

Achieving the Lisbon Goals:
The Contribution of Vocational Education and Training Systems
Contract No. EAC/84/03

Country Report: Liechtenstein

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This report is one of a series of European country reports. It has been written to support a larger report: **Achieving the Lisbon Goal: the contribution of VET**, prepared by the **Lisbon-to-Copenhagen-to-Maastricht Consortium for the European Commission**. This report is not intended as an official view. But rather independent insight into specific aspects of National VET systems in Europe.



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Theme 1 - Progress of national VET systems towards meeting the challenges of Lisbon

Strategies and barriers for improving the status, flexibility and attractiveness of Initial VET (IVET).

1.1.1 Raise the status of IVET?

The government of Liechtenstein collaborates closely with the government in Switzerland. The IVET is financed by the state, whereas the “Amt für Berufsbildung” (National Authority of Vocational Training) is in charge to implement and to transfer the Vocational Education Act. A main initiative to raise the status of IVET is the possibility to attend additional training course, which provides access to higher Technical Colleges up to access to universities (Austria).

Regarding the ISCED Code the level of this course is 3A if it is attend over the apprenticeship or 4A after if it is attend after the apprenticeship

1.1.2 Improve the status-image - attractiveness of IVET?

The “Berufsberatung” Career Guidance Office provides a wide range of activities to improve the attractiveness of IVET. First of all each pupil in the secondary school get lessons to actively reflect on vocational choices. Additionally the Career Guidance Office offers individual counselling for the pupil (up to 16 years old) and all persons involved in the process of selection for IVET.

The committee of VET meets on a regularly basis to evaluate the current situation and to put in force projects to analyse specific problems (e.g. analysing the position of immigrants in the VET system).

The committee of VET (refer to point 12) is linked to the “Amt für Berufsbildung” a government organisation. The director of the “Amt für Berufsbildung” is the chairperson of the committee.

The Chamber of Trade, which represents the SMEs in Liechtenstein, initiated a working group to deal with the theme “How can we improve the attractiveness for apprenticeships in the trade area”? The working group, composed of trainers of all large industrial companies, has worked on this theme during the last year and will continuous this project.

In parallel the Chamber of Commerce launched a working group, called AGIL, to promote the attractive training places in different industry companies in Liechtenstein.

Furthermore, the Association of Liechtenstein Banks implemented a successful cross boarder framework to teach apprentices in specific subjects of banks.

1.1.3 Increase the flexibility of IVET?

The vocational training system in Liechtenstein is based on the dual-training system, which means educational and practical training in parallel. From that point of view the flexibility is limited. However, the current Vocational Education Act (1976) is in adaptation. The necessity for the adaptation are manifold, on the one hand the landscape of education has changed on the other hand the lifelong learning policy demands on a more flexible education system.

The new Vocational Training Act will consider the increased requirements of the market. For example a two years apprenticeship will be replaced by three years apprenticeships, because the workload would be too high to cover all the additional requirements.

At the same time the new two year apprenticeship (Vorlehre) focuses on practical strengths of the youth persons.

New professions will be considered in particular in the field of new technology (Mediamatiker and Telematiker) as well as the field of environment (e.g. Recyclers).

The definition of the Vocational Education is extended which includes:

First of all the promotion of equal opportunities and the elimination of any form of discrimination, racism and xenophobia are underlined.

Special pre-apprenticeships are developed for people with a disability or people with a foreign-language (e.g. refugees)

Furthermore, Quality assurance is a main topic to improve the IVET.

Finally, the mobility for people is highlighted.

1.1.4 What are the main barriers to achieving these objectives?

The speed of the transformation is slow.

The topic IVET has become a very complex issue which demands on the direct involvement of different stakeholders for the decision making process.

Reducing the number of early school leavers

1.1.5 Who leave formal education with low levels of basic skills at age of 15?

The rate of early school leavers is not a topic as the primary and the secondary school is compulsory in Liechtenstein. Due to the individual counselling system the rate of persons who are not start an apprenticeship or an upper secondary school is reduced to 1 to 2% per year. This is an average of five persons per year.

1.1.6 Who leave education or training at the earliest opportunity and with few or no recognised qualifications?

Refer to a)

Increasing VET at tertiary level

Based on the Leonardo-da-Vinci-Project “EURO-BAC” a fruitful collaboration with Austria emerged. The objective of this project was to establish new ways to bridge the “gap” between VET and higher Technical Colleges up to universities.

There are two opportunities for the apprentices to achieve this access. One the one hand they can attend during their apprenticeship additional training course in mathematic, physic, languages or they can attend after their IVET a one year course to adapt their knowledge.

Incentives for updating knowledge & skills

1.1.7 Government

A new act of grant will put into force within the next months.

One part depends on the income and a second part is independently of the income. The scale is not released to the public. However, the idea is all persons should be encouraged (equal opportunity).

The new act will contribute a grant for further education (in the context of life long learning) for everybody. A certain amount of the grand is independently of previous education and income. The aim is to encourage the people to actively take part on further education.

1.1.8 Employers

The initiatives of employers are diverse. Some of them offers a wide range of “internal education” and supports external education. Others offers special training programs for ICT or courses in social competences.

1.1.9 Other stakeholders

The Chamber of trade installed its own institute for further education. The focus is to support persons from SMEs e.g. in accounting, HRM aspects, or person who would like to start their own business.

The University of Applied Sciences in Liechtenstein opened a SMEs centre, which supports persons to launch their own business (a very important issue is to develop a business plan, which is accepted by financial institutions).

The Association of Banks in Liechtenstein offers many courses e.g. private banking. Furthermore, the Association of Banks in Liechtenstein collaborate with the University of Applied Sciences in Liechtenstein, which provides diploma courses up to the MBA level.

1.1.10 Please provide examples (if any) of the contribution of VET to successfully promoting inclusion

Approximately two thirds of compulsory school leavers start an apprenticeship in Liechtenstein. At the same time the IVET is the main pillar for our high qualified workers and low unemployment rate.

Meeting the challenges of an aging population

First of all the new act of grant encourages all persons independent of their age. Additionally, the sector of adult education in Liechtenstein is concerned to implement further education for this group of people (Institute Erwachsenenbildung and the senior college).

For example, adults with 6 or more years of work experience are accredited to the final examination of the apprenticeship.

A Senior College offers special series of lectures in a certain topic for people > 55.

Effectiveness and efficiency of VET

1.1.11 In the current national debate, how effective is the system of VET perceived to be?

Yes, it is! Approximately two third of the youth starts an apprenticeship. This popularity of the apprenticeship is based on the dual system and it is still a heritage of long lasting tradition.

It is a tradition, but we see also the shift to the higher secondary school (Gymnasium). However, it is a tradition in this region.

1.1.12 In the current national debate, is the VET system seen as offering efficiency/ good value for money?

As mentioned earlier (point 1) the state is financing the framework of the VET. This includes all financial aspects regarding the VET-School and the examination.

For the IVET the individuals do not have to pay a fee.

The contribution of the employers in terms of a work place is the most important part of an apprenticeship.

The dual system provides an ideal balance between praxis and theory.

Indeed, the potential for an improvement is always given. The dual system is a robust and balanced framework which offers also space to improve the system. In particular the modularity is an issue for adaptation.

1.1.13 What are the main trends in terms of investment in VET (Public investment?)

Liechtenstein does not pay incentives, as we are convinced that is the wrong approach.

Based on the previous arguments the IVET system in Liechtenstein focuses on equal opportunity for all person. Therefore it is more important to take care to build a holistic framework of IVET instead to partially support organisations.

The state invests more money to make VET attractive e.g. co-financing of mobility initiatives, supporting international VET events e.g. World skills www.worldskills.com

Theme 2 - Innovation in Teaching and Learning Processes

Improvements in learning processes and contents

Liechtenstein does not have any VET schools. All VET schools are located in Switzerland and therefore the teaching and learning methods and contents for VET are based on the VET Schools in Switzerland.

[p1]A monitoring programme helps to identify further learning programmes and courses for teachers to continuous their capabilities and knowledge in the field of pedagogic, social competences and technology.

In general the monitoring programme is based on a feedback system. Not only from the teachers point of view but also from the apprentices point of view. Furthermore, the feedbacks per teacher (from several classes) are compared to all the other teachers. This evaluation generates an excellent overview of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the teachers and also displays where further training needs are required.

The vocational schools are in charge of identification the trainings needs, whereas the organisation “Schweizerisches Institut für Berufspädagogik” (<http://www2.educa.ch>) is responsible for the learning programs.

Improving the integration of different learning sites; integration of formal and informal learning.

According the dual training system these problems are eliminated. The companies in Liechtenstein have made excellent experiences. However, one disadvantage which occurs is the limited flexibility.[p2]

The dual system includes both parts of learning. On the one hand the apprentices are up to two days at school and the remaining days at the company. From that point of view the link between training organisation and enterprises are optimal linked.

Evaluation and quality assurance of VET provision

1.1.14 For the individual (assessment of competences and knowledge)

The national authority “Amt für Berufsbildung” is responsible to evaluate the competence and the infrastructure of training companies. If all the requirements are fulfilled the “Amt für Berufsbildung” will approve the training organisation.

1.1.15 For the institution (internal/external quality management)

As underlined in point 8 the vocational training schools are in charge of the continuous improvement process of the teaching methods and up to date knowledge in particular in ICT. At the same time the “Amt für Berufsbildung” is in charge to assure that the trainers in companies fulfil the requirements. It is planned in the new Vocational Education Act that a special trainer course is compulsory.

1.1.16 For the system (monitoring and evaluation)

Based on the size of active training organisations the national authority “Amt für Berufsbildung” is in a position to monitor the training companies a regular basis. This monitoring system is based on the one hand on a feedback system between the company and the “Amt für Berufsbildung” and on the other hand on the interim and final exam results of the apprentices.

Professional development and status of teachers and trainers.

As mentioned in several points Liechtenstein is a new Voc

Currently approval procedure for the new Vocational Training act is running.

The reputation and status for VET teachers and trainers are high. This excellent status is a result of the crucial position of VET teachers and trainers in the dual system.[p3]

Trainers in enterprises are well experienced professionals with the ability to deal with youth persons. Only if this combination is given they will get a good reputation. In short, persons who are encouraged motivated and are able to deal with youth people will become good trainers or teachers the others will fail. The dual system supports the selection process of person who can cope with the challenges and who will fail. It is the job of the HRM department of the enterprises to find out, who do have these requirements.

Although the topic is related to education in the end it is a process of the market.

Theme 3 - Building European Competences for a European Labour Market

Challenges & policies in relation to the Lisbon employment strategy

1.1.17 What are the main challenges to achieving the Lisbon employment objectives for your country, according to the European Commission 'Kok Report'?

According to the employment objectives Liechtenstein takes up a special position. The economy provides approximately 29'000 work places in relation to 34'000 inhabitants. The current unemployment rate oscillates between 1.5% to 2%. The number of commuters from the neighbour countries is around 12'000.

[p4]

However, the high pressure in the labour market is the most important indicator to observe. The globalisation makes it possible for companies to employ the most suitable person for each task. Therefore the market needs and even better the future market needs have to be recognised to transfer these requirements into training modules. Consequently, the training modules have to be adapted a continuous and in an even shorter time period.

These updates cause costs and this will be a challenge to balance the added value to the costs.

1.1.18 Please identify any policies and strategies being developed to tackle these challenges

It is an open labour market, which is regulated by the market requirements.

As mentioned initiatives to foster the quality assurance and the transparency of VET-qualifications are in discussion.

1.1.19 Please identify any obstacles standing in the way of reform of VET in relation to achieving the Lisbon objectives.

Involving stakeholders

1.1.20 Please describe the role of stakeholders or social partners in the planning of VET at national, sector and company level

The trade associations (trade unions) [p6] hold an important position to propose adaptations for current job training regulation to meet future market requirements.

The members of the Committee of Vocational Training are from: Chamber of Trade, which represents the SMEs in Liechtenstein, the Chamber of Commerce, Association of employees in Liechtenstein and representatives of the industry.

1.1.21 Which actions to anticipate and recognise skills and qualifications needs (at national, sector or regional level) for your country do the European social partners identify as important in their recent report?

It is important for the recognition process of professional skills that the quality requirements in all member states will be defined. Based on that definition the social partners and the policy maker get a framework for further development [p7].

As stated in a) the trade union hold an important position to propose adaptations for current job training regulation to meet future market requirements.

In Liechtenstein we have the “Liechtensteiner Arbeitnehmersverband“ www.lanv.li

Transparency, recognition & mobility

1.1.22 To establish credit frameworks

Concept has achieved a negotiation status.

1.1.23 To establish or reform a qualifications framework

Concept has achieved a negotiation status [p8].

The parties will be for the first round: Office of Economic Affairs, Office of Vocational Training, and Vocational Guidance Centre.

1.1.24 To implement Europass?

The EUROPASS-Berufsbildung was launched in 2001. Meanwhile 100 persons got a EUROPASS in Liechtenstein which is in relation to the country size an excellent number. The National Contact Point for the EUROPASS is located within the “Amt für Berufsbildung”.