



spotlight on VET

# CYPRUS

## VET in Cyprus

The vocational education and training (VET) system of Cyprus played a significant role in the recovery from the economic and labour market crisis in 2012-15, and laid the foundations for socioeconomic development.

VET is initially available at upper secondary in technical schools, including evening technical schools. The unified lyceum provides general upper secondary education. Horizontal and vertical movement across upper secondary education is possible, with students moving between the unified lyceum and technical schools provided they succeed in specific examinations.

Technical schools offer two types of three-year programme. Students select their specialisation in the first year. Theoretical stream programmes and the first and second years of practical stream programmes are mainly school-based and combine general education subjects with technological and workshop subjects.

Programmes in both streams offer practical training in enterprises at the end of the first and second year - four weeks in the practical and two weeks in the theoretical stream. The final year of practical stream programmes includes training at a workplace, one day per week. School leaving certificates are awarded on successful completion and are equivalent to those of secondary general education schools. Graduates are eligible for admission to universities and other tertiary education institutions in Cyprus and abroad. Qualifications provide access to several regulated occupations, provided all other requirements of relevant legislation are met.

VET is also available through the new modern apprenticeship system, which is directed towards young people who leave formal education between ages 14 and 18. 'Preparatory apprenticeship' lasts for one school year and young people between 14 and 16 years of age who have not completed lower secondary programmes (EQF 2), may participate. After completing the preparatory apprenticeship, students can either continue to 'core apprenticeship' or return to formal programmes.

Core apprenticeship lasts for three years. Eligible candidates must be less than 18 years old to apply and must have either completed a

lower secondary programme (EQF 2) or preparatory apprenticeship or dropped out of upper secondary programmes. On successful completion, participants may continue with post-secondary VET. The 'apprenticeship certificate' allows access to several regulated occupations, provided all other requirements of relevant legislation are met.

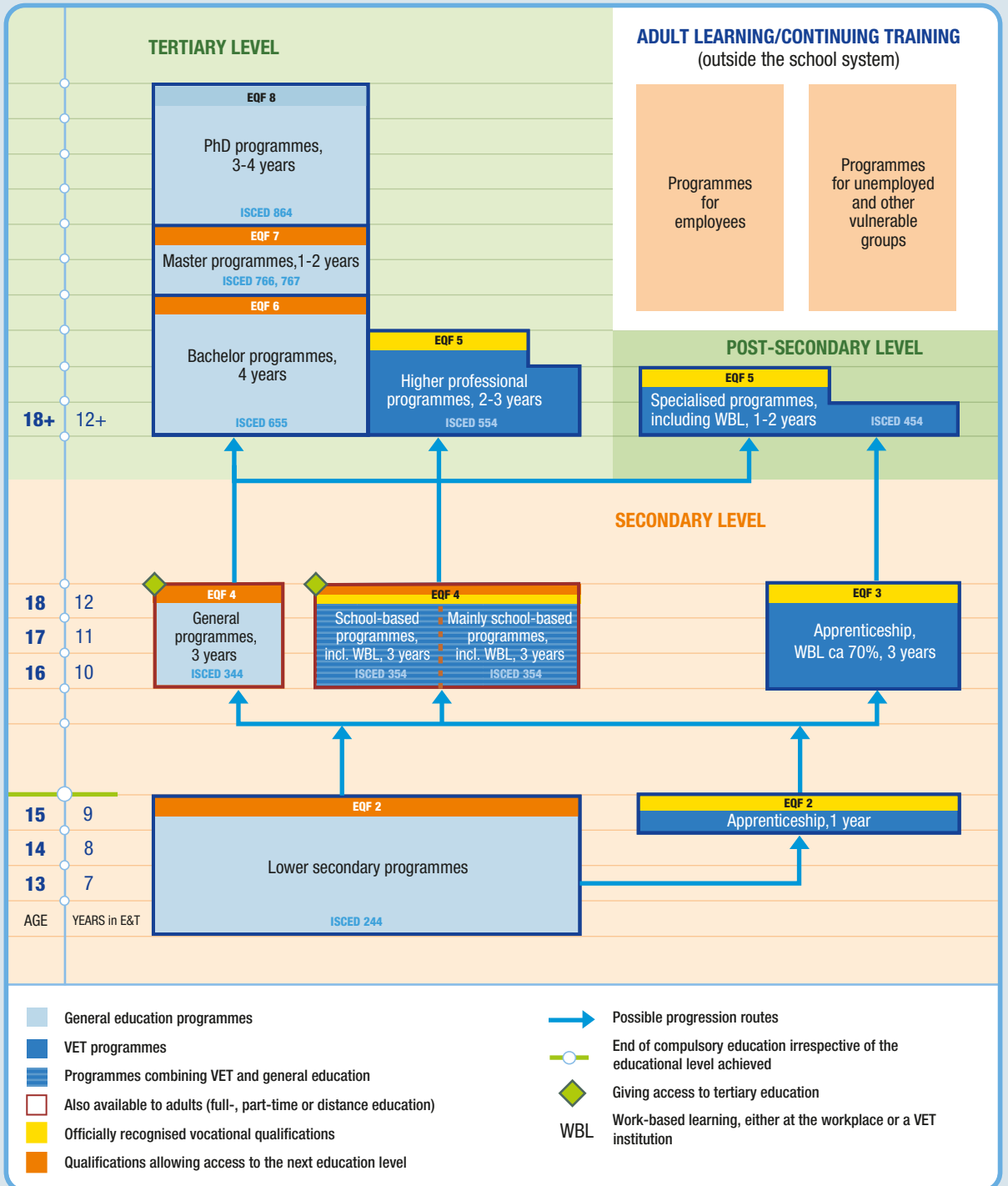
Post-secondary VET has been provided at post-secondary institutes of technical and vocational education and training since the 2012/13 academic year. These institutes provide the citizens of Cyprus, especially young people, with two-year courses to acquire, improve, or upgrade their qualifications and skills. By acquiring a post-secondary technical qualification, they are better prepared for the labour market.

VET at tertiary, non-university level is provided at four public institutes/colleges and at several private institutes. Successful completion of the programme, which lasts for two-to-three years, leads to a diploma or higher diploma awarded by the institution.

Vocational training for adults is extensively available in Cyprus for the employed, the unemployed, vulnerable groups and adults in general, through a mixture of public and private provision: colleges, training institutions, consultancy firms and enterprises. The employed usually participate in training programmes for job-specific skills to meet company needs, while the unemployed acquire both horizontal and job-specific skills to improve their employability. Training schemes targeted at the unemployed combine training with either employment in an enterprise or job placement to acquire work experience. However, the percentage of 25 to 64 year-olds participating in education and training is lower than the EU average.

The Ministry of Education and Culture has overall responsibility for developing and implementing education policy. The Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance has overall responsibility for labour and social policy and the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus plays an important role in vocational training.

# VET in the Cypriot education and training system



## Distinctive features of VET

Cyprus has a long-standing tradition of tripartite consultation (government, trade unions and employers' organisations) and social dialogue. The social partners are involved in:

- planning in an advisory and consultative capacity;
- education reform promoted by the government;
- boards of directors of institutions dealing with human resource issues;
- identifying education and training needs and setting priorities in education and training.

Vocational education and training in Cyprus is mainly public. Provision of secondary VET including evening technical schools, the apprenticeship system and post-upper secondary VET is free of charge, while various adult vocational training programmes are offered for a limited fee.

A major incentive for participation in adult vocational training is provided by the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA), a semi-government organisation. Funding provided by the HRDA has encouraged enterprises and their employees to participate in training and development activities.

Cyprus has a high level of educational attainment. There is a strong cultural trend among Cypriots in favour of general secondary education followed by higher education. The economic crisis that Cyprus faced in 2012-15, together with the efforts to increase VET attractiveness, have contributed to a significant increase in the number of students who enrol in technical schools. In 2014, VET attracted 15.1% of the upper secondary school age cohort compared to 12.7% in 2011.

## Challenges and policy responses

The recent economic crisis, and its adverse effects on the labour market, has been a critical challenge for education and training in Cyprus. Training has been redirected to respond flexibly and effectively to the crisis, with targeted actions for the unemployed, economically inactive, and the employed.

A major challenge is to address the young as well as long-term unemployment. Actions are being taken to promote employability of young persons and the long-term unemployed, through individualised guidance, training and work placements.

Another challenge for education and training, which features prominently in the current education reform, is to encourage adult participation in lifelong learning activities and increase VET participation among the young. A comprehensive, attractive, flexible and high quality VET system is being developed to respond better to the needs of the economy. Core measures are promoting post-secondary institutes for technical and vocational education, which offer students an intermediate level of education between upper secondary and tertiary education, upgrading secondary technical and vocational education (STVE) curricula and raising the quality and competences of STVE teachers. There are also actions to upgrade the new modern apprenticeship, designed to constitute a viable, alternative form of training for young people.

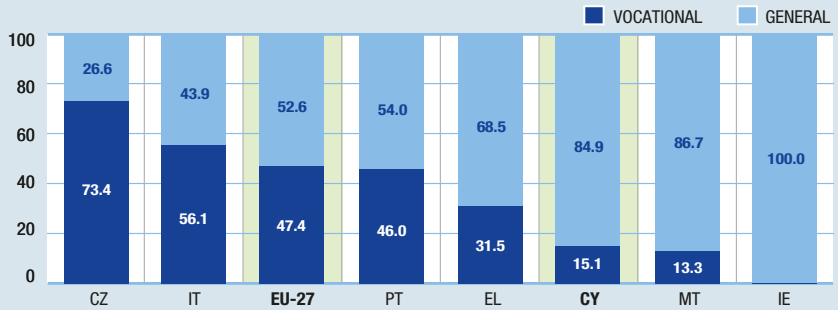
These measures are included in the strategic plan for technical and vocational education 2015-20 and the proposal of the Ministry of Education and Culture for upgrading the new modern apprenticeship, approved by the government in 2015.

EU tools for validating acquired skills, such as the national qualifications framework (NQF), will improve horizontal and vertical permeability of education and training systems. The development of a competence-based system of vocational qualifications, which will be an integral part of the NQF, is expected to strengthen the ties between VET for young people and vocational training for adults, improving their knowledge and skills.



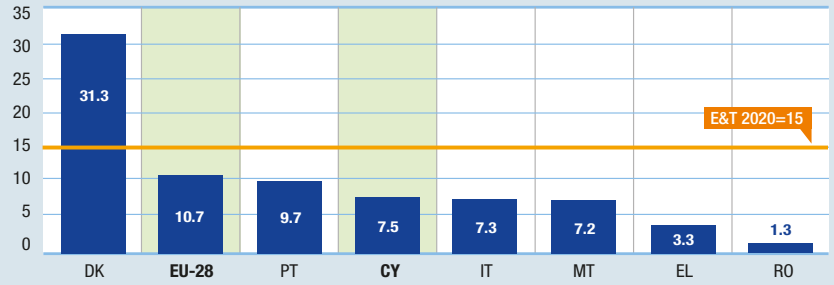
## Education and training in figures

**Upper secondary students (ISCED 2011 level 3) enrolled in vocational and general programmes**  
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2014



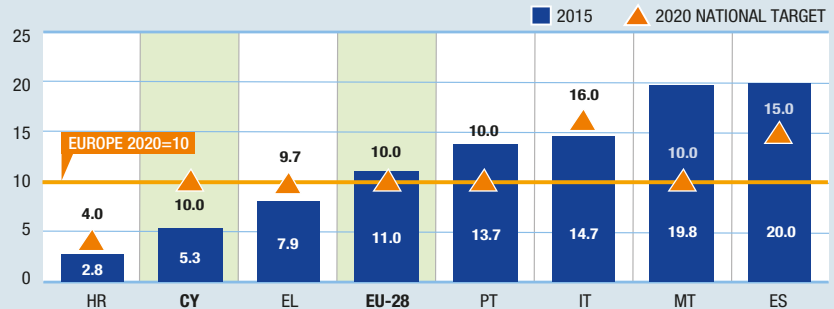
NB: 47.4% is the provisional weighted EU average for 2014 based on available country data (27 countries); while there are programmes with a vocational dimension in Ireland at ISCED level 3, these are considered general programmes.  
Source: Cedefop calculations, based on Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 22.4.2016.

**Lifelong learning**  
% of population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2015



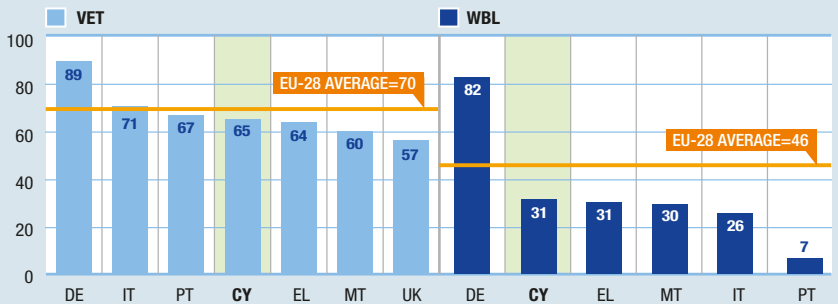
Source: Eurostat labour force survey, date of extraction 16.5.2016.

**Early leavers from education and training**  
% of early leavers from education and training, 2015



NB: Break in time series in EU-28; low reliability in HR; definition for national target differs in ES.  
Source: Eurostat labour force survey, date of extraction 16.5.2016.

**Share of employees (aged 24 to 65) with medium-level education (ISCED 3-4) who obtained a vocational qualification, and whose highest level of education involved some learning in a workplace (% , 2014)**



NB: VET: survey respondents described their highest qualification as vocational;  
WBL: studies involved some learning at a workplace (e.g. apprenticeships, internships, other forms of work-based learning).  
Results may differ from those reported in national statistics and international surveys, as the online data collection method used does not always lead to fully representative findings.  
Source: Cedefop European skills and jobs survey, 2014.



### Further information

- Cedefop ReferNet Cyprus (2014). *VET in Europe: country report Cyprus*. [http://www.refernet.org.cy/en/vet-in-europe/vet-in-europe-cyprus-2014-\(june-2015\)](http://www.refernet.org.cy/en/vet-in-europe/vet-in-europe-cyprus-2014-(june-2015))
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<a href="http://www.anad.org.cy">www.anad.org.cy</a>	Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus
<a href="http://www.dgepcd.gov.cy">www.dgepcd.gov.cy</a>	Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development
<a href="http://www.mlsi.gov.cy">www.mlsi.gov.cy</a>	Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance
<a href="http://www.moec.gov.cy">www.moec.gov.cy</a>	Ministry of Education and Culture
<a href="http://www.mof.gov.cy/cystat">www.mof.gov.cy/cystat</a>	Statistical Service of Cyprus
<a href="http://www.llp.org.cy">www.llp.org.cy</a>	Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes
<a href="http://www.erasmusplus.cy/">www.erasmusplus.cy/</a>	Erasmus+
<a href="http://www.eurydice.org">www.eurydice.org</a>	National Eurydice unit
<a href="http://www.refernet.org.cy">www.refernet.org.cy</a>	ReferNet Cyprus

This Spotlight is based on input from Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (ReferNet Cyprus 2016).

