

Slovakia

Driving instructors look beyond borders

One of the most widespread VET programmes in Slovakia is rarely taken into account in when discussing VET. Yet driving school is officially considered part of continuing training, and it is certainly a large field, with 620 schools, over 3000 instructors, and more than 60 000 graduates a year.

A prime example of the meeting of public and private concerns in a vocational field, driving instruction in Slovakia has in the past two decades years swung between being totally unregulated to being over-regulated, and has involved different legislative frameworks and government entities. For example, while at one point formal conditions for providing driving instruction were no longer set by the Trades Licensing Act, transport bodies in each district continued to examine conditions in driving schools on the basis of a Transport Ministry decree; the relevant legislation was not harmonised until 2005. But even this recent legislation is based on traditional models of training. Rather than set training output standards it focuses on the training process itself, prescribing theoretical education and practical training in detail.

Instructor for driving, a Leonardo da Vinci project involving 12 partners from nine European countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Slovakia and Spain) and coordinated by the Association of Driving Schools in the Slovak Republic, is aimed at harmonisation of training of driving instructors. Based on an analysis of driving instruction and the conditions of trainee pre-selection, qualifying examinations and refresher training opportunities in participating countries, the project produced common curricula, training material, proposals for the pre-selection of applicants and for monitoring instructors' work, as well as ways to update and refresh instructors' skills. Training material has been made available in English and other languages; the organisational module is accessible online in English and Slovak at <http://www.ifd.szm.sk/el.htm> (username: zas, password: zas).

During the conference on the follow-up to the Copenhagen process, held in Helsinki on 4-5 December 2006, an exhibition was organised to promote successful innovation projects of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme. The European Commission awarded the Quality Award to ten projects, from a pool of 157 projects nominated by national LdV agencies. The project Instructor for driving was among the ten Quality Award winners. Moreover, the Leonardo da Vinci Sectoral Programme Thematic Group on transparency of qualifications, validation of non-formal and informal learning, decided to promote this project as an example of good practice within the 2007 thematic monitoring background study. It is to be hoped that the Ministry of Transport, Post and Telecommunications of the Slovak Republic will also be able to capitalise on this project's results. After all, it is usually necessary to be recognised abroad before one can become a prophet at home.

Further information:

Združenie autoškôl Slovenskej republiky
(Association of Driving Schools in the Slovak Republic)
<http://www.zdruzenieautoskol.sk/>

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