



**COUNTRY REPORT: LITHUANIA**

**ANALYSIS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM  
WITH REGARD TO POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
*THE HAMBURG MODEL CONCEPT***

**Prepared by:**

**Renata Černeckienė**

**Vilnius Builders Training Centre**

**February 2014, Vilnius**

## Education system in Lithuania

The Lithuanian education system consists of traditional general education (pre-school, pre-primary, primary, lower and upper secondary education), initial vocational education and training (VET) (lower, upper secondary and post-secondary education), continuing VET and higher education (college and university studies).

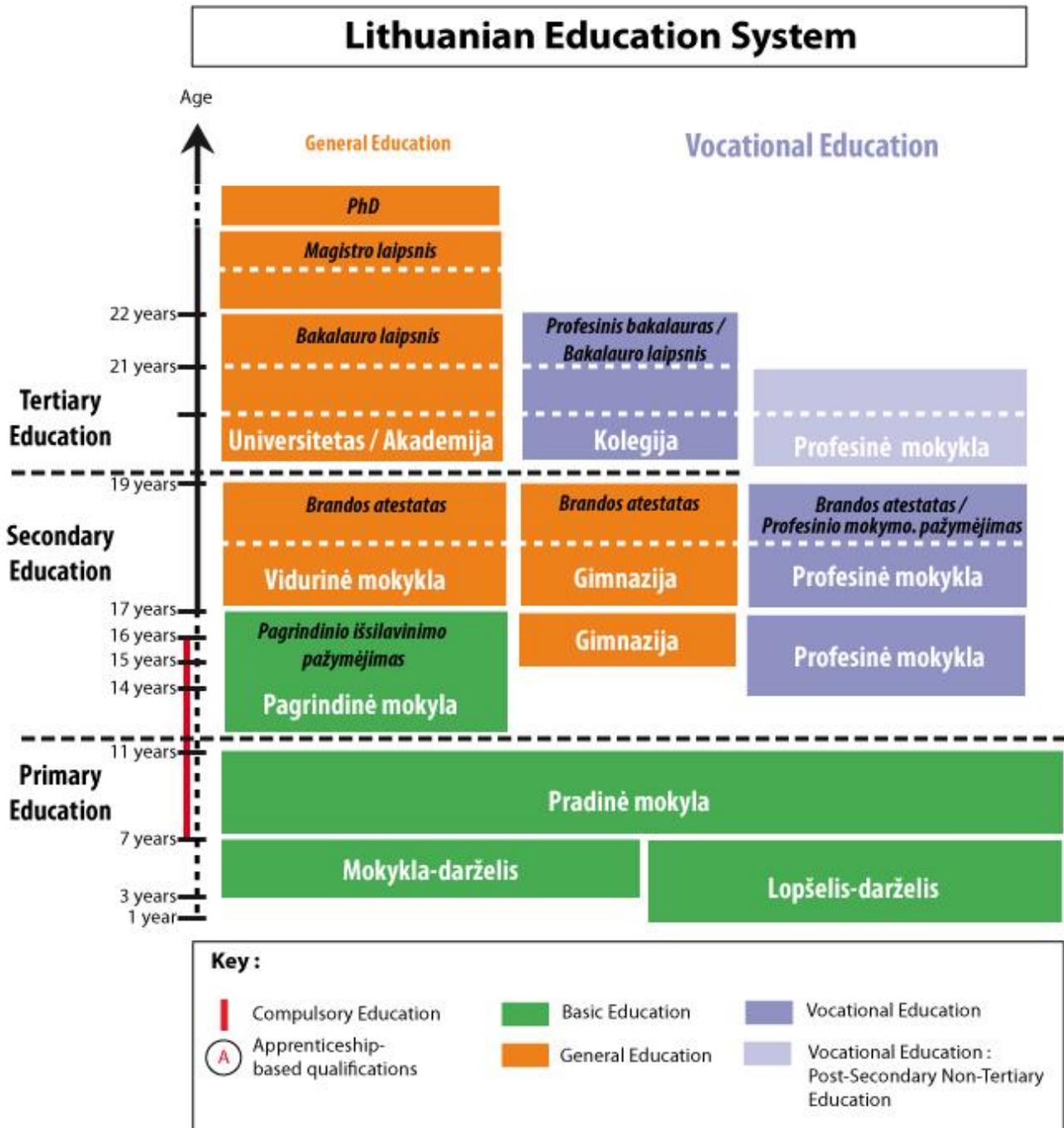
In Lithuania education is compulsory for persons under the age of 16. The compulsory education is associated with the completion of lower secondary education (ISCED 2), after which students can choose upper secondary general education or VET programmes at ISCED 3 level (leading to a qualification or to a qualification and a school leaving (maturity) certificate). Those who fail to graduate from lower secondary education may enter VET programmes or youth schools at ISCED 2 level. Graduates of upper secondary level programmes leading to a maturity certificate (either vocational or general education-oriented) may enter either post-secondary vocational training (ISCED 4) or higher education (ISCED 5) programmes. The diagram of the education and training system is presented in *Picture 1*.

In 2010 the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework (LTQF) that defined an 8-level qualifications system covering all education sectors. The LTQF was developed based on the system of dividing learning outcomes into levels, which already existed in the Lithuanian education system: three education levels in the general education sector, four VET attainment levels in the VET sector and three study cycles in higher education.

The levels of qualifications are arranged hierarchically, with regard to the underlying competence of the qualifications, the ways of acquiring the qualifications as well as the criteria defining the levels of qualifications: complexity, autonomy and variability of activities for which a person with certain qualifications is ready.

The LTQF includes qualifications for working and learning, the main purpose of which is to prepare a person for further learning. Examples of such qualifications can be qualifications acquired upon completion of general lower or upper secondary education programmes.

Picture 1. Diagram of Education System in Lithuania



## Key characteristics of VET provision

As stipulated in the Law on Vocational Education and Training (1997, new edition - 2007), the Lithuanian VET system covers initial VET (IVET), continuing VET (CVET) and vocational guidance.

VET programmes are designed for different age and educational background students. Initial VET is intended for the acquisition of a first qualification. In IVET, students are provided with opportunities of acquiring a qualification and completing general lower or upper secondary education.

CVET is designed for the improvement of a person's existing qualification, acquisition of a new qualification or gaining a competence needed to implement specific jobs (functions) as regulated in legal acts.

From 2002 VET curricula in Lithuania are competence-based, with clearly defined training objectives. IVET programmes are developed by VET providers in cooperation with representatives of employers. When developing programmes, the providers follow VET standards and general requirements approved by the Minister for Education and Science. Formal CVET is implemented following national programmes.

VET in Lithuania is school-based; however, practical training and training in enterprises constitute the major part of the training. For example, in IVET practical training comprises 60-70% of the total time allocated to teaching vocational subjects, of which 8-15 weeks is organised in a company or a school-based workshop simulating working conditions.

A new edition of the Law on VET legitimates apprenticeship as a form for VET organisation. However this training form is rarely applied in practice. It is foreseen to allocate national and European structural funds for special projects for the apprenticeship development.

Social partners participate in shaping the content of new qualifications, qualification standards and VET programmes, in assessing that VET programmes correspond to the labour market needs and in organising practical training. They also take part in organising and implementing assessment of qualifications.

## Range of VET programmes

In IVET the following VET programmes registered in the Study, Training Programmes and Qualifications Register (*Studijų, mokymo programų ir kvalifikacijų registras*) are delivered:

- programmes at lower secondary education (ISCED 2 level) for students having no lower secondary education;
- programmes at upper secondary education (ISCED 3C level) for students having completed lower secondary education and not seeking to complete upper secondary general education;
- programmes at upper secondary education (ISCED 3A level) for students seeking to complete upper secondary general education;

- programmes at post-secondary education (ISCED 4 level) for students having completed upper secondary general education.

Graduation from these programmes leads to the LTQF and EQF levels 3-4 qualifications. Average learning duration, qualification certificates and further learning and career opportunities are summarised in Table 2.

*Table 2. Formal IVET and CVET programmes*

	<b>ISCED level</b>	<b>Average duration</b>	<b>Certificates awarded<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Further learning and career opportunities</b>
Programmes at lower secondary education level	ISCED 2	2-3 years	Qualification certificate; certificate of lower secondary education	Further training in VET institution or general education school;  Access to labour market
Programmes at upper secondary education level	ISCED 3C	2-3 years	VET diploma	Access to labour market
Programmes at upper secondary education level	ISCED 3A	3 years	VET diploma; maturity certificate	Access to higher education/ college or university study programmes;  Access to labour market
Programmes at post-secondary education level	ISCED 4	1-1,5 years	VET diploma	Access to higher education/ college or university study programmes;  Access to labour market
Continuing VET (labour market training) programmes	ISCED 2,3,4	Up to 1 year	Qualification certificate	Access to labour market

Those having no general lower or upper secondary education are provided with the opportunity to acquire it together with a vocational qualification. Thus VET programmes help to return early school leavers to the education and training system. After completing general upper secondary education and having gained a vocational qualification VET students may continue their studies at higher education institutions. In recent years the conditions to apply to higher education were improved for successful VET graduates.

## **Participation in IVET**

It should be noted that the popularity of VET programmes in Lithuania is slightly increasing. Due to decreased birth numbers and emigration, the number of students in general education schools during 2009-11 has decreased by 11%, whereas the number of students in higher education institutions has decreased by 15%. At the same time, the number of students in VET has changed insignificantly.

The majority of VET students participate in ISCED 3 level VET programmes that are carried out together with the general upper secondary programme and are intended for the acquisition of a qualification and a maturity certificate. The least popular programmes are for those students having lower secondary education and wishing to acquire only a vocational qualification (ISCED 2). Around 500-600 students are participating in these programmes annually. It should be also noted that the popularity of post-secondary non-tertiary programmes (ISCED 4 level) is increasing, especially among adults who enter vocational schools having further education or work experience.

CVET covers so-called labour market training programmes. The main requirement for learners is to be over 18 years old. Programmes are designed for persons with various educational attainment levels; it may be required to have a certain qualification or work experience. Duration of the programmes is less than 1 year, depending on the target group and the complexity of the qualifications. The programmes are intended at:

- the acquisition of a vocational qualification;
- the acquisition of an additional vocational qualification;
- gaining a right to implement specific jobs or functions.

Graduation from these programmes leads to LTQF/EQF level 1-3 qualifications. Practical training comprises 60-80% of the training. It is recommended that half of the time allocated for practical training should be spent in a real work environment.

National level data about participation in formal labour market training programmes is not collected. It should be also noted, that adults increasingly choose formal VET programmes oriented towards youth training as described above. ISCED 4 VET programmes are especially popular: persons aged 24 and older account for around a quarter of those entering IVET programmes at post-secondary level.

## **VET programmes for unemployed**

Training of the unemployed and those noticed of dismissal is organised via formal CVET programmes registered in the Study, Training Programmes and Qualifications Register. From 2012 a new procedure for training for the unemployed has come into force. The unemployed and those noticed of dismissal are referred to training providers which they have personally chosen from the training providers list published on the LLE website. According to new procedure training is organised taking into account very concrete needs of employers. The major part of the unemployed are following programmes agreed with an employer and after training the employer is obliged to employ the unemployed person for a period not shorter than 12 months. In case of agreement with the employer, practical training is organised at the work place.

### **Formal VET providers**

The Law on VET stipulates that a VET provider may be any VET institution, a freelance teacher or any other provider (general education school, enterprise, organisation whose main activity is other than VET) that is entitled to develop and implement VET programmes. VET providers may accept students and start implementing formal VET programmes after receiving a licence from the Ministry of Education and Science. VET institutions may have licences for both IVET and CVET.

Based on the data from the Open Information, Counselling and Guidance System (*Atvira informavimo, konsultavimo ir orientavimo sistema, AIKOS*: <http://www.aikos.smm.lt>), there are 88 VET institutions, the main activity of which is VET provision. In 2012, 74 institutions (vocational schools - budgetary and self-governing, colleges) implement IVET programmes; 72 of them are public. In addition to IVET providers, 260 institutions, the main activity of which is other than VET, have licences for CVET. However, data about CVET is not collected and thus, no reliable data is available to indicate how many providers implement CVET programmes.

With the aim of the optimal and efficient use of training funds and resources a reform of the network of initial and continuing VET providers is carried out. The priority activities for optimising the network are the transfer of VET schools with low number of students to municipalities, strengthening larger regional VET institutions and those institutions where sectoral practical training centres are being created, merging IVET and CVET institutions and changing the status of state-run VET institutions into self-governing ones.

A sectoral practical training centre (SPTC) is a VET institution or its department equipped with modern practical training facilities from one or several areas. The main aim of the SPTC is to assure that learners, using the latest technologies and equipment, gain practical skills matching the needs of the labour market. These centres are open to students from VET, higher education institutions, employees from sector enterprises, vocational teachers, etc. By 2014, 42 SPTC have been opened.

### **Other forms of training**

In addition to the formal VET leading to state recognised qualifications non-formal VET is conducted. The Law on VET states that the requirements for the non-formal VET programmes and their implementation may be set by the organisation that orders training under this programme or

finances any such training. The objectives of VET programmes, admission criteria and duration are different and mostly depend on the target group. The decision concerning the tuition fee is made by the education provider. Non-formal adult education may be provided by all education providers, i.e. a school, a freelance teacher, and other education providers (an agency, company or organisation not having education as its main activity) that are entitled to provide education.

Non-formal VET is widely applied in continuing vocational training and is designed for the acquisition of a vocational qualification or individual competences. It is carried out in various forms: learning in the workplace, attending non-formal training courses, distance learning, etc. In most cases, the following three forms are used for the organisation of CVET:

- non-formal training/learning of employees and self-employed persons initiated by the employer. It is organised in various settings, using forms and programmes chosen by the employer. Some companies have their own qualification frameworks or apply internationally recognised sectoral qualifications and programmes. Such training/learning is funded by a company or agency or a learner. When relevant, tax incentives are used;
- training of employees funded by the state budget (e.g. training of public servants and employees in certain economic sectors: health care, agriculture, etc.);
- training of the unemployed and people notified of dismissal. From the beginning of 2012, a training voucher system was introduced for funding of training according to formal and non-formal education programmes. The unemployed and people notified of dismissal personally choose training providers from the training providers list published on the LLE website.

## VET curricula

VET curricula in Lithuania are competence -based, with clearly defined training objectives. Since 2000 VET programmes are developed by VET providers, in cooperation with representatives of employers. When developing programmes, the providers follow VET standards and general requirements approved by the Minister for Education and Science.

The training programme comprises two parts: the standardised part, common to the entire country, which defines the areas of professional activity, competencies, training objectives and provisions for the assessment of competences (the standardised part of the programme is automatically transferred from the relevant VET standard); and the *optional* part, covering teaching methods, subject programmes, training facilities, etc.

Main requirements of the programmes are as follows:

- practical training comprises 60-70% of the total time allocated to teaching vocational subjects; practical training in a company or a school-based workshop simulating working conditions is obligatory and it should take up to 15 weeks;
- specialisation subjects may comprise 10-15% of the total time allocated to teaching vocational subjects;
- programmes should contain entrepreneurship as well as working safety subjects;

□ environment, IT, foreign languages should be either integrated into the vocational subjects or developed as separate modules;

□ in order to better reflect local needs, VET institutions have the right to independently change the content by up to 10%.

A newly-prepared programme is harmonized with a relevant institution representing the employers (e.g. the Chamber of Industry, Commerce and Crafts), then experts (vocational teachers and employers) evaluate the quality of the programme and, in the case of positive assessment, the programme is entered into the Register of Study and Training Programmes and Qualifications. A license to carry out a registered programme is issued to a VET provider, if its resources are sufficient for implementing the registered training programme, and vocational teachers or candidates for vocational teachers meet the requirements prescribed in VET programmes and laws.

### **Evaluation of competences and award of qualifications**

A qualification is awarded to a person who has obtained all the competences required for the qualification and set out in the relevant VET standard or the sectoral qualifications standard or in the absence of these, in a VET programme registered in the Register of Study, Training Programmes and Qualifications.

The evaluation of the competences acquired by IVET graduates is separated from the training process. Since 2003, the organisation of the final qualification assessment has been delegated to social partners (e.g. Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Crafts and Agriculture). The evaluation of the competences of CVET graduates is organised by educational institutions and in some cases by social partners.

Qualifications are awarded by the VET provider after obtaining the results of the evaluation of competences. Until 2012, graduates from ISCED level 2 VET programmes (intended for people without lower secondary education) were issued a qualification certificate (*kvalifikacijos pažymėjimas*) and graduates from ISCED level 3-4 programmes (intended for people with lower and upper secondary education) were issued a VET diploma.

### **Apprenticeship training**

A new edition of the Law on VET (2007) legitimates apprenticeship as a form for VET organisation. However, very few schools in Lithuania provide a work-based apprenticeship route to obtaining a vocational qualification in a limited number of professions. The theoretical training is organised at school and practical training – in real work environment. A student and a company sign a labour contract and, together with the school, a trilateral training agreement.

## Conclusions

- The concept of the Hamburg Model would be a useful tool for Lithuanian VET in enhancing the development of apprenticeship training.
- The concept of the Hamburg Model could be applied for the students enrolled in vocational training programmes at upper secondary education (ISCED 3C level) who do not seek to complete upper secondary general education. These are usually the students with lower academic achievements but rather good practical skills as well as students with special needs.
- However, it should be noted that the implementation of the training programme based on the Hamburg Model can be treated only as pilot in Lithuania because the registration and licensing of a training programme is regulated on the state level and can be performed only following a set of legal procedures.
- It has to be noted that the target group students who could participate in the Hamburg Model programme, are enrolled to our training centre on a 2-year training basis. Therefore the 1-year training programme of the Hamburg Model could be treated only as a part of their total training time spent at VET centre. Consequently, the certificate issued to them at the end of this 1-year course of the Hamburg Model, could be treated only as a supplement to their VET diploma received at the completion of a 2-year training programme.
- The implementation of the Hamburg Model training programme with this group of students could be started not earlier than September 2014, i.e. at the beginning of a new school year.
- Moreover, it can not be assured that in September 2014 there will be a required number of students (15 - 30) who could participate in the pilot training course (e.g., this year we have a group of 14 students in the training programme at upper secondary education (ISCED 3C level). This is due to the majority of students choosing a training programme that provides completion of upper secondary general education.
- Another possibility that has been analyzed in Lithuania was possible involvement in the Hamburg Model training programme of the young workers who are already acting in the labour market but without having any or required qualification. The meetings were organized with different construction companies who might be interested in the implementation of the project ideas. However, the problem arose that in the construction companies in Vilnius we found only 6 young people (up to the age of 25) who work without having any professional qualification. They could be a potential target group for the implementation of the Hamburg Model concept, but they are too few. It is always too risky to have such a small group in case they start to drop out, change their mind, move, etc. It is likely that such unqualified young people could be found in other towns of Lithuania as well. However, it would be a problem of getting them coming to Vilnius for training due to high transportation and accommodation costs.

## References:

- ReferNet Report on VET in Lithuania 2012 by Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre;
- Lithuania: National Reform Programme, 2012.  
[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/nrp2012\\_lithuania\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/nrp2012_lithuania_en.pdf)
- Ministry of Education and Science (*Švietimo ir mokslo ministerija*): <http://www.smm.lt>