as post-secondary higher education in the nineties or the beginning of the second millennium. Lastly, there are the countries that introduced SCHE after the implementation of the QF EHEA and sometimes the introduction/construction of their NQF (BEnl, BEfr, DK, MT, NL). As well in Belgium as in the Netherlands the introduction of SCHE was more a transformation process of existing higher vocational education than the introduction of something entirely new.

4.1.3. Countries where there is no SCHE sometimes have level 5

As far as the countries not offering SCHE are concerned several countries indicate that they have higher vocational programmes that are labour market oriented and that are or might be at level 5 of the EQF. Nevertheless they are not considered to be SCHE because they do not, as explained before, follow the logic of higher education. We find this kind of higher vocational or professional education in mainly German speaking countries (AT, CH, DE, LI) but also in Finland, Sweden and Romania.

In **Ireland there is a quite unique situation** with on the one hand SCHE within the higher education institutions and on the other the Advanced Certificate (IE). The latter is a further education and training award at level 6 of the Irish NFQ (level 5 EQF) that is not aligned with the Bologna Framework (QF-EHEA).

4.1.4. Developments concerning SCHE

Compared to the situation in 2003 we see that some changes have taken place: on the one hand a number of countries have introduced SCHE such as BEnl, BEfr, NL and on the other hand SCHE has been upgraded to professional bachelor programmes (BG, LT) whereas the Czech Republic has not decided yet whether they will position their post-secondary higher education at level 5 or 6 of the EQF. A number of countries are also considering the introduction of SCHE (IT, EE). Sweden, which used to have SCHE, made a conscious decision in 2006/2007 that the University Diploma should be placed at

[30] Sursock, A., Smidt, H. et alia (2010). *Trends 2010: A decade of change in European Higher Education*. Brussels: EUA

level 6, even though it is only two years of study. That is why they do not categorize it as SCHE.

The question was also asked whether there was a strategy in place concerning SCHE. In Cyprus the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education and Culture are discussing the new strategy for SCHE, for the vocational programmes of studies but the final decisions have not yet been taken.

Also in the Czech Republic, discussions are taking place and an analytical study has been prepared for the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in August 2009. [31] In Denmark the current strategy is the consolidation of the existing SCHE-programmes. In Hungary a new national qualification register was introduced in 2006. The basis of this new strategy is to improve the economic and wider social needs. Through the modular system different programmes have to be linked and credit points have to be accepted. All programmes are practice-oriented, based on the outcome requirements which are in different ministerial acts.

In Ireland SCHE is an integral part of educational provision and, as a consequence, every provider considers its provision in any strategic planning context. In particular, Institutes of Technology in Ireland have used SCHE as a means of reaching adults who wish to engage in lifelong learning. In Latvia there is no overall national strategy but there is a project for a new Law of HE.

Norway is an exception and the tendency is that SCHE programmes are becoming less popular and several institutions are phasing them out. In Turkey the intention is to run six semesters to provide theory, practice and workplace training more efficiently. In Slovenia Tertiary education can be divided into SCHE and HE (first and second Bologna cycle = undergraduate professionally and academically oriented programmes). Slovenia will continue developing SCHE as an autonomous part of tertiary education[32].

4.2. Main objectives of SCHE- studies

Six countries state that the main objective of SCHE-studies is further professional specialisation focusing on employment, whereas nine countries state that the main objective of SCHE is short professional education not linked to previous studies (e.g. nursing). In only two countries the main objective is preparation for degree studies (CY, MT) and three countries indicate that SCHE studies are focusing on employment but are also preparation for (bachelor) degree studies (HU, NL, UKSC). These results indicate that in most countries SCHE is short professional education (not) linked to previous studies and leading to a professional qualification that might also prepare for progression to further studies. The fact that in most countries the focus is on employment results in industry and the world of work being closely involved in the outlining of SCHE-programmes and in defining learning outcomes.

[31] Ing. Michal Karpisek, MSc. et al: Analysis of current situation and possible development of the Tertiary Professional Schools Sector (available in Czech, www.msmt.cz)

[32] Further information available on the web side of the Ministry of education and sport: http://www.mss.gov.si/en/areas_of_work/tertiary_education_in_slovenia/

4.3. Presence of NQF

As can be seen on the table above only 10 of the 35 countries or regions surveyed had already introduced an NQF by the end of 2010. Most of these countries (BFL, DK, EE, MT, NL, PT, UK EWNI) have a national qualifications framework with 8 levels. In all these countries SCHE is organised at level 5 and as far as the UK QF for England and Northern Ireland is concerned at level 4 but with a different qualification (see under 2.6.6. qualifications awarded). One country (FR) has a national qualifications framework with 5 levels but is considering changing it into 8 levels. At the moment SCHE is positioned at level 3 of the French qualifications framework. The Irish qualifications framework has 10 levels with SCHE being organised at level 6. Lastly the qualifications framework for Scotland has 12 levels and SCHE is organised at level 8. Only three countries have already formally referenced their NQF to the EQF (MT, IE and the QF's for the UK).

It is noticeable that all the countries that have already introduced their NQF also have short cycle higher education. One of the reasons might be that when drafting their NQF they noticed that the descriptors for level 5 of the EQF corresponded to what was until then regarded as post-secondary vocational education. Decision-makers at national level might also have noticed a gap in their NQF between the qualifications acquired in secondary education and those acquired in higher education. Very often this gap or **this missing link could be found at level 5 of the EQF.**

Most of the countries that have a (draft) NQF also made a clear distinction in their (draft) NQF between levels 4 and 5 of the EQF. In Ireland and Malta intermediate awards are granted between levels 4 and 5. In Hungary an accumulation of credits can lead to an award at level 5 and in most countries (except CY, ES, SI) an accumulation of modules can lead to an award at level 5.

Two countries are not certain at what level their former specialists or higher vocational technicians will be positioned (BG, CZ). In the former case (BG) the students receive 180 ECTS when finishing their "professional bachelor" studies, so that it can be expected that they will be positioned at level 6. In the second case (CZ) the learning outcomes of tertiary professional education seem to be higher than those to be expected at level 5 but lower than at level 6. No decision has been taken yet as to where to position tertiary professional education. Slovakia, which does not have SCHE but has higher professional education, is considering transforming its higher professional education to the bachelor study programmes of professional higher education institutions.[33]

However, most countries already have an NQF for higher education. Thus, for example as far as Iceland is concerned, only the levels of the Icelandic NQF for higher education have been defined. The Icelandic higher education framework has three cycles with two sub-levels, SCHE being the first level within the first cycle. An overarching qualifications framework with seven levels has been planned where levels 1 and 2 of the EQF correspond to level 1 of the Icelandic QF. Also Norway and Turkey have not introduced an NQF yet but have defined SCHE as the intermediate level within the first cycle.

[33] Eurybase: *Organisation of the education system in Slovakia 2008/09*
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/SK_EN.pdf

When asked whether the descriptor for SCHE was linked to the Dublin descriptor for the short cycle within the first cycle, to the descriptor for level 5 of the EQF or to both descriptors, five countries indicated that it was linked to the Dublin descriptor for the short cycle (CY, FR, NO, UK EWNI), four that it was linked to the descriptor for level 5 of the EQF (DK, IE, NL, TR) and five countries linked their descriptor to both descriptors (BEnl, IS, LV, MT, UKSC). One country (HU) indicated that there was no descriptor and for four countries this information was not made available (BEfr, LU, ES and PT).

4.4. Organisation of SCHE

4.4.1. Legislation

The respondents were asked whether there was legislation on SCHE and what aspects were covered by this legislation. Some countries (NO, IS) indicated that SCHE is included in higher education and is therefore regulated by acts on higher education such as the framework law for higher education in Iceland. Most legislation is quite recent, some as recent as 2009 (BEnl, BEfr) or 2010 (CY). Many countries changed their legislation in view of the Bologna process and the implementation of the BAMA structure (NL (2007), NO (2005), HU (2006), FR (2005), DK (2008), LV (2006). Sometimes this legislation simply concerned amendments to existing laws. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland new legislation was introduced on the Foundation degree in 2009.

Country	Organisati	Entry requ	Study fiel	QA	Accreditat	Transition	Institutior	Min. stude	Tuition fe	Other iten
Befr	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	
BEfr	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	
CY	•	•		•	•				•	
CZ	•	•		•	•		•		•	
DK	•	•		•	•		•			
ES	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			
FR	•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•
HU	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			
IE	•			•	•	•				
IS		•		•	•					
LV	•	•		•	•	•	•			
LU	•	•	•		•	•	•		•	
MT	•	•	•	•	•		•			
NL	•	•			•				•	•
NO	•	•		•	•	•			•	
PT	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			
SI	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
TR	•	•	•		•	•	•		•	
UK EWNI					•				•	
UK SC				•	•				•	•

Figure 3: Legislation

The aspect that is covered in all legislation is accreditation, followed by entry requirements and the organisation of courses. Legislation in most countries also covers quality assurance, the institutions where SCHE can be organised and to transition to degree studies. In view of widening participation and access to higher education it is surprising that only eleven countries refer to (usually maximum) tuition fees. In only one country (SI) reference is made to minimum numbers of students per programme of institution. In the Czech Republic the minimum (and also maximum) number of

students is defined only within the study group, not for the whole institution. In France the conditions to acquire a (national) diploma are also laid down by law. There are particular regulations in Latvia regarding the Fire Safety and Civil Protection College, the State Police College, and the State Border Guard College. In Latvia there are also the standards of the profession approved by Cabinet of Ministers. The programmes for SCHE in Latvia have to be designed in accordance with certain standards of the profession. Sometimes (e.g. in Luxembourg) individual programmes have to be approved. In Norway, all accredited higher education institutions are free to establish study programmes up to and including SCHE and the bachelor's level.

According to ECTS principles HE organisations settle the conditions for the transition from SCHE to HE in Slovenia. In the UK EWNI transition from SCHE to degree studies is not governed by legislation but there is a formal requirement for foundation degrees to articulate with Bachelors. In Scotland there is no particular legislation but transfer to degree courses is common.

4.4.2. Provision of SCHE

SCHE is organised by the State or the public authorities in all countries surveyed. However, in all countries, except two, (DK, TR) SCHE is also organised by private education providers. In Turkey there are also the Foundation Universities under the Higher Education Law No.2544, which is applied for the State and Foundation Universities and in the Czech Republic there are also church schools. In France SCHE can be organised by private education providers but the exams are always State organised. Only in the UK (Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales) can SCHE be organised by industry.

Country	Universiti	Uni Ap. Sc	Voc HEC	FE C	Sec. Schoc	Adult Ed.
Befr						•
Benl		•			•	•
CY			•	•		
CZ			•		•	
DK			•	•		
ES			•		•	
FR	•				•	
HU	•	•			•	
IE	•	•		•		
IS	•					
LV	•	•	•			
LU	•				•	
MT	•		•			
NL		•				
NO	•	•				
PT	•	•		•	•	•
SI			•			
TR	•					
UK EWNI	•	•	•	•		
UK SC	•	•		•		

Figure 4: Institutional embedding of SCHE

In Cyprus, Ireland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland professional bodies can also organise SCHE and in Cyprus and Ireland this can be done in collaboration with the authorities. In Flanders collaboration with industry and professional bodies is also foreseen in the future. Foundation degrees are awarded by universities but can be taught /delivered by private providers, industry, professional bodies, public colleges or any other organisation. The awarding body (the university) is responsible for the quality assurance of the qualification.

One of the characteristics of SCHE is that it is provided in a wide variety of settings not only across Europe but also in each of the countries surveyed. There are only three countries where SCHE is only provided by one type of institution. In Iceland only universities can provide SCHE and they must be accredited by the government. In the Netherlands SCHE is provided in different settings but always by the universities of applied sciences. Also in Turkey SCHE is only provided by universities or foundation universities but it can be organised in foundation schools.

However, in most countries surveyed (BEnl, FR, HU, IE, IS, LV, LU, MT, NL, NO, PT, SI, TR, UK EWNI, UK SC) SCHE is delivered by HEI's such as universities, universities of applied sciences, regional technical institutes or university colleges. The French Community of Belgium also has the intention to organise SCHE in university colleges in the future. In Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Spain, Latvia, Malta, Slovenia, England, Wales and Northern Ireland SCHE is (also) provided by vocational or technical colleges and in Cyprus, Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom (all countries) by further education colleges[34]. In Flanders, the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Spain and Luxembourg, SCHE is (also) provided by upper secondary schools. In the case of Flanders this is only true for one programme (nursing) and in the Czech Republic these are usually separate institutions within a secondary school. In Portugal the technological specialisation courses are provided by higher education institutions, by the network of state, private and cooperative schools, professional schools and centres managed wholly or partially by IEFP (Institute of Employment and Vocational Training). In terms of internal political management most CET (SCHE-courses in Portugal) are provided by higher education institutions. Lastly, in Belgium (both Flemish and French Communities) SCHE is provided in the framework of adult education in the so-called centres for adult education. It should be noted that whereas Belgian HEI's in the past hardly focused on mature students there is nevertheless quite a flourishing tradition of (adult) education for social promotion. Although mature students are also catered for in other countries, courses for adult or mature learners take place in a number of settings such as further education colleges, vocational colleges but also universities and university colleges. In Portugal there are the centres for Employment and Vocational Training.

An Irish respondent points out that publicly funded areas such as Institutes of Technologies in Ireland have both a strategic and legal objective to provide short cycle higher education.

[34] HEFCE (2003) defines further education as follows: Further education is for people over compulsory school age (currently 16 in England), which does not take place in a secondary school. It may be in a sixth-form college, a further education college or a higher education institution. Further education courses are generally up to the standard of GCE A-level or NVQ Level 3. Further education colleges provide education for students over the age of 16.

4.4.3. Funding

In all the countries surveyed SCHE is subsidised by the State or the authorities. In six countries there is also funding by industry (FR, HU, IE, MT, NL, UKSC) and in three countries funding is provided by the authorities in collaboration with industry or professional organisations (IE, MT, UK EWNI). In the case of the Netherlands this funding is to some extent indirect funding by companies which pay for the tuition of their workers and employees in private HEIs. In fact the latter could be called privately-funded HEIs. Also in the UK EWNI we see a shift towards increasing private funding of SCHE.

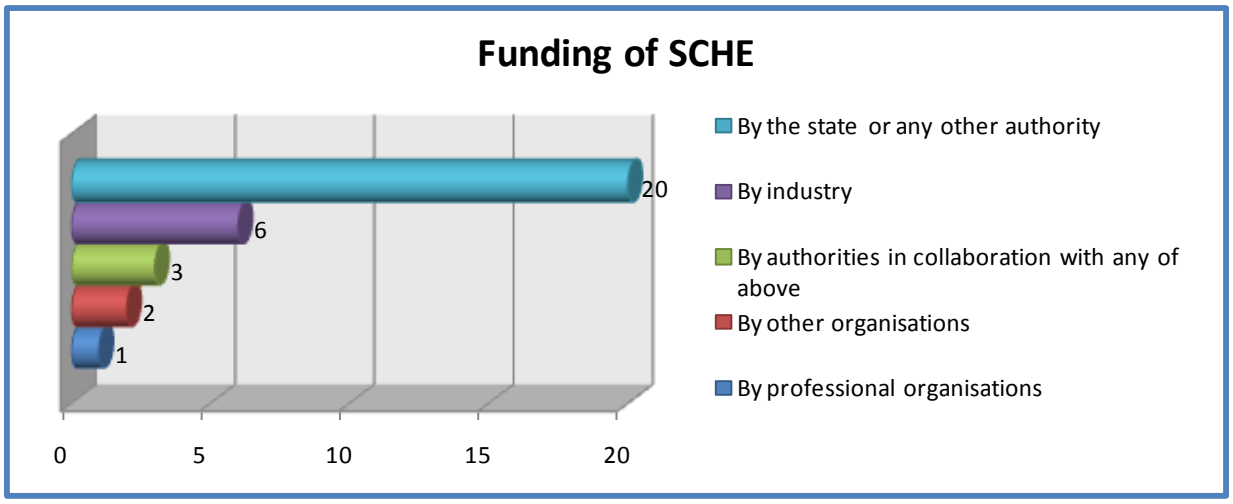


Figure 5: Funding of SCHE

In France, funding of SCHE is also provided by professional organisations. In Latvia and the Netherlands there are also other organisations that fund SCHE. In the Netherlands these could once again be the privately funded HEIs but also consultancies. No information is provided as to which organisations are concerned in Latvia.

In 2006, the Irish Government introduced a Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) through which € 510m is allocated for spending, between 2006 and 2013, in higher education institutions for projects to enhance collaboration in this sector; to improve teaching and learning; to support institutional reform; to promote access to lifelong learning; and to support the development of fourth-level education.

4.4.4. Entry requirements for SCHE

In all countries surveyed a certificate of general secondary education gives access to SCHE. In most countries concerned (BEfr, BEnl, CY, CZ, ES, FR, IE, LV, NL, PT, SI, TR, UK EWNI, UKSC) a certificate of technical or vocational education also provides access to SCHE. Half of the countries also grant access on the basis of recognition of prior learning (BEfr, BEnl, DK, FR, IS, MT, NL, UK EWNI, UKSC). In fact formal qualifications are not necessarily required for entry to Foundation Degree programmes. In the Netherlands and Portugal people who are over 21 (23 for PT) can be admitted based on an entry test covering some of the core subjects and in the French Community of Belgium there is an age requirement (on exit) as at the moment SCHE is only provided in adult education. In Malta vocational

qualifications at MQF Level 4 also grant access to SCHE. In Slovenia a Master craftsman/Foreman/Shop manager exam also grants access. In Latvia, there are additional entrance requirements in specialised military colleges.

One important area of current development in Ireland is the Recognition of prior learning. Recognition of Prior Learning is recognised as critical to the development of an open, accessible, inclusive, integrated and relevant education and training system, and is a key foundation for lifelong learning policies that encourage individuals to participate in learning pathways that include formal, non-formal, and informal learning.

4.4.5. Qualifications or awards received

As already mentioned in the introduction the qualifications or awards received still vary considerably across Europe. However certain trends can be seen, very often related to the language spoken or the educational system.

There are a number of countries that award an Associate degree (BENL, NL, TR), in fact following the term used by American Community Colleges. In Flanders the term Graduaat is used in Dutch but the English translation is added.

The French speaking countries use terminology that is identical or similar to that used in France (BFR, LU, FR). In France and Luxembourg the distinction is made between awards received in HEIs (Diplôme or diploma) and the awards in the higher education sections of secondary schools (Brevet or Certificate). With the exception of the French Community of Belgium all these qualifications refer to Technology or Technician. This is also the case for Denmark where the Academy Profession degree uses the term teknolog referring to the relevant field of study. Also in Spain (Técnico superior), Portugal (Diploma de Especialização Tecnológica) and Slovenia (Engineer / inzenir(male) /inzenirka(female) or Technologist/tehnolog(male)/tehnologinja) refer to this technological aspect of SCHE studies. In the Czech Republic they have Diploma Specialists.

The English speaking countries or those following the Anglo-Saxon educational tradition all award different kinds of qualifications, mostly linked to the duration of the studies. Usually the term certificate is used for shorter studies (one year) whereas diploma is used for two-year studies (on a full-time basis). However, it should be noted that the representative for the UK ENIW pointed out that the certificates, although being part of the higher education system are not positioned at level 5 but at level 4. This is probably also the case for Scotland (HNC and HECert), Malta and Cyprus. Malta and the UK EWNI also award a Foundation Degree (FD). The Foundation Degree courses are designed with a particular area of work in mind, with the help of employers from that sector, in general by Sector Skills Councils. The number of students involved in FD programmes now exceeds students on HNDs or HNCs.

On the other hand the distinction in Ireland is of a different nature. The Higher Certificate is normally awarded after completion of a programme of two years' duration (120 ECTS credits) in a recognised higher education institution. Entry is generally for school leavers and those with equivalent qualifications. The major further education and training award at NFQ Level 6 is referred to as the Advanced Certificate. It is distinguishable from the Higher Certificate at the same level by its learning outcomes. It is important to note that a FETAC Advanced Certificate-Craft is awarded upon completion

of an apprenticeship. The Advanced Certificate is a further education and training award at NQF level 6 (EQF level 5) and is **not aligned with the Bologna Framework.**

Country	Award (s)/ Qualification(s) received
BEFR	Brevet de l'Enseignement Supérieur (BES) : Higher Education Certificate
BENL	Graduaat ; Associate Degree
CY	Certificate 1 year studies Diploma 2 year studies Higher Diploma 3-years studies Certificate of attendance for studies less than 1 academic year
CZ	diploma specialist" (DiS.)- the Czech equivalent is *diplomovaný specialista*
DK	Academy Profession Degree in + the relevant subject title In Danish the titles are unique for each degree but will generally involve the term "teknolog" combined with the relevant subject title.
ES	Tecnico superior : Higher Education Technician
FR	DUT : Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie : University Technology Diploma BTS : Brevet de Technicien Supérieur : Certificate of Higher Education Technician
HU	Certificate on higher level vocational qualification with state recognition
IE	Higher Certificate normally awarded after completion of a programme of two years duration (120 ECTS credits) = SCHE Advanced Certificate= not aligned with the Bologna Framework.
IS	Undergraduate Diploma.
LV	Diploma of the 1st level professional higher education and the 4th level of professional qualification in accordance with the concrete standard of the profession.
LU	DUT : Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie (integrated in the professional bachelor) BTS : Brevet de Technicien Supérieur BTS : Brevet de Technicien Supérieur Spécialisé (nursing)
MT	SCHE in Malta (at MQF Level5) leads to the following awards: Vet Higher Diploma Foundation Degree Undergraduate Diploma Undergraduate Certificate
NL	Associate degree (Ad)
NO	*Høgskolekandidat*) : Unofficial translation: "university college graduate" , courses lasting 2 years in HE institutions.
PT	Diploma de Especialização Tecnológica (DET), Diploma of Technical specialisation
SI	Engineer/inzenir(male)/inzenirka(female) or Technologist/tehnolog(male)/tehnologinja(female). (economist, ..or more)
TR	Associate Degree
UK EWNI	Foundation Degree (level 5) Higher National Diploma (level 5) Diploma of Higher Education (level 5) HNC: Higher National Certificate (level 4) Certificate of Higher Education (level 4)
UK SC	CertHE : Certificate of Higher Education (one year) DipHE : Diploma of Higher Education (two years) HNC: Higher National Certificate (one year) HND : Higher National Diploma (two years)

Figure 6: Qualifications/ Awards received

Sometimes the level of education is mentioned in the qualification. In Iceland, students receive an undergraduate Diploma, in Hungary a Certificate of higher level vocational qualification with state recognition and in Latvia the Diploma of the 1st level professional higher education.

Lastly, there are a number of countries where reference is made to institutions where the qualification is acquired: thus in Norway the students receive a University Diploma, in Denmark students receive an Academy Profession Degree and in Norway University college graduate.

4.4.6. Duration of studies – ECTS workload

All respondents were asked whether the workload for SCHE is expressed in years or ECTS and how many years (on a full-time basis) or ECTS the studies approximate.

As can be seen in the table below, the majority of countries still express the workload of SCHE in years. In eight countries (BEfr, ES, FR, HU, LU, NO, TR, UK EWNI) the studies (on a full-time basis) last two years. In two country (IS, PT) the studies last between one and two years. In Cyprus the duration of studies depends on the award students want to acquire. In the Czech Republic there are still three-year courses (even three and a half years for nursing) but these studies might become professional bachelor programmes in the future.

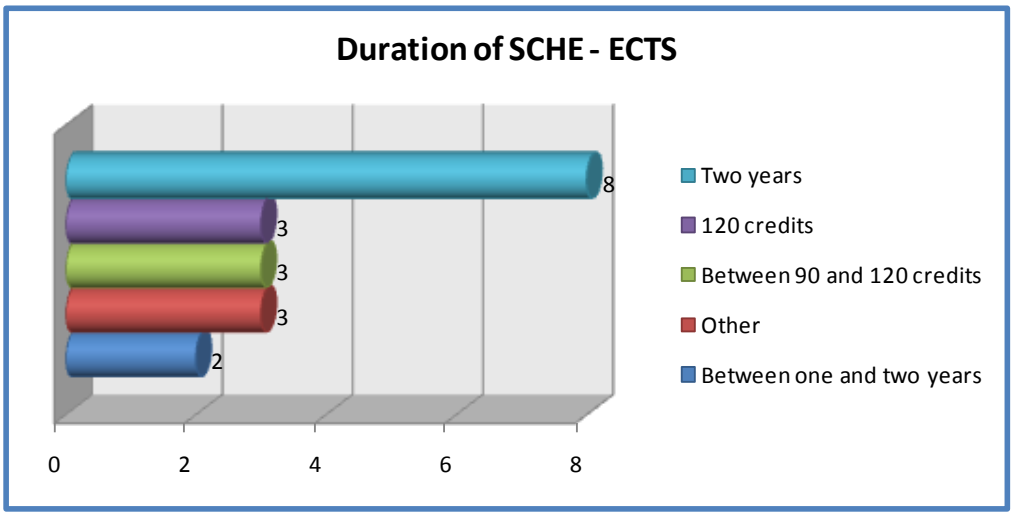


Figure 7: Duration of SCHE

The remaining countries express the workload in (ECTS) credits. In three countries (IE, NL, SI) students have to earn 120 ECTS credits. In the Netherlands these 120 ECTS are a minimum requirement but in practice all programmes have a workload of 120 ECTS. In three countries the workload is between 90 and 120 ECTS credits (BEnl, MT, UKSC). As far as the Flemish Community of Belgium is concerned it is either 90 or 120 ECTS. Portugal expresses the workload as well in ECTS (80) as years (three semesters) and hours (840-1200 hours excluding the training in a work-based context). Lastly, Latvia indicated that there is a workload of 80-120 Latvian credits (used to be 1.5 times bigger than an ECTS credit) and in Denmark the workload is between 90 and 150 ECTS.

It is clear that when exceptions are made as to the length and the work load of programmes, these concern mainly nursing programmes (e.g. Luxembourg Brevet de Technicien Supérieur Spécialisé) are concerned. This is probably to meet the requirements of the European Council Directive 77/452/EEC of 27 June 1977 concerning the mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of the formal qualifications of nurses[35].

4.4.7. Curriculum

Only three institutional respondents mentioned that the curriculum is mainly practice-based (2 HU, 1LV). Two respondents stated that the curriculum is mainly theoretical (NO, one institution and one ministry). All other respondents stated that the curriculum consists either of a combination of practice and theory (14 respondents from CY, CZ, DK, IE, IS, MT, TR, UK) or a combination of practice, theory and work placements.

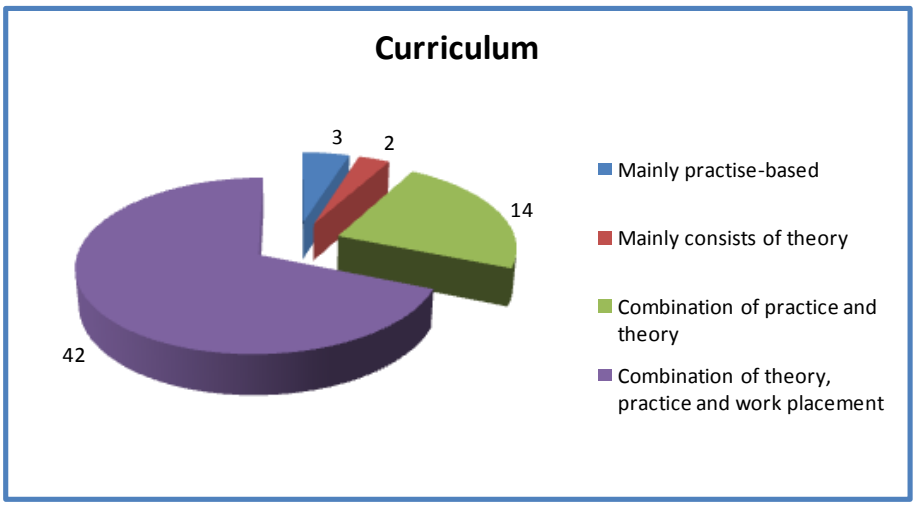


Figure 8: Curriculum

Within the same country different institutions often refer to different curricula. Thus, in the UK for example, work-based learning and placements are much more frequent in FDs than in HNDs. For certain programmes (e.g. nursing) placements are compulsory because of a European directive.

4.4.8. Flexibility

Legislation in most countries allows for flexible provision of courses in SCHE. In sixteen countries SCHE courses are taught both on a full and part-time basis. In Denmark, Iceland, Malta and Turkey the ministry only mentions full-time provision. When taking into consideration the way in which institutions providing SCHE are flexible to meet the needs of the learners it is obvious that the institutions show great flexibility.

Although only a limited number of institutions responded to the questionnaire the figures shown below give an indication as to the flexibility of institutions organising SCHE in order to meet the needs of their learners.

[35] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/smartapi/cgi/sga_doc?smartapi!celexapi!prod!CELEXnumdoc&numdoc=31977L0452&model=guichett&lg=en

In three quarters of the respondent institutions, courses are time-tabled to meet the needs of the learners. Seven out of ten institutions offer courses both on a full- and part-time basis. Courses are also offered through blended learning and through open and distance learning (around 40%). Only one quarter of institutions are not flexible in their mode of provision and only offer courses on a full-time basis and 5% only on a part-time basis. In one out of eight institutions courses are also offered off-campus at places of work, and in some institutions a combination of all of the above is offered. Some institutions also mention modular courses. In the Netherlands and the UK the possibility exists of dual education (mix of work and study, both relevant for the learning outcomes). In the UK this is referred to as work-based learning. In the Netherlands it is more comparable to Cooperative Education[36] (as known in the USA).

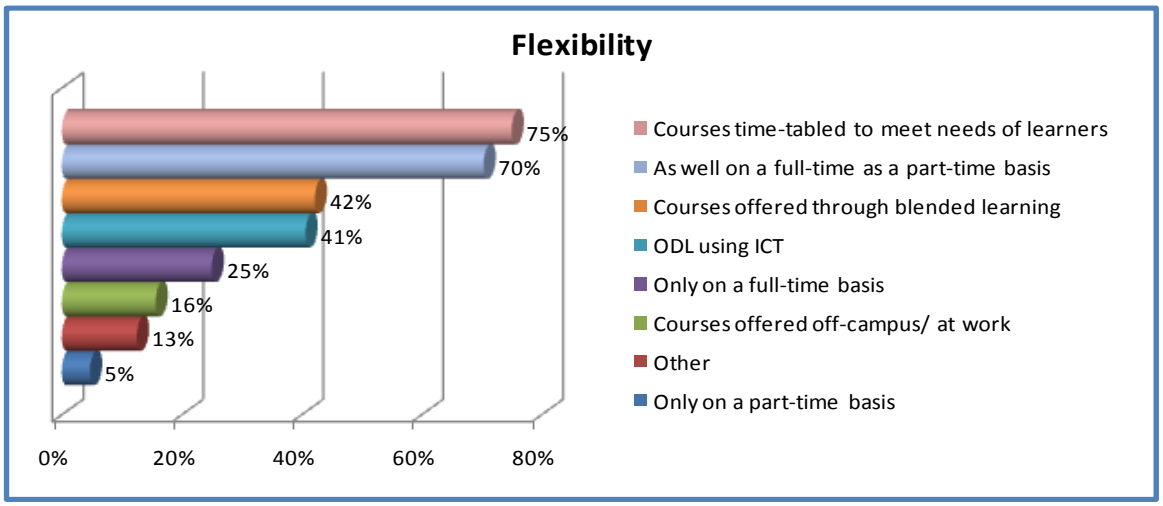


Figure 9: Flexibility

These figures are confirmed by responses from ministries where also 15 out of 20 state that the courses are time-tabled to meet the needs of the learners, and half say that courses are provided through open and distance learning and 8 through blended learning whereas four countries mentioned that courses are also offered at places of work (BENL, IE, UK EWNI, UKSC).

4.4.9. Study fields and programmes

Representatives from ministries were asked in which fields of study were programmes and courses offered at the level of SCHE. Originally it was planned to limit the list to the 15 fields of study used for the Erasmus programme but this list was considered to be too limited and not appropriate enough for SCHE. The list was therefore extended to 25 fields of study/ programmes where respondents could indicate which study fields were offered in their country or institution.

As can be seen SCHE programmes are organised in a wide variety of fields of study. However, the bulk of the programmes are in Business studies (all countries concerned), Administration (all

[36] Cooperative education is a structured educational strategy integrating classroom studies with learning through productive work experiences in a field related to a student's academic or career goals. It provides progressive experiences in integrating theory and practice. Co-op is a partnership among students, educational institutions and employers, with specified responsibilities for each party.
http://www.co-op.edu/aboutcoop2.html

countries except Iceland), ICT (all countries except Iceland and Norway), Building, Catering and Hospitality, Engineering and Mechanics (offered in 16 countries).

The fields of study that are least represented are Domestic sciences (only in Spain, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Turkey and the UK), Music and drama (Ireland, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Turkey and the UK) and Legal practice (BENL, FR, HU, IE, LV and the UK).

It is obvious that smaller countries such as Luxembourg and Iceland offer less programmes as only small numbers of students are concerned.

Country	Adm	Agri	Arts	Biot	Buil	Busi	Cate	Chei	Craf	Cult	Dom	Educ	Engi	Envi	Heal	ICT	Lang	Leis	Mec	Mus	Proc	Rest	Soci	Legal
Befr	•				•	•										•		•					•	
Benl	•			•	•	•	•	•					•		•	•		•	•				•	•
CY	•		•		•	•	•					•	•		•	•		•	•				•	
CZ	•	•	•		•	•	•					•	•		•	•		•	•	•			•	•
DK	•	•		•	•	•	•	•						•		•			•		•			
ES	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•	•	
FR	•	•		•	•	•	•	•		•			•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•	•	•
HU	•	•	•			•	•	•				•	•	•	•	•			•		•	•	•	•
IE	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
IS						•	•										•	•						
LV	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
LU	•		•		•	•							•		•	•								
MT	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•		•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	
NL	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•
NO	•	•				•				•	•		•											
PT	•					•							•			•	•	•	•					
SI	•	•		•	•	•	•					•	•	•		•			•		•		•	
TR	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•				
UK EWNI	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
UK SC	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Figure 10: Fields of study per country

The respondent institutions were also asked which programmes they organise[37]. Although these results are only indicative the same trends emerged even more clearly. Nine out of ten respondent institutions offer Business studies and Administration, and three quarters of the institutions offer ICT-studies. Nearly seven out of ten offer Mechanics and two thirds Engineering. Building programmes and programmes for Catering and hospitality can be followed at six out of ten respondent institutions. More than half of the institutions have Agriculture, Health care and Environmental studies programmed and just half offer programmes in Social work. At the other end of the scale less than two out of ten institutions offer Domestic sciences and less than one quarter Restoration, Crafts and Cultural heritage.

Moreover several respondents indicate that the list was far from complete. Thus, a few ministries indicate that in their country programmes in Social sciences, Media and Creative Industries (audio-visual) are offered at SCHE-level.

[37] For the French Community of Belgium, Luxembourg and Portugal the list may not be complete as the information was based on interviews and desk top research

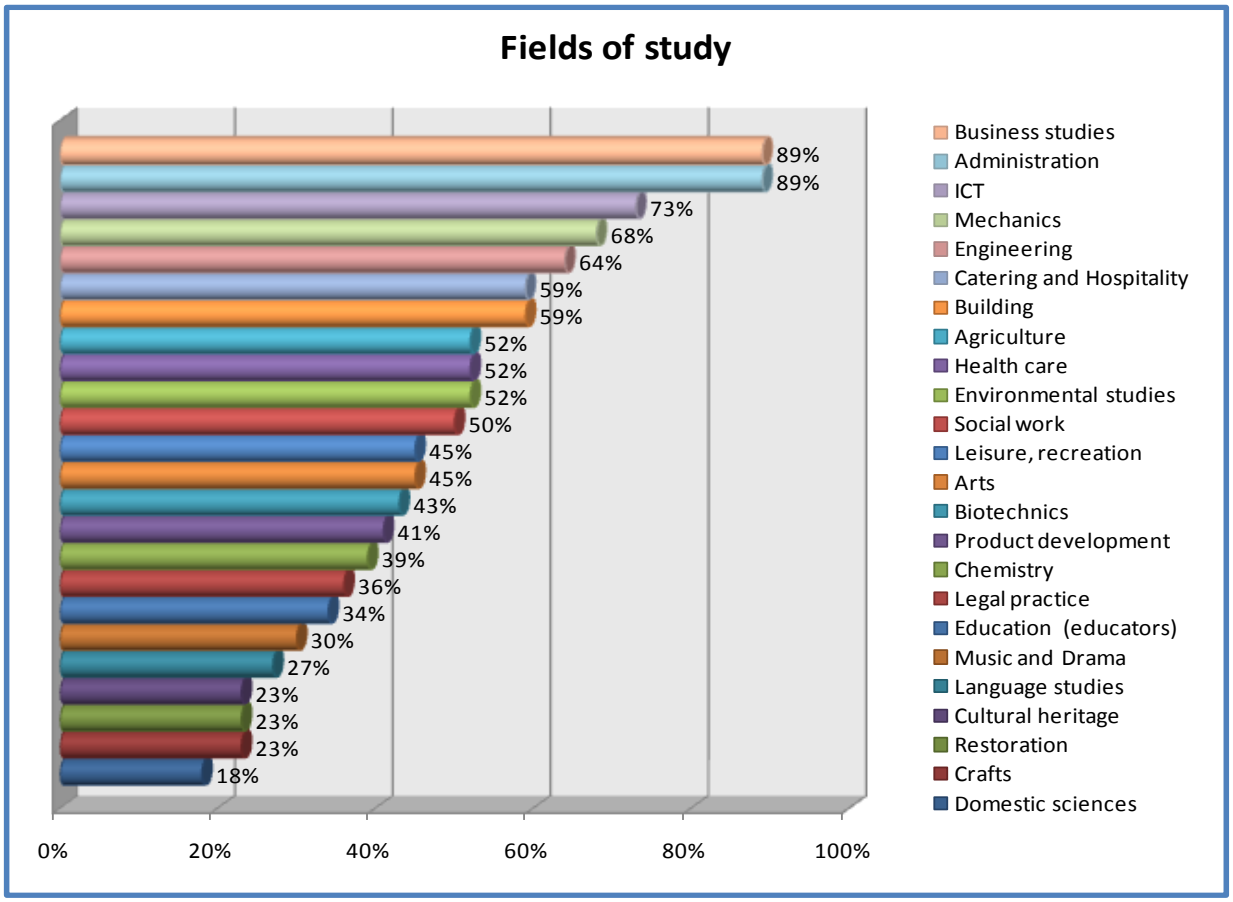


Figure 11: Fields of study (institutions)

When asked which programmes were introduced recently several respondents mentioned programmes in the food industry, ballet, police academy, ecology, forestry and hunting, urban planning and design, financial services, tourism, social pedagogies, transport, logistics, security, shipbuilding, retail wine business, aircraft mechanics and maintenance, entrepreneurship, aquaculture, driving instructor training (only NO) and retail management. The fact that so many new courses have been developed recently indicates that SCHE is a thriving sector that is clearly in line with the demands of industry.

4.4.10. Collaboration with employers to design curricula and define learning outcomes

As SCHE-studies are mainly employment-oriented it is quite obvious that collaboration with employers in designing the programmes and curricula and defining the learning outcomes is an absolute necessity. Therefore the respondents were asked in what way there was collaboration with employers when designing curricula. It is not surprising that in most countries professional organisations and/or employers are closely involved in the planning, designing and restructuring of curricula for SCHE. In six countries they are occasionally involved (DK, MT, NL, NO, TR, UKSC) and in only two countries are they rarely involved (CY, IS). In Cyprus this is only the case with public HEI s. As can be expected the employers who are involved in designing the curricula are specialists in the specific field (of study) offered by the respective school.

In more than half of the countries concerned (BEfr, BEnl, CZ, DK, FR, HU, IE, LV, MT, SI, TR, UK) chambers of commerce[38] are involved in designing or restructuring the curricula and in half of the countries the trade unions (BEfr, BEnl, DK, FR, IE, LV, SI, TR, UK). Lastly there are seven countries where institutions also work together with employment agencies (BEfr, BEnl, HU, LV, MT, PT, SI). In Ireland individual organisations work together with SCHE-providers when designing curricula and defining outcomes. In the Netherlands this happens together with employers and companies who sit on a 'regional labour market committee', in Malta with industry in general and in the UK with Sector Skills Councils, Sector Skills Bodies, employers and professional bodies related to the discipline in question.

4.5. Employability

4.5.1. Need for SCHE-graduates and employability rate

As the main objective of SCHE-studies in most countries surveyed is to offer (further) professional specialisation focusing on employment it is obvious that it is important to find out whether employability is taken into account in SCHE-studies. It was already demonstrated that most SCHE-courses are designed or restructured in collaboration with employers, employers' organisations, professional organisations, chambers of commerce and trade unions. However, it is also important to know whether this leads to genuine employment of SCHE-graduates.

Therefore, both the ministries and the institutions were asked whether there was a genuine need for short cycle higher education graduates, what the employment rate of graduates was and how institutions tried to enhance employment.

All institutional respondents except two responded that at present there is a genuine need for these graduates. One of those two respondents was from Hungary where there seems to be disagreement between colleagues. It should however be noted that Hungary will restructure its higher education system in 2011. On the other hand it is probably not a coincidence that one of the two institutional respondents who replied in the negative was from Norway as the Norwegian ministry of education responded that, with the exception of very specific professions such as driving instructor and animal care, demand was diminishing and that employers preferred students with a bachelor's degree. It should be noted, however, that along with SCHE there is a thriving post-secondary (non-higher education) vocational sector in Norway.

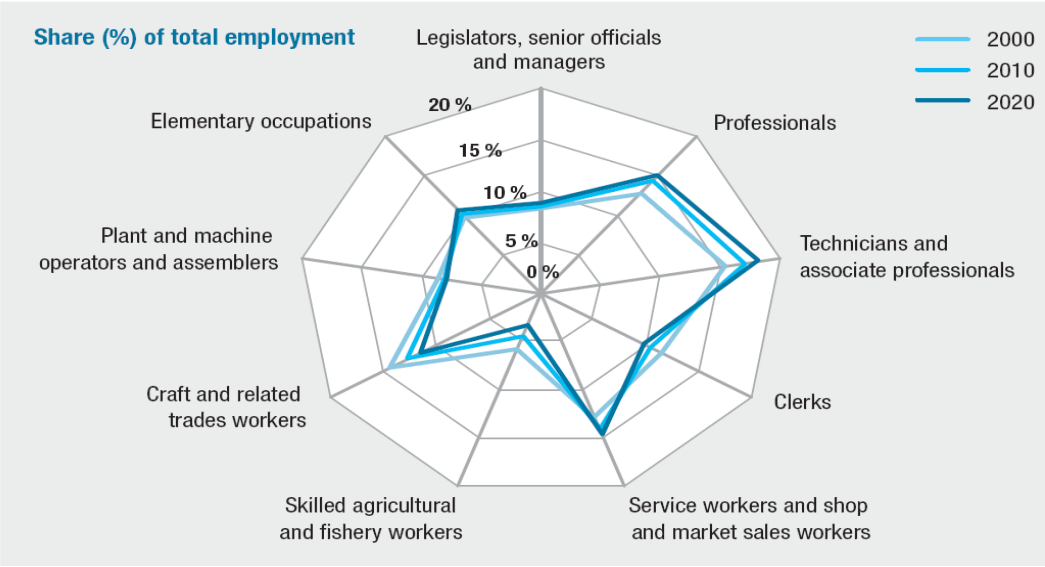
In several countries (e.g. the Netherlands, Portugal and Belgium) most students are already employed but they attend the courses to enhance their skills or to get promoted. Very often they do so at the request of their employers. In this case the qualifications attained in the course allow an internal progression in terms of functions, responsibility, autonomy and income.

[38] An association of businesspeople to promote commercial and industrial interests in the community – definition Merriam Webster

The fact that in most countries the demand for SCHE-graduates is high is also supported by the Cedefop (2010) mid-term forecasts on skills supply and demand in Europe[39]. As can be seen on the chart below, already 17% of the total employment share at the moment is for technicians and associate professionals and this share will rise again in the future.

In several countries, such as the Netherlands and the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium, employers (especially from SME s in the Netherlands) urged the government to introduce this level of higher education. According to the respondents there are some fields with a higher demand and which enjoy more popularity such as institutional communications or media technology (e.g. Hungary). Some respondents stated that there was especially a demand for SCHE graduates with specific technical skills. Thus, the Cypriot economy needs graduates from SCHE in Engineering, Construction, Maintenance and Health Care. In Malta there is a growing demand for level 5 professionals particularly in industry and the services.

Figure 21. **The changing occupational structure of employment, EU-27**



NB: Numbers in employment (NA-based estimates).
Source: Cedefop (IER estimates based on E3ME and EDMOD).

Figure 12: Skills demand forecast - Source: Skills Supply and Demand in Europe (CEDEFOP 2010)

The respondents were also asked what the employability rate was of SCHE graduates. Some respondents did not answer this question as there were no data available. Moreover, as could be expected, these figures were not unanimous as the employability rate would, of course, differ according to the specific qualifications acquired and also the country concerned. One of the Slovenian institutional respondents mentioned that none of their college graduates is un-employed. They usually find employment even before graduating through their placement in companies. Many of them, right away or a few years later, decide to open their own businesses. In the UK EWNI only 7 % of full-time foundation degree qualifiers, and 4 % of part-time qualifiers, were neither studying nor in employment six months after graduation.

[39] CEDEFOP (2010). *Skills Supply and Demand in Europe. Medium-term forecast up to 2020.* Luxembourg: Publications office of the European Union

Although figures given below only give an indication and might differ according to the countries concerned and especially according to the specific qualifications of the graduates, they do give an indication of the employability of the graduates. For some countries there are no data available, (e.g. BEnl, BEfr) as the studies have only been introduced recently but it can be expected that employability will be high as employers were urging for this level of studies to be introduced. Other respondents indicated that there were no data available yet or that there was insufficient time to track the data.

Only 8 institutional respondents indicate an employability rate of less than 80%. These are all respondents from Turkey, Hungary and Ireland. It could therefore be assumed that these employment rates have more to do with the economic situation in general in these countries than with the possible employability of SCHE-graduates as these countries were hard hit by the recent economic crisis.

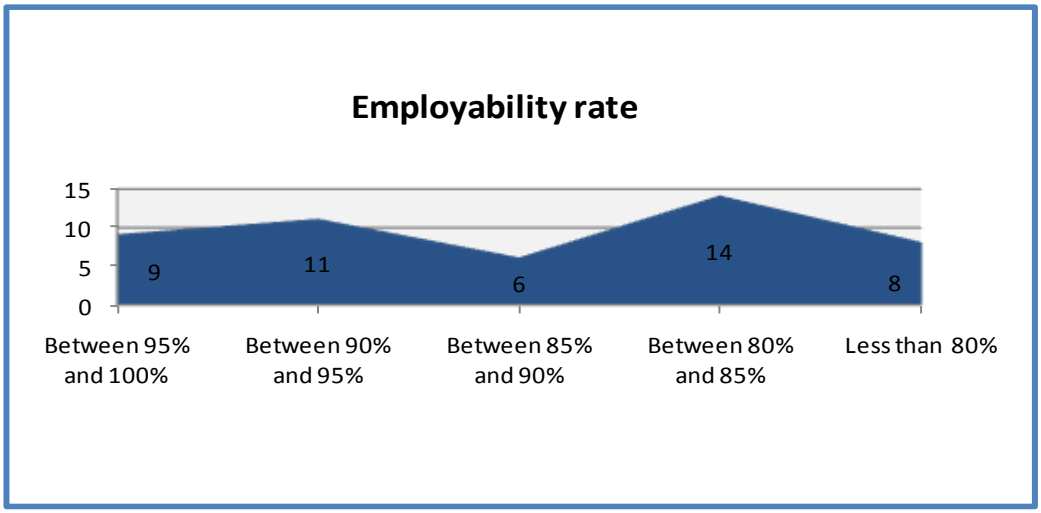


Figure 13: Employability

Respondents were also asked how long it took their graduates to find initial employment. Some institutions indicated that they did not have any data available. One institution indicated that as they only had mature students who were already employed this question was irrelevant for them. Nine institutions stated that it took the graduates less than two months to find initial employment, 11 that it took them between two and four months and 12 that they needed on average between four and six months to find employment. Only one institution responded that it took their graduates more than a year to find employment. Considering the responses in the previous section it is not surprising that it was a Turkish institution. Seven indicated that it took their graduates more than six months to find employment. Here there were one Turkish, two Hungarian but surprisingly also two French, one Slovenian and one Cypriot institution. Strangely enough the French institution indicated that although it took their graduates more than six months to find employment, between 90% and 95% of their graduates eventually found employment.

Lastly, respondents were asked what the main employment was of their graduates. Fourteen institutions responded that their graduates were employed as highly skilled technicians. Graduates from 22 institutions are mainly employed as white-collar workers in e.g. administration, sales or hospitality management. Moreover one institution indicates that their graduates work as middle-management operatives, another that they work as social workers for NGO's, one that they work in

education. One institution states that although their graduates are mainly employed as highly skilled technicians they could also be employed in administration, sales and hospitals. One institution (HU) states that their graduates could be employed as highly skilled technicians, white-collar workers and manual workers. Only two respondents stated that their graduates are mainly employed as manual workers (one from Turkey, one from Latvia). This is somewhat strange, especially for Turkey, as the SCHE-programmes are only provided by universities. However, the low employment rate might mean that graduates accept manual work because they do not find the kind of jobs they have been prepared for.

Although, once again, it must be stressed that these figures are only indicative and not representative it can also be stated that they are more or less in line with responses received from ministries where 8 ministries state that graduates are employed as white collar workers and 9 as highly skilled technicians. The Norwegian ministry indicates that it will depend on the specialisation. Lastly, no data were received for Iceland and for the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium. As the latter two have only been introduced recently there are no data available yet.

It should be pointed out that figures for highly-skilled technicians would probably have been even higher if responses had been received from Portuguese institutions as most institutions there focus on technology.

4.5.2. Enhancing the employability of SCHE-graduates

Respondents were also asked how the employability of the SCHE-graduates was taken into account. Because responses of ministries and institutions diverged more than for any other question, the responses of the ministries on the one hand and the institutions on the other are compared in the table below. As there were three times as many responses from institutions than from ministries, percentages are used to make the comparison possible. For a number of items the scores of the ministries are considerably higher but this might be due to the fact that ministries pointed out the ways in which institutions might take into account employability but that this is done by different institutions to different degrees.

Nearly nine out of ten ministries think that employability is taken into account by focusing on professional competences. Although this item also obtains the highest score from institutions, less than seven out of ten institutions state that they actually do so. More than eight out of ten ministries state that employability is taken into account when setting up new programmes but only 64% of the respondent institutions actually do so. However, it should be remarked that in a number of countries (e.g. BEnl, LU) new programmes have to stand the so-called macro-economic test where amongst others the demand for graduates from a specific programme has to be demonstrated.

Three quarters of the ministries also think that institutions regularly adapt their programmes to labour market needs but less than six out of ten institutions actually do so. In fact the much higher score from ministries might be due on the one hand to the fact that they indicate that this possibility exists but on the other hand that this results from wishful thinking. The fact that they just indicate a possibility that is definitely not implemented by all institutions is definitely true for the implementation of a modular approach. Three quarters of the ministries think that it is done whereas it is implemented by less than half of the institutions.

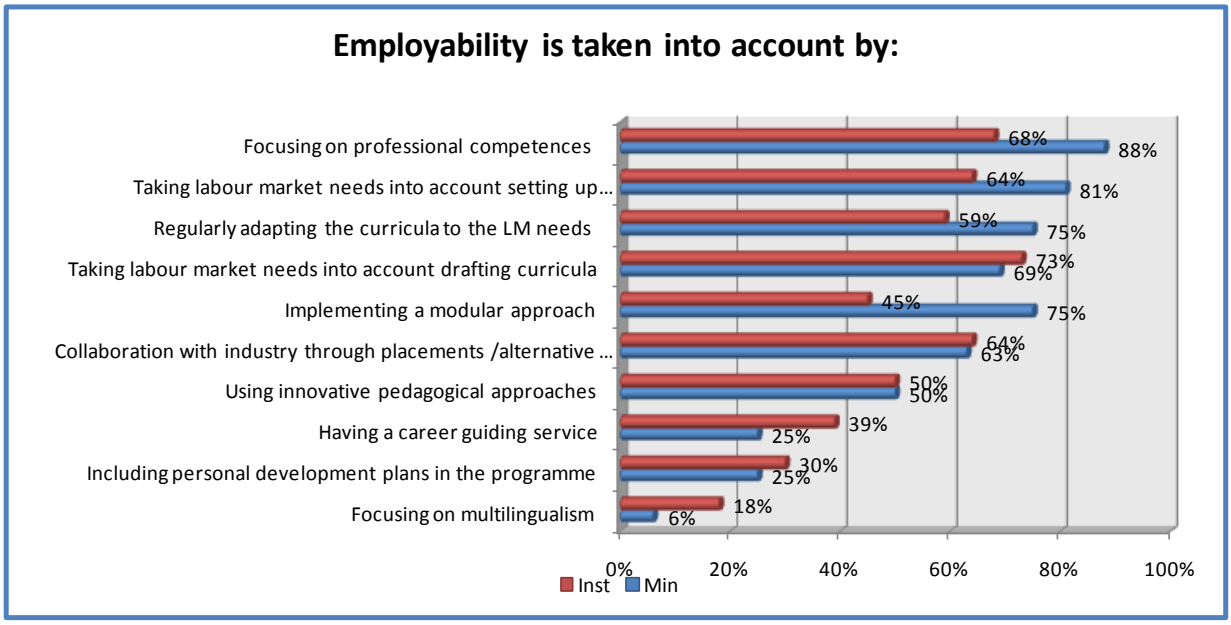


Figure 14: Enhancing employability[40]

However, a number of items score higher with institutions than with ministries. Thus slightly more institutions take into account labour market needs when drafting curricula (73%) than indicated by ministries. Because of the small number of ministerial respondents we could state that the responses here are virtually identical. Also as far as collaboration with industry through placements and alternative learning paths and as far as the use of innovative pedagogical approaches is concerned the responses are virtually identical. As far as collaboration with industry is concerned, two thirds indicate that this takes place, whereas half the respondents state that they use innovative pedagogical approaches to enhance the employability of graduates.

Strangely enough only one quarter of the ministries thinks that the institutions have a career guidance service whereas four out of ten institutions state that they actually have one. The same phenomenon occurs regarding personal development plans. One out of three institutions states that they have personal development plans for their students whereas only one out of four ministries thinks that institutions have them. The strangest result was noticed as far as multilingualism is concerned. Although only one ministry (CZ) in the countries surveyed thought that multilingualism was used to enhance employability, two out of ten institutions mainly in Hungary and France stated that multilingualism enhanced the employment chances of graduates.

It is clear that employability is a major concern for all institutions providing SCHE. It would, however, be interesting to have detailed figures of all countries and all programmes as these could be used to adapt or restructure studies according to the needs of (local) industry. In this respect we refer to the example of Italy. Although SCHE has not been yet introduced in Italy (and thus data have not been taken into consideration for this part of the study) they might introduce it in the ITS[41] as from 2011 onwards. These institutions are obliged by law to assess the provision of programmes every three years and if necessary adapt their programmes to the needs of the local industry.

[40] Data lacking for BEFR, LU, PT
[41] Instituto Technico Superior

4.5.3. Support of employers

As collaboration with industry is considered to be very important by two thirds of ministries and institutions the respondents were also asked in what way employers supported SCHE studies and SCHE-providing institutions. Two ministries indicated that employers do not support SCHE (IS, NO). Also three institutions stated that the employers do not support SCHE institutions (IS, NO, HU). In the case of Norway and Iceland this is confirmed by the ministry but in the case of Hungary it might be one particular institution not receiving support from employers.

Three quarters of institutions and as many ministries state that employers support SCHE by offering placements for SCHE-students. It should however be noted that for some mature students there is no need for placements as they are already in employment and as there will be work-based learning or dual learning. This means that where offering practical experience to the learners is concerned, the support of employers is even higher. According to two thirds of the ministries and nearly six out of ten institutions employers support SCHE by helping to design curricula. Where reflecting on the content of programmes is concerned the opinions of ministries and institutions widely diverge: seven out of ten ministries state that the employers support SCHE by reflecting on the content of programmes whereas less than half of the institutions do so.

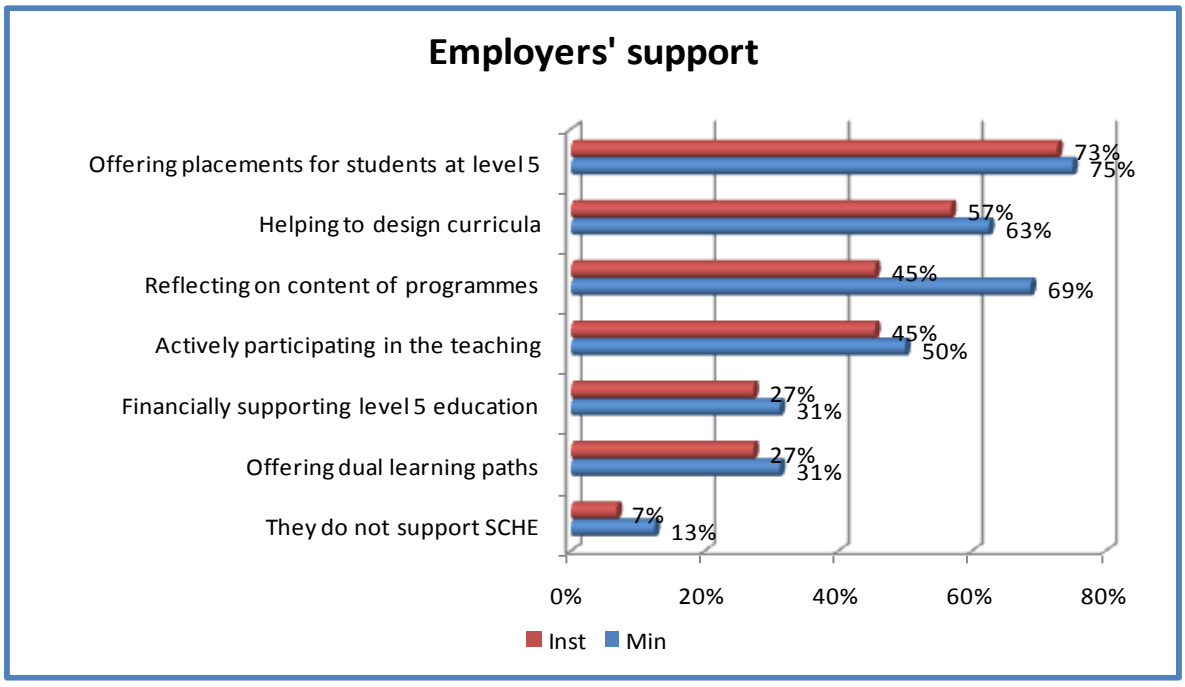


Figure 15: Employers' support

Where participation in teaching is concerned opinions of institutions and ministries are virtually unanimous as slightly less than half of the institutions and half the ministries state that employers actively participate in teaching in SCHE-programmes. Also as far as financial support and offering dual learning paths are concerned both groups seem to agree. Three out of ten state that employers support SCHE financially and that they offer dual learning paths. Lastly, 13% of the ministries but only 7% of the institutions state that industry does not support SCHE.

In Spain, employers sign specific economic agreements with institutions providing SCHE. In the open comments section several respondents state that the best way to support SCHE is by hiring SCHE graduates. Several respondents also point out that support may vary according to the area concerned. In some countries it is also up to the individual institution to decide on how far they cooperate with employers.

4.5.4. Collaboration with sector bodies and trade unions

Respondents were also asked about the nature of collaboration, if it existed, with sector bodies and trade unions and how this could enhance the employability of students.

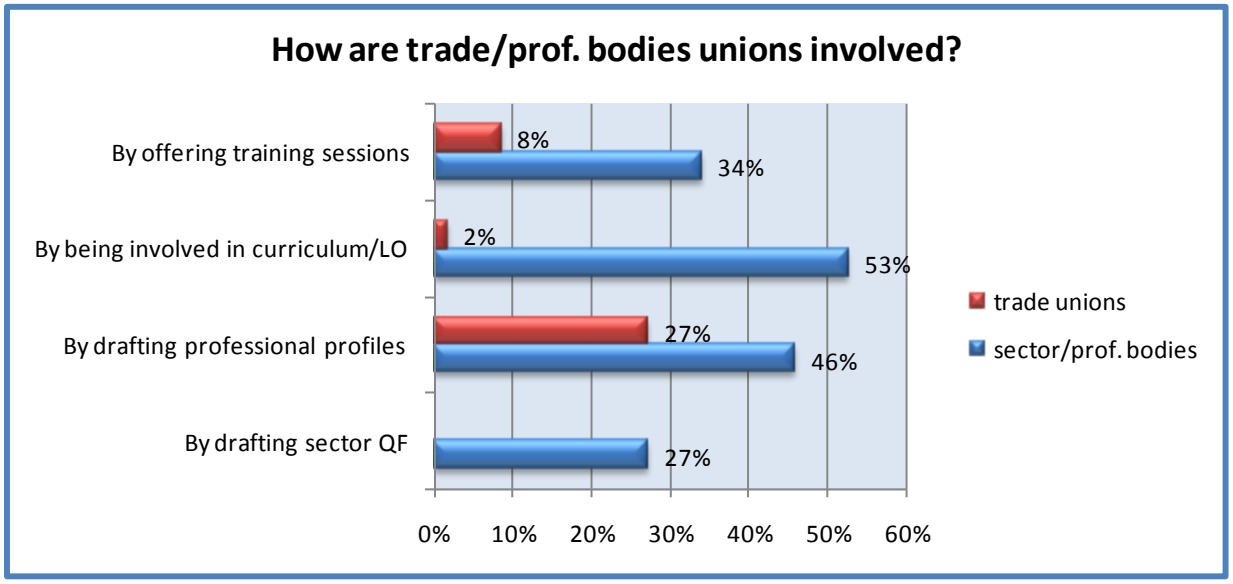


Figure 16: Involvement of sectors and TU

It is clear that collaboration with sectoral or professional bodies is more frequent than collaboration with trade unions. Indeed, one quarter of all respondents state that there is no collaboration whatsoever with trade unions. The only activity in which trade unions seem to be actively involved among the countries surveyed is the drafting of professional profiles where more than one quarter of respondents state that trade unions are actively involved. Nearly half of all respondents also state that sectoral bodies or professional organisations are actively involved in drafting professional profiles. More than half of all respondents state that sector organisations or professional bodies are actively involved in drafting curricula or programmes. Some respondents point out that nowadays the learning outcomes have become more important than curricula. One third of all respondents also refer to training courses organised by sectoral or professional bodies, whereas only 8% state that training courses are offered by trade unions. Lastly, a little more than one quarter of all respondents mention sectoral qualification frameworks.

Other forms of collaboration with sectoral or professional bodies that are mentioned refer to meetings and forums (NO) and participation in accreditation procedures. The UK EWNI representative states that trade unions might collaborate with SCHE by raising awareness of opportunities within SCHE.

4.6. Progression to degree studies

4.6.1. Legislative framework

Respondents were asked whether there is any legislation in place to regulate transfer to (bachelor) degree studies. In most countries this is the case (except for DK, IS, UK). However, as far as the UK EWNI is concerned there is no real legislation, but articulation. Indeed, a requirement for Foundation Degrees is the possibility of progression to a bachelor's honours degree. Also in Scotland funding priorities exist for such articulation. In Denmark there are however specific bachelor programmes to top-up the SCHE programmes and in Iceland students can use part of the credits earned in SCHE to progress to bachelor's programmes. In Cyprus there is specific legislation for the private universities and in the Czech Republic the progression usually depends on the dean of the university. In Ireland the articulation is provided for under the Qualifications (Education and Training) 1999 Act and in Hungary under the Higher Education Act of 2005. In the Netherlands it has been laid down in the Higher Education and Research Act that Associate degree programmes are integrated in professionally orientated bachelor degree programmes and that Ad-degree holders are automatically entitled to complete their bachelor degree with the remaining 120 ECTS, directly or at a later moment. In Norway SCHE is considered a degree programme and the act on HE provides that graduates should be given full recognition when transferring to other programmes and institutions. The SCQF[42] is a lifelong learning credit framework and all Scottish education exists within it. In Turkey SCHE graduates still have to pass a vertical pass exam to transfer to degree programmes.

Transfer to degree programmes is considered to be common in France, the Netherlands, Norway, and the UK. In these countries SCHE is seen as a fully integrated part of the first cycle. In other countries SCHE can be seen as rather linked to the first cycle as not all credits can be used for progression to a bachelor's degree. In eight countries students can use part of the credits earned at SCHE level to transfer to degree courses (CY, CZ, ES, HU, IS, LV, MT, SI). In four countries students can use part of their credits but have to attend a bridging programme in order to progress to bachelor studies (BEnl, DK, IE and TR).

In Flanders there are several possibilities: for some SCHE programmes a special short programme will lead to the bachelor diploma. For other programmes students can use the credits acquired to reduce the bachelor programme. In both options, a student can also ask for recognition of other prior learning, both formal and informal. In Cyprus, Ireland and the Netherlands students can transfer a maximum of 120 ECTS credits (where 240 ECTS are required for a bachelor degree). Also in France and Norway students can transfer 120 ECTS credits but they will only have to earn an extra 60 ECTS to be awarded a bachelor's degree. In Turkey students can transfer 120 ECTS but it is not clear how many more they will have to earn to be awarded a bachelor's degree. In the Czech Republic and Denmark it depends on the level 6 programme students want to attend and it is the decision of the receiving institution. Also in Iceland and Malta it differs from programme to programme. In Malta VET Higher Diploma or Foundation Degree students move into a first degree course in the second or third year. In Hungary students can transfer between 30 and 60 ECTS and in Slovenia as a rule 60 ECTS. In the UK some institutions assign ECTS credits to modules undertaken as part of a Foundation Degree. The award of 240 UK credits (120 ECTS credits) for a Foundation Degree would seem to be typical.

[42] The Scottish Qualification Framework

4.6.2. Students progressing to bachelor degree studies

There are no data available for this section for the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium and for Portugal because the SCHE-programmes have only recently been introduced. There were also no data received for Luxembourg and Norway.

The majority of SCHE-students progress to degree courses in France, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands and the UK EWNI and UKSC. This is not surprising considering the fact that in France, Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK 120 ECTS- credits can be transferred. However, in the UK EWNI the number of credits transferred will depend on the progression route of the students. In Scotland HND students are taught alongside degree students.

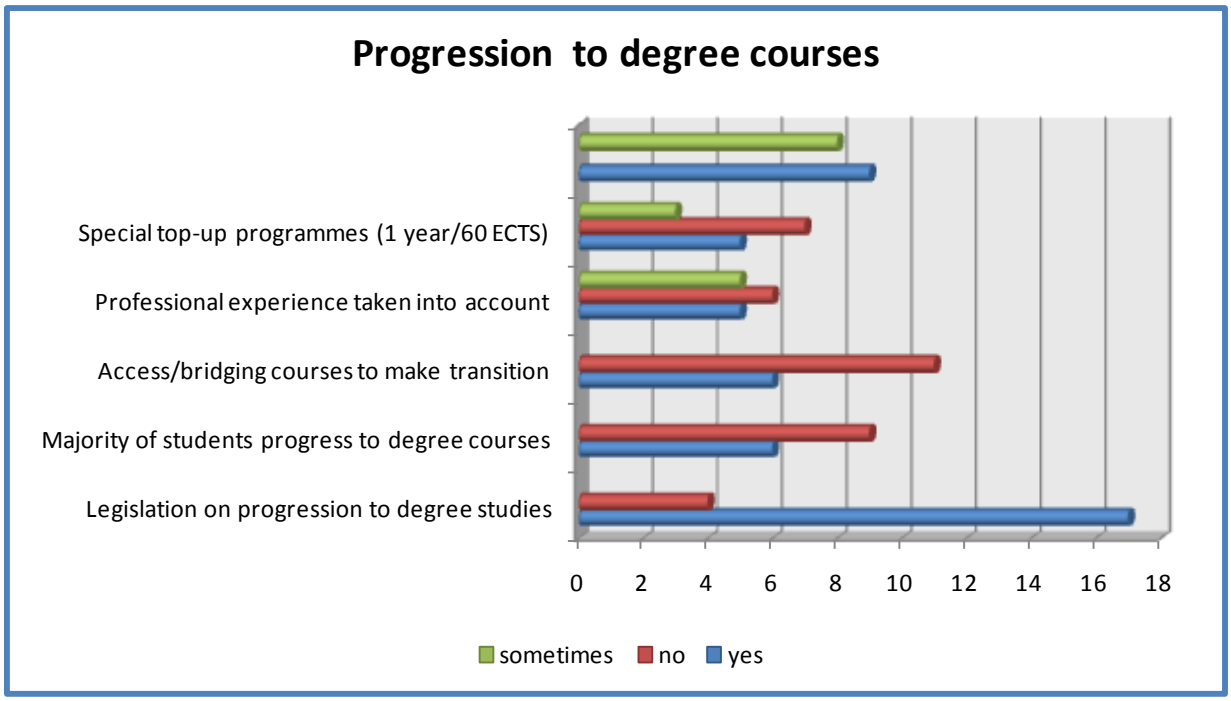


Figure 17: Progression to degree courses

In France the fact that transition is so easy is even seen as a problem because a number of students see SCHE-studies (both in the IUT[43] and in the STS[44]) as an easy way to acquire a (professional) bachelor's degree. In fact guidance and counseling are considered to be better, especially in the STS than in the universities. On the other hand students have to be motivated to gain access to these institutions as they have to present a portfolio in order to be granted access to IUT and STS. It is therefore not surprising that most of the students who progress to professional bachelor studies are successful. Nevertheless the authorities think that not enough of these students who are well prepared for the labour market actually access it immediately.

Although there are no countries where students cannot transfer credits towards degree programmes a majority of students in the other countries (CY, CZ, DK, ES Cat, HU, IS, MT, SI, TR) will access the labour market.

[43] Institut Universitaire de Technologie
[44] Section de Technicien Supérieur

There are only six countries where there are “access” or “bridging” courses (BEnl, IE, MT, LV, UK EWNI, UKSC). In two of them they are compulsory (BEnl, IE). Professional experience is taken into account in five countries (DK, FR, IE, NL, UK EWNI) when students want to progress to degree studies and it usually facilitates the transition. In five other countries it is sometimes taken into account (CY, LV, MT, UKSC). The other countries for which these data were received do not take professional experience into account (CZ, ES CAT, HU, IS, SI, TR).

In five countries there are also special top-up programmes organised (CY, DK, HU, IE, UK EWNI) and in another five these courses are only organised for certain programmes (LV, MT, UKSC). In the other countries no top-up programmes are organised.

As far as foreign students are concerned students coming from other (European) countries with SCHE qualifications can earn a degree using the credits earned in their own country in nine countries (BENL, CZ, IE, IS, MT, NL, NO, UKSC) in eight other countries (CY, DK, ES Cat, FR, HU, LV, SI, UK EWNI) they can progress on the basis of RPL[45].

As a conclusion it could be stated that compared to the survey carried out in 2003 a lot has changed for the better. In all countries surveyed students can use most of the credits earned in SCHE to progress to degree studies. In Hungary only between 30 and 60ECTS credits can be used to progress to degree studies. In all other countries the number of ECTS credits that can be transferred is higher on the condition that there is articulation between the courses in SCHE and those followed to acquire a bachelor’s degree. In some countries students can even use all the credits earned to progress to a bachelor’s award.

Usually SCHE-graduates who progress to degree studies do well and are successful in earning a bachelor’s degree. As an example we refer to the Foundation degrees in the UK where more than half the students who studied full-time for their foundation degree (59%) went on to study an honours (bachelor’s) degree in 2008-09. Among part-time qualifiers this proportion was 42 %. Most students who continued their studies did so at the same HEI at which they were registered for their foundation degree. Around 80% of foundation degree qualifiers were credited with the equivalent of full-time study for two years on an honours degree programme, regardless of whether or not they had changed institution for their honours degree study. Of those foundation degree qualifiers who went into the final year of an honours programme in 2008-09, 67 % were reported as graduating in that same year[46].

As well in France as in the UK many SCHE-graduates are quite successful when progressing to bachelor degree studies. We can therefore assume that SCHE might reduce drop-out rates in higher education, because SCHE students can progress step by step at their own rate.

Although it is not within the scope of this study it is also important to note that students can earn credits towards degree programmes even if they have attended training programmes that are not considered as SCHE such as some of the higher professional programmes in Switzerland. This indicates the growing importance of lifelong and life-wide learning not only within one educational system but also in other systems.

[45] Recognition of prior learning
[46] http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2010/10_12/#exec

4.7. Profile of students and teachers

4.7.1. Numbers of students in SCHE

According to the ministries concerned there are at the moment **1,694,080** students in short cycle higher education programmes in Europe (EUR 31) and Turkey. The figure is actually slightly higher as there were no data available for the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium where programmes have only recently been introduced. The figures for Spain are also incomplete as they only concern Catalonia.

Country	Male	Female	Total
BEFR	NDA	NDA	NDA
BENL	NDA	NDA	NDA
CY	3700	3300	7000
CZ	8047	20702	28749
DK	10500	8500	19000
ES Cat	22500	27500	50.000
FR	190000	162000	352000
HU	16100	21000	37100
IE	5175	3703	8878
IS	32	72	104
LV	5594	13053	18647
LU	66	165	231
MT	230	270	500
NL	1200	1800	3000
NO	485	450	935,5
PT			6 214
SI	8523	8356	16879
TR	485000	450500	935500
UKEWNI	74968	99377	174345
UKSC	15050	19950	35000
Total	847170	840698	1694080

Figure 18: Numbers of students in SCHE per country

It is quite surprising that there are slightly more male than female students in SCHE in the countries surveyed. Indeed, in the OECD "Higher Education to 2030[47] report , chapter on "The Reversal of Gender Inequalities in Higher Education: An on-going Trend" by Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin it is stated that: "of the 18 countries for which data were available in 1985 and 2005, women students were in the majority in 5 countries in 1985 compared with 16 in 2005.

[47] OECD (2008). *Higher Education to 2030. Volume 1: Demography. Chapter 10. The Reversal of Gender Inequalities in Higher Education: An on-going Trend.*
http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/48/28/41939699.pdf

In 2005, the average share of the student population accounted for by women amounted to 55% in the OECD area (1.2 women to every man)". Moreover, on average in OECD countries, significantly more women obtain university-level qualifications than men, 46% *versus* 30%[48].

Even if we do not take the figures for Turkey into account (where there is a majority of men participating in SCHE), men still account for more than 48% of the total student population participating in SCHE. **This might indicate that men seem to participate more in SCHE-programmes than they do in other higher education programmes**. SCHE might therefore be a way to reverse the trend of growing gender inequality in higher education especially as there are clear progression routes to bachelor programmes.

As could be expected we find the highest numbers of students in Turkey where there are over 935,500 students (FTE)[49] studying in SCHE-programmes and the smallest numbers for Malta and Iceland. The figure for Iceland only refers to the students at the University of Iceland. In France there are 188,000 students in Instituts Universitaires de Technologie and 234,000 in the Section de Technicien Supérieur. In England, Northern Ireland and Wales there are 99,760 students on Foundation Degree programmes, nearly 60,000 students on HND (Higher National Diploma) programmes and 15,000 students on Diploma of Higher Education programmes.

As already mentioned above, the only country where the numbers are actually decreasing is Norway where a number of SCHE-programmes are actually being phased out.

4.7.2. Profile of students

Although in virtually all countries the majority of students are studying full-time there are also a number of countries where the majority of students are studying part-time (SI 55%) or where there are considerable percentages of students studying part-time (LV 48%, NL 45%, UK EWNI 43% and IE 43%). It could also be expected that in both the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium there would be a majority of part-time students as at the moment SCHE is still mainly provided in centres for adult education. However, the data are not yet available and the situation might change in the future.

However in most countries the majority of SCHE-students are still studying full-time. According to data provided by Turkish institutions all the students in SCHE (100%) are studying full-time. There are also high percentages of full-time students in Denmark (90%), France (90%), Cyprus (80%), Malta (80%), Hungary (76%), The Czech Republic (72%) and Iceland (70%).

The institutions as well as the countries were asked the percentage of mature students in their country or in their institution. Although in the Netherlands, the UK EWNI and Denmark, the majority of students are studying full-time there is a majority of mature students. In the Netherlands 70% of SCHE-students are mature students and in the UK EWNI 65% of foundation degree students are aged over 21 on entry and in Denmark 60%. On the other hand it is not surprising that a majority of mature students were also recorded in Slovenia (55%). In fact these mature students are also those who are studying part-time. These percentages were confirmed by the institutional respondents. The

[48] http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/eag_highlights-2010-en/01/04/index.html;jsessionid=j86jjtnmk8gd.delta?contentType=&itemId=/content/chapter/eag_highlights-2010-6-en&containerItemId=/content/serial/2076264x&accessItemIds=/content/book/eag_highlights-2010-en&mimeType=text/html

[49] Full-time equivalents

institutions were also asked the average age of students at their institution. Most of them indicate that they are between 21-25 and some state that they are over 25 or even 30. Considering the high percentages of mature and part-time students we might conclude that SCHE-students are often not the typical first entrants in higher education and therefore SCHE contributes to lifelong learning.

Lastly, the ministries and the institutions were asked whether underprivileged students were over-represented in SCHE or in their institutions. Although hardly any data seem to be available concerning this issue (only five ministries gave percentages) the majority of both the ministries and the institutions think that compared to other levels of education there are more disadvantaged students in SCHE. In France there are between 40% and 45% disadvantaged students in SCHE, in Ireland between 35% and 40% disadvantaged students and in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, the Czech Republic and Hungary less than 30% (although over-represented). As far as Hungary and the Czech Republic are concerned the data of the Ministry are confirmed by the institutions and they confirm that disadvantaged students are not over-represented.

However, more institutions seem to think that disadvantaged students are over-represented. This might have to do with the fact that although there are no country-wide data available, institutions know the social status of their students better. Thus, although the Turkish Ministry does not provide statistics, most Turkish institutions seem to think that disadvantaged students are over-represented. The majority of institutions in most countries (except CZ, HU, NL, IS) state that disadvantaged students are over-represented in their institution. Even at the level of the institutions data are not always available or known (NO, UKSC).

Nevertheless it could be stated that SCHE is contributing to widening participation in higher education as there are apparently more mature and part-time students and most probably also more disadvantaged students than in other higher education programmes.

We can conclude that SCHE programmes and courses are provided for an increasingly diverse target audience. During interviews with amongst others representatives from Ireland and the Netherlands it became apparent that the cohort **of mature students in particular is growing in SCHE** as more workers feel the need to upgrade their skills, especially in view of the present economic situation. The fact that SCHE is not only provided at traditional HEI's but also in a number of other settings such as further education colleges, vocational colleges, adult education centres etc. definitely facilitates the accessibility of higher education and therefore contributes to widening participation and to the social dimension in higher education.

4.7.3. Profile of lecturers in SCHE

The respondents were also asked what qualification the majority of lecturers or lecturers in SCHE have at their institution or in their country. No data were received for this section from CY, LV and PT. There are four countries where the majority of staff has a bachelor's degree (IE, NL, UKSC, and UKEWNI). In Scotland there are also many higher degree educated staff. In the majority of countries for which data were received teachers have a master's degree (BEfr, BEnl, CZ, DK, ES CAT, HU, LU, MT, SI, TR). Also the Cypriot and Latvian institutions that did fill in this section of the questionnaire state that the majority of their lecturers in SCHE have a master's degree. In three countries the majority of lecturers have a Ph. D. (FR, IS, NO). It is not surprising that this is the case because both in Norway and

in Iceland SCHE programmes are only provided at university. In France we have to make a distinction between the IUT and the STS. In the former the majority of lecturers has a Ph.D. in the latter the majority has a master's degree although some lecturers also have a Ph.D. Most institutional respondents agree with the information given by their ministry. However, in the Netherlands the institutional respondents state that the majority of their lecturers have a master's degree. In Slovenia there is a mixed response with half the institutions stating that the lecturers have a master's degree and half the institutions stating that the majority of lecturers have a bachelor's degree. Several respondents mention that most of the lecturers also have a teaching qualification. Some also have trade-related qualifications. To be able to teach in tertiary education in the French Community of Belgium, lecturers have to be holders of a certificate valid for higher education (*certificat d'aptitude pédagogique approprié à l'enseignement supérieur*, CAPAES) which is quite unique. To be able to get this CAPAES the applicants have to hold an academic degree.

As far as the profile of lecturers is concerned there is a mixture of lecturers with an academic and a professional profile in thirteen of the countries surveyed (BEfr, CY, CZ, HU, IE, LU, LV, MT, NO, SI, UK ENIW, UKSC). In three countries (DK, NL, PT) the majority of lecturers have a professional profile (with experience in a professional context) and in four countries (ES CAT, FR, IS, TR) most lecturers have an academic profile according to the ministerial respondents.

As far as the institutions are concerned five institutions state that the majority of their lecturers have a professional profile (1 BENL, 4 SI) and fifteen institutions state that they have a majority of lecturers with an academic profile (1 CZ, 4 FR, 1 UK, 1 DK, 1 ES, 1 NO, 2 HU, 1 IE, 1 IS, 1 SI, 1 TR). Lastly nineteen institutions report that they have a combination of lecturers with an academic and a professional profile (1 BENL, 1 CY, 4 CZ, 1DK, 1FR, 2 HU, 1 LV, 1MT, 2 NL, 3 SI, 2 TR).

There are three countries where a certain percentage of lecturers in SCHE are obliged to have professional experience (FR, MT, SI). In all the other countries there is no legal requirement. As far as Malta and Slovenia are concerned the responses of the ministry and the institutions coincide. In Slovenia all the lecturers (100%) must have professional experience and in Malta 80%. In France two different responses were received: the national contact point indicates a minimum between 10% and 15% of lecturers needing professional experience whereas two institutional respondents indicate 33%. In Hungary there seems to be a misunderstanding. Although the ministry states that there is no legal obligation to have a minimum percentage of lecturers with professional experience, several institutions state a minimum of 60% and the Hungarian Association of institutions providing SCHE indicates that although there is no legal prescription it is expected that a certain percentage of the lecturers have professional experience.

We can conclude that although there is no legal obligation in most countries to have a certain percentage of lecturers with professional experience, most institutions have a mixture of lecturers or lecturers with an academic and a professional profile.

Most lecturers in SCHE work full-time according to the national respondents. This is also confirmed by the institutions. Twenty-two institutional respondents also state that the majority of lecturers work full-time. In Cyprus the ministry states that most lecturers in SCHE work part-time combined with work in industry but the only institutional respondent states that the majority of their lecturers work full-time. In Flanders one institutional respondent states that the majority of their

lecturers combine work in industry with teaching in SCHE, whereas another one states that the lecturers work full-time and the ministry does not yet have the data. In the Czech Republic the majority of lecturers work part-time in SCHE, combined with teaching at another level of education. This is confirmed by most institutions and can be explained by the fact that the tertiary professional colleges often share the premises with a secondary school. In France and Hungary we also find a number of institutional respondents that state that most lecturers at their institution work part-time combined with teaching at another institution or at another level. However, in Hungary the national respondent assumes that most lecturers work part-time combined with work in industry. In Ireland the institutional and national respondents agree that lecturers work part-time combined with teaching at another level or in another institution. In Slovenia there are as well lecturers working full-time as part-time combined with either work in industry, in another institution or at another level of education. In all other countries, both the national respondents and the institutional respondents state that the majority of lecturers work full time.

4.8. Quality Assurance and Accreditation

When looking at quality assurance and accreditation ministries were asked in how far all, most, some or none of the institutions applied internal quality assurance and whether it was compulsory or on a voluntary basis. Moreover they were asked whether there were external quality assurance mechanisms and what they were. Lastly, they were asked whether there was an accreditation mechanism and once again who granted the accreditation. The results were then linked to the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*[50] as defined by ENQA[51].

Country	IQA all	IQA most	IQA some	EQA all	EQA new	no EQA (y	QAA	Accredit A	Ex ante ac	No accr.ye	AA
Befr		•		•			ministry		•		ministry
Benl	•			•			nat.+ exp	•			internatio
CY			•		•		nat.+ exp	•			national
CZ	•			•			inspecto	•			ministry
DK		•		•			nat.	•			national
ES	•			•			prof. +ot	•			ministry
FR			•	•			ministry	•			ministry
HU	•			•			nat.	•			national
IE	•			•			nat.	•			national
IS	•			•			nat.+ exp	•			ministry
LV	•			•			nat.	•			ministry
LU	•			•			nat.+ experts		•		internatio
MT		•		•			other			•	
NL	•			•			nat.+ exp	•			internatio
NO	•			•			nat.	•			national
PT				•			nat.+ experts		•		internatio
SI	•			•			nat.	•			ministry
TR			•			•				•	
UK EWNI				•			nat.	•			prof. /dep
UK SC	•			•			nat.	•			reg./prof.

Figure 19: QA and accreditation[52]

[50] European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2009). *ENQA Report on Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.* Helsinki: ENQA http://www.enqa.eu/files/ESG_3edition%20%282%29.pdf

[51] European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

[52] No detailed information was received from Portugal

4.8.1. Internal quality assurance

As can be seen in the table above, internal quality assurance is carried out by all institutions in about half of the countries surveyed, mostly because they are legally obliged to do so. In some countries such as Spain and Latvia all institutions do it on a voluntary basis. The situation in the French community of Belgium is rather unclear as they are developing tools for internal and external quality assurance. However, it is not clear whether most or some institutions apply internal quality assurance. In France, the ministry thinks that only some institutions use tools for internal quality assurance. However, some institutions (especially IUT) think that most or even all institutions apply internal quality assurance. In Turkey, the ministry assumed that institutions do not apply internal quality assurance. However, the institutions state that most or some of the institutions do apply internal quality assurance. For this section no information was received from Portugal and the UK EWNI. However it can be assumed that in Portugal institutions apply internal quality assurance as they state that they are working along the European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance. It is clear that internal quality assurance is especially applied when there is a legal obligation to do so.

As internal quality assurance of HEIs is seen as the first step of quality assurance according to ENQA it would be preferable if a legal obligation were to be imposed on all institutions providing SCHE. Indeed "Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards… The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available." (ENQA, 2009,p.7)[53].

4.8.2. External quality assurance

In all countries (except Turkey) there is already some form of external quality assurance. In Cyprus the external quality assurance is only applied where the accreditation of new programmes is concerned. However in several countries the external quality assurance agencies are very often not yet the independent agencies as defined by ENQA in the standards and guidelines for external quality assurance agencies. Indeed, according to the European standards for external quality assurance agencies by ENQA : "Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders[54]."

Some ministries explicitly pointed this out. Thus, in the French community of Belgium an independent quality assurance agency has been set up for higher education but it does not apply to SCHE yet and in France discussions are still ongoing as to how to set up an independent quality assurance agency. At the moment the ministry is still responsible for quality assurance. Also in the Czech Republic external quality assurance is applied by the ministry of education. In ten countries quality assurance is carried out by a national quality assurance agency (DK, HU, IE, LV, NL, NO, SI, UKENIW, UKSC). In four countries quality assurance is carried out by a national agency assisted by

[53] European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2009). *ENQA Report on Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.* Helsinki: ENQA, p. 9 http://www.enqa.eu/files/ESG_3edition%20%282%29.pdf

[54] European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2009). *ENQA Report on Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.* Helsinki: ENQA, p. 9 http://www.enqa.eu/files/ESG_3edition%20%282%29.pdf

international experts (BEnl, CY, IS, NL, LU, PT) and in one country (ES) by a professional body or another quality assurance agency. Also in Malta quality assurance is carried out by an independent body but it was not defined which one. In three countries quality assurance is still carried out by the ministry of education (BEfr, CZ, FR). In the case of the French Community of Belgium this is only a temporary situation.

4.8.3. Accreditation

Eighteen countries state that their SCHE programmes are accredited. Only Turkey and Malta do not have an accreditation procedure yet. However it must be pointed out that there are three countries where there is an accreditation "ex ante" (BEfr, LU, PT). In these countries programmes (only) have to be accredited before they can be introduced. Afterwards there is external quality assurance but no new accreditation procedure. In the Czech Republic and in Scotland there are several ways to be accredited.

However, in many countries the accreditation is not carried out by independent agencies as defined in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

Indeed, in six countries accreditation is still granted by the ministry of education (CZ, ES, FR, IS, LV, SI). In Spain accreditation can also be granted by a regional accreditation agency or a professional accreditation agency. In six other countries accreditation is granted by a national accreditation agency (CY, DK, HU, IE, NL, NO). In the Flemish Community of Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal accreditation is granted by an international accreditation agency.

4.9. Use of ECTS and Diploma supplement

4.9.1. Use of ECTS[55]

All national contact points (usually ministries) were asked whether a national credit system is used or whether they use ECTS. The opportunity was also given to indicate that ECTS is used alongside a national credit system. It becomes clear from the table above that all the countries surveyed use a credit system. Nevertheless we have noticed that a credit system is not always used to express the workload of a programme but that in most countries it is still expressed in years.

In seven countries (ES, IE, LV, SE, TR, UKENIW and UKSC) a national credit system is used. In twelve countries ECTS is used (BEfr, BEnl, CY, CZ, DK, IS, LU, MT, NL, NO, PT, SI) and in two countries (FR, HU) a national credit system is used alongside ECTS. It should, however, be noted that several institutional respondents from Ireland, Turkey and the UKEWNI state that a national credit system is used alongside ECTS.

[55] European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

Country	national CS	ECTS	ECTS/nat CS	by all instit.	by most inst	by some ins	legal obliga	easy transiti	intern. coop
Befr		•		•			•		
Benl		•		•			•		
CY		•		•					•
CZ		•			•			•	
DK		•		•			•		
ES	•								
FR			•	•			•		
HU			•	•			•		
IE	•			•			•		
IS		•		•			•		
LV	•					•	•		
LU		•		•			•		
MT		•			•			•	
NL		•		•			•		
NO		•		•			•		
PT		•			•				•
SI		•		•			•		
TR	•			•					•
UK EWNI	•					•			
UK SC	•							•	

Figure 20: ECTS[56]

This could explain why, although only twelve countries stated that they use ECTS, and two that they use it alongside their national credit system, fourteen countries (BEfr, BEnl, CY, DK, FR, HU, IE, IS, LU, NL, NO, SI, TR) say that it is used by all institutions and three say that it is used by most institutions (CZ, MT, PT). In two countries some institutions use ECTS (LV, UKENIW).

Most institutions use ECTS because they are legally obliged to do so (BEfr, BEnl, DK, FR, HU, IE, IS, LV, LU, NL, NO, SI). In the case of Ireland it is not clear whether the legal obligation concerns the national credit system or ECTS. In the case of Latvia we find the strange situation where institutions are legally obliged to use ECTS but where the ministry states that only some institutions use it.

In the Czech Republic, Malta and Scotland institutions use ECTS because it facilitates the transition to bachelor degree programmes. In the case of Scotland it is once again not clear whether the statement concerns the national credit system or ECTS. In Cyprus, Portugal and Turkey it is used to facilitate international cooperation. It is in fact surprising that not more countries see ECTS as a way to facilitate international cooperation.

It is to be regretted that not all institutions providing SCHE use ECTS. Even if a national credit system is comparable to ECTS there is the symbolic value of ECTS that is lacking. Moreover, although national credit systems might facilitate transfer and accumulation within national education systems they do not enhance transparency within the European Higher Education Area. ECTS can help recognition of a student's studies between different institutions but also between national education systems. It is clear that the best way to implement the general use of ECTS is by making it legally compulsory. With the exception of Latvia ECTS is used by all institutions in the countries where the use of ECTS is compulsory.

[56] For Portugal this table was filled out on the basis of desk-top research

4.9.2. The use of the diploma supplement (DS)

Ministries and institutions were asked whether the Diploma Supplement is used by all, by most or by some institutions and why.

In twelve countries (BEFR, BENL, DK, HU, IE, IS, LV, LU, NL, NO, SI, TR) the diploma supplement is used by all institutions[57]. In all these countries, with the exception of Turkey, there is a legal obligation to do so. It is strange that, although there is a legal obligation in France not all, but most institutions use the diploma supplement. In the Czech Republic there is no legal obligation but institutions are encouraged to use the diploma supplement and most of them do so. Institutions are also convinced that it helps the transition to degree programmes but also access to the labour market. Also in Malta most institutions use the diploma supplement, mainly because it facilitates the transition to degree programmes. In Cyprus, Portugal and Scotland only a limited number of institutions use the diploma supplement. In Turkey institutions use the diploma supplement because it facilitates international cooperation. This is also the main purpose of the diploma supplement in Portugal where all students who are internationally mobile are issued a diploma supplement.

Country	all institut	most insti	some insti	not used	legal oblig	instit. enc	easy trans	int. coop.
BEFR	•				•			
BENL	•				•			
CY			•			•		
CZ		•					•	
DK	•				•			
ES				•				
FR		•			•			
HU	•				•			
IE	•				•			
IS	•				•			
LV	•				•			
LU	•				•			
MT		•					•	
NL	•				•			
NO	•				•			
PT			•					•
SI	•				•			
TR	•							•
UK EWNI								
UK SC			•					

Figure 21: Diploma supplement

Four countries state that both the diploma supplement and the certificate supplement is used (DK, FR, HU, MT). However, most countries state that the certificate supplement is not used because the diploma supplement is used.

[57] No information received for UK EWNI, information on Portugal received through desktop research

4.10. Internationalisation[58]

4.10.1. Lecturer mobility

Because a number of national contact points signaled that it would be better to retrieve this information from the institutions, the information in this part is mainly based on the responses received from the institutions.

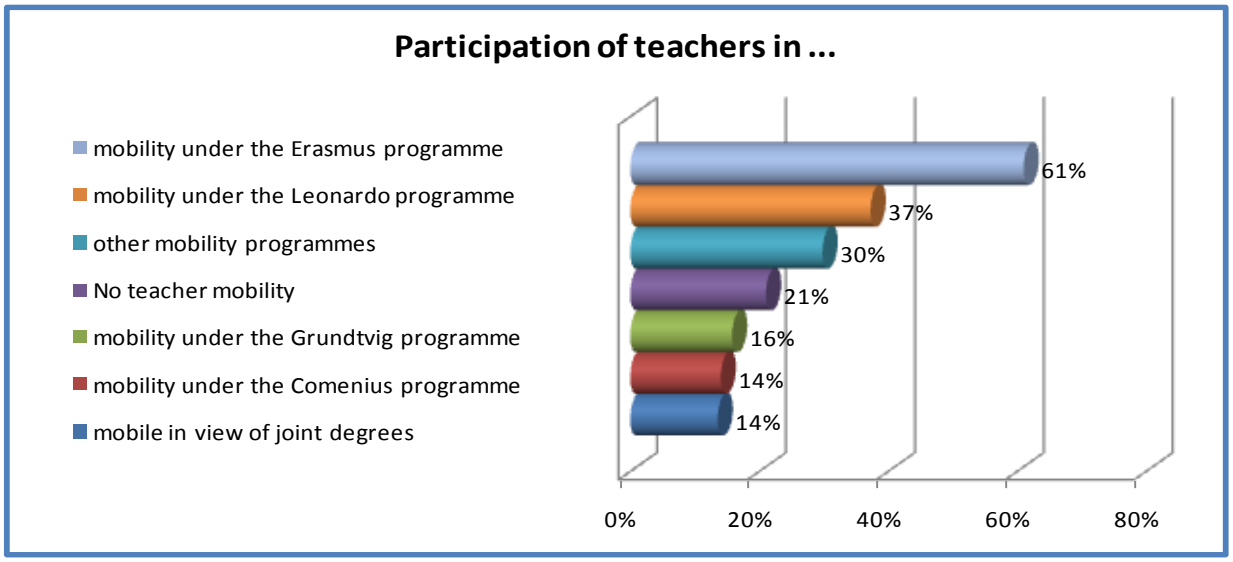


Figure 22: Teacher mobility

Sixty-one % of respondent institutions state that some of their lecturers are mobile under the Erasmus programme (CZ, DK, ES, FR, HU, IE, IS, MT, LV, NL, NO, SI, TR) and 37% participate in teacher mobility under the Leonardo programme (CZ, ES, FR, HU, IE, IS, MT, LV, SI, TR). Thirty % of the institutions participate in other mobility programmes (DK, FR, HU, IS, MT, LV, NO, SI). Examples that were given are mobility within Nordplus[59] but also cooperation Canada, Japan, Korea, India - scientific projects, organising international symposiums. Teacher mobility was also done in view of the preparation of an Intensive programme. One institution mentioned mobility in the framework of the IMO[60].

Twenty one % of the respondent institutions mention that they do not participate in teacher mobility. In 16% of the institutions lecturers participate in Grundtvig mobility (BEnl, DK, IS, MT, LV) and 14% in Comenius mobility (CZ, IS, MT, LV, SI). Exactly as many lecturers are mobile in view of setting up joint degrees (CZ, DK, FR, MT, NO, TR).

4.10.2. Student mobility

As far as student mobility is concerned the highest participation rate (61%) is also in mobility under the Erasmus programme (CY, CZ, ES, DK, FR, HU, IE, IS, MT, LV, NL, NO, SI, TR) and 32% in

[58] For this section no information was received from BEFR, LU, PT and UK and limited information from BENL
[59] The Nordplus Framework Programme offers financial support to a variety of educational cooperation between partners in the area of lifelong learning from the eight participating countries in the Baltic and Nordic regions.
[60] International Maritime organisation.

Leonardo mobility (CY, CZ, ES, FR, HU, LV, MT, SI, TR). Once again 30 % of respondents indicated that they participate in other mobility programmes (CZ, DK, ES, FR, LV, MT, NO, SI). The Nordplus programme was also mentioned for student mobility as well as student mobility for placements and observation in the framework of AEHT.[61]

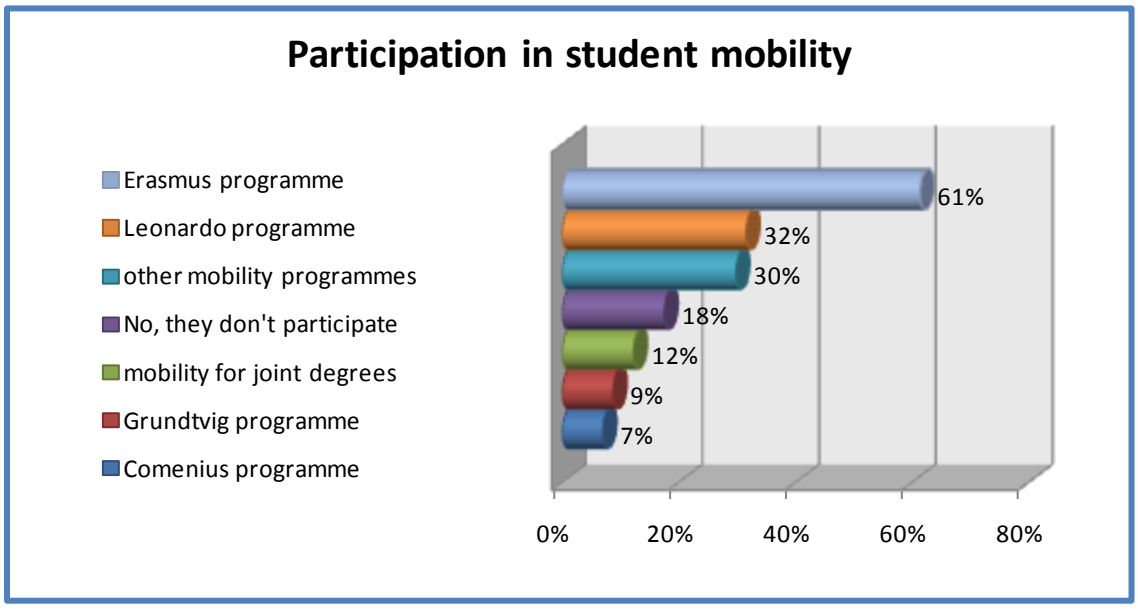


Figure 23: Student mobility

Eighteen % of respondents state that their students do not participate in mobility and 12% of students are mobile in the framework of joint degrees (DK, FR, IE, MT, NO, TR). Only 9 %of the institutions state that their students participate in Grundtvig mobility (DK, MT, LV, SE) and even less that their students are mobile under the Comenius programme (CZ, HU, LV, MT, SE). The fact that there are more lecturers participating in Grundtvig and Comenius mobility can probably be explained by the fact that lecturers probably participate in Grundtvig and Comenius in-service training courses.

4.10.3. Tools used for student mobility

Respondents were asked which tools are used when students are mobile. It should be noted, however, that some of these tools are only used for the Erasmus sub-programme (Learning agreement (LA) and Transcript of records (ToR)) and more specifically for Erasmus mobility for studies. However, it would have made the questionnaire far too long if this distinction were made.

Learning agreement

A "Learning Agreement" sets out the programme of studies to be followed by Erasmus students, as approved by the student, the home and the host institution[62]. As can be seen, 42% of the institutions indicate that students leave with a learning agreement. In the previous section we found that 61% of the institutions indicate that their students are mobile under the Erasmus sub-programmes. Some of them could however be mobile for placements and not for studies. These students leave with a placement agreement (grant agreement) covering the mobility period and signed

[61] European Association of Hotel and Tourism Schools - Association Européenne des Ecoles d'Hôtellerie et de Tourisme
[62] http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc892_en.htm

between the student and his or her home higher education institution and a "Training Agreement" regarding his or her specific programme for the placement period; this agreement must be endorsed by the home higher education institution and the host organisation[63]. Only 16 % of respondents state that their students do not leave with a learning agreement. These students might be mobile under other mobility programmes. We can therefore assume that probably all or most SCHE-students who take part in Erasmus mobility for studies leave with a learning agreement.

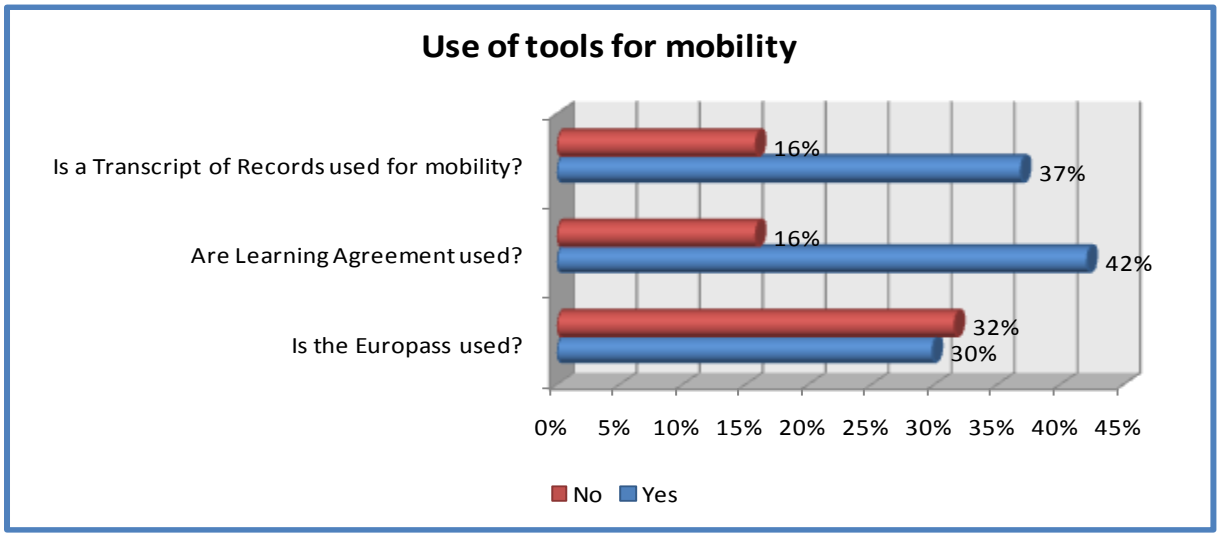


Figure 24: Tools for mobility

Transcript of records[64]

The host institution must provide the ERASMUS student and his/her home institution with a transcript of records confirming that the agreed programme has been completed and confirming the results. The home institution must give full academic recognition for satisfactorily completed activities during the ERASMUS mobility period as agreed in the Learning Agreement.

Thirty-seven % of respondents state that students who are mobile receive a transcript of records. Once again 16% of respondents state that students do not receive a transcript of records. Once again this could concern students who are mobile under other programmes. However, as fewer respondents react positively we could assume that not all students who leave for ERASMUS mobility for studies receive a transcript of records.

Europass Mobility documents[65]

The Europass Mobility is a record of any organised period of time that a person spends in another European country for the purpose of learning or training (called Europass Mobility experience). This includes for example: a work placement in a company; an academic term as part of an exchange programme or a voluntary placement in an NGO.

[63] http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc894_en.htm
[64] http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc892_en.htm
[65] http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/vernav/InformationOn/EuropassMobility.csp

Thirty two % of respondents state that the Europass mobility documents are not used. This can easily be explained by the fact that students in SCHE are mainly mobile under the Erasmus programme. Only 30% state that the Europass mobility documents are used. These might be students who are mobile under the Erasmus mobility for placements but also students who are mobile under the Leonardo or Grundtvig programme.

4.10.4. Participation in other international programmes

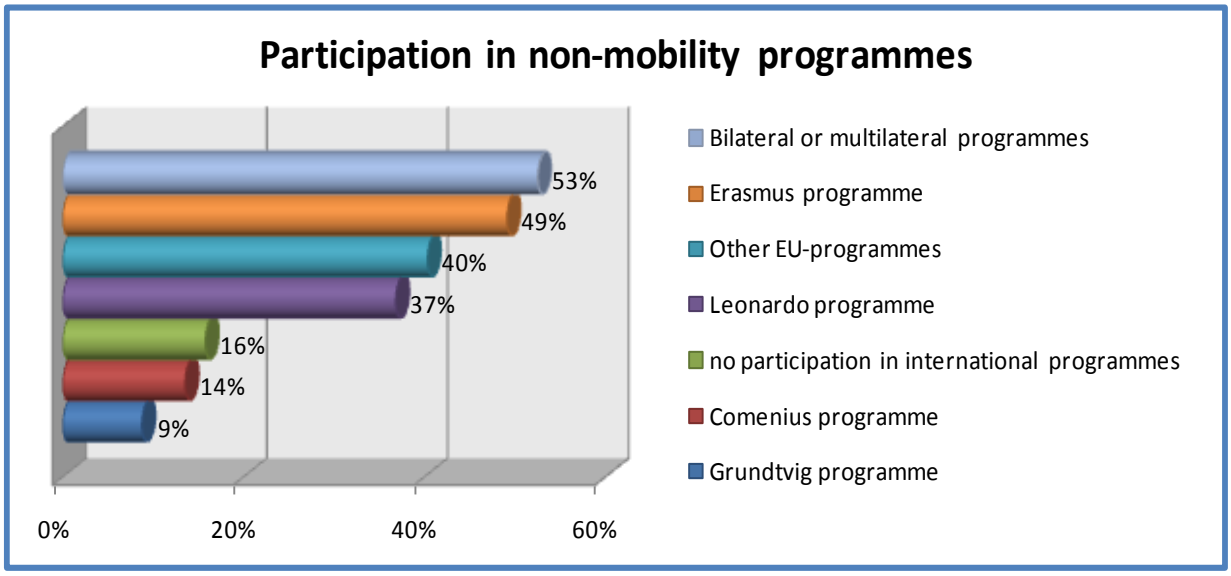


Figure 25: non-mobility programmes

More than half of the respondents state that institutions providing SCHE participate in bilateral or multilateral non-mobility programmes. Nearly half of the respondents state that institutions participate in non-mobility actions of the Erasmus programme and four out of ten states that they participate in EU-programmes that were not mentioned in the questionnaire. More than one third participates in Leonardo, 14% in Comenius and 9% in Grundtvig. Sixteen % of respondents state that their institution does not participate in international programmes.

4.10.5. Obstacles to mobility in SCHE[66]

Although 17% of respondents explicitly state that they do not see any specific obstacles to mobility of SCHE-students and lecturers, many respondents mention specific problems mainly related to the profile of the students, financial problems, insufficient knowledge of foreign languages, the small size of the institutions, the lack of administrative support and lastly the short duration of SCHE – studies and a lack of interest from students and lecturers. Apparently there are also a number of institutions that are not yet Erasmus eligible.

One of the Slovene respondents summarizes a number of the problems that confront them: *"There is not as much of study mobility as we would wish. The reason is mostly a language obstacle and non-mobile students as the result of their **weaker social background**. The mobility of staff is quite good. Still the problem is also in the small colleges who are not well staffed for*

[66] For this section responses were received from UK ENIW and Scotland

international co-operation and organisation of mobility and projects, although they are all Erasmus eligible. In ASHVC we would like to organize an International Office to give these services for all HVC network. It might be helpful. "

One quarter of all respondents refer to the specific profile of SCHE students and usually their weaker financial status. Thus one of the respondents states: *"As most of our students are part-time students who are working full-time and studying in the evening, mobility is not an option for them that can be used during their studies.*" Also in the UK this seems to be an obstacle to mobility: "*Many UK students work part-time to finance their studies and many fear losing their job if they leave the country for a few months."* The Scottish national contact points out that Commission rule changes have worked against students/institutions undertaking much SCHE mobility in Scotland.

Fifteen % of the respondents also think that a **lack of foreign language knowledge** is an obstacle for SCHE-mobility. However, this is not a specific problem for SCHE.

The small size of institutions, especially those that only provide SCHE, however, is a specific problem**. Eight %** of the respondents state that due to the small size of the institutions it is impossible to have an international office or an international coordinator. It was already mentioned by one of the Slovenian respondent but also another Slovenian respondent states that: "*Both teachers and students (especially in SCHE due to socially lower status) are very non-mobile. Also our college is very small and we cannot have a person employed only to work on international contacts and promote mobility. That makes it very difficult to prepare mobility, maintain it and motivate students and teachers*." The fact that the administration for mobility is seen as very complicated seems to be a serious obstacle for small institutions.

Also the **short duration of SCHE-programmes** is seen as a specific problem for SCHE, especially for Erasmus mobility for studies as the students cannot be mobile during their first year. As one respondent states: "*The relatively short duration of the programmes can make it difficult to have time to study abroad. Students in SCHE are typically older than other types of students and will thus typically have obligations that hinder their international mobility*." These obstacles are confirmed by a number of other respondents.

A few respondents also mention that SCHE-institutions are not always eligible for Erasmus mobility. Apparently this is especially a problem for the Czech Republic where Tertiary Professional colleges are not yet recognised as institutions providing SCHE.

The other obstacles that are mentioned are not specific to SCHE. Thus, several respondents mention problems concerning arrangements connected to students' course requirements and releasing lecturers at the moment when their absence would have least negative impact on students' learning." Also the incompatibility of the different educational systems as far as the possibilities for mobility are concerned is seen as an obstacle (e.g. exam periods, course periods or possibilities for placements at different moments of the year).

The last obstacle mentioned is a lack of interest and motivation. This might be due to the lack of motivated staff in small institutions but also to a lack of knowledge about the possibilities and the advantages of international mobility.

4.11. Cooperation with the local community

4.11.1. Involvement of local industry

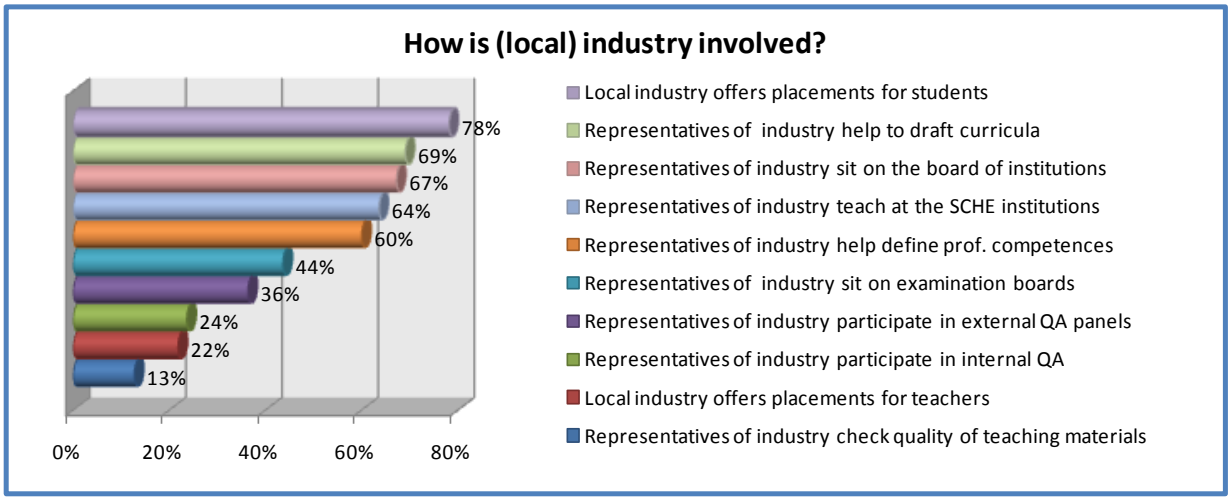


Figure 26: involvement of local industry

In the section on employment it was already pointed out that as SCHE-studies are usually labour-market oriented and that therefore the collaboration with industry in general and local industry in particular is essential for SCHE-providers. In certain countries this cooperation is even embedded in legislation (e.g. BEnl). Therefore respondents were asked how their institution or institutions in their country collaborated with representatives from (local) industry, with sectoral bodies and with trade unions. As there were only minor discrepancies between responses from ministries and institutional respondents all responses were taken together for this section.

It is not surprising to find out that the main collaboration with industry concerns placements for students. Seven out of ten respondents already considered this as the main support from industry to SCHE providers and even more (78%) mentioned that (local) industry offers placements for SCHE-students as a way of collaboration. In nearly seven out of ten respondent institutions representatives from (local) industry help to draft the curricula for SCHE – programmes or sit on the Board of the institution (67%).

In nearly two thirds of the institutions representatives from (local) industry are actively involved in the teaching and in six out of ten institutions they help to define the professional competences. Representatives from industry also sit on examination boards in more than four out of ten institutions and participate on external quality assurance panels in one third of the institutions. Involvement in internal quality assurance is less frequent with only one quarter of the institutions indicating that representatives from industry are involved. One out of five institutions also indicates that local industry offers placements for lecturers and only 13% of institutions state that representatives from industry are involved in checking the quality of teaching materials.

According to the responses received collaboration is least frequent in Latvia and Iceland. The Norwegian ministerial respondent also mentioned little collaboration except meetings and forums and points out that collaboration is mainly organised at the level of the faculty but according to the

institutional respondent there is collaboration concerning teaching, defining professional competences and internal and external quality assurance.

One Cypriot respondent states that although there is collaboration, it is mainly informal and one Czech respondent refers to project work that is being organised by SCHE providers in collaboration with industry. The Flemish ministry points out that representatives from (local) industry are also involved in the accreditation procedure. In Luxembourg representatives from local industry are involved in the selection committees if students have to be selected through an entrance exam or by presenting an application.

4.11.2. Reasons for collaboration

The institutions providing SCHE were asked why they wanted to collaborate with industry but also why industry wanted to collaborate with them. Because the responses from ministries and institutions diverged on certain items the percentages are once again given separately. These discrepancies could be caused by the fact that there were hardly any or no institutional responses from countries such as the French Community of Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain, Portugal, Scotland and England, Wales and Northern Ireland whereas responses were received from all ministries (for Luxembourg, Portugal and the French Community of Belgium through e-mail and interviews). On the other hand countries from Central and Eastern Europe are over-represented in the sample.

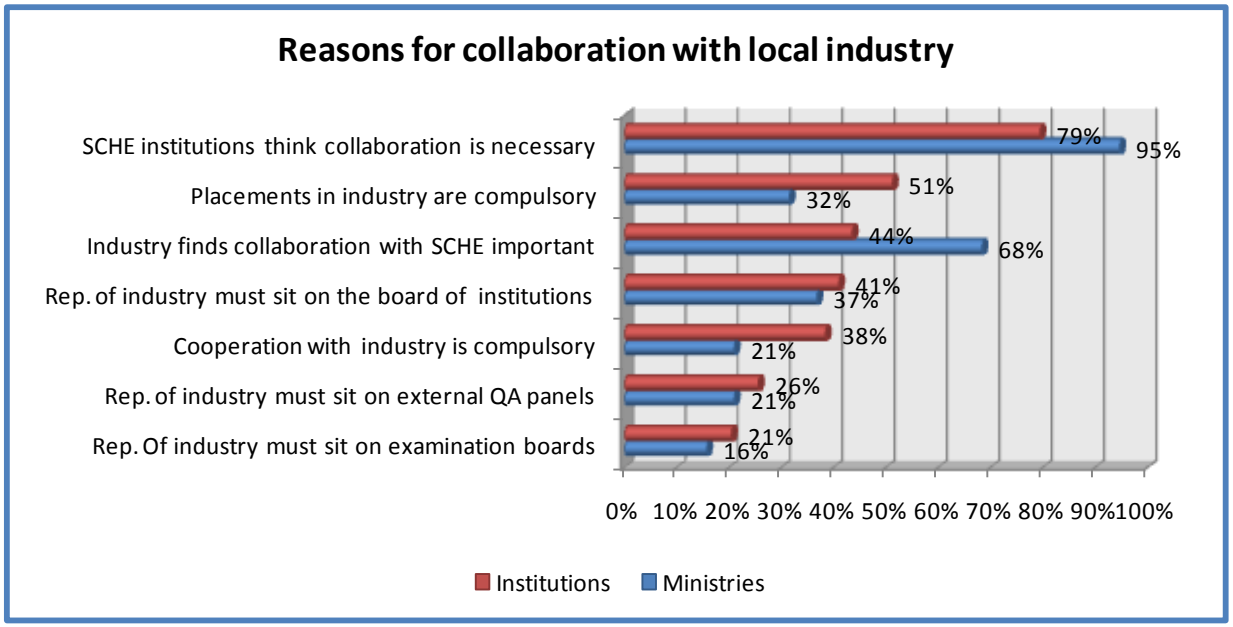


Figure 27: Reasons for collaboration

Both the institutions and the ministries think that the main reason for collaboration is the fact that institutions providing SCHE find this collaboration important. Virtually all ministries state that this collaboration is important and nearly eight out of ten institutions think this is the main reason for collaboration. Seven out of ten ministries think that (local) industry finds this collaboration important. However, less than half of the institutions are convinced that (local) industry finds this collaboration important. Especially in the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Cyprus and Malta a number of institutions were not convinced that local industry attaches enough importance to collaboration with SCHE-institutions.

More than half the institutions state that placements in industry are compulsory whereas only one third of ministries state that they are compulsory (BEnl, BEfr, SE, SI, TR). The same discrepancy is found as far as cooperation with industry is concerned. Nearly four out of ten institutions state that cooperation with industry is compulsory whereas less than one quarter of the ministries (CZ, DK, ES, FR, MT, UKSC) states that this is the case. It might be that some institutions think that it is compulsory whereas they are only motivated to do so. As far as representation on the board of management, participation in external quality assurance and the presence of representatives from industry on examination boards are concerned there are only minor discrepancies that could be explained by the reasons given above.

4.11.3. Social commitment

As far as collaboration with the local community and social commitment are concerned ministries and institutions were asked what kind of social commitment institutions providing SCHE have. Because once again major discrepancies were found in certain items the responses of ministries and institutions were calculated separately. It should be noted that several ministries indicated that they are not aware of what is going on as there are mostly no legal requirements and that individual institutions may be involved in any of these.

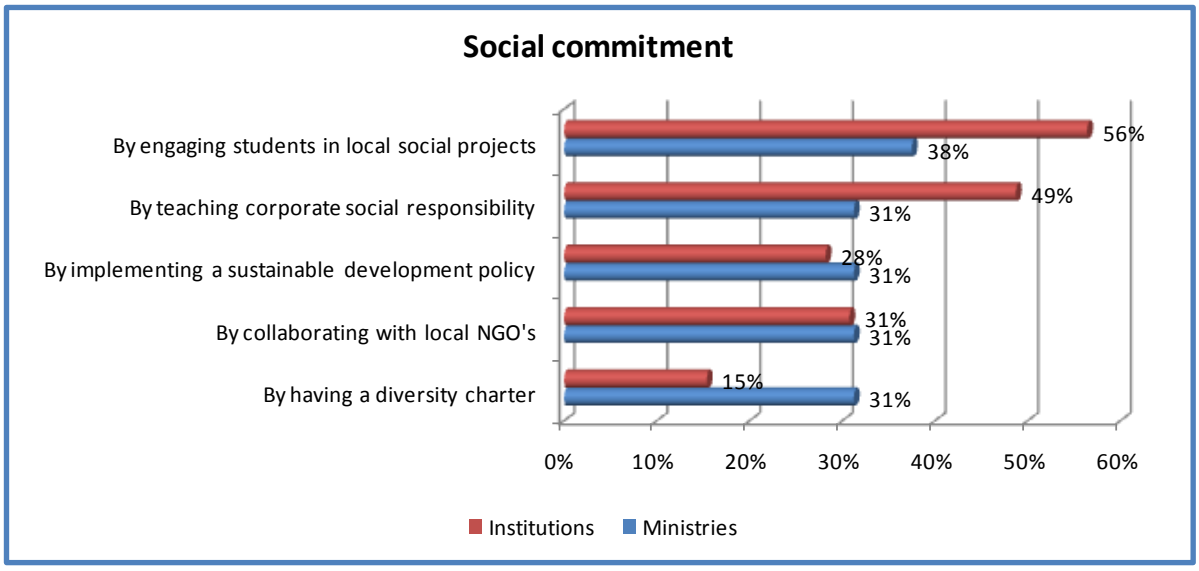


Figure 28: Social commitment

The institutional results show that the respondent institutions have a strong local commitment as more than half of the respondent institutions indicate that they engage their students in local social projects. Less than one out of four of the ministerial respondents were aware that there is involvement in local social projects (CZ, HU, IE, MT, SI, and UKSC). Nearly half of the institutions indicate that institutions teach corporate social responsibility, whereas less than one third of ministerial respondents think this is the case (HU, IE, MT, NL, and UKSC).

More than one quarter of institutions and ministerial respondents indicate that institutions implement a sustainable development policy (CY, CZ, FR, NL, and UKSC). The Scottish national contact point states that this is compulsory for all institutions. Nearly one third of institutions (31%) and exactly as many national contact points declare that institutions show their social commitment by

collaborating with local NGOs (HU, IE, NL, SI, UKSC). Lastly, nearly one third of ministries (IE, IS, NL, MT and UKSC) but only 15% of institutions state that institutions show their social commitment by having a diversity charter. Institutions can also show their social commitment by offering programmes for immigrant students (NO), etc.

The responses from Hungarian and Slovenian institutions confirm the very positive expectations of the ministry and the results from Turkish institutions exceed the expectations of the ministerial respondent.

It is obvious that the social commitment of institutions in local matters is quite considerable as more than half of the respondent institutions engage their students in local social projects and one third collaborate with local NGO's.

4.12. Multilingualism[67]

Once again the results of the ministries and the institutions diverge on certain items and therefore the results are given separately. Several ministries indicate that they are not always aware of what is happening at institutional level.

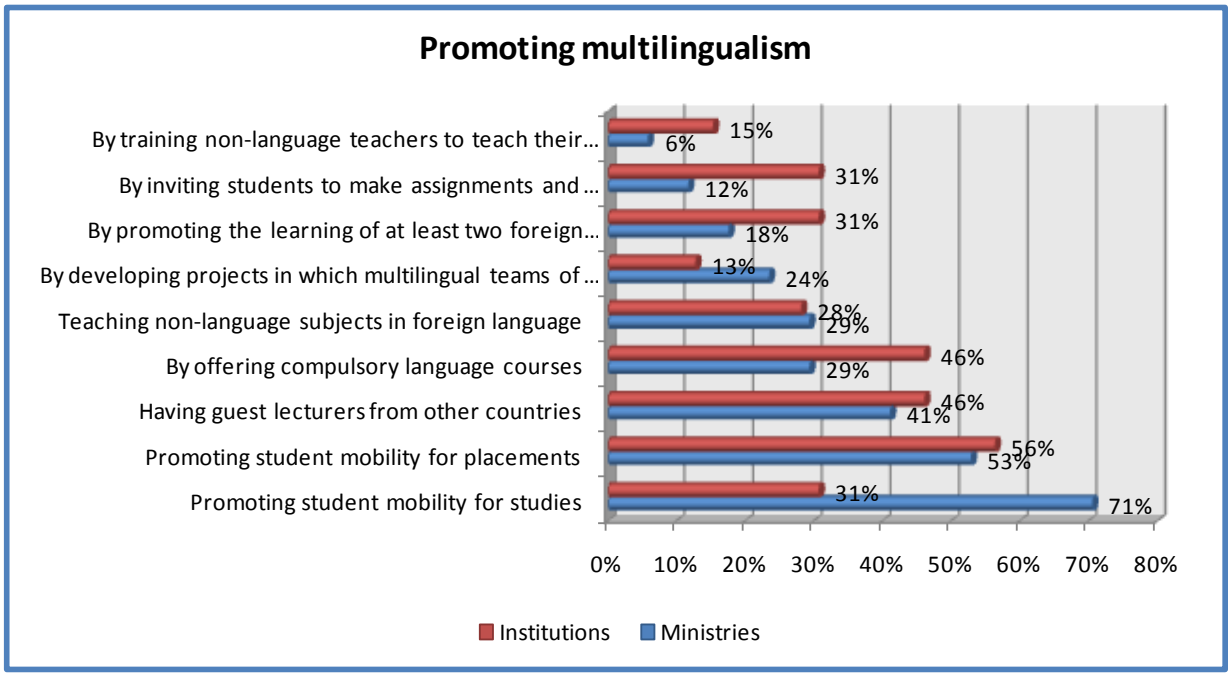


Figure 29: Multilingualism

Seven out of ten ministries (CZ, DK, FR, HU, IS, LV, MT, NL, NO, SI, TR) but only one out of three institutions states multilingualism is enhanced by promoting student mobility for studies. Ministries and institutions more or less agree as far as student mobility for placements to promote multilingualism is concerned. Half of the ministries (CZ, DK, ES, FR, HU, LV, MT, NL and SI) think that these placements are a way of promoting multilingualism and slightly more institutions (56%) think that they can promote multilingualism through these placements.

[67] In this section no responses were received from BEFR, LU, PT

Nearly half of the institutions and one out of four ministries (CZ, FR, LV, MT, NL, NO, SI) consider having guest lecturers as a way of promoting multilingualism and nearly half of the institutions but only slightly more than one quarter of the ministries (BENL, CZ, FR, LV, TR) think that offering compulsory language courses as a way of promoting multilingualism although both ministries and institutions point out that this is only the case for certain programmes. Twenty-nine % of ministries (FR, HU, IS, MT, NL) and nearly the same percentage of institutions state that institutions teach non language subjects in a foreign language. One quarter of the ministries (CY, LV, MT, SI) think that institutions promote multilingualism through the development of projects with multilingual teams but only 13% of institutions say that they actually do so. One out of three respondent institutions promotes the learning of at least two foreign languages but less than two out of ten ministries (CY, CZ, FR) think that institutions actually do so. Even less ministries (MT, NL) state that students are invited to do assignments in a foreign language whereas one out of three institutions invites their students to write assignments in a foreign language. Only the Hungarian ministry is convinced that institutions should train their lecturers to teach their non-language subject in a foreign language and 15% of respondent institutions actually do so.

Multilingualism does not seem to be an issue in most English speaking countries. Thus, one English institutional respondent states that multilingualism in the UK is actually very poor. This is confirmed by the comment of the representative for the UK EWNI who states that multilingualism does not usually feature within Foundation degree programmes. Also the Scottish national contact point knows that multilingualism is not a requirement in the vast majority of programmes but that foreign languages might be options. The Irish national contact point writes that multilingualism is not a strong feature of SCHE in Ireland.

On the other hand the Hungarian representative of the Association of Vocational Higher Education Institutions points out that each SCHE programme has a compulsory subject (module) of

Professional Foreign Language Terminology and one Maltese respondent refers to the fact that teaching and learning at this level in Malta is carried out in English and with English textbooks.

It can thus be concluded that although most countries consider multilingualism to be important it is especially important in countries with a minority language and virtually inexistent in English-speaking countries. Presence of SCHE/ level 5 in the countries surveyed

5. Examples of good practice

5.1. The Use of Embedded Awards in the Irish National Framework of Qualifications to Promote Lifelong Learning in Ireland

Mark Glynn and Richard Thorn, Institutes of Technology, Ireland

Institutes of Technology and Lifelong Learning in Ireland

The Institutes of Technology (IoTs) were established in the early 1970's with a specific mission to provide vocational, third level education whilst also meeting the developmental needs of the regions in which they were located. From a low of 10% of school leavers participating in full time higher education in the early 1970's, Ireland now has one of the highest participation rates in the world with almost 60% of the school leaving cohort progressing to higher education, (O'Connell, *et* al, 2006). At present about half of the undergraduate (Level 5 and 6 on the EFQ) students registered in higher education institutions in Ireland are registered in Institutes of Technology.

Notwithstanding the success of Irish higher education in respect of full time, school leavers, the IoTs are currently strategically focusing on the needs of adult and part time learners. This emphasis has arisen as a result of a reappraisal of mission and strategy in the light of Ireland's poor performance in part time education, compared to the benchmark Northern European countries (see EU, 2008) by attempting to increase the provision of flexible learning opportunities in line with the IoT's long standing mission to provide vocational, higher education. To help achieve this aspect of their mission the IoTs have established a major flexible learning initiative to help build capacity within the IoTs to deliver flexible learning and externally to jointly promote part time learning opportunities .

The project 'Supported Flexible Learning' is funded jointly under the Higher Education Authority's Strategic Innovation Fund and the Institutes themselves. It consists of two main components *viz* the building of capacity within the IoT's to deliver flexible learning and the development of collaborative approaches to promoting lifelong learning.

Measurement of 'Supported Flexible Learning' Project Success

A key component of the project has been the establishment of a performance measurement system to determine to what extent, if any, the project results in a system wide change in delivery from fixed delivery methods (teaching aimed primarily at direct entry school leavers) to flexible delivery methods (teaching that meets the needs of adult, part time and lifelong learners). The indicators chosen are

- The number of part time and occasional higher education students in the Institutes of Technology

- The number of Special Purpose and Minor Awards registered for the Institutes of Technology
- The number of educational offerings on www.BlueBrick.ie; a portal designed specifically for the needs of lifelong and part time learners

and

- The number of staff trained in flexible delivery methods.

The performance measurement aspects of the project are described fully in Glynn *et al* (2010). Of particular relevance here is the use of Special Purpose and Minor awards from the National Framework of Qualifications.

The Irish National Framework of Qualifications and Embedded Awards

The Irish National Framework of Qualifications was established by an Act of Government in 1999. The framework was brought into effect between 2000 and 2003 (NQAI, 2003). The Irish framework is a 10 level framework with levels 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 being levels associated with higher education. Specifically level 6 equates to EQF level 5 while levels 7 and 8 relate to EFQ level 6. Irish NFQ levels 9 and 10 equate to Levels 7 and 8 respectively of the EFQ. For the purpose of this case study we are concerned with Level 6 on the Irish NFQ which equates to Level 5 on the EFQ and thus is defined for the purposes of the L5 project as SCHE.

The Irish NFQ consists of Major, Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards that can be made at levels 6 through 9. At Level 6 the Major Award is 'Higher Certificate' and requires the completion of 120 ECTS credits worth of study. Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards will always attract fewer credits than a Major Award subject to there being a minimum of 10 ECTS credits available in the award.

- **Minor** awards provide recognition for learners who achieve a range of learning outcomes, but not the specific combination of learning outcomes required for a major award. This recognition will have relevance in its own right. A Minor award will have learning outcomes that form part of those of a major award.
- **Special Purpose** awards are made for specific, relatively narrow, purposes — for example, the Safe Pass certification of competence in health and safety in the construction industry. A Special Purpose award may form part of a major, minor or supplemental award.
- **Supplemental** awards are for learning which is additional to a previous award. They could, for example, relate to updating and refreshing knowledge or skills, or to continuing professional development.

There has been relatively little use made of supplemental awards but, as will be shown below, the use of minor and special purpose awards has been significant.

The significance of Minor and Special Purpose Awards is that they were designed specifically with the needs of learners, rather than providers, in mind. Their use, therefore, by providers represents market awareness and a focus on the needs of learners.

Use of Special Purpose and Minor Awards

Figures 1a and 1b show the number of Special Purpose and Minor Awards registered with HETAC (Higher Education Training and Awards Council). For purposes of completeness Minor and Special Purposes awards at Levels 6 through to 9 have been included. In relation to SCHE it is the use of those awards at Level 6 that is of interest in this paper. It should be noted that a large Institute of Technology (Dublin Institute of Technology) makes awards in its own right and does not return information to HETAC. Whilst the Irish framework of qualifications was launched in 2003 it was not until 2007 that policy and criteria for the development of Special Purpose and Minor Awards became available to the IoTs as a result of the approval processes delegated from HETAC. The data shown therefore show the growth of the use of these awards from the beginning of their availability.

In summary, it is clear that there is growth in the system in the use of these awards. This suggests strongly that there is greater awareness of the potential of these awards to meet the needs of learners as originally envisaged when these awards were embedded in the framework as described above.

Figure 1a

(Data provided by Higher Education and Training Awards Council)

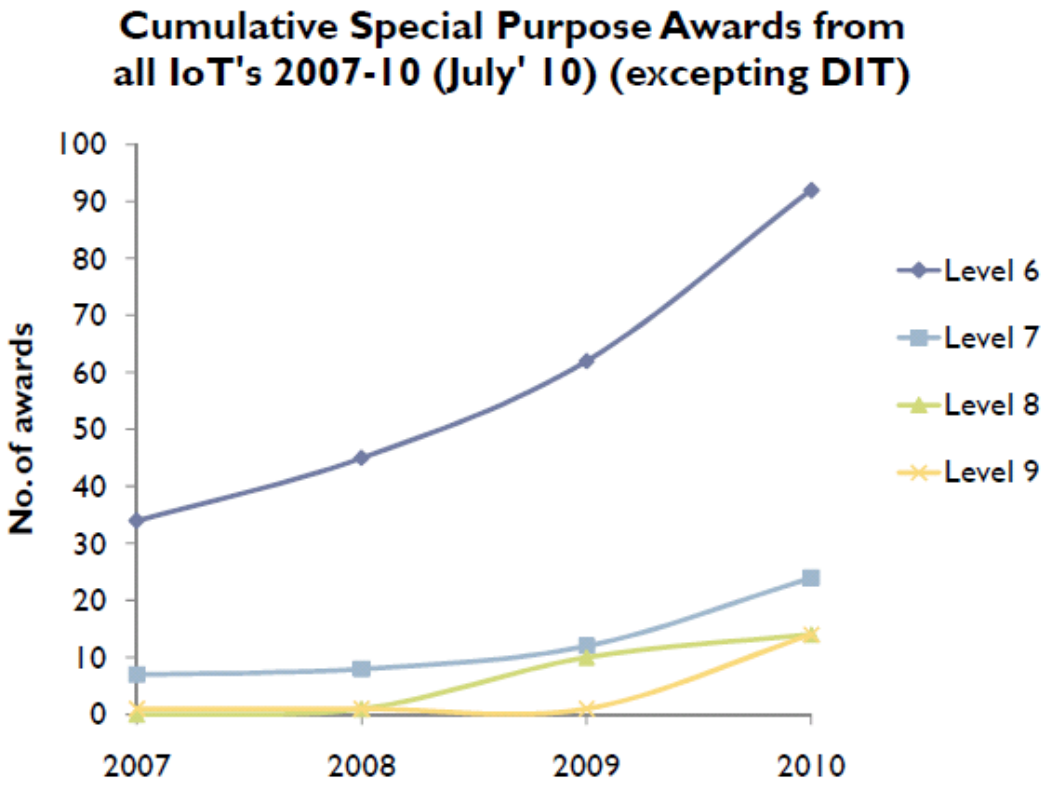
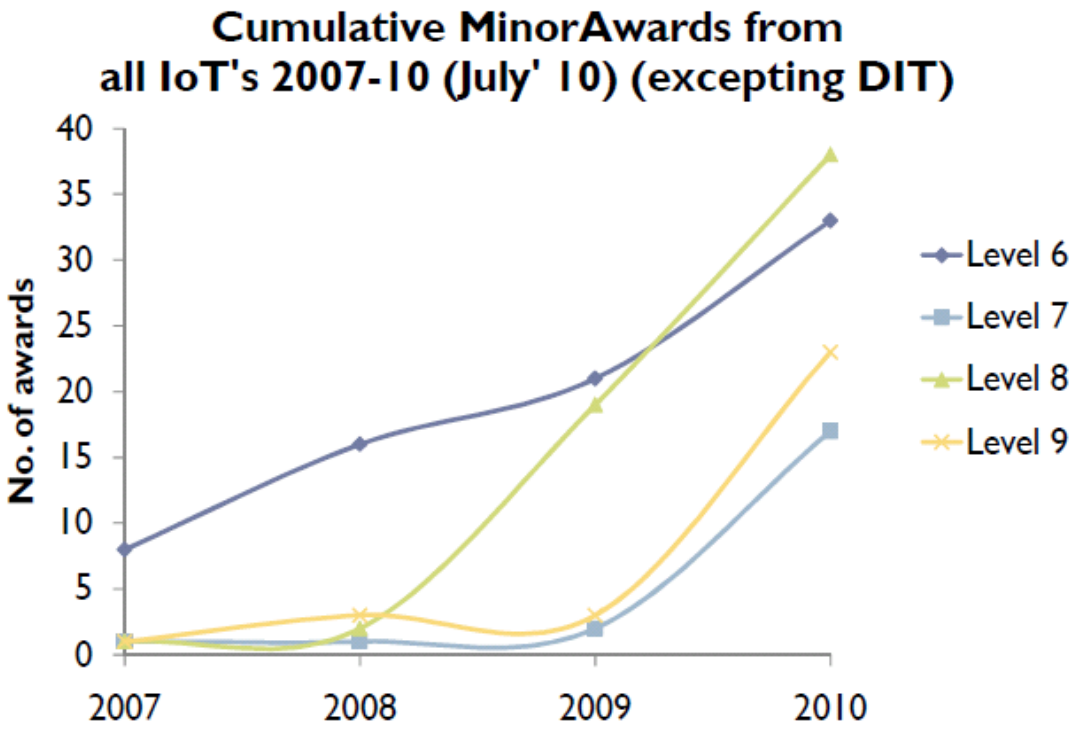


Figure 1b

(Data provided by Higher Education and Training Awards Council)



Conclusion

The question arises – does the increased use of embedded short course awards (in particular in SCHE) also coincide with an increase in the numbers of part time students and students studying by flexible learning methods? Yes is the answer. The Institutes of Technology have recorded a *c.* 5% increase in students registered as part time in the last year alone while numbers registered on distance and e-learning categories has increased by over 30% in the last year. The authors do not suggest that the use of embedded awards for short courses alone is responsible but the availability of these awards has undoubtedly increased the attractiveness of studying part time and pursuing lifelong learning. There are a great number of other factors relating to the economy, funding, student fees and organisational culture dictating uptake of lifelong learning opportunities (see Thorn *et al,* 2010) but it is clear that the framework of qualifications and the embedded awards has made it possible to conceive of a different approach to lifelong learning.

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5.2. The development and implementation of SCHE level 5 or HBO5 in the Flemish Community of Belgium with special attention to

quality assurance

Yves Beernaert

Introduction

The present case describes the activities carried out in Flanders in the implementation and development of SCHE level 5 of the EQF. It describes the different steps taken by the Flemish Ministry of Education, the different networks of education (public, private, provincial etc.-)and the NVAO (Nederlands – Vlaams AccreditatieOrgaan) [68]to start implementing the Flemish decree of 30 /. 04 / 2009 on SCHE level 5 or HBO 5.

Following the introduction of the three-cycle system within the framework of the Bologna process Flanders maintained its binary higher education system: on the one hand professional higher education and on the other academic higher education.

The Decree of the Flemish Parliament of 30 April 2009[69] concerning Secondary after Secondary and Higher Vocational Education was published in the Official Journal of Belgium on 20th July 2009. As a result of this decree and its publication, Flanders has now a short cycle within the first which is called "Hoger beroepsonderwijs" (HBO) or Higher Vocational Education. The abbreviation commonly used is HB0 5 as this short cycle higher education is situated at level 5 of the Flemish NQF [70]and at level 5 of the EQF.

HBO5 has its own specific final objective and is clearly positioned between secondary education and the bachelors as HBO 5 leads to an educational qualification at level 5 of the Flemish Qualification Framework (NQF). A student who successfully completes HBO5 is granted the officially recognized diploma of "gegradueerde" or Associate degree.

It has been decided that within HBO 5 new programmes can be created or that existing programmes can become HB05 after having been transformed into level 5. HBO 5 programmes can be organised and provided on the one hand by CVO (Centra voor VolwassenenOnderwijs or Centres for

[68] NVAO: (in Dutch: Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie) is the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders. The organisation was established by international treaty and it ensures the quality of higher education in the Netherlands and Flanders. NVAO independently ensures the quality of higher education in the Netherlands and Flanders by assessing and accrediting programmes and contributes to enhancing this quality. In addition, NVAO contributes to the increase of quality awareness within higher education and improving the position of higher education in the Netherlands and Flanders in the national and international context. See also: http://www.nvao.net/about-nvao

[69] Decreet van 30 april 2009 betreffende het secundair na secundair onderwijs en het hoger beroepsonderwijs: http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/edulex/database/document/document.asp?docid=14112

[70] Vlaamse Kwalificatiestructuur (Flemish NQF): http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/wetwijs/thema.asp?id=216&fid=1

Adult Education) and on the other hand by the "Hogescholen" or university colleges. They can also be set up jointly by CVO and university colleges.

Applications for transformation can be introduced for existing programmes provided by the CVO (Centres for adult education). This concerns programmes which in the past were set up and developed in the framework of the so-called Higher Education of Social Advancement.
Applications for transformation can also be introduced for HBO 5 programmes in nursing. At the moment secondary schools organise a post-secondary degree of nursing and these programmes can be transformed into HBO 5.

A pilot project to transform existing adult education into HBO 5 monitored by NVAO

To test how these transformations could be completed the Ministry of education invited, the NVAO to monitor and support the introduction of the new HBO 5 by setting up a pilot project, in cooperation with the pedagogical support services of the education networks. Five institutions were invited to join the pilot project: 4 CVOs and one nursing school.

NVAO accepted this responsibility for various reasons. First of all it strongly believes in the major added value of HBO5 to society. Secondly, NVAO was happy to see that all services and organisations concerned with HBO 5 had decided to join and work together on the implementation of this pilot in a spirit of quality management. This is considered to be a key element in quality and quality assurance. A third reason was that the whole pilot was based on transparency and robustness as to the possible implementation of HBO 5 through this pilot project.

The whole process of implementing the pilot project was closely monitored and followed-up by NVAO through all the different phases of this pilot project. The implementation of the pilot was also very well documented which resulted in a comprehensive report published in December 2010. This report is called "Leereffectenrapport proefproject HBO5" [71] or Report focusing on the lessons learnt through the pilot project HBO5. The present case study makes extensive use of this publication and of the contents of a workshop on the topic organised by the Ministry of Education and NVAO in Antwerp on 17 November 2010.

Key elements of the transformation

The report of the pilot points out that the transformation from an adult education programme to a higher education programme at SCHE level 5 is a major step and requires also major preparation. It is said to be a paradigm shift which is comparable to the implementation of the bachelor – master structure in the university colleges and the universities. Transforming and organising a new programme is not just a mere administrative matter or dealing with files, it also involves thorough changes to its contents.

[71] Leereffectenrapport proefproject HBO5": full text in Dutch to be downloaded on the following page: http://www.nvao.net/nieuws/2010/385

The NVAO drew the attention of the 5 institutions involved in the pilot to some key elements. The key change to be made by the 5 institutions concerned was the vital and crucial switch in vision and organisation from an institution looking at the programme it intends to organise not from the 'inside' but from the 'outside' . The start has to be the outside or surrounding world. NVAO insisted that the real societal relevance of HBO5 is to be found in the professional field that has to be intensively involved in the drafting of the learning outcomes (via the evaluation of the degree to which the competences are acquired) and of the contents of the programme, in recruiting of personnel and in implementing quality assurance. The professional field, NVAO stressed, was also to be involved in developing the forms of assessment which have to be congruent with the learning outcomes. Only at this stage can the professional field develop the different pedagogical tools with specific attention to dual learning environments. Thus the programme, the personnel and the infrastructure have to facilitate the acquisition of high quality practice-oriented LO.

This means that institutions transforming adult education programmes into HBO5 have to comply with very strict requirements. First of all they have to develop a vision which takes into account the objectives, the place and the specificity of HB05 in its societal context. Secondly the institution has to link this to a professional organisational development focusing on: middle management, HR management, QA, data collection, development of RPL procedures, individualized learning pathways and creative (digital) learning environments etc.

The objective of the monitoring and follow-up, set up by NVAO, was to support the five institutions to be able to comply with those strict requirements and to make the transformation from adult education programmes to SCHE level 5 programmes as smooth and efficient as possible.

The lessons learned from this project were listed earlier in the report. They will be useful to all adult education organisations (CVO) that will apply to transform some of their programmes into SCHE level 5 or HBO 5 programmes. The "Leereffectenrapport" is not meant to be a scenario to bring about a perfect transformation from an adult education programme to a HBO5 programme. The objective of the report is to make an inventory of the most important learning aspects and lessons that can be learned from the pilot and which may be useful to future applicants. It should be clear that a CVO does not have to transform all its programmes into HBO5. It will select those which are most relevant for the labour market in close cooperation with the professional field.

Phases of the pilot project

The pilot project consisted of three phases:

- The submission and selection of transformation application
- The process evaluation
- The product evaluation

a) Submission and selection of transformation applications

To have a concrete idea of the implementation of the pilot phase the different phases of the pilot project are listed in terms of the activities developed. This gives the interested reader an idea of

the time and the efforts that have to be invested in such a pilot project. The process started with initial meeting (5/05/2010) in Brussels where NVAO and representatives of education networks met to agree on the implementation of the pilot. On 15/05/2010 the draft transformation applications were submitted by institutions to NVAO. On 1/07/2010 the start-up meeting of the committee dealing with the applications and the first evaluation of the applications took place, monitored by NVAO. On 5/07/2010 the applications were sent to an evaluation committee. M embers filled in an evaluation document prepared by NVAO. The committee members had to send their reports to NVAO and an overview was made by NVAO of all comments.

On 30/08/2010 the committee meeting took place to discuss the results of the evaluation and on 9/09/2010 clarifying meetings between committee and representatives of the 5 pilot institutions. Based on this a decision was taken. Moreover, a test visit by the committee to one of the pilot institutions was organised (17/09/2010). The final reports were discussed by the committee on 6/10/2010 and on 13/10/2010 the reports were sent to the pilot institutions. They could react if necessary. On 20/10/2010 the final evaluation meeting took place when the committee made an inventory of the findings subsequent to the evaluation of all the applications.

b) The process evaluation

The NVAO developed a number of activities to support the pilot institutions in their process of transforming adult education programmes into HBO5 programmes.

A training day (30/03/2010) was organised concerning the drafting of transformation applications. Participants were representatives of the education networks plus representatives of the 5 institutions. Key elements linked to the transformation from adult education to HBO5 were highlighted and discussed. Specificity of HBO5 was focused upon in all its aspects mentioned earlier under key aspects for the transformation. Participants were acquainted with the expectations of the Decree of 30/04/2009 on HBO5 and Se-n-Se[72]. They received practical tips on how to draft a transformation application etc.

During the initial meeting (27/04/2010) the objectives and functioning of the pilot project, time planning, deadlines etc. were explained as well as the organisation and communication of the monitoring. Information on the composition and functioning of the evaluation committee was given as well as on the support that could be provided to the pilot project. Clear agreements were made in order to enhance transparency and openness.

The five pilot institutions then had to draft the transformation application. They did it in different ways and found it very difficult.

An intermediate evaluation meeting was organised to discuss the experiences as to the drafting of the transformation applications. The NVAO had made a quick scan of the applications received and gave feedback. Another meeting was organised where the evaluation committee had a

[72] Higher Vocational Education at level 5 and Secondary after Secondary education

discussion of one hour with representatives of each of the 5 pilot institutions based on their application.

One of the pilot institutions was visited. A visit to the pilot institutions is typically only scheduled when the information in the application is insufficient.

Lastly, an evaluation report was sent to each of the 5 pilot institutions. They were used for internal discussions.

c) Product evaluation

The product evaluation focused on the different key elements that had to be described in the transformation application:

- The intended learning outcomes of the programme to be developed.
- The contents of the programme itself:
    - The professional focus: e.g. contacts with the professional field etc.
    - The relations between the intended learning outcomes and the programme: focus on competence learning, dual learning etc.
    - Consistency of the programme: e.g. use of modular system, portfolio
    - Access: e.g. flexibility in access, RPL, remedial support to certain students etc.
    - Scope of the programme:
        - 120 ECTs credits for 4 CVO
        - For the nursing school it was expressed in contact hours: 4600 according to the EU directive for nursing
    - Transition to other (degree) courses
- Personnel
    - Quality of the personnel: e.g. in-service training policy, degrees of the lecturers, scientific expertise etc.
    - Quantity of personnel: part-time (combined with other job), full-time etc.
- Infrastructure
    - Equipment, auditoria, library, other facilities etc.
    - Student counselling services, career advice services etc.
- Internal Quality Assurance
    - Quality system used: PDCA circle etc.
    - Involvement of staff, students, alumni and the professional field
- Assessment
    - Policy to assess students: evaluation methods and forms used
    - Final assessment (end of studies) assessing competences achieved

General conclusions of the pilot project to transform CVO into HBO5

- The pilot project demonstrated the great potential of adult education institutions (CVOs) to become HBO 5 (SCHE level 5) institutions. The network of CVO institutions also holds great potential.

- This method of transforming can be mainstreamed in the near future to all CVO programmes if the institutions are interested in getting involved in cooperation with the professional field concerned.

- It is important to the paradigm shift from the inside to the outside look highlighted earlier in this text.

- Institutions that decide to move to HBO5 must be very clear about the professional profile of their alumni.

- Close cooperation with the professional field or sectors is the key to a successful transformation.

- The method to transform adult education into HBO5 proves to be very efficient and rewarding for all those involved.

- A successful transformation into HBO5 enables the institutions to position this diploma of "gegradueerde" very clearly in the European higher education area.

- The process of transformation will give much more societal recognition to these transformed adult education programmes and will contribute to enhancing lifelong learning.

References

NVAO (2010). *Leereffectenrapport proefproject HBO5.* : full text in Dutch to be downloaded on the following page: http://www.nvao.net/nieuws/2010/385

Decreet van 30 April 2009 betreffende het secundair na secundair onderwijs en het hoger beroepsonderwijs:
http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/edulex/database/document/document.asp?docid=14112

Vlaamse Kwalificatiestructuur (Flemish NQF):
http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/wetwijs/thema.asp?id=216&fid=1

5.3. The ımportance of level 5/the Associate degree for wıdenıng access to hıgher educatıon ın Turkey

An Overview of Higher Education in Turkey

The higher education system in Turkey covers all the institutions implementing at least two-year programmes after secondary education. Higher education institutions can be public universities (devlet üniversiteleri), non-profit foundation universities (vakıf üniversiteleri) and foundation post-secondary vocational education and training (VET) schools (vakıf meslek yüksekokulları) that are not attached to any university. In addition, there are military and police academies which are called higher education institutions (diğer yükseköğretim kurumları).

In 1981, the higher education system in Turkey was centralised, with all higher education institutions becoming the responsibility of the Council of Higher Education (Yükseköğretim Kurulu). According to the Higher Education Law (No. 2547) all post-secondary education of at least four half years (semesters) or more are accepted as higher education. Higher education institutions consist of at least some of the following: faculties leading to a four-year bachelor's degree, graduate schools, post-secondary schools (vocationally oriented two-or four year schools), conservatories, departments and research centres.

Currently, there are 156 universities in Turkey. Among these 102 of them are public and 54 non-profit foundation universities. There are also 9 foundation post-secondary VET schools and 37 other higher education institutions.

In 2010, the total number of higher education students (including distance education) is almost three and a half million (3 529 334). 3 311 990 of them are in the public universities; 178 264 of them are in the non-profit foundation universities; 3565 in the foundation post-secondary VET schools and 35515 in the other higher education institutions. Public and non-profit foundation universities have 94% and 5% of higher education students, respectively. The number of distance education students is 1557 217. Therefore, about 44% of higher education students continue their studies via distance education and 56% of that number via face-to-face education. The number of foreign students in Turkish higher education system is only 21 948.

There are 105 427 university lecturers in Turkey. 91 524 of them are in the public universities; 10 981 in the non-profit foundation universities; 177 in the foundation post-secondary VET schools and 2745 in the other higher education institutions. Public and non-profit foundation universities have nearly 86% and 10% of higher education university lecturers, respectively.

Since 1982, the Open Education Faculty of Anadolu University in Eskişehir has been offering both associate degree and bachelor's degree programmes via distance education. Today, in addition to the Open Education Faculty of Anadolu University, many other higher education institutions offer distance education programmes, a majority of which are provided online.

Turkey's total higher education gross enrolment rate (GER)[73] is 53,4%. Distance education GER is 25% and face-to-face education GER is 28,4%. Moreover, GER for associate degrees and bachelor degrees are 16,7% and 36,7%, respectively if distance education is included. On the other hand, these rates are 9,9% and 18,5% when distance education is excluded.

An Overview of Post-Secondary VET Higher Education in Turkey

In Turkey, the two-year post-secondary schools are called post-secondary VET schools (meslek yüksekokulları) and these give completely vocationally oriented education lead to an associate degree. These schools are higher education institutions aimed at training manpower for specific occupations.

Currently, there are 660 post-secondary VET schools and 586 of them are public university post-secondary VET schools; 34 of them are non-profit foundation university post-secondary VET schools; 9 of them are foundation post-secondary VET schools and 31 of them are other post-secondary VET schools. Almost 88% of post-secondary VET schools are public university post-secondary VET schools.

The total number of post-secondary VET school students is 1 042 350. About 41% of them are distance education post-secondary VET school students and 59% of them are face-to-face education post-secondary VET school students.

The number of post-secondary VET students is 613 077 (including distance education) and 429 273 excluding distance education. The majority, 559,496 of them, are public university post-secondary VET school students; 30,894 are non-profit foundation university post-secondary VET school students, 3565 foundation post-secondary school students and 19,122 other post-secondary VET school students. Ninety one % of post-secondary VET school students study in public universities but 5% of that number is in non-profit foundation universities. Almost 30% of higher education students are post-secondary VET school students whether distance education students are included or not.

In total there are 12160 lecturers in post-secondary VET schools. Almost 12% of higher education lecturers work in post-secondary VET schools (MYO). 9209 of them are in public university post-secondary VET schools; 1235 of them are in non-profit foundation university post-secondary VET schools; 169 of them are in foundation post-secondary VET schools and 1547 of them are in other post-secondary VET schools. Therefore, 76% of post-secondary VET schools academic staff work in public universities but 10% of them work in non-profit foundation universities.

The total quota of post-secondary VET schools is 308 980 and the number of these placed in post-secondary VET schools is 232 939 for this year if distance education is excluded[74]. Almost 56% of new students were placed in post-secondary VET schools without an examination and 60% of them graduated from vocational and technical high schools.

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73 Higher education gross enrollment rate (GRE) is expressed as a percentage of the total number of pupils (excluding graduate pupils) enrolled in higher education, regardless of age, to the population of the five-year age group (18-22) (Source: Turkish Statistical Institute and Council of Higher Education).

74 Student Selection and Placement Centre will announce the number of new students registered in post-secondary VET schools in the coming months.

There are 6014 programmes in postsecondary VET. There are 200 types of programmes. Associate degree programmes such as Accounting, Computer Programming, Business Management, Electric and Office Management, Marketing, Foreign Trade, Machine and Hospitality Services have the majority of post-secondary VET students.

In terms of The European Qualification Framework (EQF), higher education has been accepted at levels 5,6,7,8. Post-secondary VET schools education (associate degree) is defined as short cycle higher education (SCHE) in Turkey which corresponds to level 5 of the EQF.

General Conditions and Problems of Post-Secondary VET Education in Turkey

As stated above post-secondary VET education has formed a big part of higher education in Turkey since **nearly one-third of higher education students are post-secondary VET school students**. Currently, there are some criticisms concerning post-secondary VET schools but the basic one is that there is insufficient training manpower to meet the expectations of the business world. Unfortunately, post-secondary VET education has yet to fulfil the demands of the business world.

From the first half of the 1980s, some pilot projects tried to improve post-secondary VET schools. But those projects could not match with the increasing number of post-secondary VET schools. Also, a continuous and permanent system could not be set up in post-secondary VET schools where pilot projects were applied. Hence the tradition for vocational higher education could not be generated during those years.

In brief, the problems of post-secondary VET schools in Turkey are,

- Failure to provide practical training at the level of professional standards,
- Lack of motivation of students and academic staff,
- Lack of respect for the profession in society.

Post-secondary VET education is organised at national level by the Council of Higher Education, working for reorganisation of post-secondary VET education in Turkey since 2008. Some changes in legislation have been prepared but these proposals have yet to be enacted. Recent changes in legislation concern basically the following topics: new regulations for workplace training (during the workplace training, at least 1/3 of the minimum wage is given to students as a salary and these fees are paid by the organisation or institutions giving workplace training); students are insured against work accidents and occupational diseases and the cost of insurance is covered by the post-secondary VET school; a higher transition capacity of post-secondary VET school students to degree studies (increased about 10%). Although the duration of education will remain the same in post-secondary VET education (2+2 semesters = 4 semesters), Turkey will introduce the 6 semesters (3+3) structure in an attempt to integrate theory, practice and workplace training more efficiently and also in order to enhance skills and competences.

Currently, the link between post-secondary VET education and the business world is very weak and there are no links in some areas. This situation leads to a mismatch between labour force supply and demand, showing the challenge of finding qualified manpower for the business world in spite of high unemployment. The disconnection between the post-secondary VET education system and the

business world has prevented the training of the labour force in adequate quality, variety and number. A basic vulnerability observed in the post-secondary VET education system is that the labour force has not been able to find adequate skills. On the other hand, according to young people, inadequate and incompatible post-secondary VET education system, lack of jobs and lack of information about jobs are the main reasons for unemployment.

According to the EQF, qualification consists of three components called learning outcomes: knowledge, skill and competence. The main problem arises in gaining skills in Turkey since, in general, there is not enough workshop, laboratory and workplace training in post-secondary VET schools to gain skills for occupations. Generally, there is no inadequacy in terms of theoretical knowledge. However, when adequate skills are not acquired, weaknesses in competence emerge since competence is defined as a combined application of knowledge and skills to work.

Today, Turkey's young population and demographic characteristics offer an important potential advantage. Annually, the working age population will be expected to increase by more than 800 000 in the following ten years. The ratio of the working age population to the total population will increase to 69.3% in 2020 and then start to fall in Turkey according to UN projections and this situation is defined as a window of opportunity. In order to benefit from this opportunity, Turkey should reorganize its post-secondary VET education system to generate a sufficient number and quality of human capital. If the younger population is not able to find adequate training courses and jobs, the risk will be higher than today since employment in 2020 will be lower than today in EU countries and most new jobs will need high qualifications since jobs in Europe will become more knowledge and skills intensive[75]. In order to compete with rivals in EU countries, the education system will have to make sure that the learning outcomes achieved in SCHE meet those of other European countries.

75 Source: CEDEFOP.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1. Conclusions

The development of SCHE over the past seven years shows that SCHE, as an intermediate degree within the first degree of higher education, has integrated itself fully into all major developments in higher education in Europe. It is clearly the missing link between secondary and higher education and for many learners it is the missing link that enables them to access higher education, even without a secondary school degree. Thus the development of SCHE is a major element in the chain and continuum of lifelong learning. The development also shows that all the countries concerned are working at positioning SCHE at level 5 of the EQF and at the equivalent level of their national framework even if in several cases the referencing is still under way.

It is also important to point out that some countries which do not yet have SCHE, are considering developing SCHE at level 5 of the EQF in the near future. Interesting is the fact that some countries have not developed SCHE at level 5 but have developed vocational higher education & training at level 5, not leading to a degree or a higher education qualification. It is worth pointing out that some countries are developing two parallel level 5 systems: on the one hand SCHE as an intermediate degree within the first degree of higher education and on the other hand higher vocational education and training. In this way a new binary system is created and it will be interesting to follow developments in the near future. Finally, it is worth noticing that in some countries universities are organising higher vocational education and training at level 4 of the EQF with or without also organising level 5. One may thus wonder how those countries with only level 4 will develop level 5 if they do so. This is another element which will require further attention in the future.

The present study also clearly shows that SCHE is strongly complying with all major developments and demands of the Bologna reform. SCHE has been integrated into the Bologna architecture in many countries. SCHE is strongly embedded in higher education. It is part of the higher education legislation even if special decrees apply to SCHE. Legislation covers all aspects of SCHE, with particular attention applied to the progression of SCHE towards further degree courses. The demands as to the qualifications of the lecturers are quite diverse, ranging from lecturers holding a doctorate to lecturers holding a bachelor degree. Although QA is high on the agenda in most countries, a few countries still have to make progress to comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area of ENQA.

Cooperation with industry and other social partners is highly valued in SCHE across the whole of Europe. In some countries it is even compulsory. This is reflected in the involvement of industry in all aspects of SCHE. Thus lecturers with practical experience in industry are greatly valued in all countries providing SCHE. Similarly, internships for students and dual learning pathways are of great importance in SCHE. Employability is taken very seriously in SCHE and is enhanced in many ways though close cooperation with industry.

Most countries are using ECTS, sometimes alongside their own credit system, and the Diploma Supplement is widely used. Students and lecturers in SCHE are involved in international mobility and in

European and international cooperation projects but in a limited way. Due to the shorter duration of the studies and due to the specific profile of the students, mobility still needs to be stimulated and should be enhanced through greater flexibility in the sub-programmes of the LLL programme. One of the major obstacles is also the small size of institutions. It is also to be regretted that multilingualism receives little attention in SCHE in many countries.

Active citizenship and social commitment are high on the agenda in many institutions providing SCHE across Europe. However, although the majority of the countries having SCHE state that socially disadvantaged students are probably more present in SCHE, none of the countries have data to support the participation of those students in SCHE. Many countries and institutions also do not have exact data on the employability of their graduates. More attention should be given in the future, not only to the collection of data concerning disadvantaged students but also to the development and implementation of diversity policies in SCHE.

SCHE has strengthened its position over the past 7 years in higher education and is regarded as bringing a real added value to higher education in Europe. New developments are still taking place as to SCHE in Europe and it will be important to follow-up these developments in Europe in the years ahead, especially in those countries introducing SCHE at the moment.

6.2. Recommendations

6.2.1. Recommendations to the Commission

Concerning the development of Level 5 SCHE

- EURASHE recommends that the Commission organise a Cluster or Working Group focusing on the development and implementation of SCHE level 5 studies. It should be composed of high level civil servants in charge of SCHE in their respective countries. Observers should also be invited from EURASHE and EUA, ESU, Business Europe and other stakeholders involved in the Bologna process to attend the meetings.

  This cluster or WG would involve countries that have had SCHE level 5 for many years, countries that have just introduced it and countries that intend to organise SCHE level 5. The Cluster or WG could focus on the problems met while developing and implementing SCHE. The cluster or WG should focus on examples of good practice in various areas of SCHE such as cooperation with industry, QA and accreditation, employability, multilingualism etc.

- EURASHE recommends that this Cluster on SCHE would look especially into the issue of the great variety and diversity of titles, diplomas and/ or certificates which are used in SCHE. This great variety is an obstacle to readability and user-friendliness. It is also a major obstacle to European and international (professional) mobility.

EURASHE reiterates its recommendation made in the 2003 report that the Commission should put on the agenda of the cluster of WG the use of one title in English **– e.g. Associate Degree -** for students graduating from SCHE provided they earn at least 120 ECTS credits. Using one title would enhance the readability not only in a European but also in an international context.

The cluster could also focus on how the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Europe, as proposed by ENQA could be better implemented in SCHE.

Concerning the EQF and the QF-EHEA

- EURASHE recommends defining the levels of higher education Europe-wide with specific attention to SCHE level 5 promoting the use of the European meta-frameworks viz. EQF and the QF-EHEA. ;

- EURASHE recommends developing a translation tool between the EQF and the new ISCED 2011 classification to create transparency on the levels of higher education not only in Europe but worldwide.

Concerning Internationalisation and mobility

- EURASHE recommends **more flexibility** to be used to define the different target audiences for the sub-programmes of the LLL-programme. Thus, some mature students are not old enough to participate in Grundtvig mobility but cannot meet the standards for Erasmus mobility as they cannot leave their job for a long time;

- EURASHE recommends introducing more possibilities for **short-time mobility** for SCHE students. Especially the Intensive Programmes under Erasmus should be promoted in SCHE institutions. This will no doubt enhance the social dimension of mobility in higher education. Therefore widespread information should be given on the existence of tools for mobility as well as the different possibilities for mobility.

6.2.2. Recommendations to the national authorities

Concerning lifelong learning

- EURASHE recommends that national authorities should promote SCHE as a way to enhance lifelong learning, to widen access to higher education, to enhance the social dimension in higher education and to reach the objectives of ET 2020. In this respect national authorities should see it as their responsibility to continue funding SCHE and even see this as a priority area;

- EURASHE recommends that in order to enhance progression from SCHE-studies to bachelor degree studies and to stress that SCHE-studies are the intermediate or the short cycle within or linked to the first cycle, articulation between SCHE-programmes and bachelor programmes should be made compulsory;

- EURASHE recommends that national authorities promote the recognition of prior learning, whether formal, informal or non-formal, by all institutions providing higher education. Special attention should be given to the recognition of skills acquired in non-tertiary or non-higher post-secondary vocational or professional programmes. Therefore EURASHE recommends national authorities and HEIs and other institutions providing SCHE to work together to create accessible, flexible and transparent progression routes in a lifelong learning perspective;

- It would be useful to organise seminars and or in-service training for staff in SCHE to explain the use of these descriptors in order to define the relevant level of their courses;

- EURASHE recommends that national authorities take more explicit measures to promote multilingualism in SCHE institutions especially by giving language courses or by teaching certain subjects in foreign languages.

Concerning quality assurance and accreditation

- EURASHE recommends that internal and external quality assurance should be applied in all SCHE institutions across Europe.

- EURASHE recommends making internal quality assurance procedures compulsory taking into account the mission and capacities of the institutions;

- EURASHE recommends that accreditation be closely linked to QA and should be carried out by independent agencies.

- EURASHE therefore recommends establishing quality assurance and accreditation agencies or enhancing the existing ones along the lines of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Europe as proposed by ENQA;

- EURASHE recommends imposing the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Europe as proposed by ENQA on all institutions in higher education also on institutions providing SCHE.

Concerning social cohesion and equity

- EURASHE recommends that as SCHE attracts many disadvantaged and non-traditional students it is important that countries stimulate SCHE institution to improve the collection of data of student;

- EURASHE also recommends that ministries invite SCHE institutions to develop or strengthen diversity policies which give specific focus to the various types of students in SCHE.

Concerning internationalisation

- EURASHE strongly recommends that all countries should work with ECTS credits. This would no doubt facilitate mobility of the SCHE students and cooperation between the SCHE institutions or departments.

6.2.3. Recommendations to the institutions

Concerning internationalisation

- EURASHE recommends that SCHE institutions make more **efforts to develop internationalisation** strategies for their SCHE students taking into account the specificity of those students;

  EURASHE recommends setting up more structural cooperation between institutions providing SCHE and especially between smaller institutions and HEI's that already have a lot of experience in organizing international mobility for students.

Concerning internal quality assurance

- **EURASHE recommends that all institutions providing SCHE should implement internal quality assurance along the lines of** the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Europe;

- EURASHE recommends the institutions to make more efforts concerning data collection and processing on the social status of their students but also on the progression of their students, the drop-out rates and on the employability.

Concerning social cohesion and equity

- EURASHE recommends the use of student-centred learning methods especially in short cycle higher education in accordance to the specific mission of institutions providing SCHE.

6.2.4. Recommendations from the researchers to EURASHE

- The experts recommend that EURASHE should keep track of the developments which are taking place in SCHE level 5 in the months and years ahead. EURASHE is also advised to keep track of the developments in SCHE in the other European countries (such as the members of

the CIS) not covered by the present study. EURASHE is finally advised to keep track of developments in other continents in SCHE such as especially the USA, Canada and Australia. EURASHE should use to this effect the appropriate European funding made available for cooperation between Europe and the above mentioned countries;

- They recommend that EURASHE pays particular attention during their annual international conference to international cooperation between SCHE Institutions. EURASHE is advised to apply for Erasmus funding to organise a special training session for representative of SCHE to be trained to enhance internationalisation in their institution;
- They recommend EURASHE should update the present report in five years' time when most of the European countries will be working with their new NQF;
- They recommend EURASHE should create a database with contacts at ministries responsible for SCHE in the Bologna countries and also a list of institutions providing SCHE that are willing to contribute to further studies.

Part II: Country chapters

1. Austria

Introduction to higher education in Austria

Higher education in Austria [76] is offered at public universities, at universities of applied sciences, private universities (after accreditation) and at University Colleges of Teacher Education Moreover, there are a number of educational institutions which offer university-type study programmes. The three-tier system was introduced in Austrian universities (Universitäten) in 1999.

Students who successfully pursue university studies are awarded the academic degrees below. A distinction is made between regular and non-regular courses.

For regular study programmes a Diploma (240 to 360 ECTS credits), Bachelor (minimum of 180 ECTS credits), Masters (following the Bachelor, minimum of 120 ECTS credits), Doctorate/PhD (following the Masters or Diploma, minimum of 3 years)can be awarded.

Non-regular study programmes are: University programmes ending with an international Master's degree (e.g. Master of Business Administration, MBA), University programmes ending with the designation "Akademische/r" … (minimum of 60 ECTS credits).

Universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschule) study programmes awarding a diploma (240 to 300 ECTS credits), Bachelor (minimum of 180 ECTS credits) and a Masters (following the Bachelor, 60 to 120 ECTS credits), similar to the system at universities. Universities of applied sciences graduates may enroll in doctoral programmes at universities. The paramedical and midwifery academies that used to be post-secondary three-year studies have been transferred, to a large extent, to university of applied sciences programmes.

Fourteen **university colleges of teacher education in Austria** provide primary, secondary and special needs school teacher training. The Teacher Education Act 2005 formed the basis for the conversion of the university colleges of teacher education in Austria into academic institutions for teaching professions. An independent profession-related bachelor programme has been available to students since 2007[77].

In 1999, the University Accreditation Act was enacted which allows private institutions to obtain accreditation as a Private University by the Accreditation Council which works under the supervision of the Ministry. At private universities, study programmes can be offered either in accordance with state

[76] Largely taken from Eurybase: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_AT_EN.pdf
[77] http://www.educations.com/University_Colleges_of_Teacher_Education_in_Austria__d3788.html

programmes and degrees, or without reference to them[78]. The curricula of the Austrian private universities, as well as the academic degrees awarded by them, differ from university to university[79].

Admission to universities of applied sciences and universities requires a Reifeprüfungszeugnis or a Reife- und Diplomprüfungszeugnis from a secondary high school, or alternatively a Berufsreifeprüfungszeugnis or a Studienberechtigungszeugnis, the latter being valid for a given field of studies. A relevant professional qualification together with some additional qualification in general subjects may also give access to universities of applied sciences. Depending on the programme chosen, supplementary examinations may be required.

Austrians and students from EU countries currently pay no tuition fees.

Post-secondary non-tertiary education

Although there is no Short Cycle Higher Education in Austria, there is post-secondary non-tertiary education at ISCED level 4.

Sometimes this ISCED level 4 only covers the final year of a programme offered at some institutions, such as training at *Berufsbildende höhere Schulen* (higher level technical and vocational schools), *Lehranstalten für Kindergartenpädagogik* (training schools for kindergarten teachers) and at *Lehranstalten für Sozialpädagogik* (training schools for ?) as well as the Kollegs ? at these institutions.

There are also educational institutions for clinical assistants *(Schulen für den medizinisch-technischen Fachdienst)* that provide vocational training and entitle their graduates to work as clinical assistants *(Diplomierte medizinisch-technische Fachkraft)*. The programme is for thirty months and is offered at five sites in Austria. Theoretical education takes place at schoolandpractical training at hospitals and other institutions. The minimum age for training is 17 years.

Post-secondary education also exists in private colleges. Those private institutions would like to become SCHE.

The Austrian NQF (sources[80] and [81])

All Austrian national qualifications will be included in the eight-level national structure by 2012/2013. Qualifications at levels 1-5 from all sectors of education and training will be referenced according to the same set of level descriptors. At levels 6-8 two sets of level descriptors will be used, allowing academically and vocationally oriented qualifications to coexist.

The report on the discussions concerning the introduction of a NQF[82] suggests (with a question mark) that level 5 of the Austrian NQF could be the *Berufsbildende höhere Schulen* (BHS or secondary

[78] http://www.euroeducation.net/prof/ausco.htm
[79] http://www.educations.com/Private_Universities_in_Austria__d3787.html
[80] Information is taken from: Cedefop: Developments in national qualifications frameworks in Europe, 2010: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6108_en.pdf
[81] Entwicklung eines Nationalen Qualifikationsrahmens für Österreich - Vertiefende Analysen, 2007 Schneeberger (ibw) : p 15 ; http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/15833/nqr_analyse_08.pdf
[82] Information on the BHs is taken from Eurybase:

technical and similar vocational colleges). BHS schools have the task of imparting a higher level of general and specialist education, qualifying students for direct entry into higher-level professions in the areas of technology, trade, commerce, education and service industries, and at the same time of giving access to university studies (*Allgemeine Universitätsreife*).

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/AT_EN.pdf

2. Belgium

Education in Belgium is the remit of the three communities: the Flemish Community, the French Community and the German speaking Community. As a result, the education system can differ in each of the three communities.

2.1. The Flemish Community of Belgium

Higher education in Flanders

Until recently the Flemish higher-education system consisted only of university colleges, universities and 5 associations, i.e., institutional cooperation between one university and one or several university colleges. A new Higher Education Reform Act, adopted by the Flemish Parliament on April 4, 2003, introduced the three-tiered degree structure of bachelor-master-doctor. This Act excluded existing vocational qualifications positioned at the crossroads of secondary vocational education, adult education and higher education. However, on April 30, 2009 two Acts were passed simultaneously: the one introducing the Flemish Qualification Framework with 8 levels, and the other introducing short cycle higher education, HBO5[83] (placed at level 5 of the EQF for LLL and the NQF) and Se-n-Se[84] (at level 4 of the EQF for LLL and the NQF). The latter programmes are not regarded as higher education. At present the following types of programmes are organised in Flemish higher education: The short cycle programmes leading to an Associate degree (graduaat) and offered by centres for adult education, university colleges and one programme offered by secondary schools, Professional Bachelor's programmes, Academic Bachelor's programmes offered by universities and university colleges, Master programmes that are offered by universities and university colleges and promotions to the degree of Doctor.

The higher education legislation regards the professional and academic Bachelors to be at the same level (level 6) and both the professional and academic Bachelor's programmes consist of 180 ECTS, although it makes a distinction in orientation; the former is more labour market oriented and the latter is more focused towards research (Higher education act 2003). This distinction is not made for the Master's programmes as they are all considered to be focussed towards research. All university colleges are associated to a university where only academic programmes are offered. The universities are also the only higher education institutions that can grant doctoral degrees.

For further in-depth studies students can follow Advanced Bachelor studies at university colleges or Advanced Master programmes at universities.

All accredited higher education institutions are subsidised by the Flemish government. There are as well publicly run higher education institutions (organised by the state and the local authorities) as recognised privately run higher education institutions. The same legislation applies to all these

[83] Hogerberoepsonderwijs (HBO5) (asscoiate degree programmes level 5)
[84] Secundair na secundair (advanced secondary education)

institutions and students also pay the same very low means -related and credit-related tuition fees. There are higher tuition fees for some post-graduate programmes.

The NQF for Flanders

Simultaneously with the act on HBO5 and Se-n-Se the act introducing the Flemish qualification framework was introduced (decreet betreffende de kwalificatiestructuur). The main objective of the qualification structure is to make qualifications transparent, so that relevant stakeholders in education (students, pupils and providers) and in the labour market (social partners) 'can communicate about qualifications and the associated competences'.

It consists of eight levels and the descriptor for level five in the Flemish qualification framework is in line with both the descriptor for level five of the EQF for LLL and the descriptor for the short cycle within the first cycle of the overarching qualifications framework of the European Higher Education Area. In both acts a clear distinction is made between levels four and five. HBO5 studies lead to the qualification of "graduaat", translated in English as "associate degree". It is an integrated framework for professional qualifications and educational qualifications at all levels, including educational qualifications of higher education[85].

For all professional qualifications (such as HBO5) a procedure has been laid down in the above mentioned act. The SERV[86] proposes competence profiles linked to the descriptors to be recognised by the relevant services of the Flemish government. The advice for recognition and the proposal for classification are then submitted to the Minister responsible for Training and to the Minister who is responsible for the qualification. When the proposal has been accepted De the relevant services of the Flemish government will register the recognised professional qualification with the expected competences in a database. The educational qualification can only be acquired through education and training and can only be awarded by institutions that are accredited by the Flemish government.

The referencing report to the EQF for LLL is being prepared at present and is expected to be ready in 2011.

Organisation of SCHE

As mentioned before HBO5 or SHE has only been introduced in the Flemish Community of Belgium very recently with the act of 30 April, 2009 (decreet betreffende het secundair na secundair en het hoger beroepsonderwijs in Vlaanderen, 30 april 2009). At present HBO5 encompasses mainly the former HOSP programmes, known as Higher Education for Social Promotion, that were offered in adult education centres. Although the HOSP "graduaat" programs theoretically had the same civil effect on the labour market as the three year "Professional Bachelor's" programmes in the university colleges, the HOSP programs were more practically oriented while the programs at the university colleges put more focus on theoretical knowledge. The new act now makes a clear distinction between the Professional Bachelor's programmes and HBO5 in terms of competences. The act also deals with the organisation of HBO5, entrance requirements, fields of study, quality assurance and accreditation, the transition from HBO5 studies to degree studies, the institutions where SCHE is organised and tuition

[85] CEDEFOP (2010). *The development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe*
[86] Sociaal Economische Raad voor Vlaanderen - Flemish socio-economic council

fees for HBO5. A new act (onderwijsdecreet XX) has been adopted recently. It makes very minor amendments to the decree of April 30, 2009.

HBO5 is at present organised by the state and by public education providers. However, the act also allows and encourages cooperation with other stakeholders. It is taught in centres for adult education, in university colleges and only one programme (nursing) also in secondary schools. It is also state funded.

According to the act on HBO5 and Se-n-Se, the Flemish HBO5 training programmes cover either a minimum of 90 ECTS credit points or a maximum of 120 ECTS credit points. They offer a short professional education not linked to previous studies and are offered as well on a full-time as a part-time basis. The curriculum consists of a combination of theory, practice and work placements and is designed in close collaboration with employers and/or professional organisations.

Providers organise the courses in a flexible way to meet the needs of the learners: the courses are time-tabled to meet the needs of the learners, Open and Distance Learning programmes are offered using information and communication technology, courses are offered through blended learning and courses are offered off-campus in places of work. Courses are offered in Administration, Biotechnics, Building, Business studies, Catering and Hospitality, Chemistry, Engineering, Health care, ICT, Leisure, recreation, Mechanics, Social work and Legal practice . All existing SCHE courses will undergo a reform by 2012 and new courses are expected from 2011 onwards.

Access to SCHE and transition to degree studies

Students are granted access with a certificate of secondary education (general, technical or vocational) but they can also be granted access on the basis of recognition of prior (experiential) learning or can get access through an access module for those who do not have a certificate of secondary education.

The transition to professional bachelor studies has been laid down in the act on HBO5 and Se-n-Se. Students can go onto degree programmes but have to attend a bridging programme. The number of credits that is taken into account depends on the programme attended. For some SCHE programmes a special short tailor-made programme will lead to the bachelor degree. Others students can use part of their ECTS credits.. The same legislation applies to students coming from other countries.

As SCHE has only been introduced very recently there are no data yet on the number of students that make the transition to degree studies but based on the data for the former HOSP studies we can assume that only a small group will make the transition to professional bachelor programmes.

Profile of students and teachers

Although there are no data yet at the level of the Flemish Community on the profile of the students, it can be assumed that the overall majority are mature students as HBO5 is at present mainly offered at centres for adult education. Based on the figures received from institutions that cater mainly for mature students (former HOSP-students) between 80% and 100% of their students are mature students and attend the courses part-time. This might, however, drastically change in the future when more university colleges offer HBO5 and when the restructuring of programmes will be completed. Disadvantaged students are, according to the institutions overrepresented but there are no data

available. The target audience of the associate degree are on the one hand young people who want to acquire a higher education qualification and on the other hand people who are working or unemployed and want to upgrade their skills.
There are no overall data yet on the profile of the lecturers but according to the data received from a limited number of institutions the majority of the lecturers have a Master's degree and are working part-time combined with teaching in another institution or at another level or work in in industry.

Internationalisation

All institutions offering HBO5 use ECTS and the diploma supplement because they are legally obliged to do so.

There are no data yet on participation in international programmes. However it can be assumed that some institutions providing SCHE do participate in Grundtvigor Leonardo mobility and Grundtvig or Leonardo projects. Although none of the respondent institutions participates in international programmes a lot of the centres for adult education in Flanders actively participate in Grundtvig projects. The main obstacles for mobility are the fact that the studies only last two years and that most of the students are working[87].

Quality assurance and accreditation

All institutions apply quality assurance because it is compulsory. A regional (Flemish) quality assurance body assisted by international experts is responsible for assessing the quality of the programmes. The accreditation is granted by the NVAO (Nederlands,VlaamseAccreditatieorganisatie) the international accreditation organisation for the Netherlands and Flanders.

Employability and multilingualism

There is a genuine need for graduates at level 5. Indeed, during a hearing in the Flemish parliament employers made clear that they were looking for highly qualified and flexible workers that can meet the skills needs on the labour market. As there are no graduates yet the employment rate of graduates cannot be given. However, based on the data of institutions offering the former HOSP programmes that have now been converted into HBO5, 95% to 100% of their students find a job within two to four months.

HBO5 providers try to enhance the employability of their students by taking into account the needs of the labour market and labour market analyses when setting up programmes, by taking into account the needs of the market when drafting the curricula, by using innovative pedagogical approaches, by focusing on professional competences, by implementing a modular approach, by collaborating with industry through placements and alternative learning pathways and by regularly adapting the curricula to the needs of the labour market.

[87] Van den Berghe et al. (2010)

The employability is also assured by the fact that a commission has to assess the macro-efficiency of all new courses leading to an associate degree. This macro-efficiency takes into account the needs of the local labour market, the existence of similar courses, the needs of the target audiences, the availability of infrastructure and equipment etc.

Multilingualism is enhanced by the fact that a number of courses especially in business studies offer languages as a compulsory part of the programme.

Cooperation with local industry and the local community

Because employability is such an important issue and because cooperation with (local) industry is compulsory there is close collaboration with (local) industry, chambers of commerce, trade unions and employment agencies. Also institutions and employers find this collaboration important. There are different ways of collaboration possible: representatives of (local) industry might sit on the board of the institutions, they might help to draft programmes or curricula, they might sit on examination boards, check the quality of teaching materials, teach at the SCHE institutions, help define the professional competences, participate in internal or external QApanels and offer placements for students and teachers. Although these forms of collaboration are all possible they rarely occur simultaneously.

Professional and sectoral bodies collaborate by drafting professional profiles at the level of SCHE and by being involved in curriculum contents. Trade unions are also involved in drafting professional profiles.

There are no data available yet on the social commitment of SCHE providers.

2.2. The French Community of Belgium

Introduction to tertiary education[88]

Tertiary education encompasses university education, non-university higher education organised in the *Hautes Écoles*, and artistic higher education organised in the Art Schools (*Ecoles supérieures des arts* ; Higher Institutes of Architecture (*Instituts supérieurs d'architecture*) were integrated into universities by the Decree of 30 April 2009. Tertiary education studies may be either short (three or four years) or long- (four years at least). Both types are offered in the *Hautes Écoles* and Art Schools, whereas the Universities offer only long-type studies.

The mission of tertiary education as a whole includes the provision of adult and continuing education (including Higher Education for Social Advancement, HESA – *Enseignement supérieur de promotion*

[88] This introduction is largely taken from the description of education in Bfr in Eurybase http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/BF_EN.pdf

sociale) and services to the community, in particular, by collaborating with the education sector (relations with secondary education) and with the social, economic and cultural spheres.

It is important to stress that HESA is part of the tertiary education sector and that within HESA it is also possible to deliver Bachelor and Masters degrees next to many other short- or long-type courses for various groups of adult learners and next to BES (*Brevets d'Enseignement Supérieur*) - which is SCHE at level 5 of the EQF. The bachelor's and master's degrees delivered by HESA are equivalent to the degrees delivered by other higher education institutions (HEIs).

This is a typical characteristic of HESA in the French Community of Belgium as opposed to Adult education (formerly also called SAE) in the Flemish Community that does not deliver bachelor's or master's degrees but ?. the diploma of graduaat which is translated as "Associate degree" and which is situated at level 5 of the EQF for LLL and at level 5 of the Flemish NQ.

Organisation of Higher Social Advancement Education

SCHE at level 5 of the EQF exists within HESA which is to be situated within adult education. The qualification is the newly created (2008-2009) BES, *Brevet de l'Enseignement Supérieur*. HESA is part of tertiary education together with the universities and the non-university higher education institutions (i.e. *Hautes Ecoles* and *Ecoles supérieures des arts*).

SCHE is thus at the moment not organised within higher education institutions but within HESA institutions only. However, there is current discussion about the possibility of*Hautes Ecoles* that prepare the professional bachelor's degree organising SCHE courses in the near future. It is not clear yet whether post secondary studies (4th grade of secondary education) of three years leading to the *Brevet d'infirmier/infirmière* and delivered in secondary schools will be situated at level 5 of the EQF.
The decrees adopted in the early 1990s brought gradual and fundamental changes at all operating levels of SAE. The decree of 16 April 1991 makes provision for the organisation of sections and teaching units corresponding to the lower and upper stages of secondary education and short and long type courses in tertiary education and for social advancement studies. The Consultation Commission has to be consulted prior to the creation of any short type tertiary education section covering less than 750 periods.

The most important decree concerning SCHE in the French Community is the decree of 14 November 2008 to facilitate the integration of Higher Social Advancement Education into the EHEA (*Décret modifiant le décret du 16 avril 1991 organisant l'enseignement de promotion sociale, en vue de favoriser l'intégration de son enseignement supérieur à l'espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur*[89]). This decree was published in the Official Journal of Belgium (*le Moniteur B elge*) on 24 February 2009 and its implementation only started in 2009. This decree specifically mentions the BES.

[89] Décret modifiant le décret du 16 avril 1991 organisant l'enseignement de promotion sociale, en vue de favoriser l'intégration de son enseignement supérieur à l'espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur (1). http://vlex.be/vid/favoriser-integration-espace-europeen-52114002

The decree states that BES are specific to HESA; BES should have a professional character and should give access to a profession clearly identified by the Higher Council for SAE (*Conseil Supérieur de l'Enseignement de la Promotion sociale*).

As defined by article 49 of the Act of 16 April 1991 organising the SAE, modified by the Act of 14 November 2008, BES is specifically and exclusively organised in the HESA institutions.The BES is explicitly referred to as level 5 of the EQF-LLL. The programmes are vocationally-oriented and give access to a clearly identified profession. Via bridging procedures, the holder of a BES might have access to a first cycle's programme. Those programmes specifically target adults since one of the access conditions is to be at least 22 years old. Finally, these programmes use the "Bologna instruments" as they include 120 credits to be acquired in 2 years at least and the diploma supplement (DS) is delivered free of charge, in French and English. The courses have to be composed of at least 1400 periods of teaching activities.

The DS of a BES has to mention clearly: the professional profile and the final objectives of the training course, the training units of which the particular BES is composed (the number of credits, the teaching activities that were involved and the number of teaching periods). It also has to mention clearly the competences to be acquired through the training units.

HESA is organis ed by the State but provided by educational institutions (public or private).Training programmes are modular in nature, made up of several training units with a view to obtaining an overall set of skills related to a profession responding to a specific professional profile approved by the High Council of SAE.

The specific psycho-pedagogical practices within HESA take into account the following key elements: the recognition of the formal, non-formal and informal learning of the student (through the VAE, *Valorisation des Acquis de l'Expérience*)[90], the contribution of each individual, the relevance of the studies to work situations, enhancing success through consecutive blocks/modules of training; linking education and training with the profession by co-ordinating the techniques taught and techniques employed, focussing on the acquisition by the learner of responsibility and autonomy .

As the BES are very new – implemented for the first time in the academic year 2009-2010 – it is difficult to give a full overview of all the training programmes that exist. However, a few examples can be given: *Conseiller en administration et gestion du personnel* (Advisor on personnel management and administration), Tourist guide, Gestionnaires d'unités commerciales (Commercial unit managers), *animateur en action collective politique, culturelle et sociale* (organiser in collective political, social and cultural activities).

It is important to stress that the Comments on the decree of 18/11/29008 published by the ministry explicitly mention that "the BES should correspond to level 5 of the EQF for LLL". The comments add that "This should be confirmed as soon as the NQF for Bfr is approved by the European Commission."

[90] See the legislation of the French Community of Belgium : Décret définissant l'enseignement supérieur, favorisant son intégration à l'espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur et refinançant les universités, 31 mars 2004. To be fopund on : http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/28769_003.pdf

NQF in Bfr[91]

The French Community of Belgium (covering the territory of the Walloon region and the Brussels region) has been working on an NQF linked to the EQF-LLL since 2006. Initially it was foreseen that a QF covering all sectors of education and training would be developed and implemented. Consequently, a high level group, representing all sectors of education and training and various ministerial entities of the French-speaking Belgium, was established which proposed an action plan for the development of an overarching QF. However, considering the fact that HEIs had been facing profound reforms for more than a decade, the then Minister for Higher Education, Ms Marie-Dominique Simonet, and the HE stakeholders decided to establish QF for higher education qualifications only, referencing the three cycles higher education degrees at Level 6, 7 and 8 of the EQF-LLL. Since the adoption of the decree of 9 May 2008, the French Community of Belgium has established the Higher Education Qualifications Framework. The HEQF defines generic descriptors for each level, based on the generic descriptors of the EQF-LLL. At each level, all recognized degrees awarded by HEIs in the French Community correspond.

In the summer 2009, a political decision was taken, to re-activate the process of developing an overarching framework. A new high level working group, representing all sectors of education and training, is currently defining methodological instruments. A framework along the lines of the Flemish NQF has been proposed. This could help to address and strengthen the links between the diverse education and training systems of the Belgian communities and facilitate understanding by the general public. In practical terms, this could reinforce links between the overall framework and the HE framework using the approach of the Flemish model allowing both academic and professional qualifications to be awarded at levels six to eight.

The BES is explicitly referred to at level 5 of the EQF-LLL and it is at the moment organised by HSAE.

Access to SCHE and transition to further degree studies

No student can be admitted as a regular student in HESA as long as he or she is still required to attend compulsory schooling (until 18 in Belgium). The normal admission requirement is an upper secondary school leaving-certificate. Students can also be admitted on the basis of recognition of prior learning.

As mentioned above, BES graduates may have access to the bachelor's degree studies in HESA or to higher education organised in another HEI. The government determines the bridges and the possible exemptions for those wanting to access the bachelor courses in other HEI (outside HESA).

It is interesting to point out that there is a decree[92] in Bfr outlining the conditions under which students who have obtained the 4th grade certificate (*Brevet d'infirmier ou infirmière*) can obtain the

[91] Cedefop The development of national qualification frameworks in Europe, 2010; http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6108_en.pdf

[92] Arrêté du Gouvernement de la Communauté française fixant les conditions de collation du grade académique de bachelier en soins infirmiers dans l'enseignement de promotion sociale pour les étudiants de la section «bachelier en soins infirmiers pour les titulaires d'un brevet d'infirmier(ère) hospitalier(ère)» ; http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/30254_000.pdf

bachelor's degree in nursing within HESA by making use of a three-year bridge course organised in HESA. This also takes into account recognition of prior experiential learning.

Profile of the students and lecturers

In total there are 170.000 students in SAE in the French Community of Belgium of which 30.000 are in higher education programmes. It is impossible to give figures for the BES as the first sections organising such studies only began work at the beginning of the academic year 2009 – 2010. They are all mature students, a minimum age being a basic requirement to access SAE.

The majority of the lecturers in HESA hold a master's degree. One group of lecturers is recruited on the basis of an educational diploma (mostly a master's degree) and another group run specialized professionally-oriented courses for which experts from the business world are required. Their contribution allows the students to benefit from the competences and skills acquired by professional specialists or experts. Having people from business and industry as lecturers ensures a constant adaptation of SAE to the evolution of knowledge and techniques.

To be able to teach in tertiary education teachers have to be holders of a certificate valid for higher education (*certificat d'aptitude pédagogique approprié à l'enseignement supérieur*, CAPAES). To be able to obtain this CAPAES the applicants have to hold an academic degree and to teach in a *Haute École*, *Ecole supérieure des arts* or in HESA as a practical trainer, assistant lecturer, or lecturer.

Quality assurance and accreditation

For a long time, HEIs have developed instruments for internal quality assurance and have collaborated on the establishment of common mechanisms for external evaluation carried out by international experts. Under the impetus of the Bologna Process and the need to establish a European dimension in the quality assurance of higher education, the French Community established in 2004 the Agency for the Evaluation of the Quality of Higher Education (*Agence pour l'évaluation de la qualité de l'enseignemet supérieur, AEQES*). To meet European Standards and Guidelines, it was necessary to reinforce the structure and resources of the AEQES and thus to guarantee its independence and promote its effectiveness in achieving its missions. To promote a culture of quality in higher education in the French Community, AEQES's main mission consists in planning, implementing and carrying out external and systematic evaluations of the programmes offered by HEIs and then to highlight good practice, gaps and problems to solve.

It should be underlined that it was a political decision not to implement an accreditation system, *stricto sensu*, as it exists in the Flemish Community but to establish an independent body in charge of the quality assurance of HE. Indeed, in the current regulatory framework, only those HEIs, strictly mentioned in the legislation, are authorized to organise higher education programmes and to award recognized degrees. Furthermore, a set of statutory criteria, including the quality of instruction, must be observed by the institutions. If institutions do not respect these legal criteria, the authorization (habilitation) may be suspended. There is thus a form of accreditation or recognition ex ante.

So far, quality assurance of the BES is not covered by the mandate of the AEQES as this BES is not within the competence of the Minister for Higher Education (who is responsible for levels 6, 7 and 8 of the EQF). However, bachelor's and master's degrees awarded by the HESA institutions are subject to the quality assurance mechanisms which apply to other higher education institutions. This explains the need for lecturers in these forms of HESA to have a pedagogical teaching certificate (CAPAES) as mentioned earlier.

- **Internationalisation**

ECTS credits and DS are tools used for the BES studies. As mentioned earlier the diploma supplement has to be delivered to every BES student and it has to mention all elements defined in the law of 18/11/2008. At the moment it is difficult to comment on the mobility of students and lecturers as the first sections organising the BES studies have just started.

- **Employability**

As all the BES sections created respond to a clear need from industry, commerce and trade, it can be assumed that it will be fairly easy to find a job for the students having obtained their certificate (Brevet). Many of them are already working and want to upgrade their skills.

Outside the teaching of foreign languages in the specific sections where they are part of the programme there is no special focus on multilingualism.

- **Cooperation with (local) companies and social commitment**

It has to be stressed that the need for the creation of the BES is closely linked with the needs of industry and that it is industry and companies that have supported the creation of the BES.
HESA has a long tradition of cooperation with industry and this is also the case with the new BES. All new sections organising BES studies are in close contact with companies to find out what their needs are in an ever changing economic environment.

Collaboration with companies encourages a reflection on the professional profiles and the development of training profiles adapted to all specific situations . Many representatives from local industry teach at institutions offering BES.

There is also contract teaching at the level of the BES where companies (co)finance certain sections that are considered to be very important for them.

2.3. The German speaking Community of Belgium

There is at the moment no SCHE in the German-speaking community. There is, however, post-secondary education which could become in the near future SCHE as the French and German speaking

Communities of Belgium will probably adopt an NQF that is similar to the one that has been developed for the Flemish Community of Belgium and that includes SCHE at level 5. Moreover both the Flemish and French speaking Communities have already introduced SCHE.

Higher education in the German speaking Community of Belgium

There is no complete higher education structure with three cycles in the German speaking Community of Belgium (70.000 inhabitants). There is only one single higher education institution (the Autonome Hochschule), which has been created by a decree from 27 June 2005, taking in this way the place of three small institutions which gave up their autonomous existence in 2005. Presently only the first cycle of the QF of the EHEA is organised, covering two departments: 'Health Sciences and Nursing' ('Nursing' section) and 'Educational Sciences' ('Teaching' section). Three year-programmes (courses and training) at level 6 of the EQF for LLL prepare the students for entrance into professional life as graduate nurses or as teachers (for pre-primary and primary education only).

University education and other forms of higher education of long-term studies are not provided in the German-speaking Community of Belgium. Most students – approximately between 70 and 80 % of them – are studying in the French Community of Belgium, the others mainly in Germany.

To enter higher education, students have to hold an upper secondary education final certificate (or equivalent).

The decree of 27 June 2005, creating the Autonome Hochschule is in line with the implementation of the Bologna process. At the higher education institution, the academic degree of Bachelor has been awarded for the first time at the end of the academic year 2007-08 to students who enrolled in 2005/06.

Post-secondary education

Post-secondary education only exists in the form of a vocational education and training programme in one single specialisation for intending hospital nurses (called Ergänzender berufsbildender Sekundarunterricht).

These studies have been defined as SCHE in the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium and following the adoption of an NQF for the German speaking Community of Belgium might be as well recognised as SCHE/level 5.

The NQF for the German speaking Community of Belgium

As mentioned before the NQF for the German speaking Community of Belgium will be developed in line with the NQF of the Flemish Community of Belgium.

3. Bulgaria

Introduction to higher education in Bulgaria[93]

In Bulgaria, there are non-university higher education institutions – colleges - (kollegi) and university higher education institutions which are universities and specialised higher schools (academies and institutes). Colleges may also be within the universities. There is NO SCH or Short Cycle higher education in Bulgaria at the moment.

Admission criteria vary in accordance with the type of institution and its own special conditions (secondary school diploma with written examination(s), tests or competitive selection based on the school academic record), the results of state matriculation exams, etc.). Higher education institutions are autonomous and can thus choose their preferred kind of admission. During recent years, HEIs tend to simplify the models of admission, aiming to attract more students.

During the 2007, the Bulgarian Higher Education Act underwent changes and some supplements were added. They eliminate the existing obstacles connected with the setting up of branches of foreign higher education institutions in Bulgaria. The students that are citizens of the EU Member States and the EEC are granted admission to Bulgarian Higher Education institutions under equal conditions of Bulgarian citizens.

According to the Higher Education Act, the Bulgarian system for higher education provides education and training after completion of secondary education.
It consists of the following degrees:

a) Bachelor where a distinction is made between "Professional bachelor in..." degree (ISCED' 97, level 5B) with a duration of 3 years minimum(180 ECTS credits min. are required) and "Bachelor" degree (ISCED level 5A) with a duration of 4 years min. (240 ECTS credits),
b) Master (ISCED' 97, level 5A) where a distinction is made between:

2-year min. Master's courses (120 ECTS credits min.), for those having acquired the Professional Bachelor degree;
1-year min. Master's courses (60 ECTS credits min. after acquisition of Bachelor degree;
5 year Master's long study courses (300 ECTS credits minimum) only in case when the training is not recommended to be provided by separate Bachelor's and Master's courses.

c) Doctor's degree (ISCED 97, level 6).

According to the amendments in the Higher Education Act there was a change from "Specialist in……." to "Professional Bachelor in …" which was more or less an automatic change without any changes to the contents of the studies. The length of study is minimum 3 years and the credits to be acquired is minimum 180.

It is also argued that it would be good that Bulgaria would consider the development of SCHE in the near future.

[93] Based on Eurybase

Post-secondary education in Bulgaria

11th and 12th grades of secondary education can be defined as post compulsory secondary education in Bulgaria.
There are also institutions, which provide post-secondary education for graduates who have already completed secondary education and acquired diploma. Post-secondary education is not compulsory and is delivered by vocational colleges. It lasts at least one year and the candidates must have turned 16 years of age in order to be granted access to post-secondary education. The graduates are awarded 4th degree professional qualification and are considered prepared for the labour market. Those who wish to embark on the post-secondary education may have graduated from either vocational upper secondary school or from any other type of secondary school.

NQF for Bulgaria

Bulgaria is currently developing an overarching national qualifications framework (NQF), based on learning outcomes, i.e. it will include all levels of the education and training system and their corresponding qualifications/degrees. It is expected to be in place by February 2011. It will only then be possible to decide at what level the Professional Bachelor in… will be placed.

The NQF draft comprises eight levels like in the EQF, taking into account the specific features of the national education system and ISCED 97. This was considered the most optimal option.

The levels in the NQF draft are described according to the descriptors of the QF-EHEA and the EQF in terms of knowledge, skills and competence. The expected learning outcomes of qualifications are described by the legal acts governing different subsystems of education and training.

4. Cyprus

Introduction to higher education [94]

Tertiary education (Τριτοβάθμια Εκπαίδευση) is provided by the following four types of institution:

- The three state universities: the University of Cyprus, the Open University of Cyprus and Cyprus University of Technology.
- The seven public higher education institutions: the Higher Technical Institute (Ανώτερο Τεχνολογικό Ινστιτούτο) (HTI), the Forestry College (Δασικό Κολέγιο), the School of Nursing and Midwifery (Νοσηλευτική Σχολή), the Mediterranean Institute of Management (Μεσογειακό Ινστιτούτο Διεύθυνσης) (MIM), the Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus (Ανώτερο Ξενοδοχειακό Ινστιτούτο Κύπρου) (HHIC), the Tourist Guides School (Σχολή Ξεναγών) and the Police Academy (Αστυνομική Ακαδημία).
- The three private universities: Frederick University, European University-Cyprus and University of Nicosia.
- Private higher education institutions. They offer both academic and vocational programmes of study at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Public tertiary education can be subdivided into the university and non-university sectors.

In 2006/07, in addition to the three public universities, there were six public and twenty-five private tertiary level institutions registered with the Ministry of Education and Culture, with a student body totalling 22.227, of which 5.961 are international students. Of this number, 7.152 are enrolled in public institutions and 15.075 in private institutions. At the same time, 20.969 Cypriot students study abroad at tertiary level institutions.

The majority of students at the tertiary level study business administration, education, computing, social and behavioural science, humanities, health and engineering and related professions .

The non-university tertiary institutions train professionals, such as technical and engineering staff, nurses, forestry workers, tourist guides and police officers, as well as managers and other personnel, in order to cater for the needs of local industry. The main objective of the state institutions is to provide high-level education and training and to produce high calibre professionals in each respective field, according to the needs of the labour market in Cyprus whereas in the private institutions there is more focus on preparation for degree studies.

Organisation

SCHE has existed in Cyprus since the 70s. It is organized nationally. SCHE is covered by the following legislation: Control and Operation of Institutions of Tertiary Education (Law 67(I) 1996 up to 2010).

[94] The information in the introduction is taken from the description of the Cyprus education system in Eurybase: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/CY_EN.pdf

The law covers Public and Private Education Institutes in Cyprus as well as the organisation, entrance requirements, QA and accreditation and tuition fees.
In January 2010 the House of Representatives adopted the European Directive 123/2006/EC Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on services in the internal market. As a result of the above law modification of the law for the Control and Operation of Institutions of Tertiary Education was introduced allowing higher education institutions to offer franchised programmes from European Universities.

At present the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education and Culture are discussing the new strategy for SCHE and its vocational programmes of studies, but the final decisions as to this strategy have not yet been taken.

SCHE is organized by the State, by private providers or by professional organisations. It can also be provided by the State in cooperation with any of the other groups mentioned earlier. It is provided within vocational / professional colleges or within further education colleges. It is subsidized by the State.

SCHE higher education leads to: a Certificate after 1 year of study, a Diploma after 2 years ofstudy and a Higher Diploma after 3 years of study. A Certificate of Attendance for studies is granted for periods less than one academic year. This means that studies leading to a qualification can last between one and three years. In the private institutions SCHE studies are a preparation for degree courseswhich are organized on a full-time or a part-time basis. The curriculum consists of a combination of practice and theory. SCHE courses (and time-tables) are organised in a flexible way to meet the needs of learners.

Professional organisations and/or employers are rarely involved in the design and restructuring of curricula for SCHE. If they are involved it is only for public H.E.I.

SCHE studies exist in various areas of study such as Administration, Arts, Building, Business studies, Catering and Hospitality, Education, Engineering, Health care, ICT, Leisure and recreation, Mechanics, Music and Drama and Social work and all of those studies are vocational in nature. The private H.E.I. have developed over the past years about 35 new vocational programmes in Administration, Engineering, Business, Health Care and Leisure and Personal support work.

The NQF for Cyprus

The N.Q.F. will be introduced by the end of 2010. It has already been decided that there will be 8 levels of the N.Q.F. similar to those of the E.Q.F. (8 levels). The SCHE programmes which are evaluated and accredited by the Council of Educational Evaluation-Accreditation (SEKAP) will be at the level 5 of the NQF. The N.Q.F. which is being prepared will make a clear distinction between all levels. Level 5 will be a stage between the Lyceum and the Bachelor Degree. The descriptors for SCHE in Cyprus are linked to the Dublin descriptors.

Access to SCHE and transition to degree courses

The minimum entrance requirements for students in SCHE are Certificate/diploma of general secondary , technical or vocational education.
The transition to degree courses is laid down in legislation for the Private Universities and concerning the Council of Evaluation- Accreditation.

The possibility for students from SCHE to make the transition to degree programmes exists and students can use part of the credits earned at level 5 SCHE (maximum 120 out of the 240 for a bachelor's degree for students who have finished the three-year programme) to go on to level 6. Students may transfer to higher qualifications and sometimes professional experience is taken into account. For universities it is their responsibility, for colleges the ministry of education must be informed and approve the transition. The majority of students at public institutions, however, do not go on to degree courses. There are no access or bridging courses but top up programmes exist. Graduates from Evaluated-Accredited programmes can earn up to 60 ECTS in relevant programmes of studies in private universities

Students from other European countries with SCHE qualifications can earn a degree in Cyprus using the credits earned in their own country on the basis of RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning).

Profile of students and lecturers

The participation rate of the 18-21 years cohort is over 30%. There are approximately 7000 students in SCHE of which 3700 are male and 3300 are female. 80% are full-time students and 20% are part-time students. Disadvantaged groups or students with a low socio-economic background are more represented in SCHE, especially in private institutions, than in other areas of HE although some institutions think that they are overrepresented. No data ,however, are available, on these groups of disadvantaged students.

There is a mixture of lecturers with an academic and a professional profile. The majority of lecturers have a Master's degree and lecturers work part-time in SCHE combined with work in industry.

Internationalisation

ECTS credits are used by all SCHE institutions because institutions are encouraged to do so and because it facilitates international cooperation. The diploma supplement is not used by all SCHE institutions although they are encouraged to use it. The Europass certificate supplement is not used in SCHE in Cyprus. The Learning agreement and the Transcript of records are used for mobile students.

Lecturers are not mobile within various European or international cooperation programmes. However, students are involved in Erasmus or Leonardo da Vinci mobility. SCHE institutions are not really involved in international cooperation programmes and projects. The main reason is that there is not a culture for doing so.

QA and accreditation

Internal quality assurance/self-evaluation is applied by most institutions offering SCHE but on a voluntary basis. External mechanisms for monitoring quality assurance in SCHE exist but only to facilitate the recognition and accreditation of new courses. The external QA is then carried out by a national or regional QA agency assisted by experts from other countries. Accreditation is carried out by the national accreditation agency called Council of Evaluation- Accreditation (SEKAP).

Employability and multilingualism

There is a genuine need for graduates of SCHE studies but the Cyprus economy especially needs graduates from H.E. in the following areas: Engineering, Construction, Maintenance and Health Care. The employment rate of SCHE graduates is between 80% to 90 % according to the courses or programmes attended. However, the delay before level 5 graduates find initial employment is between ? and six months. They usually work as white collar workers in administration, sales or hospitality management

Employers support SCHE by reflecting on the content of these programmes and by hiring the graduates.

Employability is enhanced by taking into account the needs of the labour market and labour market analyses when setting up programmes, by taking into account the needs of the market when drafting the curricula, by focusing on professional competences, by promoting multilingualism, by collaborating with industry through placements and alternative learning pathways, by implementing a modular approach and by having a career guiding service.

Multilingualism is promoted by promoting the learning of at least two foreign languages, by offering compulsory language courses and by developing projects in which multilingual teams of students work together.

Cooperation with the local community

Both SCHE institutions and industry think cooperation between the two of them is important.
Local industry offers placements for students and lecturers and representatives of local industry teach at the SCHE institutions. The placements for students are very important as they are compulsory.

Professional/sectoral bodies collaborate with SCHE by offering training sessions. Trade unions do not really cooperate with SCHE institutions.

SCHE institutions show their social commitment by having a diversity charter, by implementing a sustainable development policy, by teaching corporate social responsibility and by involving students in local social projects.

5. The Czech Republic

There is NO SCHE in the CZECH Republic YET but there is tertiary professional education. The present contribution tends to make a picture of the present situation and to pinpoint elements which show that the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) and the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education (NUOV) are discussing the NQF of the Czech Republic and the place of tertiary professional education in this framework. This process started in 2005. There exists an analytic study prepared for the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in August 2009 on the possible introduction of SCHE.

Tertiary education in the Czech Republic [95]

The tertiary education is composed of higher education, vysoké školy, (university and non university higher education) at levels ISCED 5A and 6, and post-secondary education at the so-called vyšší odborné školy which are more professional, practically oriented schools at ISCED 5B.

Higher education institutions are either of university (24 public, 2 state, and 3 private institutions in 2010) or non-university types (2 public, 42 private institutions). The study programmes are prepared by individual institutions/faculties and approved by the MEYS on the affirmative standpoint of the Accreditation Commission. Since 2001 the three cycle structure has strictly been implemented in higher education: Bachelor's study programme (ISCED 5A), Master's study programme (ISCED 5A) and Doctoral study programme (ISCED 6).

In terms of the founders, vysoké školy can be public institutions (legally established), private institutions or state-run institutions (only in the case of military and police academies), legally established under the control of the relevant ministries. The University of Defence is not a legal entity. Relevant ministries are Ministry of the Defence of the Czech Republic and Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic. In terms of the study programmes they offer, they may be non-university institutions of higher education and University-type vysoké školy.

The more practically oriented (post-secondary) vyšší odborné školy (ISCED 5B) provide students with advanced technical knowledge. Their curriculum is prepared by the school and accredited by the Ministry of Education and Science. Final examination taken on completion of tertiary professional (post-secondary) schools is the absolutorium. The diploma the graduates of the post-secondary schools get is called the diplomovaný specialista – DiS. (specialist with a diploma).

On the completion of study at higher education institutions students take a state examination generally including a defense of a thesis. The graduates of the first cycle courses (3-4 years) are awarded the degree of bakalář – Bc. (Bachelor). The graduates of the second cycle courses continuing after Bachelor (1-3 years) or long-type courses (4-6 years) are mostly awarded the degree of magistr – Mgr. (Master) (8). On the completion of doctoral studies (3-4 years) students take a state doctoral

[95] This introduction is largely taken form the information from Eurybase: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/CZ_EN.pdf

examination and a defense of a thesis and are awarded the degree of doktor – Ph.D. (Th.D. in theology).

Organisation of tertiary professional education

SCHE does not currently exist in the Czech Republic. Therefore the data and information provided in the questionnaire do not refer to SCHE, but to Tertiary professional education (tertiary professional schools). These are placed at ISCED 5B level. **The EQF level has not been decided yet.** However, the current proposal places this kind of education at the level EQF/NQF 6. The reform of tertiary education is planned in the future. There is at present a discussion on the transformation of tertiary professional education into a more structured system of tertiary education, on shortening the duration of courses and revitalising post-secondary courses, as well.

Some of the respondents think that these studies should be considered as having professional Bachelor's level because they last three years (even 3.5 years for nursing). Others think that the competences acquired during these studies are not in line with the descriptors for level 6 of the EQF but rather with the descriptors for level 5 or between levels 5 and 6 of the EQF.

Although the Czech Republic does not have an NQF yet, the work on the framework has been going on since 2005 and it is being developed by NUOV , MEYS and other relevant stakeholders involved in the process. The outlines of the framework are more or less clear. There is a proposal of 8 levels. The NQF is currently going through the consultation process. In the current proposal the descriptors make a clear distinction in terms of knowledge, skills and competence between levels 4 and 5. In terms of attained level of education, learners at the level 4 have to pass Maturita exam (leaving examination).

The main legislation governing tertiary professional education is the Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on pre-school, primary, secondary, tertiary professional and other education (the School Act). This act was amended in 2005. The new School Act differentiated approach to tertiary professional education in comparison to other "regional" education; it has introduced quality assurance and accreditation and led to more concrete specification of organisation of study. Other items that were dealt with were entrance requirements, fields of study, the transition to degree studies, the institutions where the studies are organized, the tuition fee and the minimum (and also maximum) number of students within the study group (not for the whole institution).

Tertiary professional education is organized as well by the state as by private education providers. There are also some church schools organizing tertiary professional education. The studies are mainly provided within colleges (tertiary professional schools) very often co-existing with secondary schools (two schools within one building). They are mainly funded by the state but sometimes by foundations possibly in collaboration with the authorities. The studies are organized as well on a full-time as on a part-time basis and the courses are time-tabled to meet the needs of learners. Sometimes there is blended learning or distance learning. They offer a further professional specialization focusing on employment although they are sometimes not linked to previous studies. In most institutions the curriculum consists of a combination of theory, practice and work placement. One institution states that it consists of a combination of theory and work placements.

There are courses in Administration, Agriculture, Arts, Building, Business studies, Catering and Hospitality, Chemistry, Cultural heritage, Education (educators, trainers), Engineering, Environmental

studies, Health care, ICT, Language studies, Leisure, recreation, Mechanics, Music and Drama, Product development, Restoration, Social work, Legal practice and other studies such as Social pedagogics, Transport, Logistics and security. New courses were introduced such as International social work.

Access to tertiary professional education and transition to degree studies

The maturitní zkouška certificate(certificate of general or technical/vocational education) is the minimum entrance qualification for all tertiary education. Each institution determines its own admission criteria and the content of the entrance examination if required.

When students want to progress to degree studies they can use part of the credits earned. However, as this is the competence of the higher education institute, the amount of credits students get can vary enormously. Three institutions that filled out the questionnaire even maintained that their students did not get any credits for the studies carried out at the tertiary vocational school. Institutions also disagree on whether the majority of students progress to degree studies. The National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education thinks that the majority of students do not make the transition to degree studies whereas the Czech Association of Schools of Professional Higher Education thinks they do. Foreign students can progress to degree programmes on the basis of credits earned abroad.

There are hardly any bridging courses or top-up programmes organised and professional experience is not always taken into account to facilitate the transition to degree programmes. This is an option set by legislation, but in practice this is mostly a case of private higher education institutions. Public universities seem to be more reluctant in this respect.

Profile of students and lecturers

More than 30 per cent (28,749) of the students in tertiary education study at tertiary professional schools. The overall majority are girls (20,702). Most students attend the courses full-time (71.9 per cent) and 42 per cent present are mature students.

As there are no clear data available on the number of disadvantaged students, respondents disagree on whether there is a majority of disadvantaged students at tertiary professional schools. Some think they are overrepresented, others think that they represent more than 30 per cent of the students.

The majority of the lecturers hold a Ph. D. and there is a mixture of lecturers with an academic and a professional profile. Except in certain institutions (where the requirement is 60 per cent) there is no requirement for a percentage of lecturers to have professional experience.

The majority of lecturers work part-time in the higher professional schools. Most of them combine their job with teaching at another level of education or at another institution but some of them (especially from the schools requiring professional experience) with a job in industry.

Internationalisation

Although ECTS is applied it is only used by a small number of institutions, mainly because it facilitates transition to degree studies and because it facilitates international cooperation. Also the diploma

supplement is only used by a small number of institutions. However, institutions are encouraged to do so because it facilitates transition to other programmes and also transition to work. A very small number also use the Europass certificate supplement.

Lecturers mainly participate in Leonardo mobility but also in Erasmus mobility and a small number in Comenius and Grundtvig mobility.

Also students participate mainly in Leonardo mobility but also in Erasmus mobility and other (bilateral) mobility programmes. A small number also participates in Comenius mobility. Students who are mobile often use the Europass. The situation is not clear as far as the use of the Learning agreement and the Transcript of records is concerned. Apparently some institutions use them but the use is definitely not generalised.

Institutions participate also in international programmes for other actions than mobility, mainly in Leonardo and Erasmus actions but also in other EU (sub)-programmes and in multinational or bilateral programmes. Some institutions refer to study visits but also to bilateral cooperation for the purpose of the development of curricula or joint degrees and international cooperation with individual partners such as institutions but also employers.

The obstacles that were mentioned were the fact that many tertiary professional schools cannot participate in Erasmus, the small size of the institutions and the burden of administration and financial obstacles.

With the exception of some very active institutions Czech colleges have relatively low engagement in international cooperation. There are only about 14 colleges (out of 184) with access to Erasmus programme, yet even not these 14 use the potential fully. One of the reasons is limited capacity due to very small size of institutions.

Quality assurance and accreditation

Not all institutions apply internal quality assurance. External quality assurance is carried out by the inspectorate/ a nation quality assurance agency. Accreditation is given by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports but there are several ways of being accredited. The Accreditation Committee is organised as an advisory body to the Ministry. The Ministry takes the final decision based on the Accreditation Committee's recommendations.

Employability

There is a genuine need for graduates of the tertiary vocational schools. However, it is not fully clear whether the demand is for level 5 qualifications or professionally oriented qualifications at level 6.

The employment rate of the students varies according to the programmes offered and the institutions. It ranges from virtually total employment to employment of less than 80 per cent. Most institutions indicate an employment rate between 90 and 95 per cent. Students usually find employment between one and two months after graduation. Most of them are employed as white collar workers such as social workers in NGO's.

Employability is focused upon by taking into account the needs of the labour market and labour market analyses when setting up programmes, by taking into account the needs of the market when drafting the curricula, by using innovative pedagogical approaches, by focusing on professional competences, by collaborating with industry through placements and alternative learning pathways and by regularly adapting the curricula to the needs of the labour market. One institution states that it enhances employability by hiring external lecturers from industry, another by focusing on multilingualism and one by implementing a modular approach.

Employers try to enhance the employability of graduates and collaborate with the schools by helping to design the curricula, by reflecting on the content of the programmes, by offering placements for students and by actively participating in the teaching. They also participate in the advisory accreditation committee.

Although only one institution stated that it focused on multilingualism to enhance employability, most institutions do work on multilingualism by having guest lecturers from other countries, by promoting mobility to other countries for students to study or do placements, by promoting the learning of at least two foreign languages and by offering compulsory language courses. One institution trains non-language lecturers to teach in a foreign language.

Collaboration with (local) industry and the local community

Professional organisations and/or employers are occasionally involved in the designing and restructuring of curricula for Tertiary professional schools.

Representatives of (local) industry sit on the board of the institutions, they help to draft programmes and curricula, they sit on examination boards and they sometimes teach at the institutions. Local industry also provides placements for students and sometimes for lecturers. One tertiary professional school mentions that representatives of (local) industry help to define the professional competences of the graduates. As mentioned before they also sit on accreditation committees.

The institutions work together with local industry because they think it is a necessity and also because for some studies placements are compulsory but also because local industry finds it important. Sectoral and professional bodies collaborate less with the colleges. However they do offer training sessions and sometimes they collaborate in defining the professional competences of graduates or by being involved in curriculum contents. Very often this kind of collaboration is based on individual arrangements. Trade unions hardly collaborate with the institutions.

The social commitment with the local community is defined in several ways. Many institutions engage their students in local social projects. Some institutions teach social corporate responsibility, others implement a sustainable development policy or have a diversity charter. One institution mentioned collaborating with local NGO's.

6. Denmark

Introduction

Higher education is offered at three levels: Short-cycle higher education, medium-cycle higher education and long-cycle higher education. Approximately 45 % of the age group between 18 and 21 attends the higher education programmes and the graduation rate is between 40% and 50%.

The responsibility for higher education is divided between three ministries; the Danish Ministry of Education (short-cycle and medium-cycle), the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (long-cycle) and the Danish Ministry of Culture (medium and long cycle education within the area of arts). The current strategy as to SCHE is a consolidation of the existing SCHE-programmes.

Organisation

SCHE is organized at national level in Denmark. It is provided and subsidized by the state but organized in vocational / professional colleges or in further education colleges.
SCHE leads to a short professional education not necessarily linked to previous studies. It is usually offered on a full-time basis but can also be provided on a part-time basis. Professional organizations such as chambers of commerce and trade unions will occasionally be involved in designing and restructuring of curricula. However, in some colleges employers and professional organisations work closely together with the organisations offering SCHE. The curriculum usually consists of a combination of practice, theory and work placements. SCHE courses are organised in a flexible way to meet the needs of learners a.o. through adapting the time-tables to the needs of the learners and through blended learning.

The legislative basis for the short-cycle non-university education programmes is the Act on vocational academy programmes and professional bachelor programmes nr. 207 ("31/03/2008 Lov om erhvervsakademiuddannelser og professions bachelor uddannelser) of 2008 which authorises the Ministry of Education to lay down regulations for the programmes.
LBK nr 850 af 08/09/2009 on erhvervsakademier for videregaende uddannelser.
BEK nr 106 af 09/02/2009 on adgang, indskrivning og orlov mv. ved visse videregÃ¥ende uddannelser (Undervisningsministeriets adgangsbekendtgÃ¸relse)

Legislation is governing the following areas of SCHE: organisation, entrance requirements, QA and accreditation and the institutions which organize SCHE.
Recent changes and developments in legislation which are important for SCHE are: the creation of new institutions for short cycle higher education, the accreditation of higher education, the practical experience as part of the programmes for at least 3 months which is now obligatory and the application of the NQF.

Denmark has had a National Qualification Framework since 2003 but it was only implemented in 2008. SCHE is clearly at level 5 of the EQF and at the intermediate level of the first cycle of the overarching qualification framework for the European Higher Education Area. There is a clear distinction between level 4 that is strictly vocational training and level 5 that is regarded as higher education. The

descriptors for SCHE are clearly linked to the descriptors of level 5 of the European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF). The SCHE studies lead to a diploma referring to the Academy Profession Degree in…….followed by the relevant subject title. In Danish the titles are unique for each degree but will generally involve the term "teknolog" combined with the relevant subject title.

SCHE programmes are organised in Administration, Agriculture, Biotechnics, Building, Business studies, Catering and Hospitality, ICT, Engineering, Environmental studies / protection, Leisure, recreation, Mechanics, Multimedia and Product development. New study programmes have been developed in the following areas: Automotive Technology, Food and Nutrition Technology, Automation Technology and Energy Technology.

Access to SCHE and transition to degree studies

The minimum entrance requirement for SCHE is the Certificate/diploma of general secondary education. Entry on the basis of recognition of Prior "Experiential" Learning is also possible.
The duration of full-time SCHE is between 90 to 150 SCTS credits.

There is no legislation in which the transition of SCHE to degree programmes is stipulated but there are however specific bachelor programmes to top-up SCHE-programmes and the transition is fairly easy. Students can go onto degree programmes but have to attend a bridging programme. However the majority of SCHE students don't go on to a level 6 degree programme. However, in some institutions half of the students do make the transition.

The number of ECTS credits earned at level 5 the students can use to earn a degree at level 6 depends on the level 6 programme they want to start. It is the decision of the receiving institution. If the students continue on one of the top-up bachelors programmes they receive full credit for up to 120 ECTS. There are no „access or bridging" courses organised nationally in Denmark to prepare the transition from SCHE to degree programmes. Professional experience is taken into account when graduates from SCHE programmes want to move onto a degree programme and the professional experience facilitates the transition. Students coming from other (European) countries with SCHE qualifications can earn a degree in Denmark by using the credits earned in their own country. Recognition of prior learning is also applied in this case.

Profile of students and lecturers

Students in SCHE represent 10% to 20% of the age cohort 18 to 21. In total there are 19,000 students in SCHE of which 10,500 are male and 8,500 are female. 60% of the students are mature students. Most of the students attend the courses on a full-time basis.

Disadvantaged groups or students with a low socio-economic background are probably overrepresented in SCHE but no data are available.

The qualification held by the majority of teachers/lecturers in SCHE is a Master's degree and the majority of lecturers have a professional profile (with experience in a professional context). However, in some institutions it is a mixture of lecturers with a professional and an academic profile. There are

also institutions where the majority of lecturers have an academic profile. Most lecturers teach full-time in SCHE.

Internationalisation

ECTS credits and the diploma supplement are used by all institutions because they are legally obliged to. The Europass certificate supplement is not used but some of the Europass documents are used.

Staff is mainly involved in mobility in the framework of the Erasmus programme but they also participate in mobility projects of the Grundtvig programme and of other European or international and bilateral programmes. Some lecturers are also mobile to develop joint degree programmes.

Students are mainly involved in mobility in the framework of the Erasmus programme but also in the framework of the Grundtvig programme and in the framework of other European or international and bilateral programmes such as NORD PLUS. They are also mobile in the framework of joint degree programmes. The Europass, Learning agreements and transcripts of record are used with mobile students.

Institutions are involved in Erasmus, Leonardo and Grundtvig projects and in other bilateral, European and international programmes and projects.

The main obstacle to be involved in international cooperation is the relatively short duration of the programmes which can make it difficult to find time to study abroad. Moreover students in SCHE are typically older than other types of students and will thus have obligations that hinder their international mobility. According to the institutions there are also financial obstacles. An obstacle is also the fact that some lecturers tend to be adverse towards international mobility. Although students are mobile, not many of them are.

QA and accreditation

Internal quality assurance/self-evaluation is applied by all/most SCHE institutions because it is compulsory. There is an external mechanism for monitoring quality assurance and it applies to all SCHE institutions. The external QA is organised a national quality assurance agency. There is furthermore a national accreditation agency EVA. EVA functions as national accreditation agency for the SCHE programmes. It is independent from the Ministry of Education. Furthermore there is the council for accreditation which decides whether a SCHE-programme is accredited positively or not.

Employability and multilingualism

There is a genuine need for graduates with a SCHE diploma. They mainly work as highly skilled technicians. The employment rate is between 80% and 85% and the average duration to wait for an initial job is between four and six months. The respondent institutions record an employment rate between 85% and 95%.

Employers support SCHE by helping to design the curricula, by reflecting on the content of these programmes, by offering placements for students at level 5 and by actively participating in the teaching.

Employability is focused on by taking into account the needs of the labour market and labour market analyses when setting up programmes and when drafting the curricula, by using innovative pedagogical approaches, by focusing on professional competences (knowledge skills and attitudes), by implementing a modular approach and by regularly adapting the curricula to the needs of the labour market. Some institutions also focus on multilingualism and try to enhance the employability through collaboration with industry for placements and dual learning pathways. Institutions also try to improve employability by including personal development plans in the programme and by having a career guiding service.

Multilingualism is enhanced by teaching non-language subjects in a foreign language, by having guest lecturers from other countries, by promoting mobility to other countries for students to study or to do placements, by inviting students to make assignments and projects in other languages and by training non-language lecturers to teach their subject in another language.

Cooperation with the local community

Both SCHE institutions and industry consider cooperation vital to enhance the quality of SCHE education and training

Cooperation with industry takes different forms: representatives of (local) industry sit on the board of the institutions, they are helping to draft programmes/ curricula, they sit on examination boards, they teach at the SCHE institutions, they participate in external QA panels and they offer placements to students and lecturers.

SCHE institutions cooperate with companies because placements in local industry or organisations are compulsory, because representatives of (local) industry must be on the board of the institutions and must sit on the examination boards and be involved in external QA panels.

Professional/sectoral bodies and trade unions collaborate with SCHE by drafting professional profiles at the level of SCHE and by offering training sessions.

Some institutions have corporate social responsibility on the programme. No other forms of social commitment were mentioned.

7. Estonia

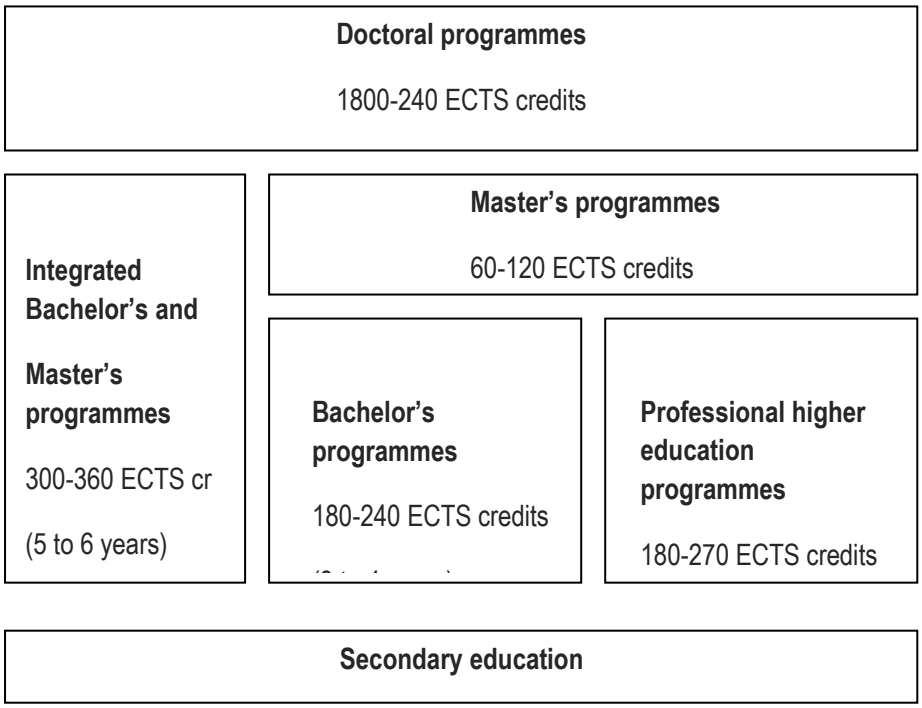
Information on the Estonian higher education system

At present there is NO SCHE in Estonia but there is post-secondary education having formal links with higher education. However, the Ministry of Education and Research, higher education department has informed Eurashe that it is analysing the possibilities of implementing SCHE in Estonia.

1. Introduction to higher education in Estonia

There are two types of higher education in Estonia[96] : first, universities (ülikool), offering academic programmes; and, secondly, institutions of professional higher education (rakenduskorgkool), offering professional higher education programs (rakenduskõrgharidus).

However, Professional higher education programmes can also be offered by universities and in a few vocational education institutions (kutseõppeasutus).



In order to be admitted to a higher education institution students must have obtained the secondary education certificate in Estonia gümnaasiumi lõputunnistus; lõputunnistus kutsekeskhariduse omandamise kohta) or an equivalent qualification earned abroad. The conditions and procedures for access to studies are set by the higher education institutions.

[96] The information is largely taken from Eurybase:
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_EE_EN.pdf

The state budget finances an established number of state-commissioned student places in higher education. The number of student places financed from the state budget, in state, municipal or private institutions, is decided during a process that involves the Ministry of Education and Research and its partners. Each higher education institution is entitled to allocate a number of additional places. However, students who obtain such additional places have or who are not studying in the state-commissioned education have to pay tuition fees.

Estonia implemented the two-cycle system in the academic year 2002/03. In 2008/09 there were 65, 934 students enrolled in the two cycle degree system in Estonia. This is 93.4 % of all students below third cycle programs (doctorate programmes). Students who are not taken into the account are usually studying in integrated bachelor's and master's programmes. Such long-cycle programmes are offered in the fields of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, architecture, civil engineering, and class-teacher training.

At the end of the university studies (the 3-4-year bakalaureuseõpe, the 1-2-year magistriõpe, the 6-year integreeritud bakalaureuse- ja magistriõpe and the 3-4-year doktoriõpe), a graduate is awarded the diploma (diplom) and a diploma supplement (akadeemiline õiend) in Estonian and in English. (A graduate from bakalaureuseõpe is issued a diploma supplement in English on request only.)

A graduate of professional higher education programs (rakenduskõrgharidusõpe) (lasting 3-4 years) is issued a diploma (diplom) and a diploma supplement (akadeemiline õiend) in Estonian and in English. Professional higher education programmes are provided in two different ways and for different courses duration: in ülikool, rakenduskõrgkool and kutseõppeasutus (programs vary 3-4 years) and in rakenduskõrgkool – programs of nursing – (3.5+1 years).

Professional Higher Education Programmes

Professional higher education is higher education of the first cycle, the purpose of which is to acquire the competencies necessary for working in a certain profession or for continuing studies at the master's level. The nominal duration of programmes is 3 to 4 years (180-240 ECTS credits). Midwifery studies and specialized nursing studies last 4.5 years (270 ECTS credits). The qualification awarded upon completion of the programme is *Rakenduskõrgharidusõppe diplom* (Diploma of Professional Higher Education) (a grayish-blue diploma form marked E). The qualification gives access to master's programmes. After obtaining the diploma (diplom), graduates of 3-4-year professional higher education programs may move directly to university. They need at least one year of professional experience if they want to proceed to the rakenduskõrgkool' master course.
When students do not have Estonian as a mother tongue and have to take additional Estonian language courses, studies might take between half a year and a year longer.

Graduates of professional higher education programmes can continue studies at Master's level (lasting 1-2 years) after completing the professionally oriented first-level study programme in a professional higher education institution or at university. Institutions are authorised to award magistriõpe by government decree. This is valid only for professional higher education institutions and not for universities. A professional higher education institution may independently provide master's programmes in the fields of theology, public security and national defence, master's programmes in

other fields may be provided in collaboration with a university. As to the form of ownership, educational institutions may be state, public and private.

Post-secondary education

Estonia has post- secondary non-tertiary vocational education organised at level 4 of the EQF. These studies do not form an integrated part of the higher education first cycle. However, sometimes there are links with the first level of the QF for HE.

Students who want to continue their studies in post-secondary (non-tertiary) vocational education can do so in vocational schools and, depending on the curriculum also in institutions of professional higher education. The objective of these studies is to prepare workers for skilled work and students are given the knowledge, skills, competences and attitudes to perform complicated work independently. There are some studies that are only available at post-secondary (non-tertiary) level, such as: business and administration, social services, environmental protection and security services. Other subjects can be studied at upper secondary and post-secondary level, e.g. engineering and engineering trades, manufacturing and processing agriculture[97].

In some sectors, satisfactory completion of general upper secondary education is the prerequisite for entry to vocational **post-secondary education.**

The studies last between 0.5 to 2.5 years after upper secondary education, i.e. 20 to 100 weeks of study. The study consists of at least 25 % of practice and at least 25 % of vocational training. At the end of their studies students receive the Kutseõpe keskhariduse baasil (vocational post-secondary education) certificate.

Quality Assurance

Since 2009 higher education quality has been assessed by an independent agency *Eesti Kõrghariduse Kvaliteediagentuur* (Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency). The responsibility of the agency is to conduct institutional accreditation of higher education institutions and quality assessment of study programme groups.

Within the assessment process of study programme groups it is assessed if the programmes correspond with the current legislation and with the national and international standards, including the quality of theoretical and practical training, the qualifications of the teaching and research staff, as well as the availability of the necessary resources. On the basis of external assessment, the Government of the Republic grants the higher education institution the right, for an indefinite or a fixed (1 to 3 years) period of time, to conduct studies according to the programme belonging to the respective corresponding study programme group. Until 01.01.2010, external assessment of study programmes resulted in adopting accreditation decisions. Full accreditation was granted for seven years, conditional accreditation is valid for three years.

[97] Eurydice (2010) *Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe, Estonia, 2009/10 Edition.* http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/structures/041_EE_EN.pdf

8. Finland

Finland does not have SCHE but the national committee which has prepared the proposal for the Finnish National Qualifications Framework has proposed to place some VET qualifications at NQF/EQF level 5. It has to be stressed that so far this is only a proposal, which is currently being discussed in the Finnish Parliament.

However as there is non-tertiary post-secondary education at level 5 a brief introduction is given both to higher as to post-secondary education. As the position of level 5 in the Finnish NQF is quite unique, the latter is also focused upon.

Introduction to higher education in Finland

Higher education [98]is offered by universities (Yliopisto/Universitet) and Polytechnics, Ammattikorkeakoulu/ Yrkeshögskola), professionally oriented higher education institutions. The latter are often referred to as universities of applied sciences. Both sectors have different profiles; universities emphasise scientific research and instruction, whereas polytechnics adopt a more practical approach.

There is restricted entry, 'numerus clausus', to all fields of study. As applicants far exceed the number of places available, universities use different kinds of student selection criteria. Usually the selection is based on previous study records and an entrance exam.

The general requirement for admission to polytechnics is completion of general upper secondary on school achievement and work experience and, in many cases, entrance examinations. Eligibility for second-cycle polytechnic degrees is given by a relevant first-cycle degree with at least 3 years of relevant work experience.

According to the degree system at universities, it is possible to take either a lower or a higher academic degree. The lower or Bachelor's degree is generally 180 ECTS credits and can be completed in 3 years. The higher or Master's degree is in most fields 120 ECTS credits, which corresponds to two years of full-time study after the first-cycle degree. In addition, universities offer scientific postgraduate degrees that are Licentiates (optional advanced predoctoral degree) and Doctorates.

Studies leading to a first-cycle polytechnic degree take 3½ years or 180-240 ECTS credits, depending on the field of study, at which point the polytechnics grant the student a degree certificate (Bachelor's degree, indicating the field of study, e.g. Bachelor of Health Care, Bachelor of Engineering). The second-cycle polytechnic degree (Master's degree) consists of 60-90 ECTS credits, which corresponds to 1½ or 2 years of full-time study. The requirement for the secondcycle polytechnic degree in polytechnics is a Bachelor's level polytechnic degree and at least three years of work experience. The second-cycle polytechnic degree is equivalent to a university

[98] Information is partly taken from Eurybase: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/FI_EN.pdf

Master's degree in the labour market. The title in the second-cycle polytechnic degree indicates the field of study, for example Master of Art and Culture.

Post-secondary non-tertiary education in Finland

Post-secondary non-tertiary VET in Finland is available for specialist vocational qualifications, which are considered competence-based qualifications. Specialist vocational qualifications are primarily intended for adults – mainly for people skilled in different fields to demonstrate their practical competence and vocational skills through competence tests. Adults can improve their position in the labour market through specialist vocational qualifications. However, although they are mostly at level 5 of the Finnish NQF (see below), they are not regarded to be higher education.

NQF for Finland[99]

There is the Government Proposal to Parliament for an Act on the National Framework for Qualifications and Other Learning, but it has not yet been approved. It will cover all officially recognised qualifications (general, vocational education and training, higher education and other learning). It is an eight-level framework described through knowledge, skills and competence. The descriptors have been inspired by the EQF but adopted to suit the national context.

A qualification framework for higher education, in line with the overarching qualifications framework for the European higher education area has been developed since 2005 forms an integrated part of the overarching framework for lifelong learning. There is no intermediate level or short cycle within the first cycle. The descriptors for levels 6-8 have been adjusted to Dublin descriptors (QF for EHEA).

There is an ongoing debate that has not been concluded yet on how to open the framework up to qualifications' acquired outside the traditional, formal education and training system.

As the Finnish NQF has not been referenced yet to the EQF for LLL the ISCED levels will be used to define the qualifications in tertiary and post-secondary non-tertiary education and then discuss level 5 of the Finnish NQF **(**Sources [100] and [101]).

Specialist vocational qualifications are at ISCED level 4. Higher education, or tertiary level education, is at levels 5 and 6 in the ISCED classification. Educational level 5 of the ISCED classification (first stage of tertiary education) has been further divided into subclasses 5A (higher education) and 5B (lowest forms of higher education). Level 5A includes Finnish polytechnic degrees as well as first and second-cycle university degrees, "**while level 5B refers mainly to vocational college qualifications that have been removed from the educational structure in Finland"**[102]**.**

[99] For further information see the website: http://www.oph.fi/qualificationsframework The legal texts are so far only in Finnish and Swedish, but more information will be included in English later.
[100] National framework for qualifications and other competence; Reports of the Finnish Ministry of Education 2009: 24 http://www.oph.fi/instancedata/prime_product_julkaisu/oph/embeds/120794_NQF-muistio_EN_02_10.pdf
[101] CEDEFOP: The development of national qualification frameworks in Europe, 2010; http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6108_en.pdf
[102] National framework for qualifications and other competence; Reports of the Finnish Ministry of Education 2009: 24 http://www.oph.fi/instancedata/prime_product_julkaisu/oph/embeds/120794_NQF-muistio_EN_02_10.pdf

The proposal for the Finnish NQF has placed some specialist vocational qualifications at level 5 of the Finnish NQF. However, they are not an intermediate level or short cycle within the first cycle of higher education.

Vocational upper secondary qualifications and further vocational qualifications are placed at level 4. In special cases, individual vocational qualifications may be placed at one level higher than the basic qualification, if the requirement level of the qualification clearly differs from other qualifications of the same type.

Thus, the vocational upper secondary qualification at level 5 is the Vocational Qualification in Air Traffic Control and the further vocational qualification at level 5 is the Further Qualification in the Construction Industry.

The Diploma in Police Studies and Finnish Police Sergeant's Examination which requires prior upper secondary level education is placed at level 5 of the national framework.

The Fire Fighter and Emergency Response Centre (ERC) Operator examination requires competences that correspond to vocational upper secondary qualifications or further vocational qualifications and therefore is placed at level 4 of the national framework but the competence requirements of the sub-Officer Examination correspond to those of specialist vocational qualifications and consequently the qualification should be placed at level 5 of the national framework.

The competence requirements of military master-level studies correspond to the requirements of specialist vocational qualifications, so they are placed at level 5 of the proposal for a national framework.

9. France

Introduction to higher education in France

Higher education in France is provided by a range of institutions with different purposes, structures and admission procedures.
Three types of institution offer provision: universities, établissements publics à caractère administratif (EPA), which are under the supervision of different ministries, and instituts ou écoles supérieures privées.
They offer five types of provision:

University programmes ; one of those being the Diplômes Universitaires de?Technologie (DUT or University diplomas of technology- level 5 SCHE which is organized within the IUT or Instituts Universitaires de Technologie(University Technolgy Institutes) and the CNAM (Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers);
Grandes écoles, (prestigious institutions of higher education);
Preparatory classes (classes préparatoires) for the grandes écoles (CPGE) offered in lycées; although these classes can be considered as level 5 no further description is needed as they are a first step to gaining a place in the Grandes écoles mentioned above and do not have a an independent mission (?)
Sections de Techniciens Supérieurs (STS, level 5 SCHE),which lead to the BTS or Brevet de Technicien Supérieur or Certificate of Higher Technician in lycées but also
Ecoles spécialisées or specialized schools.

All diplomas and certificates leading to a professional qualification and recognised by the S tate and the social partners are registered in the « **Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles (RNCP) »** (National directory of professional certifications).

Organisation of SCHE

The qualifications obtained after 2 years of post-baccalauréat studies, corresponding to 120 European credits (ECTS) are called:
- DUT: diplôme universitaire de technologie (technological university degree).
- BTS : brevet de technicien supérieur (higher technician's diploma),
- BTSA : Brevet de technicien supérieur agricole
- DEUST : Diplôme d'études universitaires scientifiques et techniques
- DMA : Diplôme des métiers d'art.
- TP : NIVEAU III Titre Professionnel.
- CPGE : classes préparatoires for the grandes écoles

These qualifications are situated at level III of the French qualifications framework (lowest level 5 and highest level 1) and are the equivalent of level 5 qualifications of the EQF for LLL. France has had its own descriptors for each level since the French NQF has existed since before the EQF and Dublin descriptors have been adopted. However, the French descriptor for level III of the French NQF is

compatible as well with the EQF descriptor for level 5 as with the descriptor of the short cycle within the first cycle of the overarching qualifications framework of the European Higher Education Area. There are 80,000 students in the CPGE but this qualification is clearly a preparatory qualification and it does not prepare young people for the labour market. As the majority of level 5 students are studying at IUTs (118,000) or at the STS (234,000) and as these receive a qualification for the labour market we shall concentrate on these two groups.

Legislation for DUT and STS has been recently modified by the following decrees:
The key decree for the DUT : Décret du 03 août 2005 relatif au diplôme universitaire de technologie dans l'Espace européen de l'enseignement
The key decree for the STS : Décret du 11 avril 2007 modifiant le décret n° 95-665 du 9 mai 1995 relatif au règlement général du brevet de technicien supérieur.

The legislation covers the following areas: the organisation of SCHE, its entrance requirements, the fields of study, accreditation, transition from SCHE studies to degree studies, the institutions where SCHE is organised and the tuition fees for SCHE.

Recent changes over the past 6 years concern two major developments. The progress students can make after SCHE to a standard bachelor degree or to the professional bachelor(?). A new element is also the Projet personnel professionnel de l'étudiant (the personal professional project of the student) which focuses on potential career prospects.

SCHE (DUT or BTS) may be organised by the State or by private education organisations. It is funded by the State or by other public authorities such as the Régions (Regions). It may also be funded by industry or by professional organisations. SCHE is provided in universities, technical universities, vocational colleges, further education colleges, secondary schools and within the framework of formal adult education. There is often cooperation with Chambers of commerce and/or professional organisations.

The programmes at IUT and STS have a clear professional orientation. The curriculum is composed of theory, practice and work placements.

BTS and IUT courses are normally two years full-time but they may also be organised in a flexible way on a part-time basis . This is the case for approximately 10% of the students.

For many years, responsibility for the organisation of the STS (programmes and curriculum) has been assigned to the Ministry of Higher Education even though the operational budget and the management of the professional careers of the lecturers is still the responsibility of the Ministry of Education .

The Ministry of Higher Education is in charge of opening up new or closing down existing departments of the IUT but this is totally decentralized to the Académies (the regional education authorities) and the regions as far as the STS are concerned.

Access to SCHE and transition to degree studies

Access to SCHE studies requires a certificate or diploma of general secondary education, of technical education or of vocational education (Certificat ou diplôme de l'enseignement secondaire général, Certificat ou diplôme de l'enseignement technique secondaire or Certificat ou diplôme de l'enseignement professionnel secondaire).

The IUT or STS may be accessed via a selection procedure. The selection procedure is based on an admission application. The type of *baccalauréat* awarded and the grades achieved during the last two years of *lycée* are determining factors. Access is also possible based on recogniton of prior learning. Access for students from other countries is possible using APEL.

Transition (regulated by legislation) to university degree courses is relatively easy and most students from IUTs have no problem . In many cases students with a DUT or BTS apply to do a vocational degree (licence professionelle) at university. Professional experience is taken into account when students transfer . There are, however, no top-up programmes.

Profile of students and lecturers

Students in STS and DUTs represent approximately 20% of the 18 to 21 year-old cohort. In the IUT and STS there are approximately 350.000 students of which 54% are male and 46% are female. Only 10% of the students are mature students and 90% attend courses full-time. According to most respondents students from a disadvantaged background are over-represented in IUTs and STS. The estimated figures given vary between 30% and 50%. The success rate in the BTS is 67 % and for the DUT 76 %.

The profile of students studying at the IUT is not fully comparable with students at the STS . Many more STS students have a technological baccalaureate diploma (70% in the STS as compared to only 10% in the IUT) . There is a stronger representation of boys and girls from socio-professional (?) categories in the IUT. More students from the IUT continue ondegree courses (80% in the IUT compared with only 50% of those in the STS). The IUTs are gradually becoming a way to avoid doing the 1st (L1) and 2nd (L2) year of the Bachelor's study at the university as those L1 and L2 years are considered by parents and families to be problematic . Consequently the vocational character of the IUT is gradually disappearing. This phenomenon is also taking place in the STS but to a lesser degree.

The lecturers teaching at the STS are normally recruited through a competition at the level of a master's degree (bac + 5 / so called second degré) while those lecturing at the IUT are university professors or Maîtres de conférences recruited via other procedures. In reality, however, many lecturers (with a second degré master's level) teach at the IUT.
10 to 20% of the lecturers have a professional profile linked to the specialisations taught in the STS or IUT. Most of the lecturers are full-time except those also working in industry or commerce.

Internationalisation

All institutions use ECTS alongside a national credit system because they are legally obliged to do so. The same goes for the Diploma supplement which is also compulsory by law.

Most of the STS and IUTs are involved in European or international cooperation in the framework of Erasmus and / or Leonardo. The STS and IUTs are involved in staff and student mobility, in projects and in double, multiple or joint degrees. A specific feature of the STS is that some of them are involved (as well as in Leonardo and/or Erasmus) in Comenius projects as they are part of upper secondary schools. The majority of SCHE students also make use of the Europass certificate.

QA and accreditation

So far a process of QA (internal and external) has not yet been put in place strictu senso within national education in France except in some private organisations that are not under the responsibility of the ministry. Until now the ministry considers that quality is ensured through the inspectorate and by putting in place very strict training and certification procedures. The question of QA carried out by an independent body has been repeatedly debated but no consensus has been reached. In fact, on the contrary, different opinions prevail on how this should be done.

Accreditation is mainly the responsibility of the Ministry of Education but also of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Social Affairs. For the STS there are also other recognised accreditation organisations, besides the Ministry of education.

Employability and multilingualism

The employability of graduates from IUT and STS is very high as 90% of the students find a job within 2 to 4 months and 5 years after graduation there is virtually total employment. Less than one quarter of graduates will be employed in the production industry and the overall majority in the service Industries.

Employability is promoted by the STS or IUTs by taking into account the needs of the labour market and labour market analyses when setting up programmes or when drafting the curricula, focusing on professional competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes), by implementing a modular approach and by collaborating with industry through placements and alternative learning paths.

Institutions (especially STS) work on multilingualism by teaching non-language subjects in a foreign language, by having guest lecturers from other countries, by promoting study and work placements in other countries by promoting the learning of at least two foreign languages, by inviting students to make assignments and projects in other languages, by developing projects in which multilingual teams of students work together and by training non-language teachers to teach their subject in another language.

Cooperation with local industry and the local community

There is very close collaboration with the social partners, especially for the STS through the CPC (commissions professionnelles consultatives). Employers support the BTS and IUTs by helping to define and design the curricula, by reflecting on the content of these programmes, by offering placements for students at level 5, by offering dual learning paths or by financially supporting level 5 education.

Cooperation with industry is thought to be important both by the institutions and by industry itself. Cooperation is implemented in the following ways: representatives of local industry sit on the board of the institutions, check the quality of teaching materials, help to define professional competences, participate in internal QA and provide work placements for students and lecturers.

Although cooperation with local industry or organisations is not compulsory, there is a lot of cooperation for various reasons. Placements in local industry or organisations are compulsory and representatives of local industry must be on the board of the institutions.

Sectoral or professional organisations cooperate with STS or IUTs in the framework of the CPC by drafting sectoral qualifications frameworks, by being involved in defining curriculum content and/or by offering training sessions. Trade unions cooperate with Level 5 institutions to draft specific vocational profiles.

Level 5 institutions are socially committed by having a diversity charter, by collaborating with local NGO's, by implementing a sustainable development policy, by teaching corporate social responsibility and by engaging students in local social projects. This commitment depends on SCHE providers and is very different according to the institution concerned.

10. Germany

Introduction to higher education in Germany

According to the information received there is no SCHE at level 5 of the EQF. Notwithstanding this some information is given about higher education and about post secondary education which may be relevant to the debate on SCHE.

Although official sources such as Eurydice[103] mention the Fachakademieen as elements of tertiary education but outside the higher education sector, they do not seem yet officially integrated into EQF level 5 or into short cycle higher education.

The tertiary sector includes, first and foremost, the 391[104] state-maintained and state-recognised different types of institutions of higher education such as *Universitäten (*universities) and equivalent institutions of higher education (Technische Hochschulen/Technische Universitäten, Pädagogische Hochschulen, theological colleges et al), Colleges of art and music and Fachhochschulen (incl. Verwaltungsfachhochschulen). Moreover and, to a limited extent, there are also establishments outside the higher education system. Thus, in addition to institutions of higher education, some Länder also have Berufsakademien, which offer an alternative to higher education[105]

Berufsakademien (professional academies) form part of the tertiary sector and combine academic training at a Studienakademie (study institution) with practical professional training in a training establishment, thus constituting a duales System (dual system). The companies bear the costs of on-the-job training and pay the students a wage, which is also received during the theoretical part of the training at the study institution.

Berufsakademien were first set up in 1974 in Baden-Württemberg as part of a pilot project and are now to be found in some Länder as either state-run or state-recognised institutions.
As an alternative to the dual courses of the Berufsakademien, several Fachhochschulen have developed so-called dual courses of study.

The Berufsakademieen or “duale Hochschulen” (Dual universities) are also considered as institutions of higher education. They are recognized by the state. The study lasts 3 years, whereby theory and practice constantly alternate. That means that a (theoretical) instruction phase of several weeks in the Berufsakademie vocational academy is followed by a training block of several weeks in the enterprise . Formerly the Berufsakadmie resulted in obtaining a BA diploma. Now the studies are concluded with a Bachelor’s title in most of those Berufsakademieen. There are Berufsakademieen in in Baden-

[103] Eurydice (2010). *National system overviews on education systems in Europe and ongoing reforms.* http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_DE_EN.pdf
[104] Figures for 2007-2008
[105] Eurydice (2010). *National system overviews on education systems in Europe and ongoing reforms.* http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_DE_EN.pdf

Wuerttemberg, Saxonia, Berlin and Thuringia which are funded by the authorities. In Hessen, Lower Saxony, Hamburg, Saarland and Schleswig-Holstein they are privately financed.

Post-secondary education in Germany

According to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), the Fachschulen, the Fachakademien in Bayern and the two- and three-year schools in the health sector are also part of the tertiary sector. They are, however, not regarded as higher education. Fachschulen are institutions of continuing vocational education in the tertiary sector that, as a rule, require the completion of relevant vocational training in a recognised occupation requiring formal training and subsequent employment[106]. Fachschulen exist in the following fields: agricultural economy, design, technology, business and social work. Whether on a full or part-time basis, they lead to a professional continuing education qualification in accordance with Land legislation. In addition, Fachschulen can offer follow-up and further courses, as well as career development programmes. Those who complete training at the Fachschulen act as intermediaries between the functional sphere of graduates and that of skilled workers in a recognised occupation requiring formal training.

Schools in the health sector offer training for occupations in the health sector, e.g. nurse or physiotherapist. Many of these schools have a physical and organisational link with hospitals where both theoretical and practical training is provided.

Depending on the training objective, *Berufsfachschulen* require their pupils to have a *Hauptschulabschluss* or a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss*.

The NQF for Germany

A comprehensive national qualifications framework [107]for lifelong learning based on learning outcomes (Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen, DQR) is currently being developed in Germany. An eight-level structure has been proposed to cover all main types of German qualifications. It will include qualifications obtained in general education, higher education and vocational education and training An NQF for the higher education sector (related to QF-EHEA) was established in 2005 and put in place since then. However, this QF does not include short cycle higher education. In January 2010, the self-referencing report of the NQF for HE to be compatible with the QF-EHEA was published. In this report the difficulty for adopting the short cycle was explained as follows:
"The essential difference between DDs[108] and QR DH[109] lies in the level of the short cycle. A corresponding logic cannot presently be found in the German higher education system. Although there are – e.g. in the training of educators – approaches towards assigning technical college training to the short-cycle system. However, these training programmes only actually manage to clearly meet the

[106] Eurydice (2010). *National system overviews on education systems in Europe and ongoing reforms.* http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_DE_EN.pdf
[107] Cedefop, Developments in national qualification frameworks in Europe, 2010: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6108_en.pdf
[108] Dublin descriptors
[109] Qualifications Framework for German Higher Education

objective of employability. A direct continuation of the studies for a Bachelor's degree – with full credit – is not foreseen, neither in systematic nor institutional terms[110].”

The relationships and links between the NQF for HE and NQF for lifelong learning are currently being discussed in Germany.

The Discussion proposal for a German Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning[111], prepared by the “German Qualifications Framework Working Group” mentions clearly the possible professional and personal competences to be acquired at this level 5. The overarching competence for this level 5 is: “Be in possession of competences for the autonomous planning and processing of comprehensive technical tasks assigned within a complex and specialised field of study or field of occupational activity subject to change”. It will be interesting to see which studies and/or training will be linked to level 5 of the German NQF.

The country chapter for Germany has not been commented on by the national authorities.

[110] Report on the compatibility of the "Qualifications Framework for German Higher Education Qualifications" with the "Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area"(2008). p. 25
ttp://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/qf/documents/NQF_Germany_self-certification_English.pdf
[111] Discussion proposal for a German Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning prepared by the “German Qualifications Framework Working Group”, February 2009. To be found on:
http://www.sgw.hs-magdeburg.de/eumahp/z-pdf/DQR_discussion_proposal.pdf

11. Greece

Although there is currently NO SCHE in Greece and although Greece has no intention of introducing SCHE in the near future, some information is given about higher education and about post-secondary education. The latter is also not considered to be SCHE at level 5. The information is taken from the 2009 Edition National summary sheets on education system in Europe and ongoing reforms made by Eurydice .[112]

Introduction to higher education in Greece

Higher education in Greece consists of two parallel sectors: the University sector (Universities, Polytechnics, Fine Arts Schools, the Open University) and the Technological sector (Technological Education Institutions (TEI) and the School of Pedagogic and Technological Education).

The Framework Law (2007) that defines the two parallel sectors in higher education also regulates issues concerning governance of higher education along the general lines of increased participation, greater transparency, accountability and increased autonomy.

The legislation establishing the International University of Greece aims at facilitating student mobility and increasing the number of places offered in higher education, especially for foreign students while also enabling it to offer distance learning courses.

There are also State Non-university Tertiary Institutes offering vocationally oriented courses of shorter duration (2 to 3 years) which operate under the authority of other Ministries.

Entrance to Universities *(Panepistimio)* and Technological Education Institutions (*Technologiko Ekpaideftiko Idryma* – TEI) depends on the general score obtained by Lyceum graduates on the Certificate, on the number of available places (*numerus clausus*) and on the candidates' ranked preferences among schools and sections.

After successful completion of their studies in universities and TEI students are awarded a *Ptychio* (first cycle degree). First cycle programmes last from four years for most fields to five years for engineering and certain other applied science fields and six years for medicine. The *Ptychio* leads to employment or further study that includes the one year second cycle leading to the second degree, *Metaptychiako Diploma Eidikefsis* – equivalent to the *Master's* degree – and the third cycle leading to the doctorate degree, *Didaktoriko Diploma*.

Recently legislation on quality assurance in Higher Education, the Credit Transfer System and the Diploma Supplement was implemented defining the framework and criteria for evaluation of university departments and for certification of student degrees. Thus Greece wants to promote student mobility and contribute to the creation of a European Higher Education Area.

[112] The present information and more is to be found on the following webpage: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_EL_EN.pdf

Post-secondary education

Post-secondary vocational education is delivered at Instituta Epaggelmatikis Katartisis-IEK (Vocational Training Institutes) . These institutes aim at providing vocational training at post-secondary level , whether initial or supplementary; ensuring relevant qualifications for trainees through the provision of scientific, technical, vocational and practical knowledge; and enabling them to develop the skills necessary to facilitate their professional integration in society whilst meeting the ever-changing needs of the labour market.

Vocational Training Institutes (IEK) offer formal but 'unclassified' education since as well graduates of Gymnasio and graduates of all types of Lykeio can be enrolled. Thus, general Lykeio (ΓΕ.Λ./GE.L.) graduates receive initial training, which gives them the possibility to acquire new professional skills whereas graduates of Vocational Lykeio can supplement their professional knowledge and receive further training. The duration of training ranges from 1 up to 4 semesters depending on the specialty and the certificate the trainee had acquired during upper-secondary training. Each training year is divided into two (2) semesters, and each semester lasts (14) full training weeks. Usually graduates attend 4 semesters of initial vocational training, or 2 semesters of further training in the case of vocational education graduates who followed a similar course.

Post-secondary education is also provided at private colleges. These private institutions of non-typical post-secondary education and training were introduced by the recent Law 3696/2008 . They fall under the category of non-formal post-Lykeio education and training and provide organised educational activities outside the formal educational system. They have specific and specialized educational objectives. Licenses for their establishment and operation are granted by the Ministry of National Education. However, the study or other certificates they provide are not considered to be equal to those granted within the framework of the Greek Post-secondary System of Typical Education. Usually they offer short non-typical vocational studies .

There are several ministries or legal entities of public law that can establish IEK. They are responsible for the organization and operation of the IEK through joint decision of the competent Minister and the Minister of Finance. However, the definition of the specifications and the approval of the IEK curriculum is the responsibility of the Minister of National Education.

The NQF for Greece[113]

According to the consultation proposal the Greek NQF will be a comprehensive framework covering all parts and levels of education and training. An eight-level structure has been proposed reflecting existing education and training systems in Greece. EQF level descriptors are taken as a starting point for further developments. Levels are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

[113] Cedefop: The development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe (August 2010): http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6108_en.pdf

A qualifications framework for higher education is being put in place separately from the NQF for LLL. Some coordination between the two initiatives is ensured by the involvement of higher education representatives in the development of the NQF. The NQF is expected to be in place by 2011.

One of the issues to be discussed in the consultation process will be the referencing of qualifications awarded by private colleges which cooperate with foreign accreditation bodies, mainly from the UK and the USA. In Greece, there is a clear division between non-university, mostly private, institutions and the university sector, which is public and charges no fees in accordance with the Greek constitution. Universities have the exclusive right to award traditional HE qualifications (MA, BA and Doctorate). Referencing higher education qualifications awarded outside traditional universities using learning outcomes-based level descriptors is seen as a challenge.

The country chapter for Greece has not been commented on by the national authorities.

12. Hungary

Introduction to higher education[114]

Tertiary level education offered by higher education institutions includes:

- Higher vocational training (Short Cycle Higher Education – SCHE) awarding an ISCED 5B level vocational qualification and
- higher education degree programmes awarding an ISCED 5A level qualification, which entitles the holder to pursue a specific profession.

Institutions **of higher (tertiary) education** in Hungary cover universities (egyetem) and colleges (főiskola). Hungary does not make a distinction between tertiary and higher education.

Due to the Bologna Declaration signed by Hungary in 1999 a three-cycle system has been introduced since 1 September 2006 although students who have started their studies in the one long cycle system can finish them.

After upper secondary education the (Hungarian) system offers education at bachelor's level that lasts 3-4 years ,which can be followed by master's level course(s) for another 1-2 years (master level public servant). The third cycle provides doctoral training. Besides multi-cycle courses, there are a few fields of education where education and training remained one long cycle course. These programmes that lasted 5-6 years in the former system are maintained alongside the new structure and are phased out gradually. Higher vocational training programmes are available after upper secondary education as an alternative to the bachelor programmes.

The admission criterion to PhD courses is a university (egyetem) degree, or a master's degree.

Students can attend professional higher education training programmes after any degree (Bachelor's or Master's). They involve specialization in a field of study, but do not lead to another degree (a certificate is awarded on completion).

Organisation of SCHE

SCHE was started up in Hungary in 1998. Higher vocational training (ISCED 5B) was made to form part of the duties of institutions of tertiary education through the Act on Higher Education, and the related government decrees. The most important legislation is the 1/2006. (II.17) act of the minister of education on the national qualification register covers all issues related to SCHE: organization, entry, fields of study, QA and accreditation, transition from SCHE to further degree studies and tuition fees.

The legislation that modifies the rules of higher vocational training defines the possibility of a contractual relationship between the student and a business firm for practical professional training.

[114] Based on Eurybase

Recent changes concern the introduction of new, competence based, modular Higher Level Vocational Training (HLVT or SCHE) programmes.

This form of SCHE education and training is spreading fast in comparison with other European countries, led by the demand of industry. A special characteristic of SCHE is that students may have a legal relationship with a higher education institution if the training is organised by a HEI, or they may have a legal relationship with a szakközépiskola – upper-secondary vocational institution - if the training is organized by such an institution in cooperation with a higher education institution.

Vocational training courses may be launched by an individual institution as soon as the professional standards and examination requirements have been announced in a ministerial decree. An institution of tertiary education may launch a course of higher vocational training – following ministerial approval of professional standards and examination requirements – only if it has the conditions in place in its basic courses of the same area.

A new national qualification register had been introduced in 2006. The base of this new strategy is better solving the economic and wider social needs. Through the modular system different programmes have to be linked and credit points have to be accepted. All programmes are **practice oriented,** based on the outcome requirements which are in different ministerial acts. The new register lists 21 study fields of vocational qualifications, including the higher vocational training qualifications. Owning to the new register new professional and examination criteria have been introduced. Together with the branches, there are more than 70 vocational training programmes.

SCHE is provided by the state or by private providers. It is provided within universities, university colleges or secondary vocational schools. It is subsidized by the state or by industry.

SCHE lasts two years and focuses on employment but is also a preparation for further degree studies. It is organized as well on a full-time as a part-time basis. The curriculum consists of a combination of theory, practice and work placement. The courses are organised in Administration, Agriculture, Arts, Biotechnics, Building, Business studies, Catering and hospitality, Chemistry, Education, Engineering, Environmental studies, Health care, Mechanics, ICT, Product development, Restoration, Social work and Legal practice. Recently new courses have been set up a.o. wine production technology assistant and Special administration for EU issues.

SCHE courses are organised in a flexible way to meet the needs of learners: the courses are time-tabled to meet the needs of learners, Open and Distance Learning programmes are offered using information and communication technology or SCHE courses are offered through blended learning.

Hungary is presently working on an integrated NQF with 8 levels. Sectoral QFs will also be integrated into the NQF. Within the 8 levels, level 5 is for SCHE of the Higher Level Vocational Training (HLVT or SCVHE) , level 6 is the Bachelor, level 7 is the Master and level 8 the doctoral programmes. However at the moment there are no descriptors yet to define level 5. However, there is a clear distinction between levels 4 and 5. Only 5 level HLVTs have a direct link to level 6. The NQF will provide accumulation of credits leading to level 5. The level 5 studies lead to the Certificate of higher level vocational qualification with state recognition.

Professional organisations and/or employers are closely involved in the designing and restructuring of curricula for SCHE. These professional organizations are chambers of commerce or employment agencies.

According to the 2005 Act on Higher Education the higher education institution may cooperate with the Chamber of Economics and Vocation in the preparation and implementation of the vocational and examination requirements. State recognition of a vocational qualification may be jointly claimed (through an accreditation procedure) by the chamber and the higher education institution. Agreements may be established with economic organizations in order to provide practical training. As a result of the revised vocational training system a new register of vocational qualifications was published. (2006/1. ministerial decree).

Access to SCHE and transition to further (bachelor) degree studies

The minimum entrance requirements are a Certificate/diploma of general secondary , of technical or of vocational education.

The legislation covers the transition from SCHE to degree studies. Approximately one third of the knowledge (30 to 60 credit points) acquired during the courses of higher vocational education or SCHE may be converted into credits at the bachelor level of tertiary studies. However the majority of students do not make the transition, although nearly half of them do. Candidates have to go through the entrance and admission procedure.

There are no access or bridging courses but there are top-up courses to facilitate the transition. Students coming from other (European) countries with SCHE qualifications can earn a degree in Hungary by using the credits earned in their own country and this based on recognition of prior learning. Some respondents pointed out an overall problem: the relations between the SCHE and the BSc are legislatively not defined. The main contradiction is that if SCHE wants to serve the reinforcement of HE more theoretical knowledge is necessary in the curriculum, while the focus in SCHE is on the practice-orientation, the knowledge taught is not in line with the demands of Universities.

Profile of students and lecturers

Almost 10 % of the age cohort 18 – 21 participate in SCHE. There are overall 37,100 students. 16 100 of them are male and 21000 are female. Approximately 1/2 study in vocational schools (szakközépiskola), and approximately 1/2 studies in tertiary educational institutions. 30.000 are full-time students and 7100 are part-time students.

Disadvantaged groups, students with a low socio-economic background are not more represented in SCHE than in other areas of HE. They represent less than 30% of the students.

The majority of the lecturers have a Master's degree. There is a mixture of lecturers with an academic and a professional profile. Several lecturers work part-time in SCHE combined with teaching at another

level or in another institution. Lecturers in vocational secondary schools usually have a master's degree in teaching which is not a requirement in higher education institutions is.

Internationalisation

ECTS is used by all institutions alongside a national credit system and this because institutions are legally obliged to do so. The diploma supplement is also used by all institutions because they are legally obliged to do so. The Europass certificate supplement is also used by most institutions.

Lecturers participate in Erasmus, Comenius and Leonardo da Vinci mobility within the LLP. Students mainly participate in mobility under the Leonardo da Vinci programme. Students involved in the mobility use the Europass for mobility and also the Learning agreement and the Transcript of records is used by some institutions for their students participating in mobility. Institutions also participate in Erasmus and Leonardo projects. Some institutions would also like to start with joint degrees or double-degrees because the industry and market are mainly internationalized.

And there are many good examples, but unfortunately not in the fields of Education. There are quite a lot settled foreign enterprises for example in the auto-industry, in the food-industry, but the education of workforce is done by the firms.

The main obstacles to involvement in student mobility are a lack of foreign language knowledge, the financial problems and the time schedule as it is difficult to fit mobility in the curriculum.

QA and accreditation

Internal quality assurance/self-evaluation is applied by all institutions offering SCHE as it is compulsory in Hungary. An external mechanism for monitoring quality assurance in SCHE exists and is applied by the national quality assurance agency, sometimes assisted by foreign experts. Accreditation is awarded by the national accreditation agency. In the HEIs the accreditation is in the hand of National Higher Education Accreditation Body.

Employability and multilingualism

There is a genuine need or demand for graduates at level 5B in Hungary. The employment rate of SCHE graduates is between 80% and 85%. There are some so-called more popular or higher in demand areas such as institutional communication or media technology. The average duration for level 5B graduates to gain initial employment is 4 to 6 months. They mostly work as white collar workers in administration, sales or hospitality management.

Employers support SCHE by helping to design the curricula, by reflecting on the content of these programmes, by offering placements for students at level 5B, by financially supporting level 5B education or by actively participating in the teaching

Employability is focused upon by taking into account the needs of the labour market and labour market analyses when setting up programmes or y focusing on professional competences, by focusing

on multilingualism, by implementing a modular approach, by regularly adapting the curricula to the needs of the labour market and by having a career guiding service.

SCHE institutions work on multilingualism by teaching non-language subjects in a foreign language, by having guest lecturers from other countries, by promoting mobility to other countries for students to study, by promoting mobility to other countries for students to do placements and by training non-language lecturers to teach their subject in another language. Some institutions also make the learning of foreign languages compulsory and promote the learning of at least two foreign languages.

Cooperation with the local community

Both institutions and industry consider cooperation to be important and beneficial. SCHE institutions cooperate with industry as representatives of (local) industry sit on the board of the institutions or are helping to draft programmes/ curricula. They also sit on examination boards, check the quality of teaching materials or teach at the SCHE institutions. Representatives of (local) industry help define the professional competences, participate in external QA panels and offer placements for students.

Professional/sectoral bodies collaborate with SCHE by drafting professional profiles at the level of SCHE or by being involved in curriculum contents and offering training courses. Trade unions do not seem to cooperate with SCHE institutions.

SCHE- institutions show their social commitment by collaborating with local NGO's, by teaching corporate social responsibility, by implementing a sustainable development policy or by engaging students in local social projects.

13. Iceland

Tertiary education in Iceland

At present there are seven higher education institutions in Iceland[115]. Higher education institutions include both traditional universities and institutions which do not carry out research. Four higher education institutions are operated by the state, while private parties with state support operate three institutions. The state institutions do not charge a tuition fee (only an enrolment fee), the private institutions charge tuition fees.

Institutions of higher education vary in the extent to which they engage in research and the number of programmes of study offered. The HEIs can also be categorized into four groups according to their specialisation: two agricultural institutions, one academy of arts, one business school, and three institutions offering a wide ranges of studies. Other differences include the number of enrolled students, the mix of programmes offered, and the level of education and research activity.

As a main rule, students enrolling in higher education institutions must have completed matriculation examination or equivalent study. Higher education institutions can accept students who possess equivalent level of maturity and knowledge as assessed by the respective higher education institution.

As a general rule, studies at the higher education level in Iceland are divided into three degree programmes: a bachelor's degree, which normally takes three to four years to complete (180 – 240 ECTS credits), a 60- to 120-credit master's degree (MA, MSc, MBA, MEd, MPaed, etc.) with a duration of one to two years and a doctoral degree, with a duration of three years.

In some of the higher education institutions a diploma or certificate is awarded after one or two years' study in various subjects, such as pedagogy, gerontology, business and languages. The diploma courses are short, practically / professionally oriented and theory-based. It is not common for these courses to be combined with placement (in industry).

Iceland also has post-secondary education at level 5 of the NQF or of the EQF. This is organized by some comprehensive schools, which next to other courses organize post-secondary non-tertiary programmes, such as programmes to educate master craftsmen.

The participation rate in higher education is more than 55% and the graduation rate is between 50% to 60%.

The NQF for Iceland

A ten level NQF is under development in Iceland at the moment. SCHE is at levels 7 and 8 of the NQF which is equivalent to level 5 of the EQF: the post-secondary non higher education part at level 7 and

[115] Based on Eurybase

the higher education part at level 8, the first level of the three higher education levels. Iceland's higher education qualification framework has three levels (cycles) but the first two are each subdivided into two sub levels, the SCHE is at sub level one at level one. This proposal builds on the previous seven-level approach but introduces three entry levels. Only the seven 'original' levels will be referenced to the EQF (the Icelandic level 1 will cover levels 1 and 2 of the EQF).

SCHE is at level 6 of the Icelandic NQF which is equivalent to level 5 of the EQF. [116] It is the first level of the five levels of the Icelandic NQF. In fact Iceland's higher education qualification framework has three levels but the first two are each subdivided into two sub levels. Overall a ten level NQF is under development at the moment.

The descriptors are linked to the descriptors of Level 5 of the European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) Learning (EQF) and to those of the intermediate level within the first cycle of the overarching framework of qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).
There are no intermediate awards between EQF levels 4 and 5.

Organisation of SCHE

SCHE was introduced in Iceland in 1990. It is organized at national level and subsidized by the state. SCHE is provided by the state or by private education providers. It is always within the universities. There is no distinction made between universities and technical universities/universities of applied sciences/ institutes of technology / university colleges in Iceland.

As to legislation, the Framework Law on universities covers SCHE as all other levels of university studies. The Framework Law on Universities sets the framework for SCHE studies. The legislation covers entrance requirements, quality assurance and accreditation.

The short cycle higher education leading to the undergraduate diploma covers between 30 to 120 ECTS credits. The duration is between one to two years. The main objective is a short practical education. However, professional organisations and/or employers are rarely involved in the designing and restructuring of curricula for SCHE.

The curriculum consists of a combination of practice and theory. SCHE courses organised in a flexible way to meet the needs of learners as the courses are time-tabled to meet the needs of learners. SCHE is mainly organized in the following areas: languages, business studies, catering and hospitality and leisure.

Access to SCHE and transition to degree studies

The minimum entrance requirement for students in SCHE is the Certificate/diploma of general secondary education. There is no accumulation of credits leading to level 5 and there is no accumulation of modules leading to level 5.

[116] Source: http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/links/documents/Iceland_National_QF_2007.pdf

There is no legislation in Iceland in which the transition of SCHE to degree programmes is regulated. Students can use part of the credits earned to go on to level 6 of the EQF (or the 2nd level of the Higher education NQF of Iceland). The number of ECTS credits earned at level 5 EQF which the students use to earn a degree at level 6 differs from programme to programme. There are no access courses, no bridging courses and no top-up courses. Professional experience cannot be used to move onto a degree programme. Students coming from other (European) countries with SCHE qualifications earn a degree in Iceland using the credits earned in their own country and this on the basis of credits earned abroad.

Profile of the students and lecturers

The participation rate in SCHE for the age group 18 to 21 years is less than 10%. At the university of Iceland there are 104 SCHE students out of which 32 are male and 72 are female. Less than 1% are fulltime students. Disadvantaged groups or students with a low socio-economic background are not more represented in SCHE than in other areas of HE.

The majority of teachers/lecturers in SCHE hold a Ph.D. They have an academic profile and work full-time in higher education.

Internationalisation

ECTS and the diploma supplement are used by all institutions because there are legally obliged to do so. The Europass certificate is not used as only the diploma supplement is used in higher education. Lecturers participate in Erasmus, Comenius, Leonardo and/or Grundtvig mobility within the LLP programme. They are also involved in other mobility programmes . Students also participate in Erasmus mobility. However, it is difficult to organise student mobility at SCHE level as the programmes are so short. Students must have completed at least one year of academic studies before they go on an Erasmus exchange. The minimum period of stay abroad is three months. This explains why it is difficult in a short programme to organise a mobility. The students involved in mobility use the transcript or records and the learning agreement. Institutions of higher education are also involved in non-mobility Erasmus, Comenius, Leonardo or Grundtvig projects and in other bilateral and multilateral projects within various cooperation programmes. One of those is the Nordic cooperation Nordplus programme.

Quality assurance and accreditation

Internal quality assurance/self-evaluation is applied by institutions offering SCHE because it is compulsory. External monitoring of quality assurance in SCHE is carried out by a national QA agency/body assisted by experts from other countries.
The Ministry of education is in charge of accreditation. Only universities may offer SCHE and they must be accredited by the ministry.

Employability and multilingualism

There is a certain need or demand for graduates at level 5 in Iceland. Employers do not really support SCHE education and there is very limited cooperation between industry and SCHE education. However,

representatives from outside the university sit on the board as this is required by law. Professional organizations trade unions are very little or not involved in SCHE education.

Employability is enhanced by taking into account the needs of the market when drafting the curricula, by promoting multilingualism, by using innovative pedagogical approaches and by focusing on professional competences (knowledge skills and attitudes).

SCHE institutions work on multilingualism by teaching non-language subjects in a foreign language and by promoting mobility to other countries for students to study.
SCHE- institutions show their social commitment by having a diversity charter.

14. Ireland

Introduction to higher education in Ireland

Higher Education in Ireland consists of seven universities (with linked colleges) and a stand-alone college of medicine and allied health-care (the Royal College of Surgeons), fourteen institutes of technology, and HETAC-accredited independent colleges (numbering in the region of about 40) of varying sizes. There also exist some colleges with foreign awarding authorities (these will not be discussed below). Universities and institutes of technology are autonomous and self-governing, but are substantially state-funded. The independent colleges range from commercial for-profit providers to charitable bodies, some of which receive some state-funding.

Universities, in addition to offering degrees at Bachelor (Bologna Cycle 1), Masters (Cycle 2) and Doctoral (Cycle 3) levels over a wide range of disciplines, are involved in research programmes, often supported by government and with strong links to business and industry.

The institutes of technology offer programmes in technology, science, engineering and humanities at all levels from Higher Certificate to PhD, as well as providing craft and professional level programmes. One of these Institutes (the Dublin Institute of Technology) has statutory power to make awards. The other Institutes' programmes lead to awards made either by the institutes themselves under delegated authority from HETAC (the Higher Education and Training Award Council) or by HETAC. HETAC sets the standards for the awards of these institutes. In recent years, the institutes have greatly expanded their research portfolios.

Independent colleges offer courses covering a wide spectrum including business programmes, law, humanities, hotel, catering and tourism studies, science and art and design. Many of the programmes offered by these colleges are validated by HETAC and others have links with universities and/or professional associations through which the courses on offer are accredited. The College of Surgeons is quality assured by NQAI (as of October 2003) when granted degree awarding powers. Many of the independent colleges also offer courses leading to the awards of overseas universities (in many cases jointly with HETAC) or other awarding bodies.

HETAC validates programmes and sets standards for awards but does NOT develop programmes.

Organisation of Short Cycle of Higher Education (SCHE)

The main relevant legislation is the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act of 1999. It established three statutory bodies, National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) and HETAC. NQAI is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of the National Framework of Qualifications and is the quality assurance agency for DIT and RCSI. HETAC and FETAC are awards councils and external quality assurance agencies for higher and further education and training respectively. FETAC and HETAC set standards for awards (including

those made under delegated authority) and confer higher education and training awards (qualifications) upon students who apply and have achieved the necessary standard. The awards councils may delegate authority to make awards to certain 'recognised' institutions. The legislation covers *inter alia* the agencies (FETAC, HETAC and NQAI) and their functions, the providers of programmes of education and training which make FETAC or HETAC awards, the standards for awards (i.e. how they are determined) and the Framework of Qualifications, validation (i.e. programme accreditation) and quality assurance (internal and external, programme-level and institutional level). Plans to amalgamate the three bodies were announced in 2008 and it is possible that this will be accomplished by 2011. This change would require new legislation.

The primary legislation (Qualifications Education and Training Act 1999) is quite generalised. The details are 'filled in' by the policies of the statutory bodies created under this legislation. These bodies have established a framework of qualifications, procedures for 'Access, Transfer and Progression', validation policy and criteria, quality assurance policy and guidelines, etc. For details see www.nqai.ie, www.fetac.ie and www.hetac.ie.

A National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) with 10 levels has been developed and implemented across the further and higher education systems. For example Level 6 in the Irish NFQ = is at Level 5 in the EQF. The referencing (of the NFQ to the EFQ) report has been published at:
http://www.nqai.ie/documents/EQFReferencingReportfinalJune2009.pdf
Details about the difference between Level 4 and Level 5 of EQF can be found in the referencing report: http://www.nqai.ie/documents/EQFReferencingReportfinalJune2009.pdf. The descriptors are linked to both frameworks (the NFQ and the EQF). The NFQ has also been referenced to the Bologna framework (FQ EHEA) and the EQF.

There are four types of awards in the NFQ: Major, Minor, Special-purpose and Supplemental. Other awards may be aligned with the NFQ (http://www.nqai.ie/applications.html).
SCHE leads to the Higher Certificate (Higher Education) and the Advanced Certificate (Further Education e.g. Trades) — it may lead to certain non-major awards (e.g. special purpose awards). Minor awards can be thought of as components of major awards—thus the NFQ supports (but does not require) modular provision of education and training.

The major 'higher education' award at EQF level 5 (NFQ level 6) is called the 'Higher Certificate'. Incidentally there is also a 'further education' award at level 6 of the EQF (NFQ levels 7/8) which is called the 'Advanced Certificate'.

The Higher Certificate (NFQ level 6, EQF level 5) is normally awarded after completion of a validated programme of two years' duration (120 ECTS credits) in a quality assured higher education institution. Entry is generally for school leavers and those with equivalent qualifications. The major further education and training award at NFQ Level 6 (EQF level 5) is referred to as the Advanced Certificate. It is distinguishable from the Higher Certificate at the same level by its learning outcomes. It is important to note that a FETAC Advanced Certificate-Craft (which is one type of advanced certificate) is awarded upon completion of an apprenticeship. The Advanced Certificate is a further education and training award at level 6 of the NFQ and is not (as a non-higher education qualification) aligned with the Bologna Framework (FQEHEA).

SCHE can be organised by public sector providers or private sector providers; by professional organisations or by groups of providers in collaboration. Any higher education and training provider (public or private) can apply to become a 'Registered HETAC provider' and apply to have SCHE programmes validated (accredited). Therefore, the system in Ireland is open. Industry, professional organisations, authorities can all have programmes accredited via this route.

Much SCHE is organized within the institutes of technology and independent registered HETAC providers. It may be subsidized by the State or by industry or by the authorities and industry together.

SCHE is an integral part of educational provision in Ireland (outside the universities) and, as a consequence, every provider considers its provision in a strategic planning context. In particular, Institutes of Technology in Ireland have used SCHE, inter alia, as a means of reaching adults who wish to engage in lifelong learning.

SCHE courses are provided in various areas of studies but the bulk of provision is in the area of applied humanities, business, science, engineering and technology.

The duration of a full-time course is two years. In all cases it is a short professional course not linked to previous studies. The curriculum consists of a combination of theory, practice and work placement.

SCHE courses are organised in a flexible way to meet the needs of learners. The Open and Distance Learning programmes are offered using information and communication technology or through blended learning. Courses are also offered off-campus in the work place. To enhance flexibility, SCHE-courses are also offered on both a full-time and part-time basis.

Access to SCHE and transition to degree studies

The minimum academic entry requirements for the majority of third-level courses are determined at individual institution level and are generally based on national examination performance (2). For SCHE the minimum entrance requirement is the certificate/diploma of general secondary education. Entry on the basis of recognition of “Prior Experiential Learning” is possible.

Transition is possible and fairly easily carried out and most of the students make the transition. All 120 credits earned at SCHE level can be used when making a transition within the same field of learning in the context of a 'ladder' programme. Students from other European countries with SCHE qualifications can be awarded a degree in Ireland using the credits obtained in their own country or on the basis of RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning). Professional experience is taken into account when making the transition and it facilitates this transition.

SCHE is not as such explicitly referred to in legislation but the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act required that the NQAI develop procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression and that all providers implement these. See section 8(d) of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1999/en/act/pub/0026/print.html#partii-sec8

The corresponding procedures are at: http://www.nqai.ie/publication_oct2003a.html
See also: http://www.hea.ie/files/files/file/Na.

Profile of students and lecturers

Between 10% and 20% of the cohort 18 to 21 years participates in SCHE. 8878 students were involved in SCHE in 2008/2009). 5175 are male and 3703 are female. 58% are full-time students and 42% are part-time students. Between 35% and 40% of the students might be disadvantaged.

The majority of teachers/lecturers in SCHE have a bachelor's degree. There is a mixture of lecturers have an academic or professional profile. Most work part-time in SCHE combined with teaching at another level or in another institution.

Internationalisation

Some lecturers participate in staff mobility and some students may participate in student mobility under the Erasmus programme. Some lecturers also participate in Leonardo mobility. The Transcript of Records and the Learning agreements are used for mobile students. Institutions organising SCHE can participate in other EU programmes and in international programmes with activities other than mobility such as the development of collaborative programmes or joint awards. However, mobility and internationalisation are not very popular in SCHE-programmes.

ECTS is applied by all institutions. Similarly the diploma supplement is used in SCHE by all institutions. The Europass certificate supplement is not used in SCHE because the diploma supplement is used.

Quality Assurance and accreditation

Internal quality assurance (self-evaluation) is applied by institutions offering SCHE. There is also external quality assurance in accordance with ESG. HETAC (www.hetac.ie) is the national accreditation agency for the non-university sector. HETAC monitors and evaluates the quality of programmes leading to awards. HETAC also validates programmes (validation is accreditation of new programmes). It also periodically conducts institutional reviews of the effectiveness of quality assurance (*inter alia*). HETAC also has a process for the registration of new providers. Institutions with delegated authority from HETAC are allowed to validate their own programmes within the limits of their delegated authority. In some fields professional bodies also accredit programmes for professional purposes.

Employability and multilingualism

There is a genuine need and demand for SCHE graduates. They are employed as highly skilled technicians. However, at present the employment rate of SCHE graduates is less than 80 %. Many students stay in higher education after SCHE.

In institutions providing SCHE employability is assured by focusing on learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competence), by considering this aspect when the programme is being designed and validated periodically by consulting with employers, by collaborating with industry through placements

(though many programmes do not have placements) and alternative learning paths and by having a career guidance service. There is no specific focus on multilingualism in SCHE.

Cooperation with the local community

Professional organisations and/or employers are closely involved in the designing and restructuring of curricula for SCHE—they are also involved in the development of awards standards (i.e. broad statements concerning expected learning outcomes in the different sectors) by HETAC. SCHE education is organised in collaboration with professional organisations such as chambers of commerce, trade unions and other individual organisations.

Employers support SCHE by helping to design the curricula, by reflecting on the content of these programmes, by offering placements for SCHE students or by actively participating in the teaching. Companies strengthen the focus on learning outcomes and learning opportunities and assessment strategies aligned with learning outcomes.
Both the higher education institutions and industry consider cooperation to be very important. Representatives of local industry are involved by sitting on the board of the institutions or by offering placements for students. Professional/sectoral bodies also collaborate with SCHE by being involved in curriculum content. Trade unions collaborate with SCHE by helping to draft new programmes.

SCHE- institutions show their social commitment by having a diversity charter, by collaborating with local NGO's, by teaching corporate social responsibility or by engaging students in local social projects.

15. Italy

Higher education in Italy[117]

Higher education in Italy aims at promoting science progress and supplying the necessary scientific culture for the professional practice. The whole higher education sector in Italy underwent a reform process to align itself with the European model outlined through the following European agreements: Sorbonne (1998), Bologna (1999), Prague (2001), Berlin (2003) and Bergen (2005).

Higher education is organised at university and non-university level. The latter is offered by the higher level arts and music education system (*Sistema dell'Alta formazione artistica e musicale,* Afam) and by other institutions. The institutions belonging to the Afam system are: Academies of Fine Arts, the National Academy of Drama, Higher Institutes for Artistic Industries (*Istituti superiori per le industrie artistiche* – ISIA), the National Dance Academy, Conservatoires. Only universities and Afam institutes issue officially recognised degrees.

Higher education, both at universities and Afam institutes, is organised in three cycles: the first cycle lasting 3 years; the second cycle lasting 2 years and the third cycle with a variable length. Courses in medicine and surgery, veterinary science, and dentistry are still organised in one single cycle lasting 5-6 years [118].

Organisation of higher technical education

The Italian higher technical education and training system (post-secondary non-tertiary sector) has been recently reformed, according to the Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers (DPCM) of 25 January 2008 (Decreto del Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri recanti " linee guida per la riorganizzazione del Sistema di istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore e la costituzione degli Istituti tecnci superiori").

Although higher technical education is considered to be post-secondary non- tertiary education, we shall discuss the system as the Italian Ministry regards some of the qualifications issued by these institutions as equivalent to the French BTS which is clearly situated in higher education at level 5 of the EQF for LLL[119] . Moreover, the credits earned can partly be used for courses at university or non-university higher education[120].

According to the DPCM ITS[121](higher technical education institutes) were created next to IFTS[122](higher technical education and training) which have existed since the legislation of 1999. The objectives of this reform are diverse: to contribute to the promotion of technical and scientific culture and support,

[117] This introduction is largely taken from the information about Italy in Eurybase: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/IT_EN.pdf
[118] Eurydice (2010). *National system overviews on education systems in Europe and ongoing reforms. Italy.*
[119] ETF, 25-26 October 2010, Education Policy Conference "*Linked Learning: can options in Postsecondary VET make a difference?"* Torino (Italy)
[120] DPCM art. 5 § 4
[121] Istituti Tecnici Superiori
[122] Istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore

in a systemic way, actions for economic development and competitiveness of the Italian economic system through the following initiatives: implementing a more structured and articulated offer of educational pathways in the field of higher technical education, matching the labour market demands, strengthening the role of vocational and technical schools in the technical-scientific sector, enhancing a closer cooperation among the different local stakeholders in the framework of the "Training Hubs", setting up a permanent career guidance function with a focus on technical-scientific professions, updating in-service training for teachers of technical, technological and scientific subjects and supporting the labour market with active measures, in line with continuing education policies and in a Lifelong Learning perspective.

ITS and IFTS are organised on the one hand by the central (national) government and by the territorial government of the regions, on the other. The national government regulates the general norms on education by issuing national legislation, by deciding on the founding principles, by defining the core curriculum (such as professional profiles and their corresponding learning outcomes to be achieved), by defining the administrative organization and by regulating working relationships. At territorial level, the regions plan their educational offer.

The creation of the ITS foundations has been inspired by the Fachhochschule in Germany, the University of Applied Sciences in Switzerland, the Section de Techniciens Supérieurs attached to a Lycée (leading to a Brevet de Technicien Supérieur ,BTS) and the IUT , Institut Universitaire de Technologie (leading to the DUT or Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie DUT) in France.

ITS foundations are part of the overall reorganisation context of higher technical education and training, with the aim of strengthening and optimising higher professional oriented education so as to give more value to the technical and scientific education sector, as stipulated in article 69 – law 17 of May 1999 number 144. The objective is to create a qualification that is recognised at European level and is placed in the middle between the upper secondary diploma and the 3-year university diploma (laurea breve).

ITS pathways are due to start in September 2011, therefore there aren't any data yet concerning students (enrolment, attendance and employment rates). Moreover, the Ministry of Education is still working on ITS Regulation which will state access rules, national professional profiles and learning outcomes, final exams and quality standards for the pathways.

ITS are specific types of foundations composed by public institutions and private stakeholders. They can be set up by:
- an upper secondary institution that, according to article 13 of law number 40/2007 belongs to the technical or vocational education in the province where the Foundation will be established;
- A local body or organization (municipality, province, etc.);
- An accredited training body for higher education, located in the same province where the Foundation will be established;
- An enterprise which insists on the production sector the ITS refers to
- A university department or an equivalent institution that is active in scientific and technological research;

ITS have to be seen as specialised technological schools of excellence training high level technicians and stimulating technological transfer to industries. The ITS design learning and study pathways for young people and adults to obtain a higher technical education diploma that refers to technological areas, considered to be a priority by the economic national programme developed by the Ministry of Economics and which also refer to the strategic framework of the EU: Energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, new technologies for life, new technologies for the "made in Italy" industry, ICT and innovative technologies for cultural heritage.

ITS can only be established if they are scheduled within the local development plans endorsed by the Regions and by the independent Provinces of Trento and Bolzano in the implementation of their exclusive competence in the field of planning the training and education offer.

ITS operate on the basis of territorial plans which means that the creation of ITS and their education and training pathways have to be linked to the regional development plans of the region. The curricula of education and training pathways of ITS , though referring to national profiles, are designed to meet industry, commerce and trade demands in that particular region.

Next to ITS there is IFTS that aims at a quick insertion of students into the labour market and at an upgrading of skills for those who are already employed. IFTS courses are destined to young people and adults who, after having obtained a secondary education diploma, want to obtain a specialization corresponding to high level qualifications and specific professional skills. IFTS courses last two semesters for a total of 800/1000 hours[123].

Courses organised by ITS last 4 semesters for a total of 1800/2000 hours and, for specific subjects, up to a maximum of 6 semesters.

Students who finish ITS and IFTS receive respectively the diploma of technician for ITS and a technical specialisation certificate for IFTS.

The Italian NQF

At the moment Italy does not have a national qualification framework yet. However, Italy is using the Dublin descriptors of the overarching framework for the European Higher Education Area nationally for the three cycles agreed within the Bologna process. According to the study on Qualification Frameworks by CEDEFOP (2010)[124] more specific descriptors are being defined for each programme by universities. Short cycle qualifications will be defined by sub-descriptors taking into account differences in specific elements of qualifications (e.g. workload, length, access etc).
This might indicate that in the future ITS-studies might be recognized as SCHE. However, in Art. 4. § 2.h of the DPMC of 25 January 2008 ITS and IFTS-studies are " at the present state" defined as level 4 of according to the 85/368/CEE decision of the European Council.

[123] Eurydice
[124] CEDEFOP (2010). *The development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe.* Thessaloniki: CEDEFOP

Access to IFTS and transition

All young people or adults (employed or not employed) can access courses organized by ITS and IFTS institutions as long as they have a diploma of the upper secondary school.

Admission to IFTS is allowed also for those who have not obtained the upper secondary school diploma but who have acquired the necessary skills during their previous educational or training pathways and work experiences carried out after completion of compulsory education at the age of fifteen (10 years of compulsory schooling).

According to the DPMC of 25 January 2008 (Art.5, § 4) the recognition of credits certified as a result of learning pathways (ITS and IFTS) can be recognised as university credits for the three-year "laurea" or bachelor degree by the universities involved in the design and organisation of these programmes, as mentioned in Article 4 of the Decree of the Minister for Universities and Research March 16, 2007.

Profile of the students and lecturers

The students can be either generation students (mostly 19 to 20 years of age) or mature students who are employed.
It is important to stress that flexible pathways facilitate employed adults and young learners' access to ITS and IFTS courses. Recognition of prior experiential learning is important for both adults and young students.

Lecturers will mostly have a II level Master degree and not less than 50% must have a professional background with specific professional experience in industries for at least five years. This means that a large number of teachers have a professional background.

Internationalisation

It is important to point out that the legislation stipulated that 30% of ITS training has to be an internship in industry and that this may take place abroad. This definitely holds a lot of potential for students and teachers to be involved in Erasmus and/or Leonardo mobility.

Employability and multilingualism

Employability is very high and all diplomas and certificates offered in the ITS and the IFTS are developed in close cooperation with all stakeholders concerned; therefore, they respond to skill needs of the labour market. As on top of this the regional aspects of the needs are also taken into account, one may assume that this has a positive impact on employability.

Employability is definitely enhanced by the fact that different stakeholders (especially companies) and regional planning authorities are involved in the bodies (foundations and consortia) managing ITS and IFTS. This means that curricula are closely linked to the actual skill needs of industry, commerce and trade. Employability is also enhanced by the fact that at least 50% of the lecturers in ITS and IFTS have not less than five year professional background in industry. Finally it is enhanced by the internship - at

least 30% of the total duration of the educational offer - which enables students to experience very concretely the specific skills and competencies they are trained for.

- **Cooperation with local industries**

For both ITS and IFTS, industries and enterprises play a major role in planning and setting up education and training pathways since they provide professional experts for lecturing and 'on the job learning'.

16. Latvia

Introduction on higher education[125]

In Latvia, tertiary education is provided by university type institutions, non-university type institutions and colleges. Higher education institutions (augstskola) in Latvia pertain either to university-type or non-university type.
The law defines four determinant criteria for a university status:

1) implementation of bachelor, master and doctor study programmes; assertion of doctoral thesis occurs annually,
2) at least half of persons elected in academic posts hold a doctor's degree,
3) issues scientific publications and
4) establishes scientific institutions or units in the main scientific disciplines corresponding to the implemented study programmes.

All types of higher education institutions (augstskola) can offer short-cycle professional programmes (ISCED 5B) that last two or three years. These so-called 'college programmes' are basically offered by another education institution, koledža.

The university-type of augstskola, universitate, offer both academic and professional programmes which last three or four years for Bachelor's degree, one or two years for Master's degree. Scientific activities last three or four years for Doctoral degree.

Professional higher education is divided into first-level and second-level professional higher education. First-level professional higher education programmes lead to Level IV professional qualifications; they are called 'college programmes' and are mainly established to train specialists for the labour market. Colleges may function under higher educational institutions and also as independent institutions. Colleges provide first-level higher professional education considered as the first phase of the second-level professional higher education programmes offered by a higher education institution.

There are public and private (i.e. established by legal persons as defined by the legislation) higher education institutions. Second-level professional higher education programmes lead to Level V professional qualifications (the highest professional qualification that provides planning and research possibilities in the respective branch). These programmes last at least four years.

The government sets the number of places in public sector institutions financed from the state budget. Students themselves or other legal entities or physical persons pay tuition fees if the place is not financed from the state budget. In the academic year 2009/10, 70 % of students paid for their studies. There are two types of loans available to students: one to cover tuition fees and another to cover living expenses.

[125] This introduction is taken from Eurybase:
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/LV_EN.pdf
and from: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_LV_EN.pdf

In a state-accredited study programme provided by higher education institutions it is possible to receive:

1) Academic education resulting in the following degrees: Bachelor and Master (academic degree) and Doctor (scientific degree).
2) Professional higher education resulting in level IV or level V professional qualification and Bachelor and Master professional degrees.

Bachelor degrees give access to Master studies, and Master degrees or its equivalent give access to doctoral programmes.
Professional higher education result in level IV or level V professional qualification and students are awarded a professional Bachelor's or Master's degree.

Organisation of SCHE

SCHE is organized nationally. It is included in the legislation of 2001 with some amendments in the Law of Higher Education Establishments in 2006. The legislation focuses on: the organisation of SCHE, the entrance requirements, the fields of study, Quality Assurance and accreditation, the transition from SCHE studies to degree studies and the institutions where SCHE is organized. Furthermore there are particular regulations regarding Fire Safety and Civil Protection College, State Police College, State Border Guard College. There are also the professional standards approved by Cabinet of Ministers. SCHE is called the 1st level higher education. The programmes have to be designed in accordance with the professional standards. There are some recent amendments to the Law of Higher Education Establishments in 2006. There was also a request to upgrade the curricula of the SCHE by introducing the basics of entrepreneurship etc.

SCHE is provided by the state and private education providers. It is subsidized by the state or by other organisations. It is provided within the universities, within colleges and within vocational / professional colleges. SCHE is a short professional education not linked to previous studies. It is organized as well on a full-time as a part-time basis. The curriculum consists of a combination of theory, practice and work placement. Professional organisations and/or employers are closely involved in the designing and restructuring of curricula for SCHE. The professional organizations involved are: Chambers of Commerce, Trade Unions or Employment agencies.

SCHE is clearly situated at level 5 of the NQF and of the EQF. It is still not yet solved whether there will be a clear distinction between levels 4 and 5 of the NQF. The levels 1 - 4 will be regulated in the new Law of Professional Education which is being prepared at the moment.
The descriptors for SCHE in Latvia are linked to the descriptors of level 5 of the European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF)and to the Dublin descriptor for the intermediate cycle within the first cycle of the overarching framework of qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

At the moment in the current Law of HE the SCHE graduates receive diploma of the 1st level professional higher education and the 4th level of professional qualification in accordance with the concrete professional standard.

SCHE courses are organised in a flexible way to meet the needs of learners. Thus, the courses are time-tabled, open and distance learning programmes are offered using information and communication technology and SCHE courses are also offered through blended learning.

SCHE courses exist in many areas and over the last years courses have been developed in education, arts, business studies, law, ICT, engineering, building, health care, social work, services, civil and military defense.

The duration of SCHE is 80-120 Latvian credits (used to be 1,5 times bigger than an ECTS credits which is 120 to 180 ECTS credits).

The NQF for Latvia

Latvia has not introduced an NQF. However, there is a draft of a Qualification Framework for Higher Education approved by Rector's Council and Higher Education Council. There are also plans for a Latvian NQF[126]. It will have eight levels: four addressing primary and secondary education and VET; four for higher education level qualifications. Levels 1-4 will be defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence. The descriptors for higher education qualifications based on Dublin descriptors and the Bloom taxonomy have been drafted and adopted by the Higher Education Council. Descriptors for basic and secondary education level qualifications are being elaborated.

Access to SCHE and transition to degree (bachelor) studies

All higher education institutions require a secondary education diploma. Since 2004 higher education institutions have to enroll students on the basis of the results of centralised examinations passed at the end of secondary education. However, higher education institutions may still organise one or several additional entrance examinations, aptitude tests or a competition with an emphasis on subjects pertinent to the chosen programme. The standards required for the entrance examinations correspond to secondary education standards. There are additional demands for entrance in specialized military colleges.

There is legislation in Latvia in which the transition of SCHE to degree programmes has been laid down. Students can use part of the credits they earned at level 5 to go on to level 6. The majority of students do go on studying a degree after having finished SCHE. There are access or bridging course but they are not compulsory and there are only top up programmes for certain areas of study. Professional experience is taken into account when graduates from SCHE programmes in Latvia move onto a degree programme and it facilitates transition. Students coming from other (European) countries with SCHE qualifications can earn a degree using the credits earned in their own country and this built on Recognition of Prior Learning.

[126] Cedefop: The development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe (August 2010): http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6108_en.pdf

Profile of students and lecturers

The participation rate in SCHE of the age cohort 18-21 is between 10% to 20%. The total number of students involved in SCHE is 18,647 of which 5594 are male and 13,053 are female. 52% are full-time students and 48% are part-time students. 33% are mature students (over 21 years of age). Disadvantaged groups or students with a low socio-economic background, are more represented in SCHE than in other areas of HE but there are unfortunately no data available.

There is a mixture of lecturers with an academic and a professional profile. Lecturers work full-time in SCHE.

Internationalisation

A national credit system is used but ECTS is not yet used by all institutions. More and more institutions are starting to use it as they are legally obliged to do so. The diploma supplement is used by all institutions because they are legally obliged to do so. The Europass Certificate Supplement is not used as the Diploma Supplement is used.

Lecturers and students are mobile in the framework of the various sub programmes of the LLP programme: in Erasmus, in Comenius, in Grundtvig and in Leonardo da Vinci. Both students and lecturers are also involved in other mobility programmes. The students involved in mobility use the Europass, the transcript of records and the learning agreement.

Institutions are involved in various projects within LLP such as Comenius, Erasmus, Grundtvig and Leonardo. They are also involved in other bilateral and multilateral projects.

QA and accreditation

Internal quality assurance/self-evaluation is applied by institutions offering SCHE on a voluntary basis. External quality assurance/self-evaluation is implemented by a national QA agency. The Ministry of Education and Science is in charge of the accreditation of SCHE institutions.

Employability and multilingualism

There is a genuine demand for graduates from SCHE. They work as highly skilled technicians. Unfortunately no information is available as to the employment rate and as to the duration it takes for graduates to find their initial first job. However, the only Latvian institution that responded to the questionnaire reports an employability rate between 95% and 100%. Their students find a job within four and six months of graduation.

Employers support SCHE by helping to design the curricula. The institutions focus on employability by taking into account the needs of the labour market and labour market analyses when setting up program, by focusing on professional competences (knowledge skills and attitudes), by promoting multilingualism, by collaborating with industry through placements and alternative learning pathways, by regularly adapting the curricula to the needs of the labour market and by implementing within the SCHE institution a Careers' guidance service.

Multilingualism is pursued by having guest lecturers from other countries, by promoting mobility to other countries for students to study or do placements, by developing projects in which multilingual teams of students work together, by developing projects in which multilingual teams of students work together and/or by offering compulsory language courses.

Cooperation with the local community

Little information was made available on this topic. However, it has to be stressed that there is cooperation with local industry as SCHE courses usually serve the local needs.

17. Liechtenstein

Introduction to higher education in the Principality of Liechtenstein

There are only a limited number of higher education institutions in the Principality of Liechtenstein. The four institutions recognized by the state are the Liechtenstein University of Applied Sciences (Hochschule Liechtenstein – HL), the International Academy of Philosophy (IAP), the Private University of the Principality of Liechtenstein (UFL, former University of Human Sciences) and the Liechtenstein Institute (LI). Indirectly, the Interstate University of Technology Buchs (NTB) in Switzerland can be seen as a part of Liechtenstein's higher education system. In addition, Liechtenstein has contractual arrangements with Switzerland, Austria and Baden-Württemberg (Tübingen) in Germany, allowing student's free entry to the universities in these countries.

The Act on Higher Education of 25 November 2004 provides the legal basis for the implementation of various objectives of the Bologna Process.

Degrees awarded at the HL are mainly in Business studies and Architecture. The LI does not offer academic diplomas. Students working on dissertations, licentiate and diploma theses at foreign universities and scientific institutions are provided with a research advisor.

Organisation of further education

In Liechtenstein so called 'further education' study programs' can be understood as SCHE. No legislation regulating SCHE is in place at the moment but it will be introduced in the near future. In the framework of the introduction of a National Qualification Framework the need for regulation has come up. Regulations planned for the near future will cover the following aspects: organisation, entrance requirements, qualifications issued and accreditation.

The further education programmes are organised by higher education institutions, by private education providers and by professional organisations. They are provided by higher education institutions and by adult education organisations. They are not subsidized by the state but by industry.

There are several options as to the duration of these studies. They are, however, mainly offered on a part-time basis. The education and training offered is clearly further professional specialisation focusing on employment. Hence the curriculum consists of a combination of practice and theory

Professional organisations and/or employers are occasionally involved in the designing and restructuring of curricula for. The courses are organised in a flexible way to meet the needs of learners: the courses are time-tabled to meet their needs and/or are offered through blended learning.

SCHE courses only exist in the following areas: administration, business studies, environmental studies and protection, ICT and legal protection.

Access to further education and transition to degree studies

The minimum entrance requirements for students in further education are not regulated and there are big differences between the programmes of the institutions of higher education that organize it.

A final examination certificate, the Maturazeugnis or the Berufsmaturitätszeugnis, is required for admission to higher education. In certain cases practical traineeship or an additional examination is required before starting studies or during studies.

There is no legislation in Liechtenstein in which the transition of SCHE to degree programmes is regulated. There is the possibility for students from SCHE to make the transition to degree programmes but they have to have gained some work experience. Professional experience facilitates the transition. Special top-up programmes are organised but only for students that already have professional experience. Students coming from other (European) countries with SCHE qualifications can earn a degree in Liechtenstein using the credits earned in their own country on the basis of RPL.

NQF for Liechtenstein

No information was received on the NQF for Liechtenstein.

18. Lithuania

Introduction to higher education

Higher education in Lithuania is composed of university and non-university higher education. University-level courses are offered by universities. They are provided at three academic levels: undergraduate (Bachelor's) studies, graduate (Master's) and post-graduate (doctoral) studies). There are 15 state and 7 non-state universities.

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The sector of non-university higher education was established in 2000 following the passing of the Law on Higher Education. The first non-university higher education institutions with the name of Kolegija – 'colleges' (4 public and 3 non-state) were established on the basis of the former Aukštesniosios mokyklos or higher vocational schools that have now disappeared. Over the period of 2001 and 2002, 11 public and 6 non-state non-university higher education institutions were established. In 2010, there are 13 state non-university higher education institutions (colleges) and 10 non-state colleges. On completion of non-university study programmes, students are awarded a professional bachelor's degree.

There is no SCHE in Lithuania yet but there is post-secondary education having no formal links with higher education. However, Lithuania does have the intention of organizing SCHE in the future. There is no particular strategy yet for developing SCHE; it is only stated in the National Qualification framework ,which has already been approved by the government, that level 5 studies can be delivered.

Introduction to post-secondary education.

Post-secondary education is organised in Profesinė mokykla (vocational post-secondary education schools). Without providing higher education, post-secondary education is implemented in vocational schools of stage 4 intended for persons who have attained secondary education or completed a curriculum of a general education secondary school and seek to acquire a profession of a qualified worker. Admission to stage 4 of vocational schools is granted to pupils who have completed secondary education or have a certificate testifying that they have attended a course of studies comparable to the secondary education programme. Admission can, however, also be granted to pupils who only have basic education (10 years instead 12), but in this case duration of their studies is 3 years. The length of the education programmes in stage 4 of initial vocational education and training is 1 year, 1.5 years and 2 years. The length of the education programme depends on the complexity of the profession.

Currently, 115 education programmes covering 13 areas of study are provided in stage 4 of vocational schools. Stage 4 post-secondary vocational training curricula include the following fields: architecture and building, manufacturing and processing, engineering, computer sciences, fine arts, personal services, security services, social services, health care, transport services, business and administration,

farming, forestry and fisheries. Courses are composed of theory, practice and a placement in a company.

The NQF for Lithuania

The Lithuanian NQF was officially introduced in May 2010. It has eight levels, reflecting both the realities of the Lithuanian qualifications system and the requirements posed by the introduction of the EQF for LLL. In fact two qualification and education frameworks in Lithuania can be distinguished in 2010: there are on the one hand the 5 vocational education levels introduced in 1997 (updated in 2001) and the 3 levels of higher education introduced in 1992. The challenge will be to link up those two frameworks. It is not clear at the moment which EQF level and NQF level will be attributed to the existing post-secondary education.

19. Luxembourg

Introduction to higher education[127]

According to the law of 19 June 2009 on higher education, higher education in the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg comprises:

- university higher education organised in three cycles leading to the awards of bachelor, master and PhD qualifications;
- short cycle higher education leading to the award of "Brevet de technician supérieur" and "Brevet de technician supérieur specialise"
- the provision by foreign, public and/or private educational institutions either under their only responsibility, or in partnership with a Luxembourg organization other that the University of Luxemburg.

University higher education is provided by the University of Luxembourg as laid down within the framework of the law of 12 August 2003 concerning the creation of the University of Luxembourg. The University of Luxembourg awards bachelor and master degrees that can be either based on academic streams or on professional streams. The Professional bachelor has integrated the old DUT, Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie, (University Diploma of Technology) with the addition of a third year and the ensuing redefinition of the syllabus leading to a professional bachelor.

Organisation of the BTS

The Law of 19 June 19, 2009 on the organization of higher education, defines the organization of the short cycle leading to the delivery of Certificate of Higher Technician or Brevet de Technicien Supérieur, BTS. SCHE is organized and subsidized by the state. In practice it is provided by lycées or upper secondary schools and lasts two years or by a university.

The objective of the BTS is to prepare for a profession, the BTS mentioning the professional area concerned. This certificate shows that its holder has acquired a professional qualification, that they are able to work as a higher technician in the specific field in which they studied and that they are able to mobilize their knowledge, their competences, skills and attitudes to improve and to adapt during their professional life.

The BTS is a national diploma; it is delivered in a specific professional field in one of the following domains: industrial and commercial professions, professions of agriculture, professions related to crafts, professions in business and in health.

[127] As no representative of Luxemburg filled in the Eurashe questionnaire, the present contribution was drafted based on information found on the website of the Ministry of education. It is in particular based on the text of the new law of 19 June 2009 concerning higher education. A synthesis of this law was made and translated into English. The full text of the law is to be found in French on: http://www.legilux.public.lu/leg/a/archives/2009/0153/a153.pdf . The text has been amended By the Luxembourg Ministry of Edsucation.

The BTS education and training is composed of a mixture of part-time courses with practical training courses in the professional area concerned. The cycle of studies is composed of theoretical teaching with professional characteristics, of practice oriented seminars and of training in a professional environment based on a standard contract. The curriculum ~~of the studies~~ is organized in modules made up of a certain number of courses, which each leads to a certain number of ECTS credits.

It is provided by general secondary schools (lycées d'enseignement secondaire) and by technical secondary schools education (lycées d'enseignement secondaire technique) , both public schools and private schools recognized by the State.

The BTS studies can also be provided by an institution of higher education (private or public) accredited in accordance with provisions of chapter III of the 2009.

The specializations within the BTS are created by a decree signed by the Minister in charge of Higher education. The special committee mentioned in article 5 of the law of 2009 has accredited this specialization and the institution that can organize it.

BTS studies exist in the following areas: marketing, international trade, accountancy, management , management assistants or secretarial studies, media operators and comic strip drawing, health and care professions (of which pediatric, psychiatric, anaesthetics or midwife nurses and technical medical assistant in surgery), informatics, technical engineering and construction management.

Professional organisations and/or employers are closely involved in the designing and restructuring of curricula for SCHE together with the organizing institution.

The Lycée forwards the proposal of the program to the accreditation committee mentioned in article 19 of the 2009 law.

Article 6 of that law foresees tutoring and the follow-up of the students throughout the whole duration of their studies. In Article 7 it is stated that the minister decides on the dates of the beginning and of end of the year of studies. The studies are subdivided in two six-month periods. The number of candidates to be admitted in the first year of studies in the BTS training programs to be organized is also decided by the minister. Article 8 mentions the Registration fees that are charged. The maximum amount of the registration fees per six-month period is fixed at 100 € .

Article 9 of the 2009 law stipulates that the body of the lecturers must be composed of teachers teaching at the Lycées concerned and of specialists working in the professional field for which BTS are trained.

The Luxemburg NQF[128]

Luxemburg is still working on its NQF. Following an initiative of the Ministry of Education, a first outline of a comprehensive NQF was presented to the Council of Ministers in early 2009. Work has continued

[128] Cedefop, The developments of national qualification frameworks in Europe, 2010: to be found on: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6108_en.pdf

on this basis, resulting in the agreement (March/April 2010) of a set of descriptors covering all levels and types of education and training. Following a new presentation to, and discussion in, the Council of Ministers a consultation process involving the main stakeholders was carried out in 2010. This process is foreseen to be concluded by the adoption of the framework (and the referencing to the EQF as well as the self certification to the EHEAQF) in the first half of 2011.

Levels 5 to 8 are aligned with the European Higher Education Area qualifications framework and the Dublin descriptors, so in that sense they also describe progression from one level to the next.

Level 5 is now seen as the bridging level between both subsectors: in this level both VET qualifications and higher education qualifications can be found. This means that the Meister qualifications (master craftsman) will probably be placed at level 5, beside the higher technician certificate (BTS).

Access to SCHE and transition to degree studies

Access to BTS education is allowed for all school leavers holding a diploma of the general secondary or technical secondary education. Holders of a foreign diploma can be accepted on to the course provided their secondary school degree is recognized as equivalent by the minister in charge of higher education. Access is also possible taking into account prior experiential learning (including other diplomas or certificates acquired). The prior experiential learning must be acquired during a period of at least three years of (accumulated) professional or voluntary work in the specific professional area. In some cases recognition of prior learning (RPL) may result in students being exempted from certain modules or parts of modules or the totality of the modules constituting the programme. This will be based on the decision of a committee stating which knowledge, competences and skills the student has previously acquired. This committee can also decide to reduce the length of the placement in industry the students has to carry out as part of the BTS studies.

In specific study areas there may be special access conditions set by the Lycées. These have to be known to the candidates well in advance. If there are too many candidates for one particular field of study, the lycée may organize an entrance exam or may make a selection based on a careful analysis of an application/portfolio submitted by the candidates. All of this is done through a special ad hoc committee composed also of specialists in the professional field concerned.

There is no specific reference in the 2009 law as to the transition from BTS to bachelor's degree studies. The transition is, however, possible. Students who have obtained their BTS at a lycée can apply to the University of Luxemburg or any other university. Their application will be taken into consideration and they may be admitted to do a third year leading to a professional bachelor's degree (which is different from the other/academic bachelor degree).

Students with a BTS degree obtained in a lycée in Luxemburg may also apply for a place at the professional bachelor's degree in some French universities.

Profile of the students and lecturers

The total number of students involved in SCHE is

- 2008/09 : 224 of whom 76 are male and 148 are female
- 2009/10: 231 of whom 66 are male and 165 are female.

100 % are full-time students. 17,75 % are mature students (over 30 years of age).

Disadvantaged groups, students with a low socio-economic background, are more represented in SCHE than in other areas of HE. Both the creation of the University of Luxembourg and the development of the BTS programmes has led to an increase in participation of students with an immigrant background.

The majority of teachers in the BTS have a Master's degree. Lecturers work full-time in SCHE education. There is a mixture of lecturers with an academic and a professional profile (79 for 2009/2010) as well as specialists from industry (101 experts from industry for 2009/10). 15197 lessons were organized in 2009/10 with 21 lecturers (full time equivalent).

Internationalisation

The percentage of students enrolled with upper secondary education obtained in another EU Member State/outside of the EU is 33,33% in the BTS programmes. The language of instruction is either French, German or English.

ECTS credits must be used by law. The BTS Certificate of Higher Technician is awarded for studies within the 120 to 135 ECTS credit range. One exception to this is the BTS of midwife which requires 150 credits. The Diploma supplement is issued free of charge.

Students and lecturers of the lycées may be involved in mobility activities within the framework of Erasmus, Comenius or Leonardo da Vinci within, the LLP programme. The lycées themselves may also be involved in Erasmus, Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci of the LLP programme or other bilateral or international projects.

Quality assurance and accreditation

Each programme has to undergo ex ante accreditation. This procedure is carried out by an external committee set up by the ministry for higher education and composed of 3 "accreditors" from international agencies (Switzerland, France and UK-Scotland) and 3 representatives from Luxembourg economic sectors (employers and employees). The committee bases its decision on reports by expert groups, the composition of which has to include a student. The lycée applying for accreditation has to produce a self-evaluation report. The accreditation procedure also includes a site visit. The quality criteria are: programme validity (learning outcomes, demands of labour market, etc), programme feasibility, resources available, transparency of procedures (admission criteria, student assessment).

The accreditation granted to a lycée is valid for 5 years.

Employability and multilingualism

There is a genuine demand for graduates from SCHE. They work as highly skilled technicians on a labour market where two out of three newly created positions require qualifications at higher education level. The duration it takes for graduates to find their initial first job is three months. Employers support SCHE by helping to design the curricula.

Employability is focused upon by taking into account the needs of the labour market and labour market analyses when setting up programmes, by focusing on professional competences (knowledge skills and attitudes), by promoting multilingualism, by collaborating with industry through placements and alternative learning pathways and by regularly adapting the curricula to the needs of the labour market.

Multilingualism is pursued by organizing courses in either French, German or English, some of the programmes being bilingual, promoting mobility to other countries for students to study or to do placements, and/or by offering compulsory language courses.

Cooperation with the local community

There is close cooperation between the Lycées organizing the BTS and the professional organisations or companies in the specific field concerned. Both the lycées and the professional organisations consider cooperation to be very important to ensure quality professional training and to see to it that BTS education responds to the needs and the requirements of the labour market.

Representatives of industry or of the profession are involved in designing the curricula or in suggesting the contents of the curricula. They are involved in the selection committees if students have to be selected with an entrance exam or by presenting an application.
Representatives of the professional bodies or of industry may also be involved in teaching in the lycées. They are also involved in the juries for the final examination before the BTS certificate is attributed to the students concerned. Members of the professional bodies or industry are also involved in the accreditation committee mentioned earlier.

There is no information available as far as the social commitment of the BTS is concerned. However, as mentioned before the BTS has led to widening participation of students of migrant origin.

20. Malta

Introduction to higher education

Higher education is offered at the University of Malta, an autonomous and self-governing body funded by government. The University offers courses at undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate levels. The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and the Institute for Tourism Studies (ITS) provide courses at ISCED level 5B. However, as from 2009, MCAST has successfully started offering vocational degrees up to level 6.

Students normally join University courses at the age of 17/18, although mature applicants are admitted mostly to part-time and evening courses. The admission requirements are the Matriculation Certificate at advanced and intermediate levels and the Secondary Education Certificate or equivalent qualifications. Besides the general entry requirements, specific requirements are set for each course. Students can also be admitted under the Maturity Clause (+23 year olds).

University students generally work towards a first (usually Bachelor's) degree during their three-year (General Degree) or four-year course (Honours Degree). The University provides courses leading to Master's degree (one to two years courses) and prepares students for Doctorate level qualification. Various certificate and diploma courses of one, two or three year duration are offered at ISCED 5B level at University, MCAST and ITS. Courses at University, MCAST and one course at ITS do lead to ISCED 5A degree courses.

Organisation

SCHE was introduced at University level approximately in 2005/06 in VET schools in 2005/06.
The legislation of higher education applies to SCHE and it covers various topics such as the organisation of SCHE, the fields of study in SCHE, Quality Assurance and Accreditation of SCHE, the transition from SCHE studies to degree studies and the institutions where SCHE is organized. Legislation (in the form of Legal Notices) are published from time to time to institutionalize courses within higher education in Malta.

The NQF was launched in June 2007 and the Referencing Report to the EQF and the QF-EHEA was presented to the EQF-Advisory Group in September 2009. The Referencing Report was published in Malta in November 2009. The Malta (National) Qualifications Framework (called MQF) has been introduced in Malta largely in line with the 8 levels of the European Qualifications Framework. SCHE is at level 5 of this NQF. The MQF makes a clear distinction between levels 4 and 5 of the EQF. In the level descriptors (see MQF level descriptors on www.mqc.gov.mt) MQF Level 4 provides access to MQF Level 5 or directly to MQF Level 6 (First cycle of the Bologna Process). The descriptors are thus linked both to the EQF and to the MQF. The MQF also provides an intermediate award between EQF levels 4 and 5.

SCHE in Malta leads to the following awards: VET Higher Diploma, Vocational Degree, Undergraduate Diploma or Undergraduate Certificate according to the SCHE studies made.

SCHE is provided by the state or by private education providers. It is organized in universities and in vocational / professional colleges. It is subsidized by the state or by industry or jointly by both of them. A small number of private education providers, run on a profit-making basis, offer courses in conjunction with foreign tertiary education institutions.

The duration of full-time SCHE is two years and students earn between 90 and 120 ECTS credits. SCHE is mainly a preparation for degree studies and is organized mainly on a full-time basis but part-time is also possible. The curriculum consists of a combination of theory, practice and, sometimes, work placement.

Professional organisations and/or employers are occasionally involved in the designing and restructuring of curricula -for SCHE to satisfy specific requirements. These professional organizations may be chambers of commerce, industry or employment agencies.

SCHE courses are organised in a flexible way to meet the needs of learners: wherever possible, the courses are time-tabled to meet the needs of learners, SCHE courses are offered through blended learning and via Open and Distance learning.

There is a great variety of study areas covered in SCHE such as Administration, Agriculture, Arts, Biotechnics, Building, Business studies, Catering and Hospitality, Cultural heritage, Education, Engineering, Environmental studies, Health care, ICT, Language studies, Leisure, Mechanics, Music and Drama, Product development, Restoration and Social work. Various courses are available within the University of Malta and others are available in the vocational college (MCAST); all at MQF Level 5. New SCHE courses are regularly introduced in a number of areas at University level or within the vocational college. The development of new SCHE courses is an ongoing process to satisfy the new skills for new jobs as well as to cater for the demands of students and the changing economy. In this respect Malta often works with the national agency promoting internal and external investments or directly with investors. Recent developments have taken place, for example, in electrical and mechanical engineering, in the care sector and in agribusiness.

Access to SCHE and transition to degree courses

The entry requirements are the Certificate/diploma of general secondary education or the vocational qualifications at MQF Level 4. Entry on the basis of recognition of Prior "Experiential" Learning is also a possibility as long as applicants have the potential to follow courses at a higher level.

Transition is possible but the majority of students in SCHE don't make the transition. Legislation expands on the transition from SCHE to degree courses. Students can use part of the credits earned at level 5 to go on to level 6. The process varies from one course to another. VET Higher Diploma or Foundation Degree students move into a first degree course in the second or third year. There are access or bridging courses but they are not compulsory. Professional experience is sometimes taken into account when graduates from SCHE programmes in Malta want to move onto a degree

programme. There are top-up programmes only for students that already have professional experience. Students coming from other (European) countries with SCHE qualifications may earn a degree in Malta using the credits earned in their own country according to the mutual recognition of qualifications process.

Profile of students and lecturers

The participation rate in SCHE for the age cohort 18-21 years of age is 10% to 20% but steadily growing. 500 students are participating in SCHE in Malta of which 230 are male and 270 are female. 80 % are full-time students. MCAST thinks that disadvantaged groups or students with a low socio-economic background, are more represented in SCHE than in other areas of HE but there are no data available on those students. However, all social strata are actually benefitting from this provision.

Most of the teachers at SCHE level have a Master's degree and there is a mixture of teachers with an academic and a professional profile. However, 80% of the teachers must have professional experience. They mainly work full-time in SCHE.

Internationalisation

ECTS and the diploma supplement are used by the majority of institutions mainly because it facilitates transition to undergraduate studies but also because institutions are encouraged to do so, because it is used as an instrument for flexibility and because it facilitates international co-operation and mutual recognition of qualifications. The Europass certificate supplement is used by the majority of institutions.

Lecturers and students participate in mobility programmes under the various sub-programmes of the LLP mainly the Leonardo da Vinci programme but also the Erasmus, Comenius, Grundtvig sub-programmes. They are also involved in mobility in the framework of other programmes and in the framework of joint degrees. For students the learning agreements and the transcript of records are used. They also use the Europass.

Institutions are also involved in projects in the various sub-programmes of the LLP such as Erasmus, Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig. They are also involved in other bilateral and multilateral projects and programmes at EU level or beyond.

The Maltese institutions providing SCHE try to avoid potential isolation by developing steady relations with other similar institutions, generally after collaborating with them in European Union programmes and projects.

There are no major obstacles to involvement in mobility and the Government encourages teachers' and students' mobility at all levels and programmes in higher education. However, certain students may have financial problems and cannot afford mobility. As far as teacher mobility is concerned it is difficult to find periods where the mobility has least negative impact on students' learning.

QA and accreditation

Internal quality assurance/self-evaluation is applied by most institutions offering SCHE in Malta. External Quality Assurance of SCHE is applied by a QA agency. At the moment there is no specific institution in charge of accreditation. However, higher education institutions collaborate and work with foreign similar institutions and academics to ensure academic quality. The Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre acts as the local NARIC / ENIC.

MCAST is developing a robust internal quality assurance system and collaborates with foreign institutions in several areas in ensuring quality assurance. It ensures that its professional and vocational education and training awards are internationally recognised and referenced to the Malta (European) Qualifications Framework through the Malta Qualifications Council.
The University, with its centuries old tradition, has very a strong internal quality assurance system.

Employability and multilingualism

It has to be pointed out that SCHE is a successful provision in Malta both at University level (University of Malta) and at the vocational colleges (Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, and the Institute for Tourism Studies).

There is a genuine need for graduates with a level 5 degree. The employment rate is between 90% and 95% and they only have to wait for months before finding their initial job. However, the employability rate varies according to the area of specialisation. The graduates mainly work as highly skilled technicians in existing or recently developing industrial areas.

Employers often support SCHE by helping to design the curricula, by reflecting on the content of these programmes, by offering placements for students at level 5, by offering dual learning pathways, by financially supporting level 5 short cycle higher education and by actively participating in the teaching in very specialised areas of knowledge or practice.

Employability is focused upon by taking into account the needs of the labour market and labour market analyses when setting up programmes, by using innovative pedagogical approaches, by focusing on professional competences, by implementing a modular approach, by promoting multilingualism, by collaborating with industry through placements and alternative learning pathways, by regularly adapting the curricula to the needs of the changing labour market and by including personal development plans in the programme and by offering a career guiding service.

MCAST works both with industry, local and foreign professional bodies, the national employment and training agency as well as with the national agency for the promotion of internal and foreign investment in Malta.

Multilingualism is enhanced in various ways: by teaching non-language subjects in a foreign language, mainly English, by having guest lecturers from other countries, by promoting mobility to other countries for students to study and practise, by promoting mobility to other countries for students to do placements, by inviting students to make assignments and projects in other languages, by

developing projects in which multilingual teams of students work together and by training non-language teachers to teach their subject in another language.

Cooperation with the local community

Institutions organising SCHE and industry think cooperation between the two of them is important as it contributes to quality in SCHE education and training and as cooperation leads to institutions developing the diplomas industry really needs.

Institutions offering SCHE programs cooperate with industry by representatives of (local) industry sitting on the board of the institutions, helping to draft programmes / curricula, sitting on examination boards, teaching at the SCHE institutions, helping to define the professional competences, participating in internal QA, participating in external QA panels and offering placements for students and lecturers. It has to be pointed out that placements in industry for SCHE students are generally compulsory.

Professional/sectoral bodies collaborate with SCHE in various ways: by drafting sectoral Qualification Frameworks, by drafting professional profiles at the level of SCHE, by being involved in curriculum content and/or by offering practical training sessions. Trade unions collaborate with SCHE by offering expertise where necessary.

SCHE- institutions show their social commitment by having a diversity charter, by collaborating with local NGO's, by implementing a sustainable development policy, by teaching corporate social responsibility and by engaging students in local social projects. The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) has developed flexibility and responsiveness to satisfy current and emerging knowledge, competences and skills needs of the changing economy.

21. The Netherlands

Introduction to higher education[129]

The higher education in the Netherlands “hoger onderwijs” consists of a binary system. It comprises higher professional education (HBO: hoger beroepsonderwijs) and university education (WO: wetenschappelijk onderwijs). These types of education are provided by Universities of Applied Sciences ("hogescholen") and Research Universities respectively.

Research Universities combine academic research and teaching. University education focuses on training in academic disciplines, the independent pursuit of scholarship and the application of scholarly knowledge in the context of a profession and aims to improve understanding of the phenomena studied in the various disciplines and generate new knowledge.

Universities of Applied Sciences provide theoretical and practical training for occupations for which a higher professional qualification is either required or useful. Graduates find employment in various fields, including middle and high-ranking jobs in trade and industry, social services, health care and the public sector.

In 2006 a new type of higher education was introduced. It lasts at least two years and confers its own statutory qualification: the Associate degree. It is considered as SCHE.

Associate-degree programmes (Ad) were introduced at the request of various sectors of the labour market. The course of study is a two-year degree programme within the HBO bachelor’s degree framework. Pilot studies have started in the 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 academic years and HBO institutions have been asked to run a third pilot starting in 2009/2010, with Ad- programmes leading to a qualification for occupations as an assistant in secondary education or vocational education. In 2010 HBO institutions have been asked to run a fourth pilot starting in 2010/2011 or 2011/2012.
In 2010 the Committee on the Future Sustainability of the Dutch Higher Education System (‘Committee Veerman’) has proposed the government to implement the definite introduction of the Associate degree in 2010. The new government has announced that the report of the Committee Veerman will be adopted. Concerning the Ad this means the definite introduction of the Ad in 2011.

Organisation

SCHE was introduced in 2006 and is covered by the 'Variawet' of 1st September 2007 which brought various mutations into the Higher Education and Research Act including the implementation of SCHE. The law covers the organization of the Ad (within the bachelor framework), the Entrance requirements, QA and accreditation and the tuition fees for SCHE. This legislation states that SCHE is a formal degree (Associate degree) within the professional Bachelor degree, that it has at least 120 ECTS

[129] Partly based on Eurybase

and that SCHE has an experimental status until there will be a thorough discussion on the implementation of Associate degree pilots.

SCHE is clearly situated at level 5 of the EQF. Level 5 belongs to the system of higher education and level 4 is part of secondary vocational education.
The descriptors for SCHE are linked to the descriptors of Level 5 of the European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF). The statutory SCHE-qualification is Associate degree (Ad) as stated in the law.

The Ad is organised by public and by private funded institutions. SCHE (Ad) is provided within the Universities of Applied Sciences (Hogescholen) taking part in the Ad-pilots. It is subsidized by the state, by industry or by others. The majority of the Ad-programmes are offered by public funded Universities of Applied Sciences.

The Ad is organised in Administration, Agriculture, Arts, Biotechnics, Building, Business studies, Catering and Hospitality, Chemistry, Crafts, Domestic sciences, Education (trainers), Engineering, Environmental studies / protection, Health care, ICT, Language studies, Leisure and recreation, Mechanics, Music and Drama, Product development, Social work and Legal practice.

The duration is at least 120 ECTS credits and SCHE is organized on a full-time, part-time or dual ('work-based learning') basis.
Professional organizations, employers and/or employers' organisations are involved in the designing and restructuring of curricula. The curriculum consists of a combination of theory, practice and work placement. SCHE courses are organised in a flexible way to meet the needs of learners through e.g. time-tabling the courses to meet the needs of learners or through blended learning. They are as well focusing on a preparation for Bachelor degree studies as on further professional specialisation (non-formal education, where relevant) focusing on employment.

- **Access to and transition from SCHE to degree education**

The minimum entrance requirements for students in SCHE are diploma of general secondary education or the diploma of vocational secondary education (level 4 of the EQF). Entry on the basis of recognition of Prior "Experiential" Learning is also possible.

In the Higher Education and Research Act it has been laid down that Associate-degree programmes are integrated in professional orientated bachelor degree programmes and that Ad-degree holders automatically are entitled to complete their bachelor degree with the remaining 120 ECTS. The transition is fairly easy and most students make the transition.
The 120 ECTS credits earned at level 5 can be used by the students to earn a bachelor degree (for which the total is 240 credits). There are no access of bridging courses or top years but in case of completing the Bachelor programme at a later moment professional experience is taken into account and facilitates the transition. In 2011 the government will decide to implement the Ad in the higher education system on a structural basis. On that occasion it is possible that the position of the Ad, now being integrated in the bachelor, and the conditions for completing the bachelor degree will be changed.

Students coming from other (European) countries with SCHE qualifications earn a degree in the Netherlands using the credits they earned in their own country through recognition of Prior Learning.

- **Profile of students and lecturers**

The participation rate in SCHE is less than 1% (out of a total of 375,000 students attending higher education programmes), but just looking at the Bachelor programmes including a SCHE-programmes it is approx. 10% of the students. The total number of SCHE students in the pilot programmes is 3000 of which 1200 are male and 1800 are female. 55% are full-time students and 45% are part-time students. 70% are mature students.

Disadvantaged groups, students with a low socio-economic background, are not more represented in SCHE than in other areas of HE. No data are available as to the number of disadvantaged students involved in SCHE.

The majority of teachers/lecturers in SCHE hold at least a bachelor's degree and have mostly a professional profile (with experience in a professional context).

- **Internationalisation**

ECTS and the diploma supplement are applied by all institutions because they are legally obliged to do so. The Europass certificate supplement is not used because the diploma supplement is used.

Lecturers and students participate in teacher or student mobility under the Erasmus programme although not very frequently in SCHE programmes. Students participating in mobility do not use the Europass and do not leave with a Learning agreement. Neither is the transcript of records used. Although there are no specific obstacles to mobility of students and lecturers the fact that the present programmes are only pilots might be the reason why not many students or lecturers are mobile. SCHE institutions also participate in the Erasmus programme and in other bilateral or multilateral programmes. Some are already preparing joint degrees that will be introduced after the pilot phase.

- **QA and accreditation**

Internal quality assurance/self-evaluation applied by institutions offering SCHE because they are obliged to do so. External mechanisms for monitoring quality assurance in SCHE exist and the QA is carried out by the national quality assurance agencies. The national accreditation agency is accrediting HBO institutions, offering SCHE-programmes.

- **Employability and multilingualism**

There is a genuine need for SCHE graduates. The board of employers of small- and medium sized companies (MBK-Nederland) has urged members of Parliament to re-introduce SCHE. The employment rate is very high as between 95% to 100% find a first job between two to four months

after finishing their studies. Some of them already have a job before graduating. They mainly work as white collar workers in administration, sales or hospitality management.

Employers support SCHE by reflecting on the content of these programmes and by offering placements or dual learning paths to level 5 students.
Employability is focused upon by taking into account the needs of the labour market and labour market analyses when setting up programmes, by working on multilingualism, by focusing on professional competences (knowledge skills and attitudes) and by regularly adapting the curricula to the needs of the labour market.

Multiligualism is enhanced by teaching non-language subjects in a foreign language, by having guest lecturers from other countries, by promoting mobility to other countries for students to study or to do placements and by inviting students to make assignments and projects in other languages.

Cooperation with the local community

Both the HBO institutions and industry consider cooperation to be of great importance so as to enhance the quality of SCHE education and training.

Representatives of (local) industry sit on the board of the institutions. They help to draft programmes/ curricula or they teach at the HBO institutions. They help to define the professional competences. They are involved in internal QA and sit on external QA panels. Local industry also offers placements for students.

Professional/sectoral bodies collaborate with SCHE by being involved in curriculum contents. Trade unions are little involved with SCHE institutions.

SCHE- institutions show their social commitment by having a diversity charter, by collaborating with local NGO's, by implementing a sustainable development policy and by teaching corporate social responsibility.

22. Norway

Introduction to higher education[130]

Higher education in Norway is defined as education and training provided at universities, specialised university institutions, university colleges, university colleges of arts, other public university colleges not under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Research, and private higher education institutions.

Since the Quality Reform of 2002, higher education institutions offer 3-year bachelor's degrees, 2-year master's degrees and 3-year Ph.D. degrees. A few study programmes are shorter than 3 years. SCHE takes two years (within the BA) and is part of the universities or the university colleges.

There are some integrated five to five and half year master degrees and some professional study programmes that last 6 years. In addition, there are some master programmes of less than two years duration and some 4-year bachelor's degrees.

Tertiary education also includes vocational colleges (ISCED 4) and practical courses of training with duration of half a year to two years as alternatives to higher education.

SCHE was first introduced around 1970 but it has to be stressed that the general tendency is that SCHE programmes are becoming less and less popular and that most institutions of higher education are in fact phasing them gradually out.

Organisation of SCHE

SCHE is included in higher education and is regulated in the Act on Higher Education. The present law dates from 1 April 2005 with the latest amendment of 1st January 2009. The latest changes had to do with QA, the Bologna implementation and more institutional autonomy.

The legislation covers the organisation of SCHE, the entrance requirements, quality assurance, and accreditation, transition from SCHE studies to degree studies and the tuition fees for SCHE.
By law all accredited higher education institutions are free to establish study programmes up to and including SCHE and the Bachelor's level.

The country has adopted a NQF of higher education consisting of three levels for higher education: BA, MA, PH.D. but all qualifications are in line with the overarching framework of qualifications for the European higher education area (EHEAThis SCHE degree of "Høgskolekandidat" is obtained after two years of study and is part of the first cycle of the EHEA (BA). This degree may be built upon with one year to obtain a Bachelor's degree.

[130] Partly based on Eurydice

The descriptors for SCHE are linked to the descriptors of the intermediate level within the first cycle of the overarching framework of qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)

SCHE is a short professional education not linked to previous studies organized on a part-time or a full-time basis. However, in contrast with most other European countries that have SCHE, the main focus is on the teaching of theoretical courses with little practice and placements. SCHE courses might be organised in a flexible way to meet the needs of learners as might of the higher education courses are in Norway.

SCHE is organized within the universities or within the university colleges. It is also organised by private higher education providers. SCHE is subsidized by the state. State university and university college education is more or less free in Norway (no fees). At private university colleges, students may have to pay fees. It varies from one institution to the next how large the fees are.

As is the case for all higher education, professional organisations and/or employers are sometimes involved in the designing and restructuring of curricula. There is little or no involvement of Chambers of Commerce, of trade unions and/or employment agencies.

SCHE has a rather small number of study fields compared to other European countries. Those areas are mainly in administration, business, agriculture, engineering, domestic sciences, veterinary nursing and cultural heritage. One area which is quite specific to Norway is the education and training of driving instructors which is at SCHE level. Oslo university college (Høgskolen i Oslo), one of the main providers of SCHE in Norway, offers Administration, Arts, Business studies, Crafts, ICT and Music and Drama.

NQF for Norway

In 2009 Norway has introduced an NQF for higher education in the framework of the Bologna process. There are three cycles with a short cycle within the first cycle. The descriptors for this short cycle are linked to the Dublin descriptor for the intermediate cycle within the first cycle of the overarching framework of qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

Norway is currently in the process of developing an NQF for the whole education system, but has not yet decided on the number of levels. Two technical working groups have been addressing vocational education and training at upper-secondary level as well as tertiary/post-secondary VET education[131].

Access to SCHE and the transition to degree programmes

The minimum entrance requirement for students in SCHE is the Certificate/diploma of general secondary education. In fact the minimum entrance requirements to University College Candidate Degree studies are exactly the same as to Bachelor Degree studies, i.e. either certificate of general secondary education or professional secondary education (with additional exams within certain

[131] Cedefop: The development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe (August 2010): http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6108_en.pdf

subjects), or on the basis of recognition of prior learning (RPL), COMBINED with an age requirement of minimum 25 years.

SCHE is part of the first cycle of the EHEA and as such students receive the Norwegian University College Candidate Degree (120 ECTS credits) that is defined as a full qualification and the Act on it stipulates that graduates have to be given full recognition when transferring to another programme in an institution of higher education. Thus the transition is easy and the students can take with them the 120 ECTS obtained at SCHE level. As the Norwegian University College Candidate Degree is a completed academic degree in itself. It may also form the 2 first years of a Bachelor Degree within the same subject area / the same field of study. It is NOT a preparation for degree studies.
Students coming from other (European) countries with SCHE qualifications can earn a degree in Norway using the credits earned in their own country.

Profile of students and lecturers

The participation rate in SCHE of students in the age cohort 18-21 is less than 1 percent in Norway. In 2008 there were only 935.5 FTE students in SCHE. 485 were male and 450.5 FTE were female. Participation is very small in SCHE compared to the total number of students in higher education in Norway which is 179 661 students. Probably the majority of the SCHE students are adult learners but the data are not available nationally. However at Oslo University College 95 percent of the students are mature students. The total number of students in these University College Candidate programmes is approx. 700 (out of a total of approx. 12000 students in all study programmes at all levels at Oslo University College. There are no data available as to the proportion of disadvantaged students in SCHE.

As for the bachelor level, the majority of teachers/lecturers in SCHE hold a Ph.D. and the others have a Master's degree. There is a mixture of lecturers with an academic and a professional profile. However, the majority have an academic profile. There is not a certain percentage defined of the lecturers in SCHE with professional experience. Lecturers usually work full-time.

Internationalisation

ECTS is used by all institutions of higher education because they are legally obliged to do so. The same applies to the diploma supplement. The Europass certificate supplement is not used.
Lecturers participate in staff mobility and students participate in student mobility in the framework of the Erasmus programme of the LLP. Learning agreements and transcripts of records are used in the framework of student mobility. Students are not involved in Leonardo student mobility.

Both lecturers and students also participate in other bilateral or international mobility programmes. Institutions of higher education with SCHE are all involved in Erasmus, Comenius projects of LLP. They are also involved in other EU programmes plus in bilateral and international programmes. There are also many national programmes for cooperation and research in which the institutions of higher education participate.

QA and accreditation

Internal quality assurance/self-evaluation is applied by all institutions offering higher education, including SCHE as it is compulsory. External mechanisms for monitoring quality assurance in SCHE exist also for SCHE as they are part of the universities or university colleges. This external QA is done by a national quality assurance agency. Institutions of higher education are accredited by a national accreditation agency.

All Norwegian universities and university colleges with an institutional accreditation are self-accrediting bodies when it comes to study programmes at Bachelor's level (and thus programmes which include the 2-year University College Candidate Degree). Some of the private (non-state) university colleges do not, however, have an institutional accreditation. At these institutions, all study programmes must be accredited by the national accreditation agency (the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education, NOKUT).

Employability and multilingualism

The demand for graduates with a SCHE degree is gradually diminishing. Hence also the reason why less institutions of higher education organise it. This also explains the low number of students that take this degree. In a few cases there is a need for such a degree such as for veterinary nurse or driving instructor.

No data are available as to the employment rate of the SCHE graduates. This probably is linked to the fact that many of them go on studying afterwards. Employability is not really focused upon; the modular approach used in SCHE courses is believed to contribute to employability. Oslo university college focuses on employability by taking into account the needs of the market when drafting the curricula, by focusing on professional competences (knowledge skills and competences), by regularly adapting the curricula to the needs of the labour market and by having a career guiding service. Employers do not or rarely support SCHE.

Multilingualism is promoted by having guest lecturers from other countries and by promoting mobility to other countries for students to study. Higher education institutions also works on multilingualism by teaching non-language subjects in a foreign language, by promoting placements in other countries and by inviting students to make assignments and projects in other languages.

Cooperation with the local community

Although cooperation with industry is thought to be important, it is limited. Representatives of industry may sit on the board of the institutions. If there is cooperation it is mainly at the level of the faculty or of the institution of higher education. Representatives of local industry are also involved in SCHE by teaching at higher education institutions, by helping to define the professional competences needed by SCHE graduates and by participating in internal and external QA.

Involvement of professional / sectoral bodies and trade unions is even more limited. They may be involved, however, in meetings and in forums. Representatives of local industry are involved in SCHE

by teaching at higher education institutions, by helping to define the professional competences needed by SCHE graduates and by participating in internal and external QA.

Little information was made available as to the social commitment of SCHE in higher education in Norway. However reference was made to the fact that there are special programmes for students of migrant origin.

Note on Post-secondary education (non-tertiary) in Norway [132]

This level of education is regulated by the 2003 Act on vocational post-secondary education ("fagskoleloven"). As from 1 January 2010, the counties are responsible for the administration of this level of education, which covers a wide range of provision and providers.

The vocational post-secondary technical and maritime colleges, which are traditionally run by the counties, offer two-year courses to students who already have trade skills, practical work experience, and/or a vocational upper secondary qualification. They offer further vocational qualifications within a broad range of trades, including those of master craftsmen, and also act as a stepping stone to higher education.

Vocational post-secondary technical and maritime colleges currently offer courses in engineering, motor mechanics, drilling technology, production technology, electronics, machinery, process technology, welding technology, house building, heating-ventilation-sanitary technology, chemistry, foodstuffs technology, agricultural and maritime studies, and fishery.

The majority of the provision at the post-secondary non-tertiary level (ISCED 4) is private. Education at this level is of half-a-year (one semester) to two years' duration and covers a wide range of studies. Besides those at the technical public vocational colleges, there are recognised programmes in business administration, marketing, tourism, ICT, health and social education, alternative medicine, media, culture, arts, Bible studies, and varied service occupations.

The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) is since 1 January 2004 responsible for the recognition of vocational post-secondary education. At first, few private providers applied for recognition according to the Act on Vocational post-secondary education, but in the last few years, there has been a 'flood wave'. The Act on Vocational post-secondary education was amended in 2007, related to the role of NOKUT, the Act on Independent Schools and a revision of the regulations regarding financial support for studies to the effect that only pupils/students attending schools and/or programmes approved according to an educational Act are entitled to receive loans and grants from the State Educational Loan Fund. Since 2005, providers have queued up for approval by NOKUT and already in 2006/07, there were approx. 10.000 students in approved vocational post-secondary non-tertiary programmes By December 2009, there were 1321 recognised programmes distributed between 193 providers, of which 50 public, with a total of approximately 16200 students (11400 full time equivalents), of whom 6400 (40 %) – 4100 or 36 % in FTE. The numbers are still expected to grow.

[132] See Eurybase: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/NO_EN.pdf

23. Poland

Organisation of higher education[133]

In Poland there are several types of higher education institutions organised by the state: universities, technical universities, agricultural academies, schools of economics, teacher education schools, medical academies, maritime schools, academies of physical education, artistic schools, theological schools, higher vocational schools, military schools, and internal affairs schools. There are also non-state higher education institutions including higher vocational schools. In the academic year 2009/10 there were 461 higher education institutions in Poland providing higher education to 1 900.0 thousand higher education students.

The new 'Law on Higher Education' was introduced on 27 July 2005 and **does not mention Short Cycle Higher Education studies**. As from May 2006 there is also a separate ministry of Science and Higher Education.

Access to higher education requires the final examination certificate (świadectwo maturalne). Admission is based on the results of the egzamin maturalny examination. Some studies such as arts also require additional admission tests.

The main qualifications in Polish higher education are the title of licencjat (bachelor, 180 ECTS) or inżynier (engineer, between 210 and240 ECTS) after 3 to 4 years of study at a university or a university of applied sciences. The students can then progress to the title of Magister (Master, 120 ECTS) or Magister inżynier (Master engineer 90 ECTS).

There are also three-year professional studies at Teacher training colleges and colleges of social work leading to a Dyplom. Colleges are classified as tertiary education institutions for international comparisons, but they are not recognised as higher education in the national legislation.

Master degree holders can apply to do a doctorate (the third cycle studies).

In the process of harmonising Polish higher education with the recommendations of the Bologna process the following changes have been introduced: two – cycle studies, the diploma supplement (as of January 2005 compulsory in all HEIs), the system of ensuring quality and issuing accreditation (State Accreditation Committee – Państwowa Komisja Akredytacyjna) and ECTS.

Post-secondary education

Post-secondary education in Poland is based on the same legislation as secondary education. Post-secondary schools are not considered to be higher education.

Post-secondary schools enable their students to acquire vocational qualifications at the level of secondary, technical or vocational, education,. Training in such schools takes no longer than 2.5 years and it depends on the occupation as specified in the Classification of Occupations. Post-secondary

[133] This description is partly based on the Eurydice publications: National summary sheets on education system in Europe and ongoing reforms (2009). and on Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010, The impact of the Bologna process.

schools lead to acquisition of a diploma confirming vocational qualifications after passing of an external examination. Graduates of post-secondary schools who hold a Matura certificate may apply for admission to higher education institutions.

An NQF for Poland

The Polish qualification framework is being developed at present. The work on an overarching Polish NQF covering the whole Polish education and training system was officially started in August 2008 but the number of levels has not been decided yet[134]. However, the introduction of an NQF will require changes in the existing legal basis for the education and training system. The development of the qualifications framework for higher education has already resulted in proposals (by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education) for amendments to the Law on higher education accepted in September 2010 by the Council of Ministers.

[134] Cedefop: The development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe (August 2010): http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6108_en.pdf

24. Portugal

Introduction to higher education

Higher education in Portugal is organised in a dual system, including university and polytechnic education administered by public, non-public or co-operative schools of higher education.
Higher education institutions can run non-higher education, e.g. post-secondary courses, for specialised vocational training purposes, called CET courses. Those who have passed these courses are eligible to apply to higher education, with the higher level training, in their courses, credited in their prospective courses.

In order to apply for access to higher education via the national system, pupils must fulfil the following requirements: they must have passed an upper-secondary education course or legally equivalent qualification; they must have taken the necessary entrance exams for the course that wish to attend with a minimum mark of 95 points; they must have satisfied the necessary pre-requisites (if applicable) of the course they are applying to. Entrance to each higher education institution is subjected to numerus clausus.

In higher education the following academic qualifications are given: First-degree (licenciado), Master's degree (mestre) and PhD (doutor).University and polytechnic institutions confer First-degrees and Master's degree. The polytechnic mestrados should certify that the specialization obtained is of a professional nature.

Studies that lead to a licenciado degree from a polytechnic normally involve a minimum of 6 semesters that correspond to 180 credits. The study cycle that leads to a licenciado degree from a university normally lasts from a minimum of 6 to 8 semesters, which corresponds to 180 or 240 credits. The study cycle that leads to a Master's degree lasts for between 3 and 4 semesters, which corresponds to 90 or 120 credits.

A Master's degree may also be awarded after an integrated cycle of studies, conferring 300 to 360 credits and normally lasting between 10 and 12 curricular semesters of work. The access to this cycle of studies is governed by the same norms applicable to access the cycle of studies leading to a Licenciatura degree.

The degree of doutor is only conferred by universities and to those who have passed all the units of the PhD course, when applicable, and who have successfully defended their thesis.
Fees are set by each higher education institution, depending on the type and quality of the course.

In the academic year 2009-2010 there were 389 841 students enrolled in public and private higher education institutions, including 6 214 students enrolled in short cycles called Technological Specialization Courses. In other words, one in three of all 20-year-olds in Portugal are enrolled in

higher education. 40% of those enrolled in higher education are in the age group 18 to 21 years of age.

Regarding fees, and according to the existing law related to the public HEI, there is a minimum and a maximum value for the undergraduate courses (licenciatura), integrated Masters and Masters which are required for certain type of professions. According to the law, in CET provided by public HEI, fees must be lower than 1,3 of the national minimum salary.

Enrolment in tertiary education of adults aged 30-34 has increased by about 20% over the last three years (2005-2009), but it was still relatively low in 2009 and about 4.1% of the corresponding age-group (compared to 3.6% in 2005)[135].

Organisation of SCHE in Portugal

In Portugal, as in many other European countries, some higher education qualifications are available to students who have undertaken a programme of study within the FQ-EHEA first cycle, which do not represent the full achievement of this cycle. These qualifications are referred to as higher education short cycle diplomas (within or linked to the first cycle) and may prepare students for employment (also providing preparation for the subsequent completion of the first cycle). These qualifications are also positioned at level 5 of the EQF for LLL.

At a post-secondary level, higher education institutions can also provide qualifications associated with Technological Specialisation Courses (CETs), leading to a Technological Specialisation Diploma. By their nature and objectives, these qualifications are also short cycle programmes, with the main goal of preparing students for employment, but also providing preparation for, and access to, the first cycle and are also at level 5 of the EQF for LLL.

The CET or post-secondary non higher education courses[136] leading to DET allow the access to first cycle and concede credits depending on the CET concluded and the 1st cycle course of destiny (one CET may give access to more than one 1st cycle course, allowing different credits).

Polytechnic institutions provide technological specialisation courses (CET), which are technical, practical and vocational in nature. In order to recapture the interest of young people who are unmotivated by formal education and give them training more suited to their needs, other forms of subsidiary training have been created, focused on working life: education and training courses for young adults and post-secondary training paths, the technological specialisation courses.

Decree No 782/2009 raised CET to level 5 but did not revoke or altered Decree-Law No. 88/06. Decree-Law No. 88/06, of 23rd May, regulated the technological specialisation courses (CET), non-higher, post-secondary training that aimed to confer a Level 4 vocational qualification.

[135] Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education, Portugal, *A new landscape for Science, Technology and Tertiary Education in Portugal*. http://www.dges.mctes.pt/NR/rdonlyres/90DBE647-5CB6-4846-B88F-101180D9E425/4832/New_landscapes_v18Jun20102.pd

[136] CET see : http://www.ccisp.pt/Documentos/Estudos%20e%20Estatisticas/Document%20about%20portuguese%20higher%20education.pdf

The CET-courses aim at individuals who wish a level 5 vocational qualification, in order to their integration in the specialized labour market. Each course lasts for a minimum of 1 200 hours and a maximum of 1 560 hours. This type of professional qualification is obtained through a combination of general or professional secondary studies and technical post-secondary studies. The completion of a CET guarantees a DET diploma (technological specialization diploma). The CET has been integrated into level 5 of the Portuguese NQF.

The programme of a Technological Specialization Courses (CET) includes general and scientific training components, technological training components and work-related training components. A diploma will be awarded upon completion of a training plan consisting of between 60 and 90 ECTS credits.
The training in a work context lasts between 360 and 720 hours and is organized in the framework of a partnership with industry / commerce/ trade. Excluding the training in work context, the other components last globally from between 840 to 1020 hours and each of them, respectively, occupies 15% and 85% of the total time. Most CET's are organized in 80 ECTS (duration of approximately 18 months – or three semesters). The general and scientific component (general subjects) represents around 9-10 ECTS (150 contact hours), the technological component (technical subjects) represents an average of 50-51 ECTS (850 contact hours) and the work context training component represents around 20 ECTS (520 hours of placement).

The institution is responsible for the signing of protocols that, ensuring the development of this training with other entities, are best suited to the specific nature of the training area, as well as the characteristics of the job market.

The technological specialization courses (CET) are provided by higher education institutions (public and private) and by non-HEI. The non-HEI that can taught CET are:

- the public and private or cooperative education institutions with autonomy or pedagogical parallelism that teach secondary education courses;
- professional training centers belonging to the network coordinated by the Institute for Employment and Professional Training (IEFP);
- technological schools;
- other training institutions accredited by the Ministry for Labor and Social Solidarity.

In terms of internal political management most CET are provided by higher education institutions. CET have always been taught in both HEI and non-HEI, even before the Bologna process. When this type of courses are taught in non-HEI, a protocol with a HEI should be made. The non-HEI institutions must have a signed agreement with higher education institutions that allows the students to continue their studies in the 1st cycle courses provided by them.

One of the ongoing debates and/or future challenges is the development and expansion not only of non-higher education, post-secondary training, but also the institutions which provide it, focusing more on middle-ranking professionals, as a demand of the growing needs of the economy and businesses.

At the beginning of 2010 the Ministry for Science, Technology and Higher Education signed a contract

with the Portuguese Council of Polytechnic Institutes but also with several universities regarding the sector's development program for the four year period between 2010 and 2013. Some of the 11 key features of the programme are:

- to increase the number of placements in CET programs to more than 10 000.
- to double the amount of places in courses offered after working hours (evening school);
- to create the e-polytechnic with more than 1000 placements (i.e., distance learning for adults over 23 years of age and lifelong learning);
- to increase the number of places for adults over 23 years of age;
- to increase the academic staff with a PhD degree up to 50% of academic staff in the polytechnic sector; 736 of the present approximately 3600 teachers or 37% have a Ph.D.
- to create Entrepreneurial Promotion Offices;
- to promote internationalisation.

QF for Portugal

A comprehensive 8 level national qualifications framework (NQF) (Quadro Nacional de Qualificações, QNQ) is being implemented in Portugal. Established by the Decree No 782/2009 (Portaria No 782/2009) (86), an outline of the framework (including levels and level descriptors) was published in July 2009. A Qualifications Framework for HE in line with the QF for EHEA has been put in place separately (Law 49/2005 and Decree law 74/2006) (87). The link between both frameworks will be discussed during the referencing process.

Level 5 of the NQF is seen as the bridging level between VET and HE. In this level there are VET qualifications as well as HE qualifications; the VET qualifications are called technological specialisation courses and there are short-cycle qualifications within the first cycle in the QF for HE. Thus level 5 of the NQF can be said to be equivalent to level 5 of the EQF.

FHEQ-Portugal Higher education qualifications	Corresponding FQ-EHEA cycle	Corresponding EQF levels
Doctoral degrees	Third cycle qualifications	8
Doctoral course diplomas	-	-
Masters degrees	Second cycle qualifications	7
Integrated Masters degrees		
Masters course diplomas	-	-
Licenciatura degrees	First cycle qualifications	6
Technological Specialisation courses	Short cycle qualifications linked to the first cycle	**5**

Source: The framework for Higher education qualifications in Portugal[137]

[137] Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education, Portugal (2010). *The framework for higher education qualifications in Portugal.* MCTS. *http://www.dges.mctes.pt/NR/rdonlyres/90DBE647-5CB6-4846-B88F-101180D9E425/4933/FHEQPortugal_22Nov_2010.pdf*

Access to SCHE/CET and transition to bachelor studies

Thus a diploma of upper secondary education in any scientific-humanistic courses will give access to higher education courses in fields of knowledge related to each area of studies or to non-higher education post-secondary courses, named technological specialisation courses.

It is also possible to access higher education outside the National Application through special applications, which are meant for students with specific qualifications. Places available are determined annually by each higher education institution. The following candidates may apply through special application:

- maiores de 23 – candidates that are over 23 and will only be admitted after completing and passing an exam that assesses the candidates' capacity. The exam must take place in the institution the candidate intends to apply to;
- people with a higher education degree;
- people with a DET (technological specialization diploma).

Profile of lecturers and students

6 214 students or 6.5 % of the overall 96.374 students in public polytechnics, attended CET Higher Education in 2009-2010. Of those 3565 students were actually in 2008 in the polytechnics. It is hoped to have around 5800 students in CET in the polytechnics in 2013. There is an increasing demand for evening courses. The increasing demand for evening courses is mostly related with a question of offer, induced by a change of policy. This policy's main objective is to allow a considerable percentage of population to gain access to professional and scholar qualifications. Enhancing the offer of evening courses, allows the active population to have access to different qualification opportunities.

The key stone in this matter (increasing evening courses) is not so much related to low SES public or a disadvantaged background, but in the national policy of rising up of the average qualification of Portuguese general population, by the diversification of offer of qualification courses, not only introducing different typologies, but also enhancing the offer of evening courses. It is therefore not surprising that many students are mature students.

As far as the profile of lecturers or lecturers is concerned, Decree-Law No. 88/06's 46th article states that the teaching body in CET should mainly be constituted by professional teachers related to the higher education institution. However, the same article states that HEI may recur to part time lecturers. This may happen when the expertise brought by these part time lecturers (due to their experience in industry or institutional background) constitutes an extra value to the course's subjects and to the knowledge transmitted to students.
However, these part time lecturers should mandatorily have certified pedagogic competences.

QA and accreditation

The new legal framework for the assessment of higher education (Law no. 38/2007, of 16th August) and the creation of the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (Decree-Law no. 369/2007, of 5th November) were developed. Both were designed to ensure the quality of higher

education through the assessment and accreditation of higher education institutions and their cycles of studies, according to the best international practices, in which independent external assessment is mandatory. [138] The A3ES, the Portuguese Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education started its activities in 2009. In order to fulfil the legal determinations and its mandate, the A3ES adopted the following strategy:

a) Have all the accreditation and quality assurance processes ICT based.

b) Implement a preliminary accreditation system for new study programme proposals for the school year of 2010/2011.

c) Implement a preliminary accreditation system so that all existing study cycles at the time of the creation of the A3ES are accredited by the end of the school year 2010/2011.

d) Foster the implementation of internal systems of quality assurance.

e) Internationalisation of A3ES[139].

Following similar practices in Europe, auditors and reviewers appointed independently will look at how institutions align the academic standards of their degrees. They will also ascertain whether institutions have means of ensuring that degrees and qualifications are of an academic standard consistent with European standards.

Internationalisation

New regulations were introduced for mobility of students between national higher education institutions, from the same or different subsystems, as well as between national and foreign higher education institutions, based on application of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The diploma supplement is given to all students involved in mobility.

The polytechnic sector aims at strengthening relations in the first place with Portuguese speaking countries and promote exchange initiatives and promote mobility programmes involving student and academic staff (like ERASMUS)[140].

Employability and multilingualism

Although there isn't official data regarding employability on CET graduates, the general perception is that there is a good acceptance by the industry and institutional framework.

Regarding this matter, two factors must be taken into account:

[138] A new landscape for Science, Technology and Tertiary Education in Portugal , MCTES, 2010; http://www.dges.mctes.pt/NR/rdonlyres/90DBE647-5CB6-4846-B88F-101180D9E425/4832/New_landscapes_v18Jun20102.pd

[139] Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education, Portugal (2010). *The framework for higher education qualifications in Portugal.* MCTS. *http://www.dges.mctes.pt/NR/rdonlyres/90DBE647-5CB6-4846-B88F-101180D9E425/4933/FHEQPortugal_22Nov_2010.pdf*

[140] CCISP Documents 2010 http://www.ccisp.pt/Documentos/Estudos%20e%20Estatisticas/Document%20about%20portuguese%20higher%20education.pdf

1 – As the CET allow the access to 1st cycle studies in higher education institutions, there is a considerable percentage of this courses public that uses them as an alternative path of access to higher education, and not necessarily to employment purposes;

2 – Most of CET public is already employed and thus the important factor to study is if the qualifications attained in the course allowed an internal progression in terms of functions, responsibility, autonomy and income.

In terms of multilingualism the government's policy is to promote the use of English language throughout the different levels of qualification, beginning on primary school until the higher levels.

Regarding the CET's there is an effort to include the English language at a technical / commercial / professional level (Technical English / English applied to Tourism /Commercial English) in most of the courses curricula.

Collaboration with local industry and social commitment

Registering a new CET implies that the higher education institution must present to the Ministry of Technology and Higher Education a group of agreements with companies, industries and institutions that guaranties the work context training component (placement) to every student.

This placement component doesn't always take place at the end of the course.

The course organization may include "alternate training" that intercalates moments of training in classroom and training in work context throughout the course.

During the course students are often involved in study visits that allow them to have contact with local industries or institutions, and enhance the students vision of reality in terms of employment and work context.

25. Romania

There is NO SCHE in Romania but there is post-secondary education which has no formal links with Higher Education. Currently post-secondary education corresponds to level 5 EQF, but is not yet decided if some of post-secondary education programs are at higher levels than level 5 EQF. Furthermore the country doesn't have the intention to organize SCHE in the near future.

Introduction to higher education in Romania

Higher education is organised by educational institutions such as: universities (Universitate), academies (Academie) and postgraduate schools (Şcoală de studii academice postuniversitare). The mission of the higher education institutions is either education and research or just education. Higher education institutions usually have several faculties, university colleges departments, chairs and units for scientific research etc. The participation rate of the age cohort 18 to 21 years of age is between 50 and 55 per cent. The graduation rate of students is between 60 and 70 per cent.

Since the 2005 - 06 academic year all higher education institutions, private and public, have to implement the three-cycle structure based on the Law no. 288/2004. The first (Bachelor's) cycle includes a minimum of 180 and a maximum of 240 ECTS credits and lasts three to four years, depending on the field and area of specialisations. The second (Master's) cycle includes a minimum of 90 and a maximum of 120 ECTS credits and lasts one or two years. Both cycles should enable the accumulation of at least 300 ECTS credits. Doctoral studies can be organised on a full- or part-time basis by higher education or research institutions. The length of doctoral courses corresponds to three years of full time work.

Post-secondary non tertiary education

Post-secondary education at Şcoală postliceală (post- secondary schools) prepares students for a higher vocational qualification that leads to employment. The post-secondary non-tertiary education is realised by those şcoala postliceală and by the apprenticeship school. Post-secondary non-tertiary education is 1 to 3 years long, depending on the complexity of the professional qualification; It is organised at the initiative of the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation or following the specific requests of companies or other interested institutions. The qualifications provided within the post-secondary non-tertiary education are approved by a Decision of Government, according to a proposal of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport.

Post-secondary non-tertiary education is usually organised by the education institutions which have other vocational education and training classes in the same professional area or in areas close to the professional profile of the VET classes. This is done so as to make better use of the existing infrastructure (equipment, workshops, other resources) and of the human resources and to improve financial efficiency.

NQF for Romania

Romania is working on an 5 level NQF. The National Authority for Qualifications is in charge of the development of the NQF in Romania and currently this authority is working on establishing the general framework for qualifications development, the correlation between Romanian qualification levels and EQF reference levels and the development of National Register of Qualifications. A qualifications framework for HE (with 3 levels) in line with the Bologna process and the EQF has been developed since 2005. For VET there are 3 qualification levels used, based on based on a tripartite agreement signed in 2005 by the Prime Minister, the Employers' National Confederation and the Trade Union's National Confederation. The NQF for VET is based on a common register for qualifications, QA arrangements and accreditation for VET qualifications. The challenge is to link these two frameworks towards a more comprehensive framework. It is not yet decided what the place will be of the post-secondary schools in the future 8 level NQF. The overall 8 level NQF should be ready by 2011.

26. Slovenia

Introduction on Higher Education[141]

Higher education in Slovenia is regulated by the Higher Education Act (HEA No. 119/2006-UPB3, 59/2007-ZŠtip (63/2007 popr.), 15/2008 Odl.US: U-I-370/06-20, 64/2008, 86/2009, 62/2010-ZUPJS.). The consolidated text consists of the Higher Education Act (Uradni list or Official Gazette RS, No 67/93) and its changes and amendments 99/99, 64/01, 100/03, 63/04 and 94/06. The Higher Education sector is governed also by several other acts, i.e.: the Professional and Academic Titles Act (61/06), Recognition and Evaluation of Education Act (73/04) and the Act Ratifying the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (14/99).

The new law concerning SCHE was enacted in 2004; Zakon o visjem strokovnem izobrazevanju/Legislation of the higher vocational education (Uradni list Official Gazette of RS, no 86/2004).

HE studies in Slovenia are provided by public and private higher education institutions: by universities and, by art academies and by professional colleges. Professional colleges and private faculties and art academies can be organised also as single higher education institutions. Universities, faculties and art academies provide all types of study programmes, while vocational colleges as a rule, provide the first-cycle vocational courses. They may also provide, however, the second-cycle programmes when certain academic requirements are met

The HE Act in 2004 implemented the Bologna Process including the new study structure. This Act laid down that study programmes existing hitherto, were to be gradually reformed; the last enrolment in the pre-Bologna courses was set for the academic year 2008/09, the courses having to be completed by the end of the academic year 2015/16 at the latest. Study programmes adopted after the 2004 amendments, were being gradually introduced the process was completed in the academic year 2009/10 when only enrolment in the new study programmes was possible.

There are 5 universities (univerze) in Slovenia[142]: (the universities of Ljubljana, Maribor, Nova Gorica, Primorska and EMUNI - Euro-Mediterranean University), over 25 single faculties (fakultete) and vocational colleges (visoke strokovne šole), which are not part of a university, and about 60 higher vocational colleges (višje strokovne šole) (offering short tertiary education).

HE and SCHE form tertiary education under the auspices of two ministries: _ the Ministry for Education and Sport is responsible for SCHE and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology is responsible for higher education.

[141] Elements of this introduction have been taken from the description of Tertiary Education in Slovenia in the Eurybase: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/SI_EN.pdf

[142] In 2009/10 there are 5 universities, of which 3 public with 53 member institutions and 2 private with 7 member institutions, and 26 single higher education institutions, out of which 12 are receiving State subsidies.

Slovenia does not yet have the NQF yet. The National Educational Classification System (Klasius, 2006) is used where SCHE is placed at level 6/1 (out of 8 levels); 6/2 is the first Bologna cycle. For better understanding see the National Educational Classification System[143]:

Level	Bologna cycle	Post 2004-2006 reform programmes	Pre-reform programmes and/or qualifications (prior to 2004)
6.1	Short cycle	Higher vocational programmes	Post-secondary vocational sub-degree programmes and qualifications Short degree studies/diplomas (prior to 1993)
6.2	First cycle	Professional/academic programmes, equivalent to Bachelor	Undergraduate professionally oriented programmes
7	Second cycle	*"magisterij"* programmes, equivalent to Masters	Undergraduate academically oriented programmes Postgraduate professional specialization
8.1	Third cycle		Postgraduate academic specialization Research based *magisterij* of science/art
8.2		Doctorate programmes	Doctorate of science

Organisation of SCHE

Since 2006 higher professional courses are undergoing significant reforms. The reforms, laid down by the Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education (2006), include guidelines for the implementation of t lifelong learning, connections with further higher education studies, internationalisation, introduction of a quality assurance system, definition of competences and learning objectives, credit evaluation according to the ECTS and introduction of the selection-election system, increasing the elective content and flexibility in education for different occupations within a specific professional field, as well as modularity of the education programmes.

As mentioned above, the law of SCHE, 2004 focuses on all major aspects of SCHE such as the organisation of SCHE, entrance requirements for SCHE, fields of study in SCHE, quality assurance and accreditation of SCHE, the transition from SCHE studies to degree studies, the institutions where SCHE is organised and the minimum number of students per institution. Recent changes in the organisation of SCHE concern mainly the management of the institutions.

[143] See the ministry website : http://www.mss.gov.si/en/areas_of_work/tertiary_education_in_slovenia/

SCHE is organised by the State or by private providers (approximately 50% by each). Full-time studies at all public vocational colleges and at 2 of the private colleges that gained the concession from the State are subsidized by the State. In some cases SCHE is (co)funded by industry and local authorities or by professional organisations. Part-time courses for mature students are completely self-financed, although sometimes the costs for those students are covered by their employer or sometimes in the case of the unemployed the State pays for educational costs using benefits available from the employment agencies. SCHE is provided at higher vocational colleges (višje strokovne šole) and sometimes also at professional colleges (visoke strokovne šole) as self standing institutions. Very often vocational colleges are an organisational unit of a school centre with two units: - secondary vocational /professional school and a vocational college. SCHE is also organised in the framework of adult education. The main objective is further professional specialisation focusing on employment. It is organised as well on a full and part-time basis. The curriculum consists of a combination of theory, practice and work placements.

SCHE courses are organised in a flexible way to meet the needs of learners: time-table organisation, open and distance learning programmes are offered as well as blended learning using information and communication technology. Occasionally courses are also offered off-campus in the work place.

SCHE is organised in many fields of study such as Administration, Agriculture, Biotechnology, Building, Business studies, Catering and Hospitality, Education, Engineering, Environmental studies, ICT, Leisure, Mechanics, Product development, Restoration and Social work. All SCHE programmes were renewed between 2006 and 2007. At the same time new SCHE programmes were developed in the field of nature protection, environment (forestry, hunting), design of materials and social networking.

Professional organisations (trade unions, chambers of commerce, employment agencies) and/or employers are closely involved in the design and restructuring of curricula for SCHE.

Students complete the course with a diploma thesis. After completing the SCHE a person obtains a title of professional qualification which is defined by the Legislation of professional and scientific titles (Official Gazette of RS, no 61/2006).

In SCHE the titles are: engineer/inzenir(male)/inzenirka(female) or technologist/tehnolog(male)/tehnologinja(female),(economist, etc.)

Access to SCHE and transition to degree programmes

Students can access SCHE with a Certificate/diploma of general secondary education, a Certificate/diploma of technical secondary education or with a Master craftsman/Foreman/Shop manager exam. SCHE normally lasts two years and students obtain 120 ECTS.

Legislation concerning SCHE also focuses on transition to higher education studies. Students can normally use part of their credits (normally 60) when continuing to higher education courses. The HE institutions set the conditions for the transition from SCHE to HE individually according to their autonomous academic evaluation. The majority of students in SCHE do not make the transition to a degree programme. The key reason is the fact that the majority of SCHE graduates does not have their ECTS recognised by HEIs and thus have to enroll in the first year of HE studies.

There is no access or bridging courses and there are only top up courses for those who already have professional experience and want to go on to higher education courses.

Students from other European countries with SCHE qualifications can obtain a degree in Slovenia on the basis of RPL but it is again up to each HEI to decide on the competences of each individual and on the recognition of parts of curriculum. For the purpose of work a foreign graduate needs to go through the recognition procedure at the unit for recognition at the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology that also acts as the ENIC/NARIC centre.

Profile of students and lecturers

There are 16, 879 students in SCHE; 8,523 are male and 8,356 are female. 7595 or 45% are full-time students while 9,284 or 55% are part-time students. The students who are part-time students are considered to be mature students (over 21 years of age). According to the institutions that filled in the questionnaire disadvantaged groups of students or students with a low socio-economic background are over-represented in SCHE but unfortunately no exact data are available. However, some institutions mention that this group represents more than half of their students.

The majority of lecturers/lecturers in SCHE have a master's degree and there is a mixture of lecturers with an academic and a professional profile. In some institutions the majority of the lecturers has a bachelor's degree and has a clearly professional background. All SCHE lecturers must have professional experience. In most cases they combine part-time teaching at SCHE level with teaching at another level or in another institution or teaching at SCHE on a part time basis while being fully employed in industry.

Internationalisation

ECTS is used by all SCHE institutions as they are obliged to do so by law. This is also the case for the diploma supplement which is used by all SCHE institutions.

Lecturers participate mainly in staff mobility within the Erasmus programme of the LLP but also in Leonardo mobility and some of them also participate in Comenius and Grundtvig. Students are also mainly involved in student mobility under Erasmus but some are mobile under Leonardo and other mobility programmes. Students who are mobile usually leave with a Learning agreement and some of them use Europass. The Transcript of records is also sometimes used. Institutions also participate in non-mobility projects.

However, there are still many obstacles as far as mobility is concerned. Knowledge of foreign languages is a problem; finding appropriate partners or companies (for Leonardo mobility) but also low motivation and lack of financial means (especially with disadvantaged students). Moreover, as most of the students are part-time students who are working full-time and studying in the evening, mobility is not an option for them during their studies. As the colleges are rather small there is also no international service and are thus facing administrative problems such as drafting of contracts.

QA and accreditation

Internal quality assurance/self-evaluation is applied by all institutions offering SCHE and there is external quality assurance system in place. The external quality assurance body (since 2010 it is the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency and before it was the Council for Higher Education) evaluates and accredits Higher Education Institutions whilst it only evaluates Higher Vocational Colleges. Accreditation of these institutions and of their study programmes is different to those of Higher Education Institutions as accreditation is granted by the Ministry of Education.

Employability and multilingualism

There is a genuine need for level 5 EQF graduates in Slovenia. The employment rate for SCHE graduates is between 85% and 90%. However, the employment rate depends on individual programmes. Thus, there are no unemployed graduates from certain programmes (mainly from technical, engineering programmes) whereas for other programmes the employment rate is only between 80% and 85%. Students find a job between 2 and 6 months after finishing their studies. They are employed as highly-skilled technicians, white collar workers in administration, sales or hospitality management.

Employers support SCHE by helping to design the curricula, by offering placements for students at level 5 and by actively participating in the teaching.

Employability strategies take into account the needs of the labour market and labour market analyses when setting up programmes and when drafting the curricula, by focusing on professional competences, by using innovative pedagogical approaches, by implementing a modular approach, by collaborating with industry through placements and alternative learning pathways, by regularly adapting the curricula to the needs of the labour market and by including personal development plans in the programme and by having a career guiding service.

Multilingualism is promoted by SCHE institutions in various ways. It is promoted by having guest lecturers from other countries, by promoting mobility with other countries for students to study or to do placements, by developing projects in which multilingual teams of students work together, by promoting the learning of at least two foreign languages, by inviting students to make assignments and projects in other languages and by offering compulsory language courses. However, we are facing problems with legislative constraints as teaching at HE level must be performed in the Slovenian language.

Cooperation with the local community

Both SCHE institutions and industry think cooperation is very important even if it is considered compulsory.

SCHE institutions cooperate with industry in various ways: representatives of local industry sit on the board of the institutions and help to draft programmes and curricula. They also teach at the SCHE institutions, they help define professional competences and offer placements to SCHE students and

occasionally to lecturers. Representatives of local industry also sometimes sit on examination boards and participate in internal and external quality assurance panels.

Professional/sectoral bodies collaborate with SCHE by drafting professional profiles, by being involved in curriculum contents and by offering training sessions to SCHE institutions.

Trade unions are involved by drafting professional profiles at the level of SCHE.

SCHE- institutions show their social commitment by collaborating with local NGO s, by implementing sustainable development, by promoting a policy of corporate social responsibility or by engaging students in local social projects.

No information was received on the involvement in and the engagement with the local environment and municipalities.

27. Slovakia

There is no SCHE in Slovakia but there is post-secondary vocational education having no links with higher education. The country also does not have the intention to organise SCHE in the near future.

Introduction to higher education in Slovakia

The higher education sector in Slovakia provides higher education courses at three levels: three to four-year study leading to Bachelor (BA) degree, Master (MA) study programmes at second level (magister, inžinier, doktor medicíny) which may last between one and three years and PhD study programmes at the third level. The standard length of full-time doctoral programmes varies between three and four years (standard number of credits recommended by decree is 60 per academic year). European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) has been completely implemented since 2005/06 at BA/MA/doctorate levels[144].

According to the Act No 131/2002 of the Law Code on higher education, there are three types of higher education institutions: public higher education institutions (20), state higher education institutions (3) and private higher education institutions (10). The amendment to the Act also allows establishment of foreign higher education institutions[145].

The minimum entrance requirement for higher education is the certificate awarded to pupils who passed the final upper secondary examination (vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške). Educational institutions can also require other criteria, such as entrance examinations[146].

Slovakia is adapting its legislation to the introduction of a new kind of postsecondary study, the so-called higher professional study. In this kind of study the secondary technical schools will provide higher professional education for the graduates with a certificate of secondary education or secondary technical education but they will not provide higher education that according to the higher education law may be provided by higher education institutions only. At the same time, it will be possible to transform those study fields of higher professional education to the bachelor study programmes of professional higher education institutions[147].

The term Short-type courses is used in Slovakia for bachelor's studies and lead to the bakalár (Bachelor) qualification. This diploma allows students either to continue the master study level or to enter the labour market. Students who successfully complete university courses (two-three years after

[144] National system overviews on education systems in Europe and ongoing reforms, Slovakia 2010 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_SK_EN.pdf
[145] Eurybase: *Organisation of the education system in Slovakia 2008/09* http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/SK_EN.pdf
[146] National system overviews on education systems in Europe and ongoing reforms, Slovakia 2010 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_SK_EN.pdf
[147] Eurybase: *Organisation of the education system in Slovakia 2008/09* http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/SK_EN.pdf

the bakalár or five to six years through a separate course) are awarded the diploma and the title of inžinier, magister or doktor (in medicine faculties 'doktor všeobecného lekárstva, doktor zubného lekárstva' or veterinary medicine faculties 'doktor veterinárskeho lekárstva'). Holders of these diplomas can go on to the third level of university education – PhD study.

Education at public and state universities is currently free of charge, except for extended standard duration of study. Private universities may require fees at their own discretion. The public higher education institution may require from the applicants of study the fees for material provision of admission procedure. The fee is derived from real expenses of the Higher Education Institutions connected with this administration.

Post-secondary education

Upper secondary schools (stredná odborná škola) organize post-secondary non-tertiary education for applicants who have the school-leaving certificate of upper secondary education. The post-secondary studies can strengthen and enhance the students' competences and professional skills to enter the labour market. The students can also acquire a professional qualification in a study field different from that in which they passed the school-leaving examination. Post-secondary education is generally organized part-time[148].

There are three types of 'post-maturita' programmes for ISCED 3A graduates (refresher programmes, specialising programmes, qualifying programmes).
The qualifying programmes at postsecondary non-tertiary level last at least 2 years and are completed by a 'post maturita' school leaving examination. They have as a main objective to enable students to gain a professional qualification. These studies are rated as an ISCED 4A level of education. The programmes are aimed at gaining additional or new qualification as they obtain a second 'maturita' school leaving certificate (in a branch other than the one studied earlier). The graduate profile is based on the general education which was obtained at secondary school and on outputs of intensive professionally oriented training. There are also the refresher programmes (upgrading skills and innovative) of at least 6 months that are completed by a final exam. These studies are also rated as an ISCED 4A level of education. The programmes are aimed at updating of previously acquired knowledge and skills[149].

The NQF for Slovakia

The NQF for Slovakia is at present being developed. An eight-level structure is envisaged to cover the main characteristics of the national qualification system and be compatible with the EQF also in terms of principles, categories and level descriptors. The final number of levels has not been defined yet. University qualifications will be included in the comprehensive NQF especially on the bachelor, master and doctorate level. The NQF will normally be in place in 2011.

[148] National system overviews on education systems in Europe and ongoing reforms, Slovakia 2010 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_SK_EN.pdf
[149] Eurydice: Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe- Slovakia 2009/10 Edition

28. Spain

Introduction on higher education[150]

Tertiary education in the Spanish education system comprises the following types of provision: university education, advanced vocational training, advanced Arts studies, advanced vocational training in Plastic Arts and Design, and advanced Sports studies.

Spain has adopted a new legal framework in order to bring its higher education structure in line with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) Qualifications Framework. Higher education is now organised into three cycles: Bachelor's, including a minimum of 240 credits, Master's, including between 60 and 120 credits, and Doctorate's.

University education (ISCED 5A) is provided in university faculties, *escuelas técnicas superiores* (higher technical schools), *escuelas politécnicas superiores* (higher polytechnic schools) and *escuelas universitarias* (colleges providing only first-cycle studies). Advanced Arts Education is also considered to be ISCED 5A and is provided in public institutions called *conservatorios superiores* (higher music conservatories) and *escuelas superiores* (advanced schools).

Advanced vocational training (ISCED 5B) is offered in the same schools as ESO and *Bachillerato*, in *centros de referencia nacional* (national reference schools) or in *centros integrados de formación profesional (*integrated vocational training schools). Advanced Plastic Arts and Design Education (ISCED 5B) is taught in public arts schools and Advanced Sports Education (ISCED 5B) is offered in public or private training schools, authorised by the corresponding education authority, and in educational institutions within the military education system.

Organisation of SCHE in Spain: Tecnico Superior

Royal Decree 733/1995 regulates the issuing of academic and professional certificates for all educational levels, except for university level. This decree states the general aspects that must be included in all academic qualifications, although each Autonomous Community is entitled to develop their own certification models, within the general framework established by this decree. Certificates issued by any competent education authority have official status, and have academic and professional validity for the whole state.

Although the legislation is national , each of the Spanish autonomias (autonomous regions) have autonomy in the curricula and management of the training offer. The legislation focuses on: the organisation of SCHE the entrance requirements , the fields of study, Quality Assurance, Accreditation, the transition from SCHE studies to degree studies, the curriculum , the directives for the organisation of the academic year and the institutions where SCHE is organized.

[150] This information is taken from Eurybase:
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/ES_EN.pdf

SCHE is provided by the state (the regional autonomias) , by private education providers and / or by the authorities in collaboration with any of the above. It is subsidized by the state or by the regional authorities (autonomias).

SCHE is a short professional education not necessarily linked to previous studies (e.g. nursing).
In order to study advanced vocational training, it is necessary to hold the Bachiller certificate. Candidates may also be required to have taken certain specific subjects in the Bachillerato related to the vocational studies they wish to pursue. It has a variable length, though it usually takes two years.

It is organized as well on a full-time as a part-time basis. SCHE courses are organised in a flexible way to meet the needs of learners: the courses are time-tabled to meet the needs of learners and/or Open and Distance Learning programmes are offered using information and communication technology. The curriculum consists of a combination of theory, practice and work placements.
Professional organisations and/or employers are occasionally involved in the designing and restructuring of curricula for SCHE.

SCHE studies exist in various areas: Physical and Sport activities , Administration and Management , Commerce / trade and marketing, Agriculture, Graphical arts , Arts and crafts, Construction and building, Electricity and electronics , Energy and water, Mechanical manufacturing, Hotel trade and tourism , Personal image (wellness , beauty centres etc.), Image and sound , Food industries , Extraction industries, Computer science and Communications, Installation and Maintenance , Wood, furniture and cork, Marine-fishery, Health, Security and Environment, Chemistry, Socio-cultural services to the Community, Textile, preparation and skin, Transport and Maintenance of Vehicles and Glass and ceramics. New SCHE courses have been developed in wines sales, aircraft mechanics and maintenance.

Students who have successfully completed advanced vocational training are awarded the Técnico Superior qualification (higher technician), which is aimed at integration into the job market. The certificate states the specialization in which the students studied.

The NQF in Spain[151]

Spain is currently developing an eight-level NQF for lifelong learning (Spanish qualifications framework, MECU), based on learning outcomes. It will link and coordinate different education and training subsystems. The higher four levels of MECU will be linked to the qualifications framework for higher education (MECES), which is being put in place separately. One of the aims of the NQF is to facilitate and improve access and participation in lifelong learning and transition within the various subsystems of education and vocational training. Very important is the progression from short cycle to university programmes and to open up higher education for non-traditional learners, possibly without a school leaving certificate.

[151] Cedefop: The development of national qualification frameworks in Europe, 2010: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6108_en.pdf

Access to SCHE and transition from SCHE to degree programmes

There are two ways of enrolling in Advanced Vocational Training: direct access, for holders of the *Bachiller* certificate, and access through a test for students not meeting academic requirements, on condition that they are 19 years old, or 18 years old and holders of the *Técnico* certificate in the same professional area[152].

For those students who wish to continue their degree studies, the certificate of Tecnico superior, qualifies them to gain direct access, i.e. without sitting an entrance examination, to certain first cycle university education programmes, related to the respective field of vocational training. This also means that they can use part of the credits (up to 60 ECTS credits) earned to go on to level six.

30% of students in SCHE make the transition to degree programmes. There are no access courses or top up courses. Professional experience is not taken into account. Students coming from other (European) countries with SCHE qualifications can earn a degree using the credits earned in their own country but this is only possible on a case by case basis.

Regulations corresponding to each certificate specify which type of university studies may be entered through direct access. A Técnico Superior certificate also qualifies students for other specialised or complementary training.

Besides accrediting the final certificate of advanced vocational training, students may obtain recognition for the credits given for certain modules without requiring completion of the relevant studies.

Profile of the students and lecturers

The larger group of the students in SCHE are around 20 years of age. 30 to 35 per cent are mature students. Approximately half of all the students is male probably with a slight majority of female students. The majority are full-time students. In Catalonia alone there are 50.000 SCHE students. Disadvantaged groups, students with a low socio-economic background are not more represented in SCHE than in other areas of HE.

The majority of the lecturers hold a master's degree and they have an academic profile. Most of them also work full-time as a lecturer.

QA and accreditation

Internal quality assurance/self-evaluation applied by institutions offering SCHE on a voluntary basis; some 40 per cent do it. a QA agency of a professional body is in charge of external QA. The Ministry of Education is in charge of accreditation of SCHE institutions.

[152] Based on Eurybase and questionnaire

Internationalisation

A national credit system is applied (very often in parallel with ECTS). However, the diploma supplement and the Europass certificate supplement do not seem to be used.

Lecturers participate in teacher mobility under the Erasmus programme and the Leonardo da Vinci programme. Students participate in student mobility under the Erasmus programme, under bilateral or other international programmes and under programmes funded by the regional ministry of education.

Students participating in mobility use the Europass. They leave with a Learning Agreement and the Transcript of Records is also used for mobile students. They also use activity plans , insurances, model certificate etc.

Moreover SCHE institutions participate in non-mobility projects such as Comenius projects, in Erasmus projects and/or in Leonardo projects. They are also involved in other bilateral or international projects.

The main obstacle to mobility of students (and sometimes of lecturers) is the knowledge of foreign language and the financial implications of mobility.

Employability

There is a genuine need or demand for graduates at level 5 SCHE. Employers support SCHE by helping to design the curricula, by offering placements for students at level 5 or by making specific economic agreements with the SCHE organizers.

Employability is implemented by taking into account the needs of the labour market and labour market analyses when setting up programmes and when drafting the curricula, by using innovative pedagogical approaches, by focusing on professional competences (knowledge skills and attitudes, by implementing a modular approach, by collaborating with industry through placements and alternative learning pathways and by regularly adapting the curricula to the needs of the labour market.

Institutions offering SCHE and companies think cooperation is very important to improve the quality of education and training and to see to it that the SCHE education corresponds to the needs of industry. To enhance this cooperation representatives of (local) industry are helping to draft programmes/ curricula, they help define the professional competences needed by SCHE graduates, they offer placements for students and for lecturers.

Professional/sectoral bodies collaborate with SCHE by drafting a sectoral Qualification frameworks or professional profiles at the level of SCHE, by being involved in curriculum contents and by offering training sessions for lecturers and/or students.

Cooperation with local industry

As mentioned above there is close cooperation with industry especially at local level. To illustrate this a few examples could be given.

Thus there is an agreement with REPSOL (chemistry of oil) according to which, the training is delivered on the premises of the company for people working in the company that want to obtain the higher technician certificate. The company provides the students, the education administration provides the trainers. The trainees will eventually work for REPSOL. Validation of prior learning and competences acquired through informal or non-formal procedures is validated as part of the diploma.

Flexibility of learning is also applied in the mining industry (electromechanic maintenance) there are mechanical and electrical specialists; the former are trained in electrics, the latter in mechanics; they work in shifts, changing every month; the training is delivered adapted to their availability, so it changes with their work shifts.

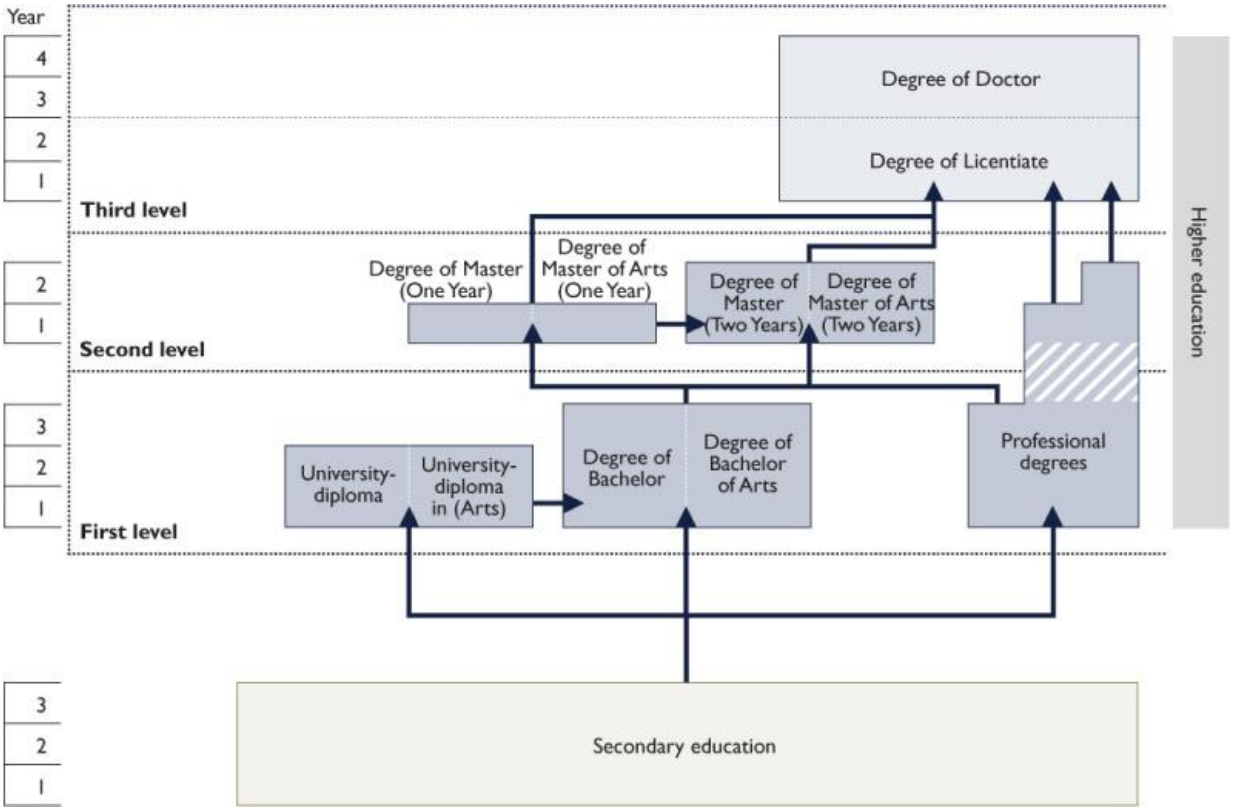
Nuclear power plant workers are trained and get qualified in order to get the necessary competences in the field of automatisms.

No information was received on the social commitment of higher vocational education.

29. Sweden

Introduction on higher education

Tertiary education is provided in universities (universitet) and university colleges (högskola). The Swedish Higher Educational Act and the Higher Education Ordinance have been changed in accordance with the agreements within the Bologna-process. The changes apply to study programmes and qualifications taken after 1 July 2007.



Sweden does not have any short cycle higher education on level 5. The general degrees in first-cycle education (level 6 according to the NQF for HE) are the University diploma (two years of study) and the Bachelor degree (three years of study). The University diploma represents only 4 % of the total amount of general degrees in first-cycle-education. There are also about 25 professional degrees (two to three and a half years of study) in first cycle (level 6). Only a few of these professional degrees can be reached after two years of study.

The NQF for Sweden

Sweden has not introduced its NQF yet. The Ministry of Education and Research carries the overall responsibility for the work on the NQF. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för Yrkeshögskolan) is designated as the Swedish national coordination point for EQF and will be responsible for referencing to the EQF.

Higher Vocational Education programmes (HVEC) are not regarded as short cycle higher education as understood in the Bologna process. It is not decided on what level of the NQF/EQF the HVEC will be placed but we want to include the education form as an interesting example of how a parallel system work.

Higher Vocational Education

Higher Vocational education programmes (Yrkeshögskoleutbildning) provide vocational education and training at the post-secondary level outside higher education institutions. There are clear differences between higher education and higher vocational education. Whereas higher education programmes are linked to research and based on scientific and artistic foundations, higher vocational education programmes build primarily on knowledge that has emerged in the production of goods and provision of services. These rarely have a traditionally scientific basis but are, instead, linked to the labour market's needs for practical vocational skills.

On 1 July 2009 the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (NAHVE) was established to develop and oversee a new form of publicly funded vocational education at post upper secondary level. The NAHVE brings together all post upper- secondary school vocational education outside university. The objectives of the NAHVE are: to make decisions on public funding, to audit the quality and outcomes of the courses, to analyse and assess the outside world's demand for qualified labour and trends in the labour market, to coordinate and support a national validation structure, to be the national coordinating body for EQF and to assess foreign higher vocational exams.

Higher Vocational education programmes (HVE) are designed to meet the needs of the labour market for post-secondary skills and are offered in a wide range of vocational areas, but they have one goal in common, namely the provision of advanced vocational education, tailored to the needs of the labour market. In HVECs a modern approach is taken where theoretical learning is integrated and blended with vocational practice at the workplace.

Courses within the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education must be organised by state universities or colleges, Municipalities or county councils, and individual natural or legal persons. The education provider may organise courses in partnership with others.

Courses in VHE intend to meet the actual needs of the labour market. New courses develop in areas where there is a need. They are given permission for a limited time and then they have to apply in competition with others if they want to continue. The curricula will therefore change continuously.

HVE-Courses are decided in consultation with employers. The NAHVE should determine what courses are to be provided and makes decisions on public funding to be allocated to educational providers. The course provider applies to join the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (with or without public funding). The agency assesses the application on the basis of a number of quality criteria. Most important is that the competence which is generated is in demand on the labour market and that employers are able to influence the educational content.

The basic eligibility requirement for all courses and programmes is a school-leaving certificate from an upper secondary national programme. HVE courses require completed upper secondary education or equivalent, and a management group is responsible for admission to and examination from these courses.

HVE programmes normally consist of two years of full-time study, but there are also shorter and longer programmes. Participant progress and outcomes are assessed and recognised by a certificate/diploma that validates their skills for employment.

30. Switzerland

Higher education in Switzerland

The Swiss tertiary level comprises higher professional education and training, as well as universities. Higher professional education and training is composed of the Federal PET diploma examinations and advanced federal PET diploma examinations and the Colleges of higher professional education and training.

Within Universities a distinction is made between the traditional universities (cantonal universities and Federal Institutes of Technology [ETH]) and the Universities of applied sciences (HES), including universities of art and music as well as universities of teacher education.

Higher professional education and training includes:

a) the federal PET diploma examinations and the advanced federal PET diploma examinations
b) the courses of study at colleges of higher professional education and training.

According to ISCED, the Swiss federal PET Diploma, the Advanced Federal PET Diploma Exams and the Professional Colleges correspond to the Short Cycle Higher Education on ISCED level 5B.[153] However, the Swiss Diplomas and curricula tend to be different from SCHE in that they are mostly part-time, are directed at people who have considerable work experience and tend to specialize in their field, aspire managerial positions or want to gain expertise in their field. Those diplomas are heavily market-oriented and supply workers highly-skilled for the labour-market.

Organisation[154] of higher professional education and training[155]

Vocational and professional education and training is the joint responsibility of the Confederation, cantons and professional organisations. At federal level, education matters are handled by three different federal departments: the Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA), the Federal Department of Economic Affairs (FDEA) and the Federal Department of Defence, civil Protection and Sports (DDPS). The Federal Department of Economic Affairs (FDEA) works in the area of education through the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET). OPET is the federal competence centre for vocational and professional education and training (VET, upper secondary level), professional education and training (PET, tertiary level type B), universities of applied sciences (UAS), training of VET professionals and innovation technology grants. Moreover, OPET is responsible for strategic control and development of all vocational education and training (basic vocational

[153] This is true for the current ISCED classification. In the consultation to the Key Revisions in ISCED, Switzerland stated that PET has to be put in levels 6-8 and that professional experience has to be recognised on these levels as well.
[154] This information is partly taken from the Swiss education server Educa+CH: http://www.educa.ch/dyn/14.asp
Especially from the pages on tertiary education: http://www.educa.ch/dyn/152667.asp
[155] Further information can be found on the website of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs FDEA, Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology OPET:
http://www.bbt.admin.ch/index.html?lang=en
and also the homepage of the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK): http://www.edk.ch/dyn/11553.php

education and training, higher professional education and training, and vocationally oriented continuing education).

Among other aspects, this responsibility involves legislation, quality assurance, further development of the vocational education and training system and encouragement of innovation.
The cantons organise the implementation of federal legislation and are responsible for supervision of vocational education and training. The cantonal offices for vocational education and training usually perform these tasks. The cantonal vocational education departments are subordinate to the cantonal education departments or ministries, or in seldom cases the cantonal department or ministry of economics.

On the inter-cantonal level, the vocational education departments have combined to form the Swiss Conference of Offices for Vocational Education and Training, which coordinates the implementation of the Federal Act on Vocational and Professional Education and Training among the cantons.
The operation of vocational information centres and career guidance centres is also the responsibility of the cantons. The cantonal vocational information centres and career guidance centres have combined to form the Swiss Conference of the Directors of Profession and Course Guidance.

The colleges of higher professional education and training teach students the skills required to assume professional and management responsibilities. The courses and post-diploma studies are practically oriented and especially encourage the ability of methodical and cross-linked thinking. Furthermore, they offer further qualifications for analysing complex tasks specific to their occupational field and for the practical application of the acquired knowledge. There are, overall, 400 curricula available.

The colleges of higher professional education and training offer federally recognised courses of study in the following fields: Engineering, Hotel industry, tourism and catering, Economics, Agriculture and forestry, Health, Surgical technology, Social work / social pedagogy , Continuing education, Art and design, Business administration, Caregiving, and many more.

The courses of study at colleges of higher professional education and training are based on national minimum requirements and on the specifications regarding framework curricula and recognition procedures as defined by the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET).

The federal PET diploma examinations and advanced federal PET diploma examinations are geared toward individuals with professional experience who wish to deepen their knowledge or to prepare themselves for a leadership role. They focus on obtaining first specialisation/deepening of technical knowledge and skills and then on the development of managerial skills
Federal PET Diplomas exist in human resources management, marketing, social insurance, electrical safety, logistics, automotive diagnostics and many more.

The advanced federal PET diploma examinations are more demanding than the federal PET diploma examinations. They are composed of gaining expertise and developing skills needed to hold top-level managerial positions within a company.
Advanced Federal PET Diplomas exist in corporate auditing, border control, taxation, construction, communications management, gardening and many more.

Around 400 recognised federal PET diploma examinations and advanced federal PET diploma examinations are offered. However, the majority apply to a limited number of professions. Professional organisations conduct the federally regulated examinations once or twice each year. Federally recognised titles are obtained.

PET programmes thus prepare students for one of Switzerland's two national professional examinations: the Federal PET Diploma Examination (eidgenössische Berufsprüfung) and the Advanced Federal PET Diploma Examination (eidgenössische höhere Fachprüfung); each of them mention the name of the profession concerned.

The Swiss NQF

Switzerland is currently working on a NQF. It will most likely, consist of 8 levels and three divisions, according to the EQF. It will take into account the specificity of the Swiss vocational and professional education and training, most of all of its dual-track system with the on-the-job experience which is so very crucial to the system. Switzerland has not yet finished work with the NQF and has therefore neither been able to reference the national qualifications to the EQF.

The Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology OPET has, however, finished a first draft of a NQF. It was shown that qualifications of Professional and Vocational Education and Training [156]will not only be situated on level 5 of the EQF but throughout. Depending on the qualification, levels might be as high up as 8 on the EQF.
Moreover it is important to stress that the same kind of Qualifications will not necessarily be on the same level.

In autumn 2009 the nqf.ch-HS (the Swiss Qualifications Framework of the Swiss Higher Education Area) was submitted separately to the CRUS, the KFH and the COHEP and was adopted in turn by all three rectors' conferences. The definitive version was adopted by the common steering committee of the rectors' conferences (la-rkh.ch) on November 23rd 2009 and was passed on to the State Secretariat for Education and Research SER.

There is no intermediate degree within the first –bachelor's – degree. This means that although Switzerland does not have a short cycle within the first cycle of the overarching qualifications framework of the European Higher Education Area (SCHE) it does offer higher professional education at level 5 of the EQF.

Access to higher professional training and transfer to degree studies

Higher professional education and training provides tertiary-level courses outside the university system. This is a Swiss specialty, which seldom appears in this form in other countries. It provides courses of study for demanding vocational fields and leadership roles, and serves the purpose of staff

[156] Further reading on the Swiss Vocational and Professional Education and Training: http://www.atdforum.org/IMG/pdf_Vocational_education_in_Switzerland_Werber_Kull.pdf

training and specialisation of individuals who have completed a 3-to-4-year basic vocational education and training course.

There is no real need for holders of diplomas to transfer to degree programmes because they have the possibility to progress in higher professional education up to level 8 of the EQF. If they want to continue with degree programmes, however, they can apply 'sur dossier'. This means they can put together a portfolio which contains all their information regarding education and training they have received. This dossier is given to the university they want to go to and the university then decides if and on what requirements they allow the candidate to take up his/her studies.

The Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences has issued recommendations on the admission of graduates of higher professional education and training to Bachelor courses at universities of applied sciences[157].. Permeability in vocational education and training is also aided by the possibility of accrediting skills acquired outside the usual educational courses.

People with a foreign degree can apply directly to the homepage of the OFFT: http://www.bbt.admin.ch/themen/01105/index.html?lang=en where they find the necessary information.

QA and accreditation

The topic of Quality Assurance is put down in the Federal Act on Vocational and Professional Education and Training. Article 8,1 states that the provider of VET/PET has to assure quality development. Article 8,2 states that the confederation promotes Quality development, puts in place quality standards and surveys the compliance of those standards. This means that there are national minimum requirements for curricula at colleges of higher professional education and training and they have to pass recognition procedures as defined by the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET).

Moreover, it might be important to note that the Confederation, via the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET), recognises the examination regulations; the professional organisations are responsible for the content of the examinations. Within each industry, only 1 federal PET diploma examination and 1 advanced federal PET diploma examination are approved for each specific professional field. Preparatory courses for federal PET diploma examinations and advanced federal PET diploma examinations are not regulated and are also not compulsory. Preparation can also occur by means of self-directed study.

Profile of students and lecturers

As mentioned before students in higher professional education and training are people who have considerable work experience and tend to specialize in their field, aspire managerial positions or want to gain expertise in their field. Most of the students attend the courses part-time.

[157] These recommendations can be found on: http://www.kfh.ch/uploads/empf/doku/Empfehlung%20Zulassung%20Hoehere%20Berufsbildung%20f.pdf

The lecturers in higher professional education and training have a professional degree themselves and additional training that enables them to teach, such as professional, pedagogical and methodical-didactical training.
For the professional colleges there is an act that states that the lecturers must:
A: have an academic degree, a degree of a professional college or a comparable degree in those subjects they teach and
B. a professional-pedagogical and didactical education: i) of 1800 learning hours when teaching full-time and ii) of 300 learning hours when teaching part-time.

Internationalisation

As from 1.1. 2011 Switzerland will participate in the EU's lifelong learning programme. This will enable students and lecturers in VET/PET to take part in mobility schemes.

Employability and multilingualism

The strategy which governs the development of new diplomas, curricula and modules is the labour-market. The Professional organisations will define what needs there are on the labour-market and will consequently put in place new educational offers.

In order to enhance the employability there is the Swiss Service Centre for Vocational Training, Study and Careers Counselling. The cantonal vocational information centres and career guidance centres have combined to form the Swiss Conference of the Directors of Profession and Course Guidance. This Service Centre has been in place since 2007 and is a newly founded institution of the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education for the provision of services which are transferred to the cantons by the Federal Act on Vocational and Professional Education and Training.

The cantons and private providers are responsible for educational institutions in the field of higher vocational education and training. The Confederation authorises professional organisations to regulate various aspects of the federal PET diploma examinations and advanced federal PET diploma examinations, namely the terms of admission, course content, qualification process, certificates and titles.

The promotion of multilingualism in the area of VET/PET is set down in the Federal act on PET/VET in Article 6. It states that the Confederation can further measures in the area of VET/PET that improve the understanding and exchange between the language communities. Moreover, individual multilingualism can be promoted, namely through standards in the language of teaching and the linguistic education of lecturers. Also, the exchange of students and techers between the linguistic regions of Switzerland is promoted.

Social commitment

The Federal Act on Vocational and Professional Education and Training states in article 3 that one of the objectives of the Act itself is to foster and develop:

A VET/PET system that enables individuals to develop on a professional and personal level, to become integrated into society, and particularly into the labour market, that provides them with the skills they need, the willingness to work in a flexible manner and the ability to compete on the labour market;
A balancing of education and training opportunities in social and regional terms, true gender equality and the elimination of discrimination against people with disabilities.

31. Turkey

Introduction to higher education

The tertiary education system in Turkey[158] covers all the institutions implementing at least two year programmes after secondary education. Higher education institutions can be public universities *(devlet üniversiteleri)*, non-profit foundation universities *(vakıf üniversiteleri)* and foundation post-secondary vocational education and training (VET) schools (*vakıf meslek yüksekokulları*) that are not attached with any university. In addition, there are military and police academies which are called as other higher education institutions (*diğer yükseköğretim kurumları*).

According to the Higher Education Law (Yükseköğretim Kanunu), No. 2547 all post-secondary education that last at least four half years (semesters) or more are accepted as higher education (Article 3/a). Higher education institutions consist of at least some of the following: faculties leading to a four-year bachelor's degree, graduate schools and post-secondary schools (vocationally oriented two-or four year schools). The two-year post-secondary schools are called as post-secondary VET schools (*meslek yüksekokulları*) and those give completely vocationally oriented education lead to an associate degree.

Since 1982, the Open Education Faculty of Anadolu University in Eskişehir has been offering both associate degree and bachelor's degree programmes via distance education. Today, in addition to the Open Education Faculty of Anadolu University, many other higher education institutions are offering distance education programs majority of which are online offerings.

Currently there are 156 universities in Turkey. Among those 102 of them are public and 54 of them are non-profit foundation universities. There are also 9 foundation post-secondary VET schools and 37 other higher education institutions. Universities as corporate bodies are entitled to award any vocational and academic degrees at every level. There is no school type or stage between secondary education and higher education.

As of 2010, total number of higher education students (including distance education) is almost three and a half million (3,529,334). 3,311,990 of them are in the public universities; 178,264 of them are in the non-profit foundation universities; 3,565 of them are in the foundation post-secondary VET schools and 35,515 of them are in the other higher education institutions. The number of distance education students is 1,557,217. The number of foreign students in Turkish higher education system is only 21,948.

[158] This information is taken from Turkish Council of Higher Education (CoHE) http://www.yok.gov.tr

31.1.1. Organisation of SCHE

SCHE is organised at national level by the Turkish Council of Higher Education. The legislation that applies to higher education also applies to SCHE. The legislation covers the organisation of SCHE, the entrance requirements, the fields of study, the transition from SCHE studies to degree studies, the institutions where SCHE is organised and tuition fees for SCHE.

Recent changes in legislation concern the following topics: new regulations for workplace training, education, a higher transition capacity of SCHE students to degree studies (increased about 10 per cent). Although the duration of education will remain the same in SCHE (2+2 semesters : total 4), Turkey will introduce the 6 semesters (3+3) structure trying to integrate theory, practice, and workplace training more efficiently and also in order to enhance skills and competences.

The National qualification Framework NQF about Higher education has been accepted at levels 5,6,7,8. SCHE (associate degree) is situated at level 5 of the NQF of which in fact only a draft has been developed. The NQF has not been officially and legally accepted yet. The descriptors for SCHE in Turkey are linked to the descriptors of level 5 of the European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF). On the completion of short-cycle vocational higher schools (2 years), a vocational qualification known as *Önlisans Diploması* (associate degree diploma) is awarded by *Meslek Yüksekokulları* (two-year post-secondary VET schools).

The objective of SCHE is to offer a further professional specialisation focusing on employment. SCHE is organized by the state or by foundations. It is provided within the universities or by foundation post-secondary vocational schools. It lasts for the moment four semesters or two years (occasionally three years) and is only organized on a full-time basis.

Professional organisations and/or employers are occasionally involved in the designing and restructuring of curricula for SCHE. SCHE is furthermore organized in cooperation with professional organizations such as chambers of commerce or trade unions. The curriculum consists of a combination of practice and theory or of a combination of practice, theory and work placements.

SCHE courses are organised in a flexible way to meet the needs of learners. Thus the courses are time-tabled to meet the needs of learners, institutions use blended learning and Distance Learning programmes are offered using information and communication technology.

SCHE education is available in many traditional fields of study in higher education such as Administration, Agriculture, Arts, Biotechnology, Building, Business studies, Catering and Hospitality, Chemistry, Crafts, Cultural heritage, Domestic sciences, Education (educators, trainers), Engineering, Environmental studies / protection, Health care, ICT, Language studies, Leisure and recreation, Mechanics, Music and Drama, Product development, Restoration, Social work and Legal practice. New courses have been developed in the following areas: courses in mechatronics and automotive engineering, alternative energy sources, biomedicine and biotechnology.

Access to SCHE and transition to degree programmes

The minimum entrance requirements for students in SCHE are: the Certificate/diploma of general secondary education, the Certificate/diploma of technical secondary education or the Certificate of vocational secondary education. Sometimes there is also a national higher education entry exam.

There is legislation governing the transition of SCHE to degree programmes as students can progress to degree programmes but most students don't do it. For those who want to study further to earn a bachelor's degree there is the vertical pass exam. Students need part of the credits earned (between 60 and 120) but they have to attend a bridging programme. Students take orientation courses for a year. After these orientation courses, they can continue with the third class.

Professional experience is not taken into account when graduates from SCHE programmes to move onto a further degree programme. There are no top-up programmes for those intending to study further. Foreign students can also use part of the credits earned abroad to continue studying in Turkey.

Profile of students and lecturers

10% to 20% of the age cohort (18-21) participate in SCHE (30% of all HE students). There are altogether 1,042,350 students involved in SCHE (including distance education). Of those 587,075 are male and 455,275 are female. The number of post-secondary VET school students is 613,077 if not including distance education and majority of them are public university post-secondary VET school students (559,496).

Currently, there are 660 post-secondary VET schools and 586 of them are public university post-secondary VET schools; 34 of them are non-profit foundation university post-secondary VET schools; 9 of them are foundation post-secondary VET schools and 31 of them are other post-secondary VET schools.

Disadvantaged groups, students with a low socio-economic background are overrepresented in SCHE but no data are available as to the numbers or percentage of those students.

The majority of teachers/lecturers in SCHE holds a Master's degree and the majority of the lecturers or lecturers have an academic profile. There is, however, a mixture of lecturers with an academic and a professional profile. Most lecturers or teachers teach part-time in SCHE combined with teaching at another level or in another institution.

Internationalisation

A national credit system is applied by all institutions of higher education alongside with ECTS. ECTS is used because it facilitates international cooperation. For the same reason the diploma supplement is used by all institutions.

Lecturers participate in staff mobility and students participate in student mobility under the Erasmus and Leonardo programmes of the LLP. Teachers or lecturers are also mobile to develop joint degrees

and students to participate in them. Institutions participate in various international and bilateral cooperation programmes in higher education. They probably do not use the Learning agreement, the Transcript of records and the Europass. One of the major obstacles to internationalization is the knowledge of foreign languages. Turkish institutions also have problems finding partners.

QA and accreditation

Internal quality assurance/self-evaluation is only applied by some higher education institutions offering SCHE. External mechanisms for monitoring quality assurance in higher education also do not exist yet (except in view of recognition of new programmes) but they are being set up at the moment. Furthermore, currently there is no mechanism for accreditation.

Employability and multilingualism

There is a genuine need or demand for graduates at level 5 and they are mainly employed as highly skilled technicians. There are, however, no exact data for the employment level of SCHE graduates. Institutions report employment rates between 80% and 85% or even lower than 80%. Employers support SCHE by helping to design the curricula, by reflecting on the content of these programmes, by offering placements for students at level 5, by offering dual learning paths, by financially supporting level 5 education and by actively participating in the teaching.

Employability is focused on by taking into account the needs of the labour market and labour market analyses when setting up programmes, by taking into account the needs of the market when drafting the curricula, by using innovative pedagogical approaches, by focusing on professional competences, by focusing on multilingualism, by collaborating with industry through placements and alternative learning pathways, by regularly adapting the curricula to the needs of the labour market, by including personal development plans in the programme or by having a career guiding service.

It also promotes multilingualism by stimulating mobility to other countries for students to study or to do placements, by offering compulsory language courses, or by promoting the learning of at least two foreign languages.

Involvement in the local community

Both institutions of higher education and industry think it is important to cooperate to enhance the quality of higher education. Representatives of (local) industry are helping to draft programmes and curricula. They teach at the SCHE institutions and help to define the professional competences. Industry also offers placements to the students and sometimes lecturers for their practical training and sometimes representatives from industry participate in internal QA.

Professional/sectoral bodies and trade unions collaborate with SCHE by drafting professional profiles at the level of SCHE, by drafting sectoral qualification frameworks and by being involved in curricular contents and by offering training sessions. Higher education institutions with SCHE show their social commitment by teaching corporate social responsibility, by collaborating with local NGO's, by implementing a sustainable development policy and by engaging students in local social projects.

32. United Kingdom:

32.1. England, Wales and Northern Ireland

General introduction on higher education

Higher education institutions include universities, higher education colleges and university colleges. Higher education institutions are diverse, ranging widely in size, mission and history. SCHE is organized by those institutions of higher education but also by other institutions mentioned below.

All major higher education institutions are autonomous bodies and each determines its own admissions policy and requirements. Entry is competitive and specific requirements are set for each course. In most cases, entry requirements are specified as GCE A-levels or equivalent qualifications. However, most institutions also welcome applications from mature candidates who have had appropriate experience but may lack formal qualifications.

The Higher Education Act 2004 allowed institutions in England to set variable tuition fees up to a maximum of £3000 (adjusted for inflation). However, in December 2010 the UK parliament approved the introduction of a revised threshold of £6,000 for those entering HE from 2012/13, with institutions able to charge fees above that amount up to an absolute limit of £9,000 if they meet tough conditions on access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. At present, however, the impact of these changes on SCHE are yet to be determined, and so it remains to be seen what tuition fee levels will be for these courses from 2012/13.

In the UK, academic qualifications at the tertiary level are not national awards, but are granted by the individual institutions which have the power to award their own degrees and qualifications. Degrees and other qualifications offered by higher education colleges without degree-awarding powers are validated by external bodies such as a university or national accrediting body.

Qualifications and titles vary between institutions. Qualifications may include higher education certificates and diplomas, foundation degrees, bachelor's degrees, bachelor's degrees with honours, and higher (postgraduate) degrees, such as master's degrees and doctorates. Undergraduate programmes leading to bachelor's degrees with honours form the largest group of higher education programmes. Typical courses leading to an honours degree last for three years (if taken full-time) although some courses are longer.

National Qualifications Framework for England, Northern Ireland and Wales

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, a five-level framework for higher education qualifications (FHEQ) (from levels 4 to 8) has been developed to provide a clear structure to higher education qualifications and to promote consistent use of qualification titles.

Level 5, which includes Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE), Foundation Degrees (FD) and the Higher National Diplomas (HND) is also called the Short Cycle (within or linked to the first cycle qualifications). Level 4 concerns Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE).

The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) with 9 levels is a new framework for creating and accrediting qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The QCF recognises smaller steps of learning and enables learners to build up qualifications bit by bit; it helps learners achieve skills and qualifications that meet industry's needs; and enables work-based learning to be nationally recognised. The QCF is referenced to the European Qualifications Framework and operates within it. All vocational qualifications were expected to be placed on the QCF by the end of 2010 and it is expected that academic qualifications will also be placed on the QCF at some point in the future; until that time, the outgoing National Qualifications Framework remains the framework for all academic qualifications.

Also Wales has developed the CQFW (Credits and Qualifications Framework) which is a descriptive voluntary framework that was developed by bringing together a number of sub-frameworks already in existence in Wales: the framework for higher education qualifications (FHEQ); the National Qualification Framework (NQF) for regulated national courses; and the quality assured lifelong learning. The CQFW is positioned as a key part of Wales' lifelong learning policy and strategy. It embraces both academic and vocational qualifications and can be described as comprehensive. The CQFW can be seen as a second generation framework emerging from the NQF for England, Northern Ireland and Wales. There are nine levels in the CQFW: entry plus eight levels. There are common level descriptors which apply to all types of learning programmes and qualifications.
EQF level 5 is subdivided into level 4 and level 5 of the CQFW:

- The Certificate of Higher Education (120 UK credits), Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE), Key Skills Level and HNC (150 UK credits) are at level 4 of the CQFW
- The Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diploma (HND) and The Foundation degree are at level 5 of the CQFW with each 240 UK credits. The latter are called Short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle) qualifications

Organisation of SCHE

SCHE is organized regionally within the UK for England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Scotland, however, is described separately as there are some major differences compared to the three other regions.

The legislation as to SCHE is the same as that which applies to all higher education institutions. The 'Further Education and Training Act 2007' is the latest legislation concerning the Foundation Degree. It covers amongst others Entrance requirements for SCHE, Quality Assurance and Accreditation of SCHE, the transition from SCHE studies to degree studies and tuition fees for SCHE. This act also allows further education colleges to apply for the power to award Foundation Degrees.

SCHE can be organised by the state or any other public authority, by private education providers, by industry and professional organizations. SCHE is either publicly-funded (via the UK territories' respective funding councils, as for all degree studies at publicly-funded institutions), sometimes in collaboration with any of the above. SCHE is provided within the universities, university colleges, within vocational or professional colleges and within further education colleges. It is also provided

within the framework of formal adult education but usually this is HNC (Higher National Certificate) for Part-Time students (adult education).

Foundation Degrees are awarded by institutions with Degree Awarding Powers, but can be taught or delivered by private providers, industry, professional bodies, public colleges or any other organisation. The awarding body is responsible for quality assurance of the qualification.

The courses are organised in a wide range of subjects such as Administration, Agriculture, Art and Design, Biotechnology Building, Business studies, Catering and Hospitality, Chemistry, Crafts ,, Cultural heritage, Domestic sciences, Education Engineering, Environmental studies, Health care, ICT, Language studies, Leisure, Recreation, Mechanics, Music and Drama, Product development, Restoration, Social work and Technology. However, according to one of the respondents Business studies is one of the key areas in SCHE. This is more or less confirmed by the HESA statistics for other undergraduate degrees. According to these figures 9.2 % of all full-time and 10% of all part-time courses at undergraduate level (other than first degree programmes) are in the area of Business studies and administration. However, according to these figures, 42.9% of all other undergraduate full-time courses and 19. 4% of all part-time undergraduate courses are in subjects allied to medicine. Moreover the subject area of Education also seems to be quite important with 7.7% of all full-time other undergraduate courses and 13.4% of all part-time courses being organised in that subject area.

SCHE- studies typically last two years (on a full-time or more on a part-time basis) and are focusing on further professional specialization for employment AND feeding into BA studies sometimes with an Extension or Top Up degree – 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time. However, it has to be pointed out that this is mainly the case for Foundation degree graduates but not necessarily for HND graduates and certainly not for HNC and CertHE holders. Professional organisations and/or employers are involved in designing and restructuring the curricula. Chambers of commerce and trade unions are especially involved in the development of the Foundation degrees. The curriculum usually consists of a combination of theory, practice and work placement.

SCHE courses are organised and time-tabled in a flexible way to meet the needs of learners e.g. Open and Distance Learning programmes are offered using information and communication technology or blended learning. Courses are also offered off-campus in places of work.

Access to SCHE and transition to degree studies

The entry requirements are generally either a certificate of general secondary education, technical, or vocational secondary education. There is also the possibility for entry on the basis of recognition of Prior "Experiential" Learning, since formal qualifications are not necessarily required for entry to the Foundation Degree.

The transition from SCHE to degree programmes is fairly uncomplicated. Students can progress from the HND, the DipHE to bachelor degree studies, and legislation also requires that there is also an articulation for all Foundation Degree students to progress to an honours degree. Access or bridging courses are organised to prepare the transition from SCHE to degree programmes but they are neither

compulsory nor always available or needed. Professional experience is taken into account and facilitates the transition.

Thus, for students who were registered at an HEI for their foundation degree, and who qualified with a foundation degree award in 2007-08, Hefce[159] found that more than half of students who studied full-time for their foundation degree (59 per cent) went on to study an honours degree in 2008-09. Less part-time qualifiers progressed to an honours degree (42 %). Most students who continued their studies did so at the same HEI at which they were registered for their foundation degree. Moreover , around 80 per cent of qualifiers were credited with the equivalent of full-time study for two years on an honours degree programme, regardless of whether or not they had changed institution for their honours degree study and of those foundation degree qualifiers who went into the final year of an honours programme in 2008-09, 67 per cent were reported as graduating in that year.

SCHEstudents may be taught alongside Degree students. Reasons for opting to join an HND course instead of a Degree course can include the difference in entry requirements or the more vocational emphasis of HND courses. Students who make good progress on SCHE courses may then choose to proceed to join the Extension Degree (Bachelor's) one year full-time or two years part-time.

Some institutions of higher education are assigning ECTS credits to modules undertaken as part of a Foundation Degree. The award of 240 UK credits or 120 ECTS credits for a Foundation Degree tends to be typical. This can be compared with a normal Bachelor's degree, which is equivalent to 300-360 UK credits or 180-240 ECTS credits.

Most students in SCHE make the transition (immediately or after some practical work) to degree programmes, and access or bridging courses are organised to help with the transition from SCHE to degree programmes, although they are not compulsory. Professional experience is also often taken into account and facilitates the transition.

In addition, there are special top-up programmes organised so as to help students from SCHE programmes transfer to a degree-level course, but these are only in certain areas and only for students that already have professional experience.

Students coming from other (European) countries with SCHE qualifications can earn a degree using the credits earned in their own country on the basis of RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning).

Profile of students and lecturers

About 7% of the HE students are enrolled in SCHE. In the academic year 2008 – 2009 there were in total 15,105 students enrolled in an HND course and 59,480 in a DipHE course. Moreover there were 14,565. Students enrolled in HNC-courses. In 2008 – 2009 there were 72,135 students in the Foundation degrees[160]. In 2009-2010 this number has risen sharply to 99.475 [161] students enrolled in Foundation degrees and it is expected that in 2011 the number of 100.000 will be reached.

[159] Hefce : Foundation degrees . Key statistics 2001-2002 to 2009-2010http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2010/10_12/
[160] HESA statistics 2008-2009; http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php/content/view/1650/278/
[161] Figure provided by fdf (foundation degree forward)

According to figures received from individual institutions most of the students doing the HND or the DipHE are in the age cohort of 18 – 21 years of age. However, for the Foundation Degrees more than 65% is more than 21 years old on entry.

In 2008-9, 58% of entrants to Foundation degrees were female. In the same year, two-thirds (66%) of Foundation degree entrants were aged 20 or older and 49% were aged 25 or older. In 2009-10, 57% of Foundation degree students studied on a full-time basis and 43% were part-time students.

According to some respondents disadvantaged students are overrepresented in SCHE compared to other levels of HE. However, there are no data available to confirm this.

The majority of the lecturers hold at least a bachelor's degree and work full-time in SCHE. There is a mixture of lecturers with an academic and a professional profile but no percentage of lecturers with a professional profile is imposed by law. However, at the universities, the majority of lecturers hold a Master's degree and have an academic profile.

Internationalisation

Staff and students are involved with international or multilateral programmes, mainly in the framework of the Erasmus programme of the LLP. Nonetheless, there is not an extensive participation in mobility programmes.

The participation rate in Erasmus student mobility in the UK stands at 1.58% of all graduates, compared to an average of 4.23 % for all Erasmus eligible countries (EUR 31)[162]. Although several institutions use ECTS alongside the national credit system, in order to facilitate international cooperation, no reference is made to the use of the Diploma supplement or the Europass certificate.

Several respondents state that the main obstacle to internationalisation and participation in mobility is the fact that many UK students work part-time to finance their studies and many fear losing their job if they leave the country for a few months.

Quality Assurance and accreditation

Internal quality assurance and enhancement is compulsory and applied by all institutions. All students in England, Wales and Northern Ireland undertaking degree or foundation degree level study are invited to take part in a National Student Survey in the final year of their programme. This survey asks about satisfaction, and the results are published by institution and subject. An external mechanism for monitoring QA is applied by a national QA agency (the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education). Each degree awarding body validates its own degrees, subject to satisfactory judgements by the QAA. The Privy Council (a government body) is responsible for determining which institutions have the

[162] European Commission (2010). *Lifelong Learning Programme. Statistical Overview of the Implementation of the Decentralised Actions in The Erasmus Programme in* 2007/2008http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/0708/report.pdf

power to award Foundation Degrees, again, subject to satisfactory QAA judgements. A large number of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies also accredit vocational courses.

Employability

There is a genuine demand for graduates of SCHE at level 5. 95% to 100% of the SCHE students who are seeking employment find a job within 6 months after graduating. They are mainly white collar workers in administration, sales or hospitality management. These figures given by respondents are confirmed by the Hefce Key statistics on Foundation degrees. Hefce found that one year after graduating, only 7 per cent of full-time qualifiers, and 4 per cent of part-time qualifiers, were neither studying nor in employment. The statistics also show that three-and-a-half years after graduating 91% was in employment. Moreover, 53 per cent were in graduate jobs. This compared to 45 per cent of employed qualifiers being in graduate jobs six months after qualifying.

Employability is definitely a focus within SCHE courses. This is done by taking into account the needs of the labour market when setting up programmes and drafting the curricula. In addition, institutions frequently use innovative pedagogical approaches, focus on professional competences, adopt a modular approach, have an active careers service, and collaborate with industry through placements and alternative learning paths.

The Government is currently consulting on a sustainable skills strategy, to build an internationally competitive skills base. The draft strategy is likely to be significant to SCHE, given its attention to the provision of vocational training, routes into employment, progression opportunities, the role of employers in shaping skills training, community-based learning, and business start-up opportunities.

Multilingualism (and languages in the curriculum) generally do not get much attention. In the words of one of the respondents, “the focus on multilingualism is minimal?”.

Cooperation with local community

Both institutions offering SCHE and local industry consider mutual cooperation to be important. Employers support SCHE by helping to design the curricula, reflecting on the content of SCHE programme, offering placements for students at level 5, and financially supporting SCHE level 5 education.
Cooperation with companies and industry is enhanced by the fact that representatives of (local) industry often sit on the boards of the institutions, and some are even involved as external examiners.

One of the responding institutions mentioned that it works closely with the local Chambers of Commerce and businesses (through KTPs - Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and the provision of local internships), as well as running a Professional Passport scheme and promoting PDPs - Personal Development Portfolios.

Moreover, professional/sectoral bodies collaborate with institutions offering SCHE by drafting sectoral Qualification frameworks or by being involved in curriculum development, and trade unions help to raise awareness of opportunities within SCHE.

SCHE provision is connected with social mobility, lifelong learning and institutions' commitment to the local population or issues of corporate social responsibility in various ways. For example, several institutions have a diversity charter (with special focus on low SES groups of students), collaborate with local NGOs, have a sustainable development policy, teach corporate social responsibility, or engage students in local social projects. Short courses also attract significant numbers of mature learners.

32.2. Scotland

Introduction to higher education in Scotland[163]

There are 20 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), comprising 14 universities and six other institutions. As the Open University also operates in Scotland, the total number of universities is now 15. HEIs offer university and non-university level programmes (degree and sub-degree).
Courses at higher education level are also offered by Scotland's 40 tertiary colleges (mainly Higher National Certificate –HNC- and Higher National Diploma – HND) and there are close collaborative links between the two sectors. There is also one unique institution, the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) Millennium Institute, which comprises a federation of 15 Scottish tertiary colleges .

All HEIs are autonomous bodies and each determines its own admissions policy and requirements for each course. In most cases, applicants require ISCED level 3 qualifications although other routes are offered to attract applications from people returning to study after a gap. In recent years greater provision for mature students has led to the development of special access courses with guaranteed places for successful participants.

Since autumn 2000, tuition fees have been abolished for Scottish domiciled students and EU students who undertake full-time non-advanced degree courses. Some part-time students in receipt of state benefits may also be eligible to have their fees waived. In addition, from autumn enrolment 2008, a £500 part-time fee grant was introduced. Students whose individual income is £18 000 or less and who are studying at 50% or more of a full-time HNC/HND/Undergraduate Degree course (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework – SCQF level 7, 8, 9 and 10) will qualify for this funding. This will replace the current part-time loan and will be delivered through ILA (Individual Learning Accounts) Scotland.

The National Qualification Framework for Scotland

Scotland has a NQF called the SCQF – Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework with 12 levels compared to e.g. England which has 8 levels for its NQF. The SCQF is a meta-framework which includes all sectors and all levels of formal education, including HE. SCHE (EQF level 5) is at level 8 of the SCQF. The Scottish NQF makes a clear distinction between levels 4 and 5 of the EQF. The SQF has been referenced to both the EQF and the QF EHEA. The descriptors for the SQF are in line with both

[163] The introduction is largely taken from Eurybase:
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_SC_EN.pdf

frameworks. The SCQF provides for accumulation of credits leading to level 8 of SQF as long as they are at the appropriate level and correspond to particular design rules and principles. The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland has been self-certified as compatible with the Framework for Qualifications of The European Higher Education Area (EHEA). As mentioned above the FHEQ in Scotland is fully incorporated within the SCQF.

Organisation of SCHE

Within the three cycle system, students can study a range of courses at higher education level, including: a one year Higher National Certificate (HNC); two year Higher National Diploma (HND); three year ordinary degree; and four year Honours degree, although there is flexibility depending on the subject and/or institution concerned. Many learners will undertake HNC and HND programmes through workplace release and/or through part-time learning. Higher National Qualifications such as HNC and HND are developed by SQA – Scottish Qualifications Authority – in partnership with colleges, industry and HEIs. HN qualifications are quality assured, awarded and certificated by SQA. Degrees are awarded by HEIs with degree-awarding powers.

A new Scottish lifelong skills strategy called 'Skills for Scotland[164]' was published in September was published in September 2007. The strategy is a call to action to create a cohesive system that supports the lifelong development and use of skills that is centred on the individual and is responsive to employer needs. It covers the development and use of skills at all stages of life, including the contribution of early years' provision, schools, colleges, universities, community learning partnerships and workforce development. In October 2010 a new report was published to assess the progress that was made since 2007 and how the strategy had been implemented. This report called 'Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth'[165] also focused on empowering Scotland's people, supporting Scotland's employers, simplifying the skills systems and a partnership approach.

SCHE is organized regionally within the UK. Scotland has distinct compulsory and post-compulsory education systems from the rest of the UK. The legislation governing SCHE in Scotland deals with Quality Assurance, accreditation of SCHE and the tuition fees for SCHE. The legislation also governs up to a certain extent the CertHE (Certificate of Higher Education) and DipHE (Diploma of Higher Education) in HEIs, in terms of where they are delivered. HNC/HNDs (Higher National Certificate and Higher national Diploma) in Scotland are generally validated and awarded by SQA (Scottish Qualification Authority).

SCHE leads in Scotland to the following certificates or diplomas: CertHE, DipHE, HNC, HND.
SCHE is organized by the state and the Colleges are funded primarily by the state through the Scottish Funding Council, but they also operate as autonomous incorporated bodies overseen by boards of management state and by industry. Universities, technically, are not owned or controlled by the state, as they independent institutions through Royal Charter, though they may be generally construed of as

[164]RR Donnelley (2007*). Skills for Scotland, A lifelong Skills Strategy*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/09/06091114/0
[165]APS Scotland (2010*). Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government. http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/326739/0105315.pdf

public bodies and they are highly dependent on public funding. Though many HNs may be funded by industry, depending on where they are studied, this might not be the case for many or any CertHE and DipHE's. SCHE is offered by the state , by private education providers or by industry. Thus, it is provided within the universities, within the university colleges or within tertiary colleges.

Professional organisations and/or employers are closely involved in the design, development and restructuring of curricula for SCHE. These professional organizations are: the Sector Skills Councils; the Sector Skills Bodies; the employers and the professional bodies related to the discipline concerned. Also here, this might be more the case for HNDs than for HNCs or DipHEs.

SCHE may be provided in a flexible way to meet the needs of learners: many courses, especially in the colleges, are time-tabled to meet the needs of learners, Open and Distance Learning programmes are offered in a number of cases using information and communication technology or through blended learning and courses are also offered off-campus in places of work. A combination of the aforementioned delivery methods is also possible, though not always completely in every case.

It is offered on a part-time and on a full-time basis. The curriculum consists of a combination of practice and theory. The duration of SCHE in Scotland is between one and two years or 96 to 240 SCQF credits. For HNC, 96 SCQF credits are required, with 240 for HND. In practice, many colleges run programmes of 120 SCQF credits as part of the HNC. CertHE and DipHE are 120 and 240 SCQF credits, respectively (equivalent to 60 to 120 ECTS credits).

Courses exist in a large variety of areas and regularly new courses are developed such as e.g. shipbuilding to reflect and support the UK government's naval shipbuilding programme.

- **Access to SCHE and transition to degree studies**

The minimum entrance requirements for students in SCHE are the 'Higher' or other appropriate qualifications, such as National Certificates, at SCQF level 6.

There is no specific legislation though funding priorities exist for articulation within HE of HNC into year 2 of a degree or HND into year 3. The transition is fairly easy and the majority of students do it. ECTS credits earned at level 8 of SCQF can be used by students to earn a degree at level 9 SCQF etc. as all the levels are part of the SCQF which is a lifelong learning credit framework and all Scottish education exists within it.

There are "access" or bridging courses organised in Scotland to prepare the transition from SCHE to degree programmes but this depends on the receiving HEI. Professional experience is sometimes taken into account when graduates from SCHE programmes want to move onto a degree programme. There are special top-up programmes organised where students from SCHE programmes can earn a degree but this also depends upon the receiving HEI.

Students coming from other (European) countries with SCHE qualifications earn a degree in Scotland using the credits earned in their own country on the basis of credits earned abroad. It is not always a straightforward process, but it is achievable using credit transfer and/or RPL processes.

Profile of the lecturers and students

The average age of the majority of the students would be around their mid-twenties. A very large group of students thus are adult students. Overall there are about 39.000 students in SCHE education in Scotland. Research by the Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning at Glasgow Caledonian University 28 highlighted that HN candidates tend to be mature students, more likely to be part-time and to come from disadvantaged areas than other entrants to higher education in Scotland[166].

The majority of the lecturers have a Bachelor's or Master's degree and the majority of the HEI lecturers have an academic profile. However there are some trade-related qualifications for providers of the specialized qualifications. Probably most college lecturers have a professional profile. Most lecturers work full-time, but there is a significant number on part-time contracts, as is there in the HEI sector (where quite a lot of teaching and/or tutorial work for at least 1st and 2nd year is undertaken by postgraduate students, particularly in the universities.

Internationalisation

ECTS is used alongside a national credit system because it facilitates international co-operation and it is an instrument enhancing flexibility.

Many students and teachers don't participate in mobility. If the students do they may use the transcript of records or the learning agreement. The institutions may be involved in Erasmus projects, in bilateral or multilateral cooperation projects.

Problems may be the knowledge of foreign languages and finances. Many Scottish students work part-time to finance their studies and many cannot afford to go and fear losing their job if they leave the country for a few months.

QA and accreditation

All SCHE institutions use internal quality assurance as it is compulsory to do so. For qualifications awarded by HEIs and for CertHE and DipHE, External QA is done by the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education) and the use of external examiners. For HNC and HND, SQA appoints experienced and skilled practitioners to conduct external quality assurance on its behalf. Additionally, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMI) conducts quality reviews of educational provision, including the delivery of HNC and HND.

The SQA is the statutory accreditation body for Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs).. There is also a professional accreditation agency for specific professions and for certain professionals. There is however no overarching professional accreditation body.

[166] The Scottish Government (2006*). Review of Scotland's Colleges: Unlocking Opportunity: The Difference Scotland's Colleges Make to Learners, the Economy and Wider Society.*
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/10/02110410/13

Employability and multilingualism

Although respondents state that there is a real need for SCHE graduates on the labour market recent figures for the employment rate are not available. Graduates would be mainly employed as highly skilled technicians.

Employers support SCHE through a range of means, such as helping to design the curricula, by reflecting on the content of these programmes, by offering placements for students, by offering dual learning paths and/or by financially supporting SCHE education.

Institutions offering SCHE programs cooperate with local industry by having representatives of (local) industry sit on the board of the institutions, help to draft programmes/curricula or help to define the professional competences needed by SCHE graduates, participate in internal QA and in external QA activities and offer placements for students and lecturers.

Employability is focused upon by taking into account the needs of the labour market and labour market analyses when setting up programmes and when drafting the curricula, by using innovative pedagogical approaches, by implementing a modular approach, by regularly adapting the curricula to the needs of the labour market, by including personal development plans in the programme and by having a career guidance service. However, multilingualism gets very little attention and focus.

Professional/sectoral bodies collaborate with SCHE by drafting sectoral Qualification Frameworks by drafting professional profiles at the level of SCHE, by being involved in curriculum content and by offering training sessions.

The Scottish Government has continued to support the development of local employability groups across Scotland and strengthened this with an Employability Learning Network to help improve the way employability support is delivered. Local employment groups, facilitated by local authorities, are developing a pipeline of employability-related interventions, including skills development, to be delivered by SDS[167], local colleges and the third sector[168].

Cooperation with the local community

Both the institutions of higher education (including tertiary colleges) and industry think that it is important to enhance the quality of SCHE education and to see to it that SCHE graduates respond to the needs of industry. This is why representatives of (local) industry help define the professional competences needed by SCHE graduates

SCHE institutions show their social commitment by having a diversity charter, by implementing a sustainable development policy, by collaborating with local NGO's, by engaging students in local social projects and/or by teaching corporate social responsibility to their students.

[167] Skills Development Scotland
[168] APS Scotland (2010*). Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government. http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/326739/0105315.pdf

Annexes

List of tables

List of acronyms

Ad : Associate degree (NL)

ADIUT :Association des Directeurs des IUT : Association of Heads of IUT (FR)

AEHT : European Association of Hotel and Tourism Schools - Association Européenne des Ecoles d'Hôtellerie et de Tourisme

BA : Bachelor

BES: Brevet d'Enseignement Supérieur: Certificate of Higher Education (BEfr)

BFUG : Bologna Follow-Up Group

BTS: Brevet de Technicien Supérieur:/ Certificate of Higher Technician (FR and Lux.)

CEDEFOP : Centre Euroéen pour le Développement de la formation Professionnelle : European centre for the Development of Vocational Training

CertHE : Certificate of Higher Education (UK ENIW + Scotland)

CQFW : Credits and Qualifications Framework for Wales

DD : Dublin descriptors

DET : Diploma de Especialização Tecnológica : Diploma of Technical specialisation (PT)

DG EAC : Directorate General for Education and Culture

DipHE: Diploma of Higher Education (UK ENIW + Scotland)

DS: Diploma Supplement

DUT: Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie : University Dipoloma of Technology (FR)

ECTS : European Credit transfer System

EFTA : European Free Trade Association

EHEA : European Higher Education Area

ENQA: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

EQF: European qualification framework

ESF : European Social Fund

ET 2020 : Education and Training Strategy for 2020

ETF: European Training Foundation

EU: European Union

EUCEN : European Association for University LifeLong Learning

FD: Foundation Degree((UK ENIW)

FETAC: Further Education and Training Awards Council (Ireland)

FTE: Full-Time Equivalent

HE : Higher Education

HEFCE: Higher Education Funding Council for England

HEI : Higher Education Institution

HETAC: the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (Ireland)

HBO 5: Hoger BeroepsOnderwijs level 5 : higher professional education (Bnl)

HNC : Higher National Certificate (UK ENIW + Scotland)

HND : Higher National Diploma (UK ENIW + Scotland)

ICT : Information and Communication Technology

ILA: Individual Learning accounts

IMO : International Maritime organisation.

IOTI (Institutes of Technology Ireland)

ISCED : International Standard Classification of Education

IFTS : Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore (IT)

IST: Instituto Technico Superior (IT)

IUT: Institut Universitaire de Technologie: University Institute of Technology (FR)

LA : Learning agreement (Erasmus mobility)

LLL : LifeLong Learning

LM: Labour Market

LLP: LifeLong Learning programme of the EU (DG EAC)

MA: Master

MECU: Spanish qualifications framework

NGO: Non Governmental organization

NOKUT: Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education

NQF: National Qualification Framework

NVAO: Nederlands – Vlaams AccreditatieOrgaan: Dutch – Flemish accreditation Agency

ODL: Open and Distance Learning

OJ: Official Journal of the European Union

PDP: Personal Development Portfolio

Ph.D.: Doctorate

QA: Quality assurance

QCF: Qualifications and Credit Framework (England & Northern-Ireland)

OECD : Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development :

QF: EHEA: Qualification Framework European, Higher Education Area

RPL: Recognition of prior learning

SCHE: Short Cycle Higher education

SCQF: Scottish Credits & Qualification Framework

SES: Socioeconomic Status

SQA: Scottish Qualification Authority

STS: Section de Technicien Supérieur: Section for Higher Technicians (FR)

TA : Training agreement (Leonardo da Vinci mobility)

TEI: Tertiary Education Institutions

TOR : Transcript of records (Erasmus mobility)

TSC: Tertiary short Cycle

VET: Vocational education and Training

VHE: Vocational Higher Education

List of abbreviations for countries

AT: Austria

BEde: Belgium: German-speaking community

BEfr: Belgium French-)speaking community

BEnl: Belgium Dutch-speaking community

BUL: Bulgaria

CH: Switzerland

CY: Cyprus

CZ: the Czech Republic

DE: Germany

DK: Denmark

EE: ESTONIA

ES: Spain

ESCat: Spain Catalonia

FI: Finland

FR: France

HU: Hungary

IE: Ireland

IS: Iceland

IT: Italy

GR: Greece

LI: Liechtenstein

LT: Lithuania

LV: Latvia

LU: Luxemburg

MT: Malta

NL: The Netherlands

NO : Norway

PL: Poland

PT : Portugal

RO : Roumania

SE : Sweden

SI : Slovenia

SL : Slovakia

TR : Turkey

UK EWNI: UK England, Wales and Northern-Ireland

UK SC: UK Scotland

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Cammarino, Raffaelina, *Italian Ministry of Education*, Turin, 26 October 2010
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Daale, Hans, *Secretary General Dutch Association for Shorter Higher Education* (DASHE), Amsterdam 18 June, 2010
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Ivanov, Stefan, *International University College, Dobrich, Bulgaria.* Amsterdam 18 June, 2010
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Lewis, John, *Scottish Qualification Agency,* Budapest, 21st January 2011
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	Dugald Craig	West of Scotland College' Partnership (WoSCoP)

Figure 30: contributing experts

Responses to the questionnaire per country

Country	Min./department	Association	Institution
AT	1		1
BEDE			
BEFR			
BENL	1		2
BG	1		2
CY	1		2
CH			
CZ	1	1	5
DE	1		1
DK	1		2
EE	1		
ES	1		
FI	1		
FR	1	1	5
GR	1		
HU	1	1	5
IE	1	1	2
IS	1		1
IT			
LV	1		1
LI	1		
LT	1		
LU			
MT	1		1
NL	1	1	1
NO	1		1
PL			1
PT			
RO	1		
SE	1		2
SI	2	1	7
SK	1		
TR	1		3
UK EWNI	1	1	1
UK SC	1	1	
Total : 83	29	8	46

Figure 31: Total of respondents

Questionnaires

The questionnaires can be found and downloaded in the full version of the study (including country chapters) on the EURASHE – website

http://www.eurashe.eu/RunScript.asp?p=ASP\Pg0.asp