

VET in Europe: Cyprus 2012



Cyprus

VET in Europe – Country report

2012

ISBN 978-9963-43-956-0

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This country report is part of a series of reports on vocational education and training produced for each EU Member State plus Norway and Iceland by members of ReferNet, a network established by Cedefop (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training).

The opinions expressed in this report are not necessarily those of Cedefop.

Please note that ReferNet reports are based on a common structure and are available at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Information-services/vet-in-europe-country-reports.aspx>

The preparation of this report has been co-financed by the European Union.

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Foreword

This report was initiated by Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, and has been prepared by the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus, HRDA, which is the nominated National Coordinator of the European network ReferNet in Cyprus.

Cedefop established ReferNet as the European network of reference and expertise in vocational education and training. The aim of this network is to meet the growing demand for information on policies and developments in the area of vocational education and training in the European Union.

The report has been prepared as part of a series of reports on vocational education and training in European Union countries, Iceland and Norway. The reports follow a common structure, which has been provided in the form of guidelines by Cedefop. The reports are updated annually and reports from past years are available to the public through Cedefop's VET-Bib. They aim to provide stakeholders in Europe with a description of the national VET systems in Europe to feed into research work, policy initiatives, peer reviews, best practices and projects at national and European levels.

This report provides the readers with a concise, basic insight into the state of the vocational education and training system of Cyprus. It situates the Cyprus education and training system within a broad political, social, economic, and labour market framework.

ReferNet comprises 29 members, known as ReferNet national partners, from EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. ReferNet national partners are key organisations involved in VET in the country they represent. The HRDA, as the National Coordinator of ReferNet in Cyprus, wishes to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of the other members of the Cyprus consortium in the preparation of this report.

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Cyprus



Capital: Nicosia

Government: Presidential Republic

Geographical position: North-eastern Mediterranean Sea

Area: 9 251 Km²

Population estimate: 862 000 in 2011

GDP per capita: EUR 22 000 in 2011

Main dates:

1960: Gained independence from the United Kingdom

1974: Turkey invaded the island occupying until today 37% of its territory

2004: Joined the EU

2008: Adopted the Euro

1. EXTERNAL FACTORS INFLUENCING VET

1.1. Political and socioeconomic background

Cyprus became an independent sovereign republic in 1960 with a presidential system of government. The 1960 constitution institutionalised communal dualism between the Greek and Turkish communities on the island in all spheres of government activity. Turkey occupied the northern part of the island in 1974¹.

Executive power is vested in the President of the Republic. The President exercises executive power through a Council of Ministers (Υπουργικό Συμβούλιο) appointed by him. The House of Representatives (Βουλή των Αντιπροσώπων) exercises legislative authority. Cyprus is divided into six administrative districts. Each district has a district officer, who is the local representative of the central government.

The Planning Bureau, PB (Γραφείο Προγραμματισμού), a coordinating and policy-making body, in cooperation with all governmental services, collects and analyses information on the economy and proposes measures for future action, including the overall planning of education.

The Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Υπουργείο Παιδείας και Πολιτισμού) has overall responsibility for the development and implementation of educational policy. The Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, MLSI (Υπουργείο Εργασίας και Κοινωνικών Ασφαλίσεων) has overall responsibility for labour and social policy.

The Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Αρχή Ανάπτυξης Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού) plays an important role in vocational training. The HRDA is a semi-government organisation whose mission is to create the necessary prerequisites for the planned and systematic training and development of the human resources of Cyprus.

Cyprus economy is open, free-market, flexible and predominantly service-based. Since gaining independence from the United Kingdom in 1960, Cyprus has experienced strong

¹All the information and data contained in the report refer to the government-controlled area.

economic growth, full employment conditions with high employment and relatively low unemployment.

The Cypriot economy, was adversely affected by the world economic crisis and contracted by 1,9% in 2009, mainly due to the poor performance of the tourism, construction and manufacturing sectors. The persistent economic downturn continued in the period 2010-11, with growth rates of 1,1% and 0,5% respectively, which resulted in further deterioration in the labour market, adversely affecting employment growth and increasing unemployment to exceptionally high levels.

1.2. Population

Cyprus is an island located in the Eastern Mediterranean, covering a total area of 9 251 square kilometres. According to the Statistical Service of Cyprus (Στατιστική Υπηρεσία Κύπρου), the population of the area not occupied by Turkey (the government-controlled area) is 862 000 (end-2011) and it has increased by around 2,6 % from the previous year. The Turkish-Cypriot population in the occupied area was estimated by the Statistical Service of Cyprus to be 90 100 (end-2011), representing 9,5% of the total population in 2011.

The low fertility rate (1,35 in 2011) increases the old-age dependency ratio and leads to the ageing of the population. The population over 60 years of age, as shown in Table 1, is forecast to reach 24,0% in 2025 compared with 18,2% in 2011.

Table 1: Age-specific demographic trends (end of year population estimates)

Age group	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2025
0-24	38,1	35,3	34,8	34,4	33,8	33,3	32,8	32,1	27,7
25-59	46,5	47,9	48,2	48,4	48,7	49,0	49,2	49,7	48,3
60+	15,4	16,7	17,0	17,2	17,5	17,7	18,0	18,2	24,0
Total	697,5	744,0	757,9	776,3	796,9	819,1	839,8	862,0	933,0

Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus, Eurostat

Table 2 presents the old-age dependency ratio projections (number of persons aged 65 and over expressed as a percentage of the number of persons aged between 15 and 64). This

ratio is expected to increase from 18,6% in 2010 to 47,6% in 2060, which is still lower than the average EU27 ratio which is projected to be 52,6%.

Table 2: Projected old-age dependency ratio

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	2055	2060
EU27	25,9	28,5	31,4	34,6	38,3	42,3	45,5	48,0	50,2	51,8	52,6
Cyprus	18,6	21,6	24,9	28,2	30,8	32,0	33,3	35,5	39,8	43,8	47,6

Source: Eurostat

The number of migrants (EU nationals and third country nationals), as shown in Table 3, has more than doubled since 2000. The percentage of migrants in the population increased from 8,6% in 2000 to 17,9% in 2011, due to the policy to employ foreigners in sectors facing labour shortages and the influx of EU nationals after Cyprus joined the EU in 2004. Consequently, according to Labour Force Survey, LFS (Έρευνα Εργατικού Δυναμικού) data, in 2011 foreign workers, including EU27 nationals, represented 22,2% of the total employment.

Table 3: Migrants (EU nationals, third countries' nationals)

	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
EU nationals	34 675	46 354	49 991	54 786	62 485	69 904	82 576	88 656
Third country nationals	23 061	35 619	34 952	38 578	45 007	45 119	49 663	49 976
Total Migrants	57 336	81 973	84 943	93 364	107 492	115 023	132 239	138 632
% of Population	8,6	11,3	11,5	12,4	14,2	15,1	17,1	17,9

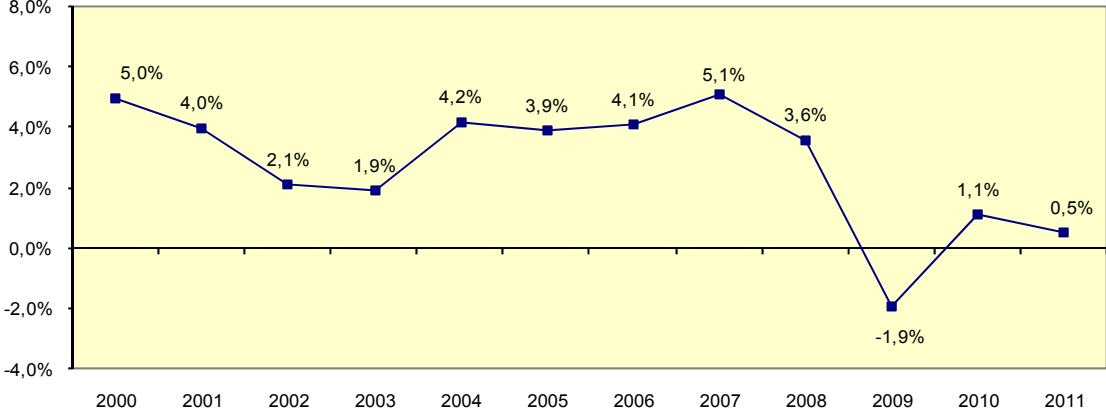
Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus, LFS

1.3. Economy

The Cypriot economy grew by an average of 3,8% a year during the period 2000-08, prior to the outbreak of the world economic crisis. However, as shown in Figure 1, during the period 2009-11 the Cypriot economy experienced the negative effects of the economic crisis, as it

contracted by 1,9% in 2009 and grew only modestly by 1,1% and 0,5% in 2010 and 2011 respectively.

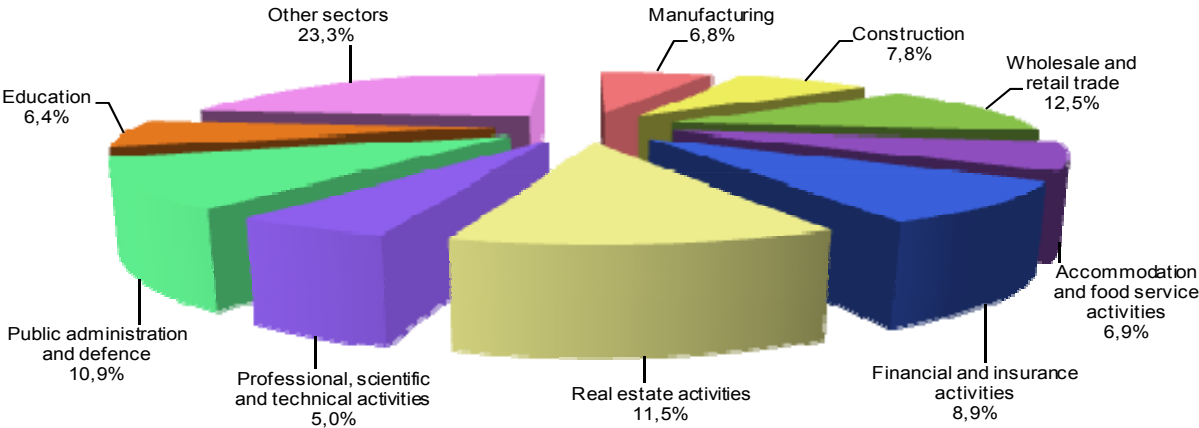
Figure 1: GDP growth



Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus

Figure 2 presents the distribution of GDP by sector in 2011. The Cypriot economy is mainly service-based and the tertiary sector amounts to about 81% of GDP, while the secondary sector amounts to about 17% of GDP. More specifically, the five largest sectors in 2011 were the wholesale and retail trade (12,5% of GDP), real estate activities (11,5% of the GDP), public administration and defence (10,9% of GDP), financial and insurance activities (8,9% of GDP) and construction (7,8% of GDP).

Figure 2: GDP by sector in 2011



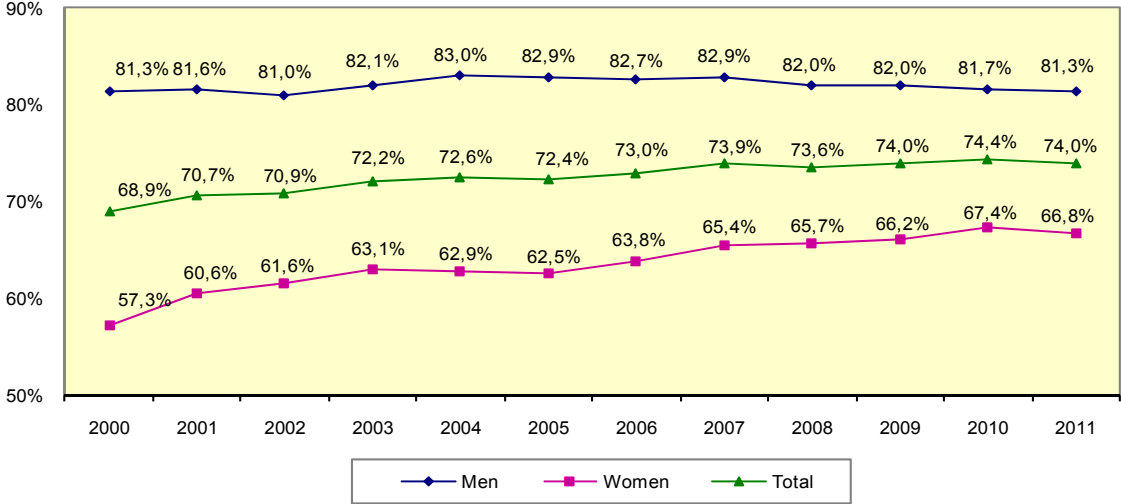
Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus

Most enterprises are very small. According to social insurance data for 2011, 93,6% of enterprises employed 1-9 persons, while 5,5% employed 10-49 persons and 0,9% employed over 50 persons.

1.4. Labour market

Increasing the level of labour market participation is a central challenge for Cyprus, given the ageing population. This is being addressed mainly by increasing women’s participation, since men’s participation is already quite high. The activity rate for the population 15-64 years, as presented in Figure 3, increased from 68,9% in 2000 to 73,9% in 2007, mainly driven by an increase in the activity rate of women as a result of the introduction of specific policy measures and has remained rather stable thereafter (74,0% in 2011).

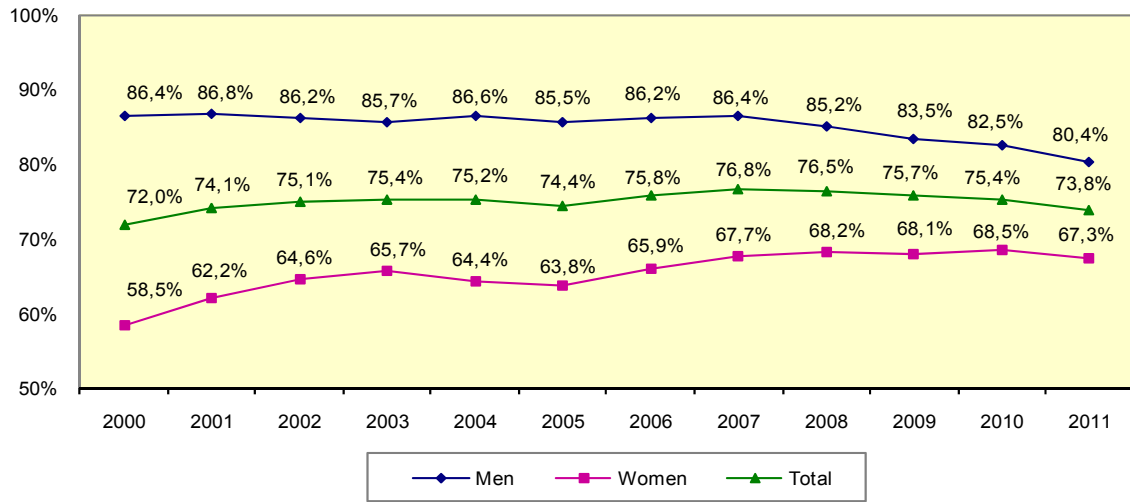
Figure 3: Activity rates for the population 15-64 years by gender



Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus, LFS

The employment rate of the population 20-64 years, as presented in Figure 4, has also shown a stable increase during the period 2000-07, again as a result of the increase of the employment rate of females, while it has decreased during the years 2008-11. The employment rate (73,8% in 2011) compares favourably with the EU average (68,6% in 2011) while the national target for 2020 is for this percentage to reach about 75-77%.

Figure 4: Employment rates for the population 20-64 years by gender



Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus, LFS

Table 4 shows employment rates by age group and Table 5 shows employment rates by highest level of education attained. The tables show that employment rates in Cyprus are highest for the age group 25-49 (81,6% in 2011) and increase as educational attainment increases.

The unemployment rate rose from 3,7% in 2008 to 7,7% in 2011, but still compares favourably with the EU27 average (9,7% in 2011). The unemployment rate in Cyprus has been higher for women than for men, although the gap has narrowed and in 2011 it was smaller, as shown in Figure 5.

Table 4: Employment rates by age group

(%)

Age group	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
15-24	36,7	36,7	37,4	37,4	38,0	35,5	33,8	29,3
25-49	77,9	81,8	82,6	83,8	83,7	82,6	82,5	81,6
50-64	49,5	50,6	53,6	55,9	54,8	56,0	56,8	55,2

Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus, LFS

Table 5: Employment rates for the population 20-64 years by educational attainment

(%)

	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
ISCED 0-2	62,6	64,8	66,6	66,4	64,1	65,2	67,0	65,2
ISCED 3-4	72,4	74,6	75,1	75,8	76,1	74,9	73,9	71,8
ISCED 5-6	85,6	85,0	85,6	86,5	86,5	84,8	83,1	81,5
Total	72,0	74,4	75,8	76,8	76,5	75,7	75,4	73,8

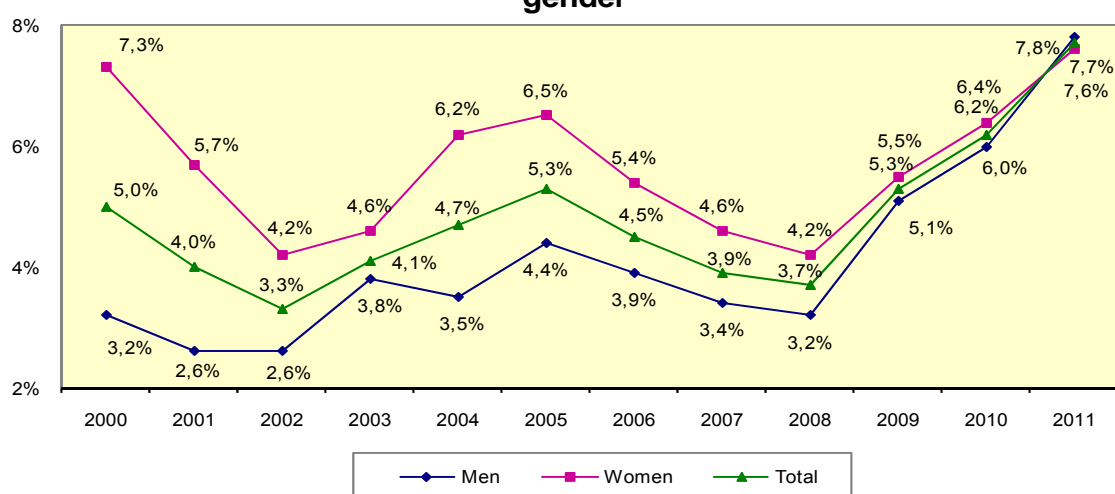
ISCED 0-2: Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education

ISCED 3-4: Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education

ISCED 5-6: Tertiary education

Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus, LFS

Figure 5: Unemployment rates for the population 15+ by gender



Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus, LFS

From Table 6, which presents unemployment rates by age group, it can be seen that the unemployment rate for young people under 25 increased from 13,8% in 2009 to 22,4% in 2011, higher than the EU27 average which was 21,4% in 2011.

Table 6: Unemployment rates by age group

(%)

Age group	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
15-24	10,2	13,9	10,0	10,2	9,0	13,8	16,7	22,4
25-54	4,5	4,5	4,1	3,4	3,2	4,6	5,4	6,8
55-64	3,5	3,5	3,3	3,1	3,2	4,3	4,7	4,9
65+	0,0	0,5	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,6	0,2	0,6
15+	5,0	5,3	4,5	3,9	3,7	5,3	6,2	7,7

Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus, LFS

From Table 7, which shows unemployment rates by highest level of education attained, it can be seen that unemployment rates usually decrease with higher educational attainment. However, it is worth noting that in 2011 the unemployment rates are higher (8,5%) for the population with upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

Table 7: Unemployment rates for the population 15+ by educational attainment

(%)

	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
ISCED 0-2	6,2	6,0	4,8	4,7	4,8	6,0	7,0	7,4
ISCED 3-4	5,4	5,5	4,5	3,9	3,6	5,6	6,2	8,5
ISCED 5-6	2,9	4,4	4,4	3,4	3,0	4,5	5,6	7,1
Total	5,0	5,3	4,5	3,9	3,7	5,3	6,2	7,7

ISCED 0-2: Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education

ISCED 3-4: Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education

ISCED 5-6: Tertiary education

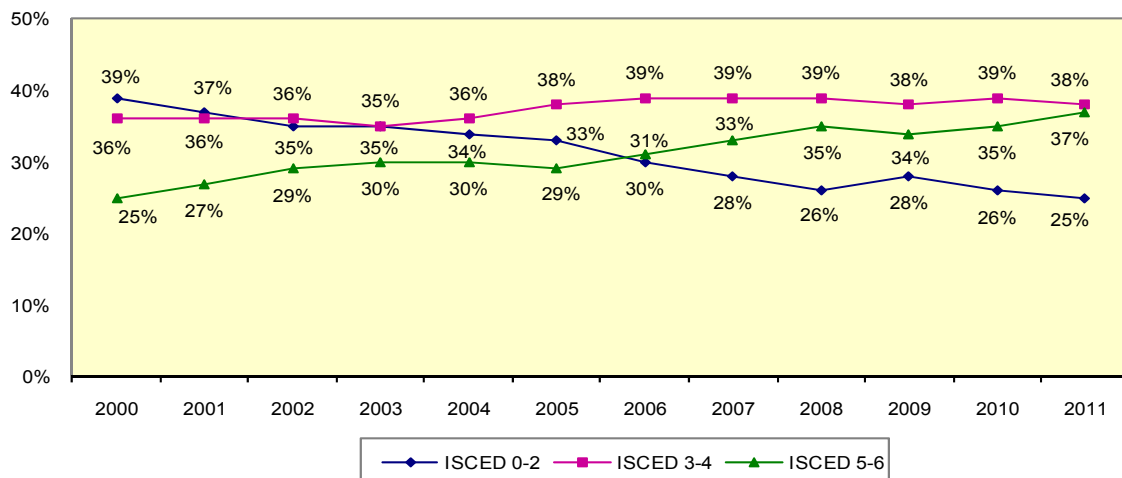
Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus, LFS

1.5. Educational attainment

Human resources in Cyprus are characterised by a high level of educational attainment. As shown in Figure 6, the percentage of people 25-64 years with tertiary education was 37% in 2011, significantly above the corresponding EU27 average (27% in 2011).

There is a strong cultural trend among the Cypriot population in favour of general secondary education followed by higher education. In 2010/11 78% of the students that completed upper secondary education sought places in institutions of higher education. Family plays a significant role in encouraging and supporting young people to continue to higher education. The number of places in Cyprus is rather limited as there are only three public and four private universities, so a large proportion of young people continuing to higher education (55% in 2010) enrol in education institutions abroad. High education attainment is also due to economic reasons, as tertiary education graduates usually receive higher remuneration.

Figure 6: Educational attainment of the population 25 - 64 years



ISCED 0-2: Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education

ISCED 3-4: Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education

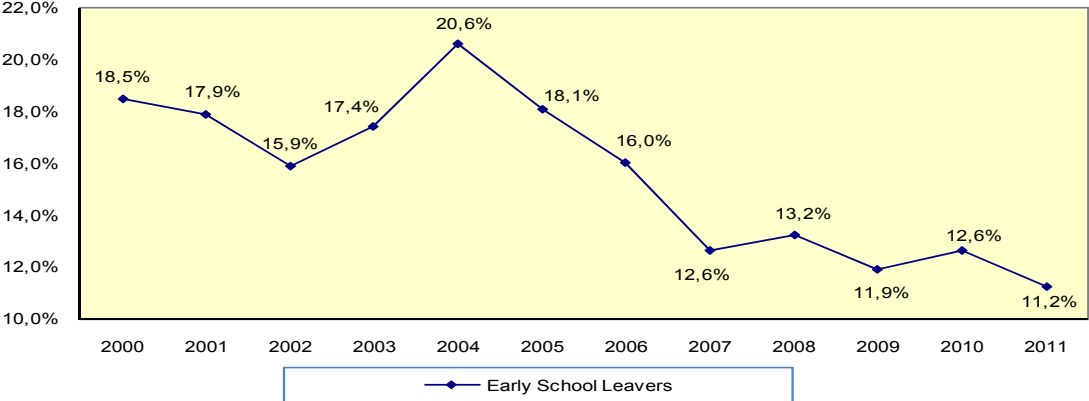
ISCED 5-6: Tertiary education

Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus, LFS

The percentage of early school leavers has decreased from 18,5% in 2000 to 11,2% in 2011, as shown in Figure 7. The EU27 average in 2011 was 13,5% and the EU2020 target is to reduce the dropout rate to 10% by 2020. However, Cypriot students abroad and soldiers 18-

20 years are not included in the LFS sample, while temporary foreign workers usually of low educational attainment are included. If students abroad, soldiers and foreign workers are all taken into account the estimated percentage drops below 10%.

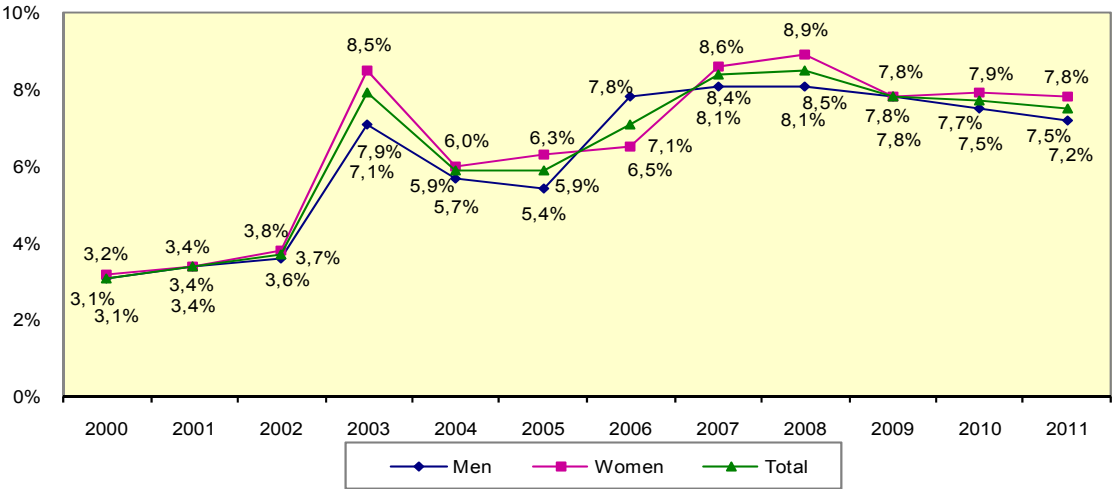
Figure 7: Percentage of the population 18-24 years with at most lower secondary education and not in education or training



Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus, LFS

According to the LFS, the percentage of the population 25-64 years participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey was 7,5% in 2011, which is lower than the EU27 average which was 8,9% in 2011 and the national target for 2020 which is 12%. The participation of women, as shown in Figure 8, was generally higher than that of men (exception in 2009).

Figure 8: Lifelong Learning - adult participation in education and training (population 25-64 years) by gender



Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus, LFS

2. PROVIDING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN A LIFELONG LEARNING PERSPECTIVE

Education developed significantly after 1960, when Cyprus gained its independence and the Cyprus economy posted spectacular growth. The need for an adequately trained workforce in all sectors of the economy led educational institutions at all levels to increase in number and scope. Adult education was also promoted through various initiatives and institutional arrangements, and the establishment and operation of the HRDA provided significant impetus to the training of employees and the unemployed.

Education in Cyprus is available from the pre-primary to the postgraduate levels. It is compulsory at the pre-primary, primary (grades one to six), and lower secondary (grades seven to nine) levels, until the student reaches the age of 15.

In upper secondary education, which lasts for three years (grades 10 to 12) there are two types of schools: the unified lyceum (ενιαίο λύκειο) and technical schools (τεχνικές σχολές).

Tertiary education, including postgraduate courses, is provided at three public and four private universities, and several private colleges and institutions provide courses at the post-secondary non-university level.

Public expenditure on education increased from 5,6% of the GDP in 2000 to 7,8% in 2011, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Expenditure on education

	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Public expenditure on education (% on GDP)	5,6	7,0	7,1	7,1	7,5	8,0	8,0	7,8
Total expenditure on education (% on GDP)	9,2	9,1	9,2	9,3	9,6	10,5	10,6	10,3

Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus

The earliest level at which Vocational Education and Training (VET) is available, is the upper secondary level at the technical schools, including the evening technical schools (εσπερινές τεχνικές σχολές). VET is also available through the apprenticeship system (σύστημα μαθητείας), which accepts students who leave formal education between grades eight and ten.

Post-upper secondary VET will be provided as of the academic year 2012-13 at the post-secondary institutes of vocational education and training (Μεταλυκειακά ινστιτούτα επαγγελματικής εκπαίδευσης και κατάρτισης).

VET at tertiary level is provided at four public institutes/colleges, which come under the jurisdiction of various ministries and at several private institutes.

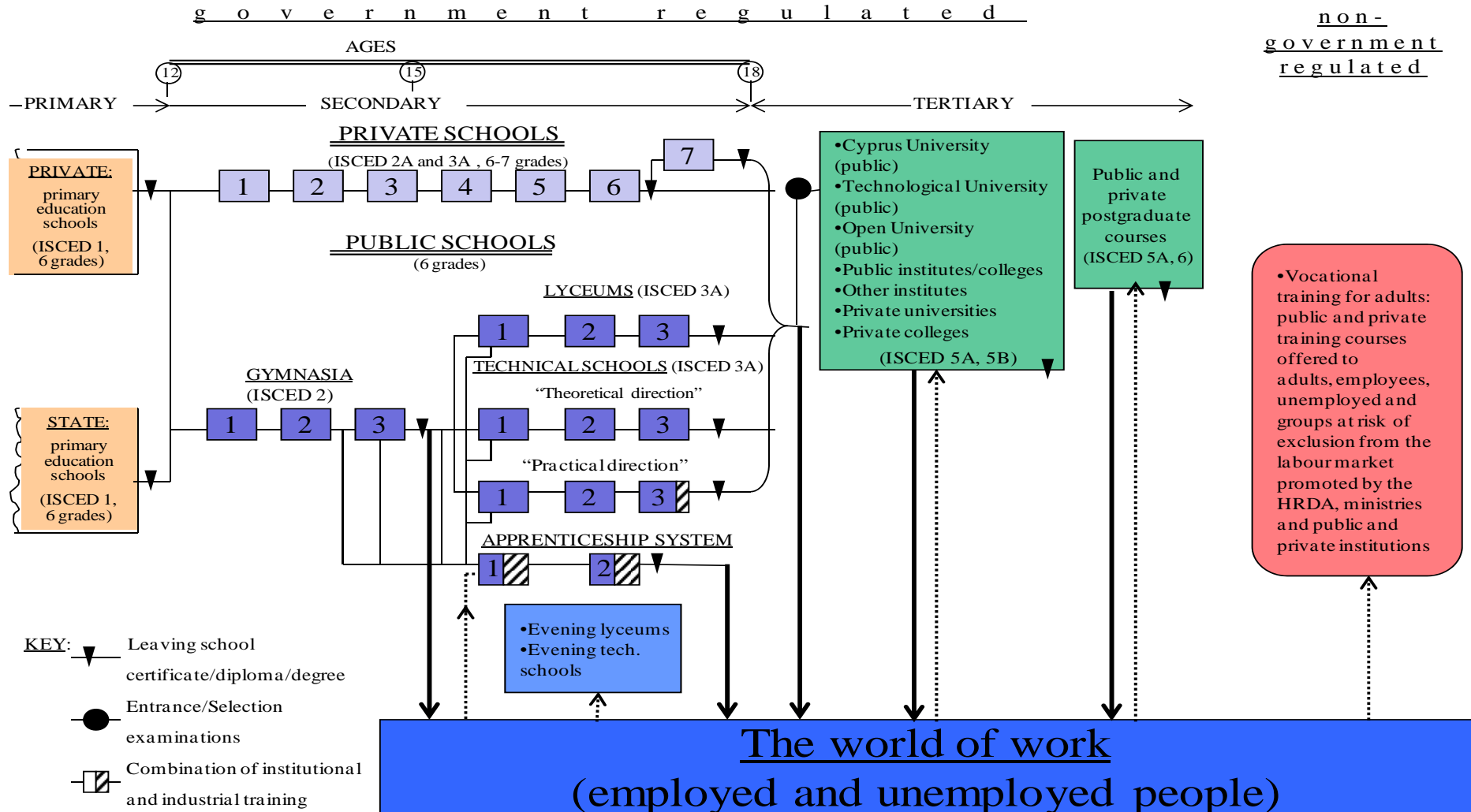
Furthermore, vocational training is extensively available in Cyprus for employees, the unemployed, other groups at risk of exclusion from the labour market and adults in general through a mixture of public and private provision such as colleges, training institutions, consultancy firms and enterprises.

VET is an important and prominent part of the Cyprus lifelong learning strategy, CyLLS (Εθνική στρατηγική δια βίου μάθησης) for 2007-13. The main actions designed to achieve the objectives of the strategy include enhancement of lifelong guidance and counselling services, development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and promotion of actions outlined in the education reform (εκπαιδευτική μεταρρύθμιση) that have a specific impact on VET such as the creation of new VET pathways and facilitate horizontal and vertical movement within education.

2.1 Government-regulated VET provision

Government-regulated VET provision refers to defined VET qualifications, such as diplomas, degrees, certificates, and to the public or private training routes leading to them within the education and training system. All activities relating to the provision of VET are legitimised by decisions of the Council of Ministers and/or Acts passed by the House of Representatives.

Figure 9: The education and training system of Cyprus



2.1.1. Apprenticeship

The apprenticeship system is a two-year initial VET programme providing practical and theoretical training to young people who have not successfully completed their secondary compulsory education and wish to be trained and employed in technical occupations. The apprenticeship system applies to students who do not intend to continue their education in schools in the formal education system past the third grade of Gymnasium. Students eligible to register in the apprenticeship system are those who have studied in the second grade of Gymnasium and have reached their 15th year of age, or will reach it the latest by the end of the year of their registration. The apprenticeship system is not compulsory and attendance is free of charge. Apprentices follow practical training in enterprises for three days per week where they are remunerated for their work, and they receive theoretical training for two days a week when they attend classes at technical schools.

Responsibility is shared between the Cyprus Productivity Centre, CPC (Κέντρο Παραγωγικότητας), a dedicated centre of the MLSI and the MoEC, while the HRDA compensates employers for wages paid to apprentices while attending classes at technical schools. Additionally, under a new policy measure co-financed by the European Social Fund, ESF (Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο) and the CPC, enterprises receive subsidies to cover part of the salary of the in-company trainers who train the apprentice and the social insurance contributions for the apprentice.

During the school year 2010-11, 256 apprentices were trained in occupations such as builder, plumber/welder, auto mechanic, auto electrician, furniture maker/carpenter, electrician, domestic appliances repairer and hairdresser.

Assessment of apprentices in technical schools follows the rules of the education system with regular tests and final examinations. During the practical training, apprentices are assessed by their supervisors and their grades appear on the apprenticeship certificate issued by the CPC to apprentices who successfully complete the course.

The apprenticeship certificate allows access to several regulated occupations (e.g. building contractor and electrician), provided that all other requirements of the relevant legislation are observed.

In 2007, the Council of Ministers approved the proposal for the establishment of the new modern apprenticeship (NMA). The NMA, which provides an alternative pathway for education, training and development for young people who withdraw from the formal education system, is geared towards meeting the needs of the labour market. Implementation of the NMA has begun and will embrace young people between 14 and 21 years of age at two apprenticeship levels (preparatory and core). The NMA is co-financed by the ESF and it will become fully operational by 2015.

The Apprenticeship Board (Συμβούλιο Μαθητείας), which supervises the operation of the apprenticeship system, has a tripartite character whereas the design of the NMA is the outcome of long and detailed deliberations with the social partners.

2.1.2. VET at upper secondary level

VET at upper secondary level is provided at technical schools and evening technical schools, as well as in the afternoon and evening classes of technical schools (απογευματινά και βραδινά τμήματα των τεχνικών σχολών). Secondary technical and vocational education, STVE (Μέση τεχνική και επαγγελματική εκπαίδευση) provides a broad range of initial training programmes to gymnasium leavers and adults.

2.1.2.1. Formal mainstream upper secondary initial technical and vocational education

Formal upper secondary technical and vocational education programmes are offered free of charge in both the theoretical direction (θεωρητική κατεύθυνση) and the practical direction (πρακτική κατεύθυνση). The duration of studies is three years for both directions. The first year of studies is common for all branches in both directions and students select a specialisation offered in the branch of their choice in the second and third year of their studies.

The theoretical direction and the first and second years of the practical direction are completely school-based and combine general education subjects with technological and workshop subjects. The third year of studies in the practical direction combines a school-based environment with a real workplace, with final-year students being placed in enterprises for one day a week, where they follow a practical training programme.

The programmes provided include various branches in both the theoretical and practical directions. Examples include mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, building and civil engineering, hotel and catering, woodwork and furniture making, fashion design, graphic arts and interior design.

The criteria used to assess students include class participation, workshop and laboratory work, written assignments, projects, tests and a final examination.

School leaving certificates (απολυτήρια) are awarded upon successful completion of either programme and are equivalent to those of secondary general education schools. Therefore, STVE school leavers are eligible for admission to universities and other tertiary education institutions in Cyprus and abroad. Qualifications provide access to regulated occupations, provided that all other requirements of the relevant legislation are met.

Curriculum development is a collective effort involving qualified STVE staff, experts from other training institutions, STVE advisory committee members, trade unions and employers' representatives. The STVE curriculum is subject to approval by the Council of Ministers before being implemented.

The restructuring of STVE is underway within the context of the education reform with the direct involvement and cooperation of VET stakeholders. The quality and efficiency of VET has been improved through the further development of the infrastructure of technical schools and the introduction of modern technology in VET curricula. The new curricula, which are expected to be developed by 2015, will enhance the attractiveness of VET and match specialisations offered with the current needs of the labour market. The objective of the curricula revision is to reduce the number of the specialisations offered by STVE, thus providing students with an opportunity to acquire the key competences they need to make them more competitive in the labour market.

The 2010/11 enrolments in STVE include students in the theoretical and practical directions as well as evening classes. As shown in Table 9, only 12,7%, one of the lowest percentages among European countries, were students in technical schools, as most students prefer to follow general education due to the prejudice against technical occupations. Moreover, the economy is characterised by a thriving services sector and a declining manufacturing sector. This has led to a decline, over the years, of the number of persons employed in technical

occupations and consequently to a decline in the number of students in technical schools, which cater mainly to those occupations.

The total public expenditure for STVE was estimated to be EUR 60,8 million in 2011 (Statistical Service of Cyprus). The share of secondary technical and vocational public expenditure was estimated to be 4,4% of total public expenditure on education in 2011.

Table 9: Students in upper secondary education by programme orientation (general/vocational)

(%)

	2005 / 2006	2006 / 2007	2007 / 2008	2008 / 2009	2009 / 2010	2010 / 2011
Upper secondary education pre-vocational and vocational programmes	13,3	13,0	12,6	12,8	13,2	12,7
Upper secondary education general programmes	86,7	87,0	87,4	87,2	86,8	87,3

Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus

2.1.2.2. Second chance formal initial vocational education

Evening technical schools

The MoEC also offers formal education programmes through the two evening technical schools, one in Nicosia and another in Limassol, to further promote participation in STVE and support the integration of school dropouts in the workplace and in society in general. The programmes are equivalent to the STVE programmes that are offered in mainstream technical schools.

The duration of studies varies from one to four years, depending on the educational background of the students. Attendance is free of charge and leads to the acquisition of a leaving certificate (απολυτήριο), which has the same legal status as the one awarded by the unified lyceum (ενιαίο λύκειο) and mainstream technical schools. Adult graduates then have the opportunity to compete for a place in higher education in Cyprus or abroad or enter the labour market.

In 2011, expenditure for the evening secondary general and the evening technical schools amounted to EUR 8,0 million (Statistical Service of Cyprus), including teacher salaries.

Three-year programmes of the afternoon and evening classes of technical schools

The three-year programmes are provided in the context of the afternoon and evening classes of technical schools, which are administered by the Directorate of STVE (Διεύθυνση Μέσης τεχνικής και επαγγελματικής εκπαίδευσης) of the MoEC. The objective of these programmes is to offer formal initial education and training to employed or unemployed adults, to respond more efficiently to the contemporary demands of the labour market and achieve re-integration in the labour market in areas where there is shortage of skilled workers. Successful completion of the three-year programmes leads to the acquisition of a leaving certificate equivalent to that awarded to graduates of upper secondary general or technical and vocational education, as far as the technical component is concerned. This means that individuals who already hold an upper secondary education leaving certificate are given an opportunity to obtain a second leaving certificate in their chosen field of study.

In 2011, expenditure for the afternoon and evening classes of technical schools amounted to EUR 603 190 (Statistical Service of Cyprus), including teacher salaries.

2.1.3. VET at post secondary level

VET at post secondary level has not been available in Cyprus. The MoEC in cooperation with the MLSI and other stakeholders is promoting, within the context of the education reform, the establishment of post-secondary institutes of vocational education and training, co-financed by the ESF, which will offer further technical specialisation and will operate as of the academic year 2012-13.

Students who attend these Institutes, especially those who wish to enter the labour market directly, will have the opportunity to acquire or complete their technical and vocational education. These Institutes will provide opportunities to Cypriot citizens, especially young people, to acquire, improve, or upgrade their qualifications and skills so that they are better prepared for the labour market.

Post-secondary institutes of vocational education and training will operate at existing technical schools and lyceums, as public education institutions, within the remit and under the supervision of the MoEC. The one- and two-year programmes that will be offered will include practical training in enterprises.

2.1.4. VET at tertiary level

VET at tertiary level is provided by four public institutions of tertiary education, which come under the jurisdiction of various ministries and by 35 private institutions of tertiary education.

According to Table 10, about one-third of the persons in higher education (32,4%) participate in tertiary education programmes that are practically oriented and occupation-specific, while most participate in programmes that are largely theory based. However, large numbers of Cypriot students are enrolled in educational institutions abroad. During 2010/11 there were 19 199 Cypriot students abroad (ISCED levels 5-6) compared to 21 884 Cypriot students in Cyprus, while the total number of students in Cyprus, including 10 275 foreign students, was 32 159.

Table 10: Participation rates in higher education by programme orientation – 2010/2011

	Total ISCED 5-6	ISCED 5a		ISCED 5b		ISCED 6	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Cyprus	32 159	21 151	65,8	10 419	32,4	589	1,8

ISCED 5a: Tertiary education programmes that are largely theoretically based and are intended to provide sufficient qualifications for gaining entry into advanced research programmes and profession with skill requirements

ISCED 5b: Tertiary education programmes practically oriented and occupationally specific, which do not provide direct access to advanced research programmes

ISCED 6: Second stage of tertiary education, leading to an advanced research qualification

Source: Eurostat, Statistical Service of Cyprus

2.1.4.1. *Public institutions of tertiary education*

There are four public institutions of tertiary education (non-university level) offering programmes in forestry, culinary arts and other vocations. These institutions operate under a relevant ministry or organisation as follows:

- (a) the Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus (Ανώτερο Ξενοδοχειακό Ινστιτούτο Κύπρου) operates under the aegis of the MLSI;
- (b) the Forestry College (Δασικό Κολέγιο) operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment (Υπουργείο Γεωργίας, Φυσικών Πόρων και Περιβάλλοντος);
- (c) the Tourist Guides School (operates whenever there is a need) operates under the aegis of the Cyprus Tourist Organisation (Κυπριακός Οργανισμός Τουρισμού);
- (d) the Cyprus Police Academy (Αστυνομική Υπηρεσία Κύπρου) operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, MJPO (Υπουργείο Δικαιοσύνης και Δημόσιας Τάξης).

The basic admission requirement for public tertiary education institutions is completion of 12 years of primary and secondary education, as certificated by the leaving certificate issued by the lyceum or technical school. The selection of candidates is based on the applicants' success in the common final examinations and in some cases success in an oral interview is also required.

Cypriot and EU students studying in public institutions of tertiary education pay no fees. In some institutions, all students receive free accommodation and board. International students are required to pay fees to attend these institutions. The student tuition fees range from about EUR 3 700 to EUR 4 500 per year. All fees are paid to the institution.

Studies are organised in diploma programmes, which include different specialisations. The competent ministry of each institution has to approve each programme but to a large extent the institutions themselves design the curricula. The diploma programmes consist of basic professional studies and practical training.

Students are assessed on the basis of semester, and often mid-term examinations. Workshop and laboratory assignments, project work and industrial training are also assessed and taken into consideration when assigning final marks. Successful completion of the programme,

which lasts 2-3 years, leads to the institution's diploma or higher diploma awarded by the institution.

Depending on the job specifications, teachers must hold an appropriate diploma in their subject area or a degree relevant to the subject they will teach; work experience in their area of specialisation is also required. Pre-service training is usually not a requirement. In-service, continuing training of VET teachers in public institutions is common practice but on a voluntary basis.

2.1.4.2. Private institutions of tertiary education

Private institutions of tertiary education offer a wide range of academic as well as vocational programmes of studies at various levels (one- or two year diploma, three-year higher diploma, four-year bachelor degree and one- or two-year master's degree) in secretarial studies, aesthetics, food preparation, music, arts and drama, graphic design, hotel and tourism management, computer science, social sciences, education, business studies and engineering. The language of instruction is English for most programmes of studies offered, which attracts scholars and students from other countries.

All private institutions of tertiary education must register with the MoEC. Each institution sets its own regulations on their operation, entry requirements, evaluation, qualifications awarded, teachers and tuition fees, which must be approved by the MoEC.

Teachers in private institutions of tertiary education usually hold the qualification of the level of the subjects they are teaching, or higher. Previous work experience and pre-service training are not usually required although colleges will consider them as an advantage when hiring teachers. In-service, continuing training of teachers in private colleges is voluntary.

2.2. Other forms of training

Other forms of training refer to VET programmes which do not lead to a formal qualification but to professional development and updating of specific skills and competences and which are addressed to adults, employees, the unemployed and other groups at risk of exclusion from the labour market.

2.2.1. Training for employees

The main bodies promoting training provision for employees are the HRDA, the MoEC, the MLSI and other ministries and public institutions. Moreover, private institutions such as colleges, training institutions, consultancy firms and enterprises offer a variety of courses for adults, including many that are not subsidised by the HRDA.

2.2.1.1. Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus

The provision of training programmes addressed to employees has been encouraged and strengthened primarily through the approval and subsequent subsidisation of training activities by the HRDA, a semi-government organisation whose source of income comes from the Human Resource Development levy paid by all companies. Civil servants and the self-employed are excluded from the HRDA's sphere of competence. The HRDA is governed by a 13-strong Board of Governors, comprised of representatives of government, employers and trade unions.

The training programmes are implemented by public and private institutions and enterprises. To be approved they need to adhere to the criteria laid down by the HRDA. An important development with regard to trainers is the introduction of a system for the assessment and certification of training providers. Through this system, trainers of vocational training, vocational training institutions and vocational training infrastructure are assessed against specific criteria to ensure that they are eligible for certification.

The HRDA carries out evaluation studies on the effectiveness and impact of its activities. To this end, a comprehensive system evaluating the impact of HRDA on the economy of Cyprus has been set up. Within this system, five evaluation studies, which include field and desk research, have been conducted by independent consultants in the period 2010-11, while another evaluation study was completed by the HRDA in 2012.

As far as the training provision is concerned, the HRDA subsidises a variety of training activities that are addressed mainly to employees:

- (a) Single-company initial and continuing training programmes in Cyprus provide in-company training to employees to allow them to meet the specific needs of the enterprise for the effective utilisation of its personnel through its appropriate training and development.

During 2011, 3 394 programmes were subsidised with 33 273 participants and total expenditure of EUR 4 193 764;

- (b) Single-company continuing training programmes abroad train and develop employees of an enterprise abroad, in order to meet specific enterprise needs for the effective utilisation of its personnel through its appropriate training and development. During 2011, 1 038 programmes were subsidised with 1 038 participants and total expenditure of EUR 2 072 593;
- (c) Standard multi-company continuing training programmes provide continuing training for meeting the training needs of employees through their participation in training programmes implemented by public or private training institutions and organisations. During 2011, 1 467 programmes were subsidised with 19 760 participants and total expenditure of EUR 4 728 694;
- (d) High-priority multi-company continuing training programmes provide continuing training to meet the training needs of employees through participation in training programmes implemented by public or private training institutions and organisations in specific high-priority issues. During 2011, 72 programmes were subsidised with 1 230 participants and total expenditure of EUR 1 797 491;
- (e) Multi-company continuing training programmes abroad aim at improving and enriching the knowledge and skills of senior personnel of enterprises through the transfer of know-how and the acquisition of practical knowledge and experience from equivalent, successful units abroad. During 2011, one programme was subsidised with 16 participants and total expenditure of EUR 44 511.

2.2.1.2. Ministry of Education and Culture

The MoEC offers continuing education and training to employees through the one-year programmes of afternoon and evening classes of technical schools and it is responsible for the training of secondary education teachers.

In the context of the afternoon and evening classes of technical schools, the Directorate of STVE of the MoEC offers one-year programmes which lead to the award of a certificate. These programmes are designed to offer continuing education and training to employees, enrich their knowledge and skills and thus place them in a position to respond more efficiently to the contemporary demands of the labour market. No qualifications are required to attend these programmes and the teaching methods used vary, depending on the programme.

2.2.1.3. Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance

The MLSI is responsible for the CPC, which offers short modular programmes for employees in technical occupations and management and the Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus, which offers upgrading courses for employees in the hotel and restaurant sector.

2.2.1.4. Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment

The Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment is responsible for the training of farmers. Most of the training is provided by the Department of Agriculture training centres and during 2011, 38 training courses were organized which lasted 62 days in total, with the participation of 822 farmers. Additionally, the centres organised 24 courses on home economics such as basket making, embroidery, weaving etc, in which 281 female farmers participated.

Also, the Department of Agriculture organised in 2011 various apprenticeship schemes in a range of subjects. Persons under 40 years old are granted a daily allowance of EUR 18,00 per training day. During 2011, five such schemes were implemented which lasted 19 days in total, and in which 52 farmers participated (some of which were not entitled to a subsidy).

Finally, within the framework of the Cyprus Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (RDP), 152 young farmers who applied for financial support were trained on various agricultural topics for a total of 150 hours.

The MoA is also responsible for the training of foresters and forestry graduates provided by the Forestry College.

2.2.1.5. Cyprus Academy of Public Administration

The Cyprus Academy of Public Administration, CAPA (Κυπριακή Ακαδημία Δημόσιας Διοίκησης), whose budget was EUR 1 521 637 for 2011, is the learning and development centre of the Cyprus civil service. It was established in 1991 and is part of the Public Administration and Personnel Department of the Ministry of Finance, MoF (Υπουργείο Οικονομικών, YO). CAPA's overall objective is to contribute to the continuous improvement of the Cyprus civil service through learning activities in the broad field of management,

organisational development projects and applied research. CAPA's main projects and activities are:

- (a) developing the capacity for the management of learning in civil service organisations by setting up a learning unit in each civil service organisation to systematically manage its learning activities;
- (b) developing personal and interpersonal skills;
- (c) organising induction courses for newcomers;
- (d) offering EU training programmes;
- (e) offering training programmes for foreign public officers;
- (f) application of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) – a quality management tool for the self-assessment of public service organisations;
- (g) designing and organising workshops on a wide variety of management and leadership skills for the civil service and local authorities;
- (h) EU funded projects.

2.2.1.6. Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health, MoH (Υπουργείο Υγείας) is responsible for the training of public sector nurses provided by the School of Nursing (Νοσηλευτική Σχολή).

2.2.1.7. Ministry of Justice and Public Order

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order promotes the training of police officers and sergeants provided by the Cyprus Police Academy. The Police Academy also offers part-time training in the use of computers for police members. The lessons are taught by qualified teachers appointed by the MoEC and they take place at the computer lab of the Police Academy. The courses run from autumn until summer of next year.

2.2.1.8. Foundation for the Management of the European Lifelong Learning Programmes

The Foundation for the Management of the European Lifelong Learning Programmes is the body which manages education programmes and promotes the goals and the EU education and training policies in Cyprus. The Foundation uses funds obtained from the European

Commission to subsidise educational institutions and organisations active in this field, as well as teachers, students, educators, trainers and trainees.

According to the Foundation, in 2011, the amount of EUR 960 034 was approved for funding activities within the Leonardo da Vinci Mobility programme. This amount funded the mobility and training of 345 learners/trainees in VET (compared to 237 in 2010). Furthermore, 43 teachers and trainers (compared to 51 in 2010) and 38 enterprises/organisations (compared to 25 in 2010) participated in VET mobility schemes.

2.2.2. Training for the unemployed

Over recent years, training provision for the unemployed has become vitally important for combating the effects of the economic crisis. Resources have been re-directed towards the prevention and reduction of unemployment. The main bodies promoting training provision for the unemployed are the HRDA in cooperation with the MLSI and the MoEC.

2.2.2.1. Human Resource Development Authority

The HRDA offers the following training activities:

- (a) a scheme for the improvement of the employability of the unemployed. It is co-financed by the ESF in the programming period 2007-13. It aims at improving the employability of the unemployed by offering opportunities for participation in training activities and work experience. The programmes are offered free of charge and participants receive an allowance. During 2011, the HRDA subsidised the participation of 692 unemployed persons in 50 training programmes and the participation of 163 persons in work experience programmes. Total expenditure was EUR 2 044 144;
- (b) training programmes for upgrading the skills of unemployed persons. They cover important horizontal as well as job-specific skills, which will help people to return to productive employment. The programmes are offered free of charge to unemployed persons, with priority given to the long-term unemployed. For the duration of these programmes participants are also entitled to training allowances from the HRDA. During 2011, the HRDA subsidised the training of 854 unemployed and total expenditure was EUR 516 622;

- (c) the accelerated initial training scheme. It is a multi-company initial training scheme operated by the HRDA aimed at remedying significant labour shortages by providing theoretical and practical training in occupations that are currently in demand. The HRDA covers all the costs for the institutional training. In addition, trainees receive a weekly allowance. During 2011, 392 persons benefited from the scheme and total expenditure was EUR 1 067 252;
- (d) the training programmes for newly employed tertiary education graduates. They aim at strengthening the management capacity of enterprises and organisations through the employment and training of young university and other tertiary education graduates. The HRDA provides subsidies to employers for the delivery of in-house training programmes of six months duration. These programmes are supplemented by participation in other training courses. During 2011, 544 participants were subsidised and total expenditure was EUR 4 641 445;
- (e) job placement and training of unemployed Cypriots and EU nationals to fill vacancies and/or replace labour from third countries. This scheme provides a subsidy and guidance to employers as incentives to encourage them to employ and provide individualised training for unemployed. As of 1 March 2012, the scheme is directed exclusively at the long-term unemployed. During 2011, 683 persons benefited from the scheme and total expenditure was EUR 3 154 861.

2.2.2.2. *Ministry of Education and Culture*

In the context of the afternoon and evening classes of technical schools, the Directorate of STVE of the MoEC offers one-year programmes leading to the award of a certificate.

One of the objectives of these programmes is to offer continuing education and training to the unemployed, aiming at their re-integration into the labour market, in areas where there is shortage of skilled workers. Therefore, these programmes help to meet the workforce needs of the economy, both in terms of quality and quantity. No qualifications are required for attending these programmes and the teaching methods used vary, depending on the programme.

2.2.3. Training for other groups at risk of exclusion from the labour market

The training programmes for groups at risk of exclusion from the labour market, such as inactive women, public assistance recipients, single parents, drop-outs, persons with disabilities and asylum seekers are provided mainly by the MLSI, the MoEC, the HRDA and other ministries.

2.2.3.1. Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance

The Centre for the Vocational Rehabilitation of the Disabled (Κέντρο Επαγγελματικής Αποκατάστασης Αναπήρων) provides specialised programmes to promote the acquisition of professional skills by disabled persons, which are promoted by the MLSI. The centre provides training and offers employment opportunities in the following specialisations: leather goods/shoemaking, furniture industry/carpentry, brooms making, knitting and sewing embroidery. The centre provides a special allowance in addition to the regular training allowance.

The Department of Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities promotes a scheme for vocational training of persons with disabilities to expand the training opportunities by providing training in specialties and at levels not offered by the Centre for the Vocational Rehabilitation of the Disabled. The scheme covers the training costs at an appropriate training institution or company with special programmes to facilitate the employment and career development of persons with disabilities. During 2011, training opportunities were provided to 16 persons with a budget of EUR 9 855.

The Social Welfare Services, SWS (Υπηρεσίες Κοινωνικής Ευημερίας) have launched the project named 'Work and Social Activation of People in Vulnerable Groups through the Development of Social Skills and Other Actions' co-financed by the ESF in the programming period of 2007-13. The aim of this project is to provide training in social skills to vulnerable groups (such as people aged 15-24 or over 50 years of age, single parents, public assistance recipients, ex-prisoners, people with disabilities) and to reintegrate them in the labour market. It is expected that 1 300 persons will participate in the scheme and the total budget for the period 2011-15 is EUR 2 385 979.

2.2.3.2. Ministry of Education and Culture

In the context of the afternoon and evening classes of technical schools, the Directorate of STVE of the MoEC offers one-year programmes which lead to the award of a certificate. One of the objectives of these programmes is to offer continuing education and training to specific groups of people at risk of exclusion from the labour market. As a result, special programmes addressing prisoners, aiming at their re-integration into the labour market, are offered at the central prisons in Nicosia. These programmes include classes in cooking, graphic design, woodcraft and furniture making, and AUTOCAD design.

2.2.3.3. Human Resource Development Authority

The HRDA is implementing a scheme co-financed by the ESF in the programming period 2007-13 which aims at the improvement of the employability of the inactive women by providing opportunities for them to participate in training activities and work experience. The programmes are offered free of charge and participants receive an allowance. During 2011, the HRDA subsidised the participation of 406 women in 27 training programmes and the participation of 146 women in work experience programmes. Total expenditure was EUR 1 035 592.

2.2.3.4. Ministry of Justice and Public Order

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order in cooperation with the MoEC and the private sector offers classes and other programmes of professional training to the prisoners, on a voluntary basis.

2.2.3.5. Ministry of Interior

Based on the national employment strategy and the labour market needs in general, the immigration strategy aims to integrate legal immigrants into the society under conditions of increased social cohesion. The action plan for the integration of third country nationals includes actions in a number of sectors such as education, vocational training, and learning of the Greek language, health, information and more.

2.2.4. Training for adults in general

The adult education centres (επιμορφωτικά κέντρα) of the MoEC offer a wide range of courses aimed at the holistic development of each individual's personality and the social, economic and cultural progress of Cyprus' citizens, communities and society.

There are 400 adult education centres, both in the urban and rural areas of the government-controlled area of Cyprus, run by the Directorate of Primary Education (Διεύθυνση Δημοτικής Εκπαίδευσης) of the MoEC which offer a wide range of courses in about 100 different subjects per year. The subjects include, among others, arts, literature, computers, foreign languages, Greek for foreigners, sign language, gymnastics, accounting, public relations, first aid, interior design, typing, journalism, cooking, woodcarving, knitting/weaving, pottery, car mechanics, gardening, building, handmade jewellery, photography and dancing. Classes take place from November to the end of May on the premises of public schools. No entry qualifications are required and anyone over the age of 15 can attend the courses. Lessons are held once a week and last for 90 minutes. Those who attend the courses pay a small fee and at the end of the year they receive a certificate of attendance. In 2011, expenditure was EUR 2 303 342, including teacher salaries.

The adult education centres also organise about 50 special classes each year, free of charge, for various disadvantaged groups of people such as illiterate people, prisoners, senior citizens and people with disabilities.

Furthermore, the adult education centres are implementing a project teaching Greek language to foreigners, immigrants and other residents of Cyprus aged 15 and over, co-financed by the ESF during the period 2010-15. The programme consists of fifty, 90-minutes teaching sessions, twice a week for each teaching group and attendance is free.

3. SHAPING VET QUALIFICATIONS

3.1. Qualifications systems and frameworks

In Cyprus until recently there has been relatively limited implementation of frameworks and mechanisms regarding the transparency of qualifications and systems for the recognition of competences and qualifications. However, Cyprus is committed to introducing the relevant EU tools. A description of progress in implementing qualifications systems and frameworks is provided below.

3.1.1. Implementation of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The development of a NQF to promote recognition of academic and vocational qualifications acquired in Cyprus is a government priority. To facilitate the process, the Council of Ministers appointed a high-level national committee comprised of the Directors-General of MoEC, the MLSI and the HRDA.

In February 2009, the national committee appointed a working group, which, after studying the examples and good practices of other European countries, prepared an interim report on the state of the development of a NQF in Cyprus. The report was finalised in March 2012 and will form the basis for further consultation with stakeholders and other interested parties.

The National Coordination Point (NCP) was established in October 2012, following the Decision of the Council of Ministers 541/2012, comprised of representatives from the MoEC, the MLSI and the HRDA. Four international and one Cypriot expert have been appointed in order to assist the NCP in the development of the referencing report, which will describe the process of referencing the Cyprus qualification levels to the EQF. Furthermore, the level descriptors are being developed in order to make them relevant to the Cypriot education system. The project for the establishment of a NQF in Cyprus is expected to be completed by June 2013.

Regarding the regulated professions, Cyprus has fully transposed the new Directive 2005/36/EC into national law by adopting eight different laws, one for the general recognition of regulated professions and seven others for the seven sectoral professions (nurse

responsible for general care, dental practitioner, veterinary surgeon, midwife, architect, pharmacist and doctor).

Furthermore, the development of a competence-based system of vocational qualifications, which will constitute an integral part of a future NQF, is a high priority for Cyprus. The HRDA is establishing and implementing the system in two phases. During the first phase in the period 2006-09, five standards of vocational qualifications at level 2 have been developed in the three economic sectors of hotel and restaurants, construction and retail trade for the occupations of waiter, cook, receptionist, construction mason and sales person.

During the second phase, which covers the period 2007–15 and is co-financed by the ESF, 67 new standards in priority occupations were developed at various levels and opportunities for access are provided to employees, unemployed and economically inactive persons. The standards cover a broad range of occupations in the sectors of hotels and restaurants, retail and wholesale trade, construction, manufacturing, repairs of motor vehicles, systems and networks of communication and computers and hairdressing as well as the occupation of trainer of vocational training. The new standards are discussed by the sectoral technical committees of vocational qualifications and approved by the Board of Governors of the HRDA. It is expected that during the second phase, 7 000 persons will be given the opportunity to get their qualifications recognised according to the new standards.

3.1.2. Implementing a unit-based credit system

The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is part of the overall project to develop European cooperation in VET and constitutes one of its operational tools. A working committee on the development and implementation of ECVET in Cyprus was set up in September 2011. This committee comprises stakeholders from the public and the private sector, such as the MoEC, the MLSI, the Planning Bureau, the HRDA, the CPC, the Foundation for the Management of the European Lifelong Learning Programmes in Cyprus and private providers of VET. Furthermore, several pilot projects on implementing ECVET prepared by the ECVET European expert groups are under consideration as part of the ongoing reform of STVE curricula.

3.1.3. Quality assurance, accreditation and recognition

There are two bodies responsible for quality assurance, accreditation and recognition:

- (a) the Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (Κυπριακό Συμβούλιο Αναγνώρισης Τίτλων Σπουδών), an independent body, is the competent authority responsible for the recognition of diplomas awarded by institutions of higher education;
- (b) the Council for Educational Assessment and Accreditation (Συμβούλιο Εκπαιδευτικής Αξιολόγησης και Πιστοποίησης) is an independent body that advises the Minister of Education and Culture on issues concerning the establishment, control and operation of tertiary education institutions in Cyprus.

The MoEC is working towards the adoption of new legislation, to establish the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education (CyQAAE). The CyQAAE, which will be responsible for the external evaluation of all tertiary education institutions, will replace the existing separate evaluation and accreditation bodies and will simplify all evaluation and accreditation procedures and the quality assurance system.

3.1.4. Europass

The CPC, an institution of the MLSI, was appointed as the Cyprus National Europass Centre and is thus responsible for the coordination, management and promotion of all the activities related to Europass documents as well as for the provision of information regarding the documents and for cooperation with other organisations in the field of mobility and qualification transparency.

The Cyprus NEC in cooperation with the Foundation for the Management of the European Lifelong Learning Programmes in Cyprus is encouraging all organisations participating in mobility programmes to issue the Europass mobility document and during 2011, 221 documents were issued.

Additionally, in 2011, the Cyprus NEC managed to contact almost all interested organisations both private and public to promote the Europass documents and make them accessible to all citizens. Around 80% of the higher educational institutes automatically issue the Europass diploma supplement to their graduates, and the number of Europass diploma supplements issued in 2011 reached 3 903. Furthermore, 1 431 Europass certificate supplements have been issued to the 2011 technical schools' graduates and the graduates of the CPC accelerated training programs.

In 2011, the Cyprus NEC organised 66 workshops with 773 participants. During the workshops, the participants created their own Europass CV and were advised on how to write a cover letter and on how to perform well in an interview.

3.2. Anticipation of labour market needs

Cyprus has a long experience in providing forecasts for skills needs. Employment forecasts in economic sectors and occupations are provided at a detailed level of analysis, including both expansion and replacement demand.

The main formal mechanism in place for the assessment of skill needs is operated by the HRDA. The Ministry of Finance provides projections for the growth of the economy, which include forecasts for different sectors. The MoEC is responsible for the identification of educational and special skill needs.

3.2.1. Human Resource Development Authority

For the systematic employment forecasting and the identification of skills gaps, the HRDA conducts the following research studies:

(a) long term employment trends and forecasting in Cyprus.

The provision of long-term employment forecasts in sectors of economic activity and occupations has become an established activity of the HRDA. The HRDA provides 10-year employment forecasts on a regular basis every two to three years. The latest set of employment forecasts for Cyprus were completed in 2010, cover the period 2010-20 and provide forecasts of employment, expansion and replacement demand for 46 sectors of economic activity and for around 200 occupations, which cover the whole spectrum of the Cyprus labour market. Furthermore, the HRDA participates actively in initiatives and actions that are promoted at European level in the framework of the European network Skillsnet for skill needs forecasting;

(b) annual investigations for the identification of skill needs with the involvement of the social partners.

This study provides annual estimates for the number of persons required for specific occupations by district. On the basis of these estimates, suggestions are put forward for

the implementation of multi-company initial training programmes. In the study, the views of employers' organisations, trade unions, district labour offices of the MLSI and the Cyprus Tourism Organisation are collected and analysed through a specially designed questionnaire;

- (c) study on the anticipation of green skill needs.

The study *Identification of Green Skill Needs in the Cyprus Economy 2010-13* outlines the green economy of Cyprus, provides employment needs forecasts for sectors of economic activity and occupations of the green economy and identifies green skill needs for the period 2010-13. A special action plan for promoting green skills in the Cyprus economy has been put forward as a result of the study;

- (d) study on the identification of employment and training needs for the effective utilisation of natural gas in Cyprus.

The existence of natural gas in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus and the emerging growth prospects of the Cyprus economy due to its future exploitation, has led the HRDA to conduct a research study, in cooperation with the MLSI, entitled 'Early Identification of Employment and Training Needs for the Effective Utilisation of Natural Gas in Cyprus';

- (e) thematic priorities setting.

Every year the HRDA prepares documents that contain the thematic priorities for the continuing training programmes it subsidises. The HRDA then examines, approves or rejects the submitted programmes that need to be in accordance with the policy and subsidy manual and subsidises the implemented programmes.

The studies on anticipation of skill needs are utilised by policy makers in order to develop appropriate policy responses for adapting to the forecasted situation in the labour market, public and private organisations involved in human resource planning, people involved in counselling such as secondary education vocational guidance teachers and employment counsellors and by the general public. For this purpose, all research studies, upon completion are disseminated to a wide audience of prominent stakeholders. Special presentations are organised for secondary school guidance counsellors and employment counsellors, students and parents.

3.2.2. Ministry of Finance

The MoF provides projections for the growth of the economy, which include forecasts of value added, productivity and employment for all sectors, and submits proposals for the required policy changes.

3.2.3. Ministry of Education and Culture

The MoEC and more specifically the Directorate of STVE is responsible for the introduction, with the participation of the social partners, of new branches and specialisations, the design of curricula and the identification of special skills needed.

To carry out these tasks, while taking into account the developmental needs of the Cyprus economy and the latest scientific and technological advances, the Directorate of STVE has developed close cooperation with all major stakeholders such as Ministries and the Planning Bureau, the social partners (employers' and employees' organisations), teachers and their associations, the University of Cyprus, UCY (Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου), the Pedagogical Institute, PI (Παιδαγωγικό Ινστιτούτο) and the HRDA. The findings of the research studies of the HRDA are also taken into account for the design of curricula.

The curriculum is revised whenever a need is identified. The last reform was completed in 2004. A revision of the curricula is underway within the context of the education reform, based on a study focusing on the reorganisation of STVE. For the introduction of new branches and specialisations, the views of all major stakeholders are considered and the teachers of STVE provide their suggestions every year.

In addition, the Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation (CERE) of the MoEC participates in the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), a survey recognised by OECD and delivered by ETS. PIAAC assesses the level and distribution of adult skills in a coherent and consistent way across countries. It focuses on the key cognitive and workplace skills that are required for successful participation in the economy and society of the 21st century.

4. PROMOTING PARTICIPATION IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

4.1. Incentives for participation in vocational education and training

Incentives for promoting participation in VET are aimed at individuals and enterprises, the main ones being the free provision of a variety of VET programmes, the subsidies granted for participation in training programmes and tax incentives for enterprises.

4.1.1. Incentives for individuals

The main incentive for participation of individuals in vocational education is the fact that the provision of secondary technical vocational education including evening technical education, the apprenticeship system and public tertiary vocational education are free of charge, while various lifelong learning programmes are offered for a small fee. Public funds administered mainly by the MoEC are the primary source for financing VET.

Furthermore, a government grant is paid to parents with a child in tertiary education based on specific income and property criteria.

In the case of unemployed and economically inactive persons, the HRDA provides a major incentive to participate in vocational training: the programmes, which are implemented by public and private institutions, are provided free of charge and participants receive training allowances.

The financing provided by the ESF has played an important role in the promotion of participation due to the increased level of funds available which led to the introduction of new training programmes. Many training programmes that are co-financed by the ESF are addressed to the unemployed and groups at risk of exclusion from the labour market.

Educational leave schemes, which are applied in the public sector in Cyprus, provide public-sector employees with the opportunity to take educational leave for studies which are relevant

to their job. The State pays up to 100% of the training and travel costs of civil servants awarded a scholarship from, through or with the approval of the government or any other authority approved by the Council of Ministers.

In some sectors, leave of absence for education and training purposes is included in the collective agreements, thereby ensuring a certain level of education and training. Such sectors are the hotel industry, banking sector, cabinet making and carpentry industry and private clinics. Moreover, collective agreements in some sectors also provide for leave of absence for trade unionists regarding trade union matters.

4.1.2. Incentives for enterprises

The funding provided by the HRDA has effectively motivated enterprises and their employees to participate in training and development activities. The funds of the HRDA come from the human resource development levy of 0,5% on the payroll of eligible employers. Enterprises are directly involved in training activities and prepare and submit training programmes to the HRDA on a continuous basis. The HRDA subsidises up to 80% of approved training programmes.

The HRDA subsidies have also proved to be an important incentive for the development of efficient training institutions and providers, which prepare and submit for approval, every six months, continuing training programmes, in accordance with the thematic priorities that are communicated to them by the HRDA.

Furthermore, the scheme for the support of infrastructure and systems for the development of human resources provides several incentives. These include support for (a) development of centres providing services to enterprises and organisations; (b) development of cooperation among enterprises; (c) establishment of certified assessment centres.

In terms of tax incentives to enterprises, all expenditure on human resource development is tax deductible in the same way that other production expenses are treated. It is therefore estimated that about 20-25% of total human resources development expenditure is borne by the State and the rest by private funds.

4.2. Guidance and counselling

Enhancing the provision of guidance and counselling services to all population groups is a policy priority for Cyprus. The main bodies delivering guidance and counselling in Cyprus are the Counselling and career education service, CCES (Υπηρεσία συμβουλευτικής και επαγγελματικής αγωγής) of the MoEC, the Public employment services, PES (Δημόσια υπηρεσία απασχόλησης) and the Euroguidance centre Cyprus of the MLSI, the HRDA, the Youth Board of Cyprus and certain private organisations. Guidance is provided mainly for students and young persons, to the unemployed and for the employed and economically inactive.

An important development with regard to guidance was the establishment in March 2012 of the National Forum on Lifelong Guidance, which was a basic step in the upgrading of all guidance and counselling services in Cyprus. The Forum acts as a coordinating mechanism for guidance services provided in Cyprus through various channels. Its mission is to act as an advisory body to the government policy makers in the field of lifelong guidance. All major stakeholders are represented in the Forum, such as the MoEC, the MLSI, the HRDA, the Youth Board of Cyprus and the social partners.

4.2.1. Students and young persons

Guidance and counselling for students is provided mainly by the MoEC, the Euroguidance centre Cyprus of the MLSI, the HRDA and the Youth Board of Cyprus.

4.2.1.1. Ministry of Education and Culture

The Counselling and career education services of the MoEC provides students in public secondary general and technical schools with specialised assistance in developing their personal awareness of their interests, needs, abilities, and skills so that they can take suitable decisions about their personal lives, education and careers. Educational and vocational guidance is provided throughout upper secondary education both through the careers and social education course which is offered at the third grade of lower secondary level and through personal and group counselling.

The services are provided by qualified guidance counsellors, who have undergone specialised post-graduate education in counselling and or career education/guidance. The counsellors are

placed in schools and at the central and regional offices of the MoEC. The central office is responsible for numerous publications that address the needs of the Counselling and career education services as well as the continuous support of the school counsellors. Moreover, schools counsellors administer psychometric tests for career guidance to their students.

During the first grade of the lyceum (public upper secondary education) students have the opportunity to become acquainted with the world of work by attending presentations from professionals in different fields and visiting corresponding workplaces.

Additionally, students attending technical schools have traineeships in the specialisation of their choice as part of their curriculum. Furthermore, the third year of studies in the practical direction of technical schools combines a school-based environment with a real workplace as final-year students are placed in industry for one day per week, where they follow a practical training programme.

Each year, the MoEC organises the International Education Fair where the students and other interested parties receive educational information about universities' study programs, entrance requirements, fees and scholarships. Over 200 higher education institutions and universities from 35 countries, as well as the national universities and colleges usually attend the fair.

The Guidance and Counsellors Association (part of the Association of Secondary School Teachers of Cyprus) also organises an Annual Careers Fair. More than 150 organised professional bodies and organisations take part.

Educational Fairs are additionally organised by the British Council and the Fulbright Commission with the participation of different universities and colleges from the UK and the US respectively in order to provide information to prospective students for further studies in these countries.

4.2.1.2. Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance - The Euroguidance centre Cyprus

A website (www.nrcg.dl.mlsi.gov.cy) has been set up by the Euroguidance centre Cyprus, in accordance with the Euroguidance initiative. The Euroguidance network is the European network of the National Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance and currently includes 65 centres that are co-financed by the European Commission and the relevant national authorities.

It provides among other things information on (a) education and training opportunities in Cyprus (private and public); (b) living and studying in Cyprus; and (c) the Cyprus education system, for the benefit of interested people in the EU countries, including expatriate Cypriots as well as local people (early school leavers, workers, unemployed and adult learners).

The target groups of the Euroguidance centre Cyprus are guidance counsellors, individuals and organisations in need of counselling and guidance, especially students and parents seeking information on tertiary education.

4.2.1.3. Human Resource Development Authority

The findings of the HRDA research studies on the anticipation of skill needs are a significant tool for guidance. The HRDA presents the findings of its research studies to secondary school guidance counsellors in collaboration with the MoEC, employment counsellors in collaboration with the MLSI, as well as parents and students in secondary schools in all districts.

Additionally, the HRDA maintains a web page with information and advice on approved training opportunities. The HRDA also displays its research studies in a downloadable form. A special section in the web page contains occupational employment forecasts in all the occupations of the labour market in Cyprus. Another section contains the latest available trends of human resources indicators for the labour market and education and training in Cyprus.

4.2.1.4. The Youth Board of Cyprus

The Youth Board of Cyprus is a semi-government organisation which promotes progress and prosperity for all young people of Cyprus, regardless of religion, ethnic or racial origin. It also promotes young people's active participation in the social, economic and cultural development of our country. The Youth Board of Cyprus operates the youth information centres, which are based on European standards and provide young people with general information and counselling services.

4.2.2. Adults - employed, unemployed and inactive

Guidance for adults is provided mainly by the MLSI through the PES and certain private organisations. Furthermore, the CCES of the MoEC is planning to extend access to guidance for other groups of people besides students/young people and thus promote the goal of lifelong guidance.

4.2.2.1. Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance - Public Employment Services

The vocational guidance service of the PES provides information to adults and secondary-school graduates on employment prospects and opportunities or on skills-training possibilities. These services also cater for school dropouts, who may be interested in joining the apprenticeship system.

Furthermore, the PES provide assistance to employers, jobseekers and those in employment who wish to change jobs, by providing registration and placement services, information on training opportunities and job vacancies. Since 2006 the PES have offered individualised counselling at the district and local labour offices, which has been intensified as a result of the economic crisis, mainly targeted towards the unemployed, economically inactive women and young secondary education graduates.

4.2.2.2. Private employment services

Private employment services and consultancy organisations in Cyprus have expanded in recent years, particularly in the recruitment of managerial or highly qualified specialised staff and in the recruitment of foreign workers. Private employment services act as human resource advisers to firms that do not have their own human resource department.

4.2.2.3. Ministry of Education and Culture

The CCES also operates central offices at the MoEC and regional offices which do not only serve the needs of students but provide services to all citizens. Furthermore, the central offices have an administrative and supportive role.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

CAF	Common assessment framework
CAPA	Cyprus Academy of Public Administration
CCES	Counselling and career education service
CPC	Cyprus Productivity Centre
CTO	Cyprus Tourism Organisation
CyQAAE	Cyprus Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education
ESF	European Social Fund
GDP	Gross domestic product
HRDA	Human Resource Development Authority
ISCED	International standard classification of education
LFS	Labour force survey
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment
MoEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MJPO	Ministry of Justice and Public Order
MLSI	Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance
NEC	National Europass Centre
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PI	Pedagogical Institute
PB	Planning Bureau
PES	Public employment services
PIAAC	International Assessment of Adult Competencies
STVE	Secondary technical and vocational education
SWS	Social welfare services
UCY	University of Cyprus
VET	Vocational education and training

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Foundation for the management of European lifelong learning programmes www.llp.org.cy

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Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance www.mlsi.gov.cy

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Police Academy – Ministry of Justice and Public Order www.police.gov.cy

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ISBN: 978-9963-43-956-0

