

TORINO PROCESS 2018–2020

MONTENEGRO

NATIONAL REPORT

Disclaimer

Montenegro - national Torino Process report (NRF)

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ACRONYMS

ALMP	Active Labour Market Policies
CIPS	Centre for career orientation and information
CVT	Continuing vocational training
EAM	Employment Agency of Montenegro
EPALE	Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe.
ETF	European Training Foundation
VET	Vocational education and training
IVET	Initial vocational education and training
ILO	International Labour Organization
NQF	National qualifications framework
MOE	Ministry of Education
NRF	National Reporting Framework
MEIS	Montenegrin education information system
RYCO	Regional Youth Cooperation Office
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

BUILDING BLOCK A: COUNTRY AND VET OVERVIEW

A.1: Country background

A.1.1 Introduction

Montenegro was awarded EU candidate status in December 2010. The accession negotiations with the country started in June 2012.

In this reporting period, new Government of Montenegro (GoM) is nominated in November 2016. In the field of education, through the implementation of reforms aimed at improving the quality of education, from pre-school to high, the Government continues to improve the quality of education, striving for the creation of knowledge that is functional, as well as creating the preconditions for students to adopt the skills needed in the 21st century. Improving the education system and investing in education will have significant positive effects on both society and the economic development of the state. The government is continuously committed to achieve main objectives of social policies aiming to improve level of employment, to achieve efficient functioning of the labour market, to have better matching of supply and demand in the labour market, to increase social inclusion and to target poverty reduction. In the field vocational education the development of new educational programmes is done with special focus on professional development of teachers.

During this reporting period, Montenegro has opened a new negotiation chapter with the EU at an intergovernmental conference in Brussels on Monday 10 December 2018, which is Chapter 27 – Environment and Climate Change. It will be the 32nd opened chapter for Montenegro, and only remaining chapter to be open is Chapter 8 – Competition policy. The country has so far provisionally closed three Chapters: 25 – Science and Research; 26 – Education and Culture and 30 – External relations.

The 17 April 2018 EC assessment of the Economic Reform Programme (2018-2020) as well as the Annual Enlargement Package acknowledge that Montenegro is making good progress in the European accession process. Yet the skills mismatch at the secondary and higher education levels and the lack of job creation remain a key challenge for inclusive growth and competitiveness in Montenegro. Youth unemployment rates and NEETs have gone down to 31.3 in 2017 and 16.7 respectively, but remain high compared to EU average of 16.8 and respectively 10.9. In addition, both employment (58.2 in 2017 compared to EU average of 72.1) and activity rates (69.3 in 2017 compared to EU average of 78.0) have been improving. Participation in lifelong learning remains low with 2.8 in 2017 compared to the EU average of 10.9. Provision of employment services and active labor market policies does not encompass all possible beneficiaries due to insufficient funding and staffing of the Public Employment Service, among others. The EC in its recommendations calls upon the Government of Montenegro to move vocational education and skills development up on the policy agenda.

The EC progress report 2018 for Montenegro¹ states that Montenegro “made progress on implementing the revised curricula based on learning outcomes, revised enrolment policies, and the introduction of practical learning must be maintained and ensured across all levels of education and that focus in the forthcoming period should be on continuing with curricular reform in primary and secondary education to teach basic and transversal skills and focus on learning outcomes”.

¹ [European Commission Montenegro 2018 Report](#)

A.2: Overview of Vocational Education and Training

A.2.1 Overview of VET: set-up and regulatory framework

According to the VET Law amended in 2017², VET Education is “education providing students with skills of different complexities”.

The VET system in Montenegro offers three different types of initial VET programmes: lower VET (two years), secondary VET (three and four years) and post-secondary VET (two years, following secondary VET).

The lower VET programme (2 years): it starts completion of 9 year primary education and it refers to ISCED 3, NQF level II, leading to labor market as also access to next level of education after passing additional exam. At the end of this education period, student is taking practical exam and obtaining relevant certificate.

Most 3-year programmes (ISCED 3, NQF level III) contain approximately 40-50% of practical learning. These programs are offered in two forms: one is regular form of learning whereby student is acquiring practical skills in school workshop as also partially in companies. Second form of education on this level is dual education, whereby the student is acquiring practical skills exclusively in companies. At the end of this period of education, student is passing final exam.

The vast majority of the programmes offered in initial vocational education are **4-year programmes** (ISCED 3), level 4 NQF qualifications. Usually, these are the programmes having extension “technician” (such as Tourism technician, Law technician, Medical technician, etc..) in their title. At the end of this education period, students are taking final exam and obtain diploma for this level of education. For the enrollment in four-year VET programs, the limit is defined - for each academic year whereby the number of points that students should achieve on the basis of achievements in the subject of relevance and the external assessment at the end of the ninth grade are determined. Students opting to continue education need to pass vocational exam organized externally, and those planning to go to the labor market are taking vocational exam organized by the VET school who continue their education take the vocational exam (Matura), and those with intention to go to the labor market from there, are given an internal vocational examination

Post-secondary VET (2 years): theoretically it starts at age 18 or 19, upon completed secondary vocational education and it is equivalent to ISCED 4 (NQF level V) and leads to labor market, and there is no further academic progression.

Continuous VET is provided through the network of adult education providers, offering short and medium term training programmes for vocational qualifications as well as for key skills. Adult education providers are also 26 out of 37 VET secondary schools, accredited for different training programmes.

Most of the VET related strategies are initiated at the time of reporting on previous Torino process, with exception of Strategy for Teachers Education in Montenegro, Ministry of Education, 2017-2024³.

Implementation of dual education is monitored by the National coordination body, composed of representatives of Chamber of economy of Montenegro, VET Centre and the Ministry of Education.

The Montenegrin educational system is governed by a set of laws: General Act on Education (Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro 64/02, 31/05, 49/07, Official Gazette of MNE 04/08, 21/09, 45/10, 45/11, 37/13, 47/17), Vocational Education Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro 64/02, 49/07, Official Gazette of MNE 45/10, 37/13, 47/17), General Secondary School (Gymnasium) Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro 64/02, 49/07, Official Gazette of MNE 45/10, 37/13, 47/17), Adult Education Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro 64/02 and 49/07, Official Gazette of MNE 04/08, 21/09, 20/11, 47/17), National Vocational Qualifications Act (Official Gazette of MNE 80/08, 46/16), Act on Education of Children with Special Needs (Official Gazette of the Republic

² [Law on Vocational education and Training in Montenegro, 2017](#)

³ Strategy for development of teachers 2017-2025, Montenegro

of Montenegro 80/04, Official Gazette of MNE 45/10), National Qualifications Framework Act (Official Gazette of MNE 80/10), Higher Education Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro 60/03, Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro 45/10, 47/11, 47/17), as well as the Act on Recognition of Foreign Educational Certificates and Harmonisation of Qualifications (Official Gazette of MNE 57/11, 46/16).

The most important changes in the Law on Vocational Education, as per the amendments of 2017, in this reporting period are the following:

- Achievements of the students in practical learning should be partially assessed by the employer who provided practical learning to the students (in-company training).
- In order to be accredited provider of student's practical learning, each employer should fulfil specific conditions related to staffing, technical conditions offered to the students. Eligibility of employer to provide practical learning is assessed by the VET Centre. Association of employers we entitled to do this before the changes in the Law, however this was not done in successful and systematic manner.
- The Ministry of Education budget provides funds for **scholarship for students of the first and second grades in dual education**. Compensation in the third grade is the obligation of the employer. Compensation to students in dual education is for the first grade at least 10% of the average net salary, at least 15% for the second grade and at least 20% in the third grade. Since 2002, the Law stipulates that benefits are provided by the employer. Also, the Amendments to the Law stipulate that in dual education the employer has no obligation to pay the student a pension and health insurance.
- The **criteria for enrolment in secondary school were changed, whereby the** minimum number of points required for enrolment in gymnasium and four-year vocational school was determined.
- Students opting to continue to higher education need to pass vocational exam organized externally, and those opting to go on the labour market are taking vocational exam organized by the schools. Next to native language and math/foreign language (depending on VET programme) In the second case, student is working on project work as part of the vocational exam, whereby in the first case student should pass specific VET theory subjects.

A.2.2 Institutional and governance arrangements

The Ministry of Education is responsible for planning, implementing and improving the educational policy. Three Council are also established with purpose to provide verification of specific processes in developing and adopting educational standards: National Council for Education, Higher Education Council, and Qualifications Council.

The Bureau for Education defines and ensures quality education in kindergartens and schools, performs developmental, advisory, and research activities in pre-university education. **The Vocational Education and Training Centre (VET Centre)** is a governmental research institution and responsible for the development and improvement of the vocational and adult education system. The VET Centre undertakes all activities related to development of vocational education in Montenegro, from level 2 to level 5 of National Qualification Framework, provides support to VET providers (schools and adult education providers) in implementing VET programmes (examples), as also responsible for conducting external evaluation of VET providers/ schools. In the part of general education subjects, in the external evaluation of schools, the Bureau of Education is involved. In accordance with the General Law on Education, schools are obliged to conduct an internal evaluation every year.

The Chamber of economy of Montenegro and Union of employers are institutions representing employers in the design and delivery of education. The Chamber of economy of Montenegro and Union of employers have memberships in all key national bodies assigned to contribute to the quality of education, including National Council for Education and its working bodies for vocational and adult education, Higher Education Council, Qualifications Council and sectoral commissions.

Based on labor market analysis, sectoral commissions propose the development and revision of new and existing qualifications. The Qualifications Council adopts the qualifications and makes a decision on their inclusion in the National Qualifications Framework.

The National Council for Education approves educational programmes for all level of pre-university education and programmes for CPD of teachers and principals.

VET Centre, The Chamber of economy of Montenegro and Union of employers, Union of employees, the Employment Agency and the Ministry of Labour, in the coordination and active role of the Ministry of Education, are key partners in the preparation of the Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education and relevant action plans. These partners conduct monitoring and evaluation of the activities planned by the Strategy and the Action Plan.

A.2.3 Basic statistics on VET

The Montenegrin Education Information System (MEIS) is the ultimate point where all statistics related to pre-university education is collected, including all data about VET providers and VET students. It allows i.e. to monitor the absence of students, how they progress, the grades, and compare with student data that are not in dual education. From this year, separate module of MEIS collects also information about adult education providers and training offered and implemented.

The current vocational education and training provision in the country is predominantly state-led and school-based. Around 98 different VET programmes are provided in 37 VET schools. **Initial VET offers three types of programmes: 2-year lower secondary track and 3- and 4-year upper secondary programmes.**

In the academic year 2017/18, 1 797 students have been enrolled in 3-year programmes (14% of them in dual education) and 17 095 students in 4-year programmes. There are currently no students in 2-year programmes because there is no student interest. 30 students are enrolled in post-secondary programmes.

In the school year 2018/2019, there are 27.978 students enrolled in the secondary education. 8942 of them are students enrolled in general education (gymnasium) and the number of students enrolled in first year VET programmes this academic year is 5274.

In 2017/18 the student teacher ratio in VET schools is 12.98 (8-9 is the EU average, compared to 2012/2013 when it was 15.17. Total number of teachers delivering VET programmes in 37 VET schools is 2113) this number includes also music and art schools with approx. number of 250 teachers in total.

Public expenditure on education in 2016, 2017 and 2018 was around 4.5% of GDP. In 2010 it was 4.4% of GDP.

A.2.4 Vision for VET and major reform undertakings

VET reforms in Montenegro are framed by the Vocational Education Development Strategy (2015-2020) and Action Plan, adopted in December 2016. The priority areas in VET for the period 2015–2020 included ensuring high-quality and efficient VET provision, which would be relevant to the labor market demands and would provide equal opportunities to all citizens to acquire qualifications and to enhance their employability, social integration, lifelong learning and mobility. These priorities are all relevant to the Riga medium-term deliverables. The strategy implementation is guided by yearly action plans that are administratively monitored checking if an activity has happened or not.

Since 2015 Montenegro has further reformed its VET system. In the area of work-based learning, the country adopted a set of legal stipulations providing incentives to employers to engage in apprenticeships. Further efforts were made to improve the quality of VET by means of harmonizing the national quality assurance approach with the EQAVET Recommendation and ensuring feedback loops through launching a tracer system for IVET graduates. The flexibility and accessibility of VET was improved thanks to the introduction of individual transition plans in secondary schools, more modularized curricula and wider use of distance/e-learning for adults, as well as through the implementation of the Montenegrin Qualifications Framework (introducing possibilities for gaining partial qualifications) and improving the procedures for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Measures were taken for improving the preparation of teachers: a new Strategy for Teachers' Training in Montenegro (2017-2024) was adopted in 2016, actions were carried out in pre-service education to address the gaps in the pedagogic skills of VET subject teachers, the promotion of key competences

was included in the newly adopted (2016) teacher standards and a programme for placement of teachers in enterprises was piloted. Programme implementation was continued in 2019.

Flexible system of qualifications is built with support of the employers, and based on the occupational standards developed with the support of industry representatives. In the previous period around 160 qualifications of different types and levels have been developed. In school 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, 78 standards of vocational qualifications and 26 qualifications of level of education have been developed.

VET reforms in the recent decade had targeted mainly secondary VET, with less consideration given to post-secondary or continuing VET. The main driver behind the reform processes in VET, substantially supported by EU pre-accession assistance funds, had been the need to develop a VET system able to respond to the labor market needs, mainly by introducing new approach in developing VET standards by revising methodologies for occupational standards, qualification standards and curricula development quality VET system that was more demand-driven and oriented towards a learning-outcome-based logic.

A.3: The context of VET

A.3.1 Socioeconomic context

The country has trading-oriented economy with this sector accounting for 70% of the gross domestic product (GDP) while one-fifth was generated by industry. In 2017, GDP growth was 4.3% compared to 3.4% in 2015. The structure of the employment follows nearly the same pattern, as three-fourths of the country's workforce are employed in services (74.8%, 2015, 60.3% of GDP in 2015 and 54.5% of GDP in 2017), industry employed 17.5%, while the agriculture sector employed 7.7% of the workforce (and generated 10.2% of GDP). In 2013-2015 the economy grew at an annual rate ranging between 1.8% and 3.5% (3.2%, 2015). GDP by sector remains rather stable in agriculture (2015-2017); went slightly up in industry (a lot of construction is ongoing) and down in services and up in "others". Structural changes will go more in direction of diversifying sectors, which are supposed to be developed in the forthcoming period, in particularly through investments of international partners in the sectors of tourism and catering, energy, transport.

Montenegro's priority reform measures in the Economic Reform Programme for 2019–2020⁴, presented on the Ministerial meeting in 2017, are focused on: Public finance management, energy market and transportation market reform, improvement of business environments, development of research and innovation and digital economy, trade, education and skills and employment and labour market.

The total population in 2017 was 622, 387 (307,752 male; 314,635 female) compared to 619,001 (305,223 male; 313, 778 female) in 2010. Relative size of the youth population in 2017 was 18,4% (19.2m; 17.5f) compared to 18,6% (19.4 m; 17,8 f), in 2011 and has been stable over the years.

Labour market performance has generally been improving in the past years but is still characterized by relatively low participation and high share of informality (2017: 20.5 % of GDP; 2015: 17,2 % of GDP). The employment rate increased since 2013 (56.7%, 2015) but remained around 13 percentage points below the EU-28 average. Unemployment had been decreasing since 2013 and stood at 17.5% in 2015. Youth were particularly affected with one third of registered unemployed being first-time jobseekers and almost one in five people of those aged 15–24 years remaining not involved in employment, education or training. Although decreasing in recent years, youth unemployment still stood at high levels (37.6% in 2015). An ILO study (2015) on youth transition from school to work showed that only a quarter of youth (15-24 years old) were employed and the most important barrier for finding a job was lack of vacancies. The country's workforce was relatively low-skilled, with nearly three-fourths of active population having low- or medium-level of educational attainment, though the proportion of the population aged 30-34 with completed tertiary education was increasing. Further description of labour market conditions and employment is provided in section B.

⁴ [Economic Reform Programme for Montenegro 2019-2021](#)

A.3.2 Migration and refugee flows

According to the EU Country report on Montenegro⁵ data, number of asylum seekers increased from 335 in 2016 to 849 in 2017. According to UNHCR⁶, there are 13.000 refugees, mostly from Middle East due to current conflicts.

Refugees and Asylum seekers (RAS) are most common categories of people coming from abroad to Montenegro, looking for temporary or permanent residence. Nine months after declaring their asylum status, they are registered as refugees. Law on international and temporary protection of foreigners⁷ is prescribing different kind of rights, which refugees can obtain, but the overall fact is that from the moment they are registered as refugees, they have equal access to education and employment as any resident in Montenegro.

Regarding employment, as soon as RAS status is granted with the local ID card (ideally 9 months after submitting request for asylum), RAS can register in the employment office and enjoy all rights as any resident of Montenegro. This includes also career counselling and participation in training courses provided by employment agency of Montenegro as well as partners. RAS can also become beneficiaries of any active labour market measure. .

The biggest barrier for asylum seekers and refugees to be employed is lack of local language skills, and this is something to be focused in the forthcoming period, as current forms of language trainings provided to them are not supportive enough. The same applies for education.

According to the whole set of education laws, revised in 2017 Asylum seekers and refugees can enjoy full right on, free of any charge, education (primary and secondary), as any other citizen. There are only a few primary and secondary schools which are private, but predominate majority are state schools. After the opening of the Asylum Seekers Centre, and during the school year 2014/2015, there was no asylum seekers child enrolled in state school. During 2015/2016 school year, two children of asylum seekers who had left Montenegro in the same year were enrolled in elementary school.

A very important fact is that asylum seekers mainly consider Montenegro as transitional country, and this is very much important in creating any kind of supporting measures regarding employment and education.

A.3.3 Education sector context

The Montenegrin educational system includes preschool, primary, general secondary education (gymnasiums), vocational education, and higher education.

The system is comprised of:

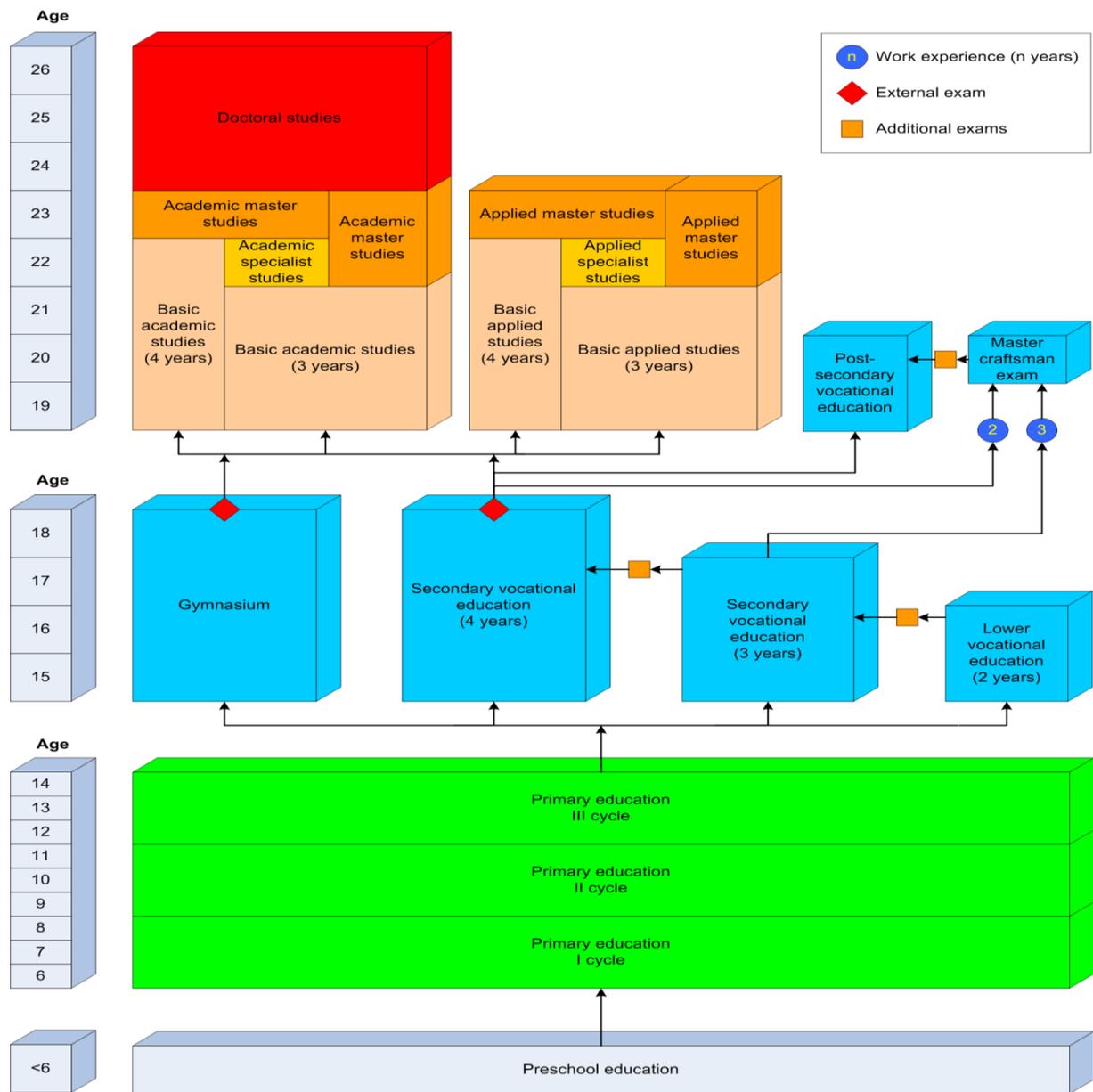
- 21 public and 13 private preschool institutions;
- 163 public primary schools;
- 48 public secondary schools (gymnasiums, vocational and combined schools) and one private gymnasium;
- 3 resource centers (for education of children with special educational needs),
- 106 licensed adult education providers out of which 26 are VET Schools, four universities and more autonomous private faculties. (list of providers in annex)
- Number of teachers teaching in secondary schools is 2565, out of which 1983 are teaching VET programmes⁸

⁵ [EU annual country report for Montenegro](#), 2018

⁶ [UNHCR on number of refugees in Montenegro](#), 2018

⁷ [Law on international and temporary protection of foreigners Montenegro](#), 2018

⁸ Source: Montenegrin education information system (MEIS)



The Montenegrin system of qualifications is governed by the National Qualifications Framework Act, the Rulebook on descriptors for qualification levels and sub-levels (Official Gazette of Montenegro 51/11), the Rulebook on procedures for developing qualifications form level I to level V (Official Gazette of Montenegro 21/12), the Rulebook on procedures for developing qualifications form level VI to level VIII (Official Gazette of Montenegro 21/12), as well as by a set of regulations in the field of education, including the National Vocational Qualifications Act.

Comparison of MQF and EQF levels



According to the Economic Reform Programme for Montenegro 2018-2020, when it comes to education sector, in the forthcoming period, focus is on development of qualifications in line with labour market needs, as also carrying out apprenticeship with employers.

For the 2017/2018 school year, 27798 students were educated in secondary education programs, out of which 18773 students were educated in vocational school programs. 4519 students were enrolled in 4 year vocational education programs. 727 students were enrolled in first class of 3 year vocational education programs, out of which 277 students are in dual education. Dual education is organized in 12 municipalities, 18 vocational and mixed schools, through 14 educational programs. 101 employer are involved in dual education. Incentives to first and second grade students are provided by the Ministry of education, subsidies for the third grade are the duty of the employer.

In the school year 2018/2019, there are 27.978 students enrolled in the secondary education. 8942 of them are students enrolled in general education (gymnasium) and number of students enrolled in the VET programmes first grade of this academic year is 5274, whereby 3808 of students are enrolled in four year programmes and 1466 in enrolled in the three-years programmes. Out of 1466 students enrolled in the three years programmes, 737 students are in grade one, 573 in grade 2 and 487 in grade three, currently. So the trend of students attending these programmes is significantly increasing as an outcome of the recent measures introduced by the Ministry of education.

Students finishing level 3 programmes can continue with formal education by taking additional exams - supplementary and differential exams that represent the difference of subjects by grade (first, second and third grade). After that, the student takes the 4th grade courses and the vocational exam. There are no direct passages from the three-year program to higher education institutions. Their level 3 qualifications lead directly to the labor market.

In order to encourage students to enroll in level III education programs recognized by the labour market as a deficit, for the 2017/2018 school year, 119 scholarships were provided for first-grade students who have been educated for these deficient qualifications. In school 2018/2019. the total number of scholarships is 420. In 2018/2019 300 scholarships were provided for first-grade students who have been educated for these deficient qualifications. Scholarships are awarded for qualifications: Locksmith, Electrical Installer, Hairdresser, Sanitary Installer, Heating and Air Conditioning Installation, Ceramist, Waiter, Cook, Fashion Tailor, Electronic Communication Infrastructure Mutturer, Pastry Shop, Carpenter, Welders ets. The amount of the scholarship is 70 euros per month.

A.3.4 Lifelong learning context

Overall LLL means access to “adult learning” and as such is a priority of the country. Besides the VET strategy (IVET), **the adult education strategy has recently been adopted**. The VET Centre plays a prominent role for adult learning and in the Ministry of Education, VET, General Secondary Education and Adult Education are in one Directorate. The Entrepreneurial Learning strategy (2014-2019) is the only strategy in a lifelong learning context, from the cradle to the grave.

In spite of efforts adult participation in lifelong learning is low with 2.8 in 2017 (in 2010: 2.4%, 2016: 3.3%, 2015: 3%) and has even gone down compared to EU average of 10.9. Women and low-skilled are less prompt to participate in further training, trapped in low-skilled jobs with no career paths. Up-skilling through training is not always obvious. Less training leads to skills depletion.

As for adult education, emphasis has been placed on extending the number of licensed adult organizations, with the goal of having these organizations in all municipalities, in order to provide the adult population with the opportunity to improve knowledge and qualifications. In order to improve the quality of adult education provision, andragogical training of teaching staff working with licensed adult education organizers is organized. Over 400 teachers have been trained by the VET Centre.

In the framework of the Project EPALE, activities were organized on the development of andragogical manuals for teaching staff that is implementing the elementary school program for adults. Instruction manuals for 16 compulsory and 7 elective courses of the elementary school program were prepared in order to functionalize content for adult learners. In addition, the VET Centre, within the framework of the EPALE Project, has prepared and published an Instructional Manual for Teachers who implement the program "Elemental Functional Literacy for Adults".

An important activity for regulating the adult education system and improving the quality is the extension of the information system of the Ministry of Education (MEIS data-base) with the data on adult education. Within the framework of the EPALE project, the MEIS database is upgraded with a module designated to gather information on adult education. The database will include all information about adult education organizers (for which programs the organizer is licensed, contact data, etc.), programs (name, duration, level, when training will be organized, trainings executed, number of candidates who attended a particular program, etc.), the number of participants (their status in terms of employment, pre-school, years, etc.). Through the monitoring of the work of adult education providers, the process of collecting data on adult participation in lifelong learning programs has been improved in this way. Based on the data it will be possible to perform different analyzes, e.g. availability of the program, the structure of the participants (employees / unemployed, years, pre-school education), programs for which there is a greater interest, examination of candidates. All this is important for further improvement of adult education programs quality and make the process of reporting on adult education easier and more precise. The database is linked to the Employment Agency's database on training provided by this institution.

There are 104 licensed education providers in Montenegro, and out of them 22 are VET Schools. For the reports on the implementation of the Annual Plan on Adult Education for 2017 and 2018, the VET Centre and Ministry of Education collected data showing that in 2017, 27,962 persons were involved in different adult education programs. In 2018, 28 996 persons were involved in different adult education programs.

Region	Number of licensed adult education providers <u>per regions</u>	Number of adult education providers offering training programmes related to <u>vocational qualifications (key skills)</u>	Number of adult education providers offering training programmes related to <u>key skills</u>
Central region	63	35	28
South	13	9	4
North region	30	27	3
TOTAL	106	71	35

Adult education system is improved by enabling different target groups to access it - primarily unemployed without any qualification, or with qualifications not required by the labour market, employees in need for reeducation to better accommodate the changes that new technologies bring, drop-out students...)

Modularized competency-based programs for students with special educational needs, enable them to acquire qualifications gradually, in accordance with their capabilities. For the students who have left the education system, these programs give the opportunity to acquire a professional qualification for a part of the program that has been successfully completed. Key competences and key skills are promoted in the new competency based programmes the context of lifelong learning skills as they are the basis for lifelong learning and adaptation to individuals with rapid changes in technologies and labour market requirements.

Adult education programmes are approved by the National Council for education and refied by the Ministry of Labour. Until now, National Council adopted 92 adult education programmes, leading to vocational qualification.

Sector	Number of approved programmes	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 and level 5
Construction and spatial planning	20	9	10	1
Agriculture and food processing	5		5	
Forestry and wood processing	11	4	6	1
Textile	6	2	4	
Trade, tourism and hospitality	12	3	5	3 1
Economy, Law and administration	4		3	1
Personal services	4	3	1	
Health, pharmacy and social protection	5		3	2
Transport	5		5	
Mechanical engineering and metal processing	10	4	6	
Electrical engineering, telecommunications and computing	6		6	
Non-metal chemistry and graphics	4	1		3

A.3.5 International cooperation context: partnerships and donor support

The EU continues to provide assistance to Montenegro for education and labour market reforms. IPA II Programming for the implementation of SOPES (2015-2017) is progressing at a moderate pace. Priority interventions are: active labour market measures and local employment initiatives; improvement of quality of education with particular focus on STEM and further development of practical experience in educational programmes. The planned activities build on results of EU IPA funded project "Modernization of educational programmes and teachers training" implemented by British Council from the beginning of 2016 until mid of 2017. Focus of the project was on development of qualifications based on labour market needs, modernisation of educational programmes and training of teachers in selected schools. As result of this project, methodologies for development of VET standards are updated and 10 new competency-based programmes are developed and introduced in the VET schools, as also 180 teachers trained in introducing competency-based curricula.

In addition to the European Union, VET and skills development receive support from different donors and international organisations, among which the ILO to support the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare with the revision of the labour law; the Council of Europe on inclusive education; UNDP on Youth Entrepreneurship; UNICEF as new player on education sector governance; World Bank on Higher Education Reform and the British Council as previous contractor for the IPA Programme 2012-2013.

Through the "Education and Economy" project supported by Kultur kontakt (2015-2017), the Guide for Practical Education Organizers was prepared, trainings for practical training providers were organized, as well as the portal www.obrazovanjeiprivreda.me/ which serves to exchange information between employers and schools, among other things, on the available places for realization of practical education and on the educational offer of schools.

BUILDING BLOCK B: ECONOMIC AND LABOUR MARKET ENVIRONMENT

This building block focuses on the demand for VET from the economic and labour market perspective. It collects information on labour market and economic factors that shape the demand for skills, and on the responsiveness of VET to these factors. This includes migration, skill gaps and mismatches, the transition to employment, and the role that VET plays in the promotion and development of entrepreneurship.

B.1: VET, economy, and labour markets

B.1.1 Labour market situation

The labour market, with some improvements, is still characterized by a low rate of activity and employment, long-term unemployment, and high unemployment rates, especially for young people, as well as a structural discrepancy between supply and demand.

According to the data in 2017, the labour market continued with positive developments, taking into account the overall rate of activity, employment and unemployment. All parameters reflecting the labour market (LM) situation have been significantly improved compared to the previous year. Although these positive trends could also be the consequence of an aging or shrinking workforce, it should be noted that these factors affect the labour market in long run. The positive trends of 2017 are mainly the consequence of increased economic activity which is registered not just in tourism (significant increase of overnight stays compared to 2016), but also in construction sector due to the intensification of highway construction and other capital projects. Despite positive trends in LM indicators, it should be stressed that these improvements are rather limited when it comes to the most vulnerable groups on the labour market⁹.

There is an obvious discrepancy between these indicators for men and women. Activity and employment rates are significantly higher for men, while unemployment rates are at similar level. Lower activity and employment rate for women indicate that women in Montenegro still represent vulnerable group at the labour market. Also, observed by regions, it may be concluded that both, men and women from Northern region have less opportunities for job finding than those in Central and Coastal region. Activity rate and employment rate are significantly lower than national average, while unemployment rate is higher (it amounted 35.2% for this region compared to 16.1% for Montenegro in 2017 – LFS data).

The number of employees in 2017 amounted to 182,368 and was by 2.5% higher than the average number of employees during 2016, when it amounted to 177,908. In the first five months of 2018, the number of employees increased by 1.0% compared to the same period previous year.

The basic characteristics of the achieved trends in the labor market according to the MONSTAT indicators as a wider insight into the whole movement and market conditions (Labor Surveys from IV quarter 2018 and IV quarter 2017) could be reduced to the following:

- In the IV quarter of 2018, the activity rate of the population aged over 15 years increased from 53.5% to 56.6%, or 3.1%, in relation to the IV quarter of 2017. The rate of women's activity increased from 45.9% to 48.8%, or 2.9%, and the activity rate of men increased from 61.5% to 64.6%, or 3.1%.
- The employment rate of the population over the age of 15 increased by 44.4% to 47.5% or by 3.1 pp. In men it increased from 51.5% to 54.4%, in women it increased from 37.6% to 40.9%.
- In the IV quarter of 2018, the employment rate for the age group of 15-64 years increased from 51.2% to 54.7% in relation to the IV quarter of 2017, ie by 3.5 pp. (in men it increased from 58.0% to 60.7%, and in women from 44.3% to 48.7%).

According to the MONSTAT data, in the fourth quarter of 2018, the total employment increased by 6.84% (from 222,100 to 237,300) in relation to the IV quarter of 2017, where it decreased by 1.68% in

⁹ <https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2019-01/KIESE%202018.pdf>

agricultural activities, increased by 31.28% in non-agricultural activities, while in service increased by 2.73%.

The unemployment rate, according to MONSTAT data, was reduced from 17% to 16.1% (by 0.9%), with the unemployment rate of men reduced from 16.2% to 15.9%; the unemployment rate of women declined 18% to 16.3%. At younger ages 15-24, the activity rate increased from 28.8% to 31.7%, the employment rate also increased from 18.2% to 20.3%, and the unemployment rate was reduced from 36.7% to 36.2%.

The Employment Agency data on the number of unemployed people as for the date June 30, 2018 is 42,737 (out of which 24,959 is women or 58,4%). Compared to the data for the same day last year, (46,781 persons, out of which 24,313 is women or 51,97%), the number of unemployed people has decreased for 3,256 persons or 8.64%. The unemployment rate, observed as the ratio of registered unemployed and active population, as of June 30, 2018 was 18.42% (on the same day of the previous year 20.16%). Observed by the qualification structure of the unemployed persons, the dominant share of 21,337 or 49.93% belongs to unemployed persons with III, IV and V level of education (June 30, 2017- 23,776 or 50.82%). The number of unemployed people with VI, VII and VIII level of education is 5,833 or 13.65% (June 30, 2017 - 7,368 persons or 15.75%), while the number of unemployed people with I and II level of education is 15,567 persons or 36.43% (June 30, 2017 - 15,637 persons or 33.43%).

In relation to the age structure, the number of unemployed persons under 25 years is 4,142 or 9,69% (June 30, 2017 - 6,072 or 12.98%) of the total number of unemployed, and as for the age of 50 and above - 13,470 or 31.52%, (June 30, 2017 - 12,262 or 26.21%).

School-to-work transition remains difficult with almost one in four not in employment, education or training (15-24 age group).

Long-term unemployment (persons seeking employment over 1 year) on 30 June 2018 amounted to 54% (23,074: 42,737), on the same day previous year it was lower and amounted to 51,0% (23,881: 46,781).

The cooperation between education ministry, labour ministry, employment agency and schools and social partners has received particular attention to improve school to work transition and help young graduates in finding jobs matching their level and field of studies. The results are still to be measured.

The main indicators of the power of absorption of the labour market are the scope and structure of labour demands expressed by the number of vacancies that employers register with the Employment Agency and the scope and structure of employment in relation to the reported demand.

In the first half of 2018, 17,998 vacancies were announced through 8,766 vacancy notices, registered by the Employment Agency of Montenegro. Compared to the same period in 2017, there were 810 or 4.31% less vacancies reported. Out of the total number of employment vacancies, 1,300 or 7,22% were for permanent employment, 10,879 or 60.45% for a fixed-term employment, 113 or 0.63% were for trainees, 5,653 or 31.41% for seasonal jobs and 53 or 0.3% were for other types of employment (trainee - volunteer, supplementary work, temporary and occasional work, temporary work engagement, employment of disabled persons). Most vacancies were posted for the NQF level of education – a total of 4,942 or 27.46%, followed by the IV level - 4,157 or 23.10%, and for the III level - 4,005 or 22.25%.

According to the data obtained by the by the employers and the Tax Administration of Montenegro, through the system of Unified Registration of Taxpayers and Insured Persons, in the first half of 2018, through the Employment Agency, 8,339 persons were employed. For the same period in 2017, 6,791 persons were employed. The highest share of employed persons were high school students with the IV level of education - 3,078 or 36.91%, followed by persons with higher education - 2,265 or 27.16% and high school students with the III level of education – 1,479 or 17,34%.

Basic characteristics of the realized trends in the labor market according to the data on registered unemployment, ie records of the Employment Agency¹⁰:

¹⁰ EAM publication: Analysis of supply, demand and employment at the labour market in Montenegro (2018)

- On the records of the Employment Agency as at 31 December 2018, there were 41,378 unemployed persons (women 23,944 or 57, 87%). In relation to December 31, 2017 (51,262 persons, of which 30,035 women or 52.21% were women), the number of unemployed persons was reduced by 9,884 persons or by 19,28%.
- The registered unemployment rate on December 31, 2018 was 17, 83% and on the same day the previous year was 22, 09%.
- Regional participation in total unemployment in the northern region decreased by 3,326 persons or 14, 47%, in central and coastal areas reduced by 4,705 or 1.853 persons.
- Employment for more than one year requires 24,370 persons or 58, 89% of the total number of unemployed on the Institute's records (as at 31 December 2017, 23,418 persons or 45, 68%), over 3 years 7,229 persons or 17, 47% of unemployed persons December 31, 2017, 6,653 persons or 12, 98%), and over 5 years 3,558 or 8,6% (December 31, 2017, 4.027 or 7, 5%).

In the qualification structure of the total number of unemployed persons at the end of 2018, the dominant share of 18,797 or 45, 43% have unemployed with III, IV and V level of education, which is less than the end of 2017 (24. 312), unemployed with higher education make up 20, 93% or 8,659, which is 12, 81% less compared to 2017 (December 31, 2017, 9.931), while the unemployed with I and II level of education - December 31, 2018. was 3.097 less or 18, 20% more than in 2017 (13.922: 17.019), so their participation in the total unemployment increased 33.20% to 33, 64%).

Unemployment of younger categories of unemployed (up to 25 years) in total unemployment has been reduced (12.96%: 14, 02%), and the share of persons older than 50 years has increased (30,69%: 28,20%).

The share of unemployed without senior service in total unemployment increased from 41,25% to 41,39%, while the share of unemployed with seniority decreased from 58,75% to 58,61%.

According to the information received from the Tax Administration of Montenegro, the scope of employment in 2018 (15,534) was lower (19,34%) compared to 2017 (19,258). Employment at I and II level of education is lower by 20,9% (from 3,096 to 2,449), code

the average lower by 21.65% (10,098: 7,912) and higher education by 14.7% (6.064: 5.173). The participation of I and II employment in the total employment decreased from 16,08% to 15,76%, with the average from 52,43% to 50,93%, and higher education increased from 31,49% to 33.30%.

According to data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in charge of issuing permits for temporary residence and work of foreigners, in 2018, 26,327 licenses for work and employment of foreigners were issued, which is 5,358 or 25.55% more than in 2017 (20,969).

In the occupied foreign employment quotas in 2018, the majority share (80.23%) has four groups of occupations: construction, accommodation and food services, trade and other service activities.

"Employment of foreigners in Montenegro is a specificity and an exception in relation to the volume of employment of foreigners in other countries, which, due to its size and structure, and impact on the labor market, imposed a need for a special review of this issue. The large volume of this employment has already been relatively lengthy, although in 2015 and 2016 it was significantly lower than in 2013 and 2014, so that in 2018, we would again have an increase in the number of work permits issued. There are many causes of this phenomenon and, above all, the circumstance that in Montenegro there is a deficit in the offer of some professions from the field, primarily construction and catering, at the time of the most intensive work in these activities, and the fact that in the surrounding countries unemployment (totaling around 1 million people: in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania), which provides the opportunity to meet employers' needs by volume, structure and dynamics, and as a rule, cheaper workforce, which determines the possibility of greater employment of domestic workforce in these jobs.

The scope and structure of supply and employment (domestic and foreign) of the labor force indicates that for some activities, in a larger extent, far more than now, a larger amount of domestic employment in relation to foreign labor (employment, catering, services, etc.) can be employed. , while in some cases it can be achieved to a lesser extent, given the stated deficit in some occupations that are mostly related to a certain activity (in construction, and to a certain extent, the activities of providing accommodation and food services). If the substitution of employment by domestic foreign workforce would be, on average, about 30% (out of the total employment of foreigners), it would have an effect on the increase

in the employment of domestic labor, on this basis, by about 5.000 persons. This would, ultimately, also mean a change in the employment relationship of domestic and foreign forces, or the substitution of employment by the foreign labour force.

The fact that about 60% of foreigners are engaged in performing less demanding auxiliary services, which, to a greater extent than so far, can be done by the domestic labor force, is also necessary to change the employment relationship between domestic and foreign labor.

One of the basic prerequisites for changing the relationship in the employment of domestic and foreign labor is timely planning of the employer's personnel needs, their structure and the dynamics of work engagement, and the need for their greater engagement in this regard. Similarly, projections of employers in terms of engagement of foreign forces are often unrealistic and oversimplified, and in doing so, insufficiently looking at the domestic supply of labor force, which can largely satisfy their demand in terms of size and structure.”¹¹

The situation on the labour market is still complex, with a number of **challenges** which limit, or condition more favourable trends on that market, which can basically be summarised as follows:

- Low rate of labour force participation and high unemployment rates;
- Insufficient participation of young people, women and other vulnerable groups on the labour market;
- Regional disparities in employment and unemployment;
- Insufficient compliance of supply and demand;
- Low citizen participation in lifelong learning programs;
- Insufficient interaction between activation and social assistance measures;
- Low level of inclusion of persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups on the labour market.

The process of transition of the economy has led to the necessary adaptation and redistribution of workforce between sectors, from production to services. This led to a change in the demand for qualifications, as well as to closing and opening up job positions, but did not reach the dynamic and the volume that would absorb workers who lost their job positions.

Changes in the formal education system realized in view of adapting it to the new economic structure, although significant and in the right direction, cannot be fast enough to respond quickly to the new demands for workforce and dynamic changes in the labour market. By establishing a system of verification of non-formal and informal learning, as a supplement to formal education, in the longer term, it can be more responsive to labour market demands.

B.1.2 Specific challenges and opportunities: skill mismatch

According to the 2018 rolled out measurement of skills mismatch incidence in Montenegro (report ETF), key findings of the report show:

(a) most subjected to the skills mismatch are young persons (less affected are 30-49 and 50-64 years old);

(b) occupational mismatch in the form of over-qualification is higher for people with tertiary education but on decreasing trend, while in case of secondary educated the incidence is lower but on increasing trend over the last years;

(c) women with upper secondary education are more exposed to the risk of working in mismatched occupations (compared to their male peers);

(d) decreasing shares of NEETs over the last three years indicate that school-to-work transition has become easier and young people find jobs more quickly than before; it seems however that school-to-work transition is slightly quicker and easier for young males;

¹¹ EAM publication: Analysis of supply, demand and employment at the labour market in Montenegro (2018)

(e) people with VET based qualification tends to have higher employment rates as compared to people who graduated from general secondary education programmes.

Skills mismatch analysis reveals that efforts to improve the position of vulnerable (e.g. women, youth, low educated) in the labour market should continue. A precondition is related to adequate data availability and regular use and interpretation for follow-up measures.

According to the EAM data¹² In 2018, 34,034 persons applied for registration of the Employment Service, of which 19,434 women or 57, 10%. Out of the above number, 5,786 persons or 17% are registered for the first time, while 28,248 persons or 83% have already registered on the Institute's records. Compared to 2017, 10,923 persons were registered or 24.3% (in 2017 - 44,957 newly registered).

- The total labor supply in 2018 (85,388) was 10,26% or 9,765 less than in 2017 (95,153). The relative participation of I and II degrees in the total bid increased from 30.74% to 32.08%, while nominally decreased by 1.857 or 6.35% (29,257: 27,400). The share of professions with secondary education decreased from 47.44% to 45.85%, and nominally by 5,994 or 13.28% (45,143: 39,149), while the share of higher education increased from 21.81% to 22.06% , while nominally decreased by 1,914 or 9.22% (20,753: 18,839).
- In 2018, the demand for labour seen through the registration of vacancies, as one of the main indicators of market absorption capacity, or employment opportunities, was reduced in comparison with 2017. In 2018, employers registered 29,372 vacancies for the Employment Service, which is 7.79% less than in 2017. At the demand of I and II degrees of professional education, a fall of 9.6% was registered (12.295: 11.115), and the share in total demand decreased from 38.6% to 37.8%. In higher education, demand was reduced by 3.09% (5,926: 5,743), while in the middle it decreased by 8,19% (13,631: 12,514);

Obvious regional structural unemployment and high rate of long-term unemployment are still dominant problems. There are large differences in the level of development between regions and smaller territorial units - municipalities. Northern region offers lesser employment opportunities, In addition. Though coastal region and Podgorica feature stronger demand, particularly during summer, this is often associated with higher incidence of informality (e.g. in tourism or construction activities).

First-time job-seekers face challenges in employment as employers increasingly require additional knowledge, practical skills and competencies, capacity to perform independently jobs and tasks within the profession, on top of qualification acquired in regular education. As well as, there are still insufficient investments in education and training of adults, including of those employed. This can be said equally for both investments made from public funds, by employers or the individual investments. As Montenegrin economy continues its transformation path, skills development/update is one key means to counteract mismatches challenges.

Non-consistence between the supply and demand. Although registered unemployment in Montenegro is expressed very clearly, it does not suit by its structure (qualification, specialist's training and profile of workers) to the structure and smaller volume of present demand in the labour market. Significant proportion of registered unemployed are formerly employed people, who, with their knowledge and skills mirror the structure of labour and skill demand specific to previous/old economic structure. Long-term unemployment or inactivity spells had also led to obsolete skillset. Predictable future demand will express a different knowledge and skills set. We may conclude that there is need of higher investments in relevant initial education (for the young workers who will enter on the labour market) and lifelong learning approaches to address the needs of low educated, those with obsolete skills, vulnerable groups etc.

It is almost impossible to reduce the gap between structure and volume of demand and supply without proper targeting of economic and social needs in the education and training provision, and without other measures for stimulating demand and job take up. The public institutions, which have a great influence on the labour market as they are biggest employers, need further capacity building and proper resourcing to play an effective role in addressing the labour market and skills imbalances.

¹² EAM publication: Analysis of supply, demand and employment at the labour market in Montenegro (2018)

Skills mismatch and the lack of job creation remain key obstacles to growth and competitiveness. Next to regular analyses of labour market demand¹³ and rather recently established graduate tracking system¹⁴, three relevant studies done in Montenegro over the last years complement the picture of existing or emerging mismatches, reasons behind and possible policy approaches, namely the DGEAC study (2016) quoted above, the ILO youth school to work transition (2016), and the Montenegrin Employers Federation study on Mismatch between education and labour market needs (2016).

The skills mismatch manifests itself at secondary and higher education levels; it stems from high transitions from VET to higher education and to programmes less relevant for labour market needs. It seems an oversupply of HE graduates, particularly in low demanded professional fields on the labour market such as law, business and humanistic areas, leading to a high level of graduate unemployment.

According to the DGEAC study (2016) the main reasons that graduates have difficulty in finding jobs include the lack of available jobs, and the fact that HE system does not equip graduates with relevant skills. There is a high reliance on friends and family to find a job leading to inefficient recruitment practices. Having some work experience is important in enabling graduates to achieve a successful transition to the labour market in terms of both the probability of finding a job and of finding a job well matched to the field of study followed at their HEI. Mentioned study showed that although graduates have strong numerical, reading and writing skills, employers are more concerned with the absence of interactive skills and report serious and growing skill gaps in this area. The largest increase in graduate employment has been in the sectors of Accommodation and Food Services and Construction reflecting the rapid growth in the tourism and construction market. While most graduates are employed by large enterprises, much of the recent increase in graduate employment has been in fast-growth SMEs called “gazelles”. These may be an important source of graduate employment in the future and hence the importance of building up entrepreneurial skills and mind-set. The same study shows that, for employers, the most important skills are sector-specific skills (for which vocational courses are relevant), computer skills, and analytical and problem-solving skills (i.e. a mix of cognitive and interactive skills). The relative weakness of such skills (apart from computer skills) among graduates is worrying and indicates a major challenge facing employers. Many of them solve this problem by providing additional training to their graduate recruits.

Another relevant research for the skills mismatch topic is the study ILO carried out in collaboration with MONSTAT in 2015 and published in 2016, i.e. Labour market transitions of young women and men in Montenegro. Youth cohort included in the study was 15 to 29. Key findings point out a slightly higher incidence of over-education among young workers overeducated (11.4 per cent) than undereducated (8.0 per cent). At aggregate level, the majority of young workers (80.7 per cent) have managed to find work that is well matched to their level of qualifications. Among youth working in elementary occupations (ISCO group 9), more than half (53.6 per cent) have a higher educational level than the primary level degree expected for the effective performance of the job. The other occupations in which overeducated youth are primarily found are clerks (where 25.7 per cent are overeducated) and service and sales workers (12.8 per cent), but they are also found among youth working as technicians and associate professionals and plant and machine operators. Undereducated young workers are found even in the elementary occupations when they have not passed even the primary level of schooling. This finding can be also related to the classification of educational programmes which is rather particular in Montenegro.

Vacancy monitoring and other analyses reveal that there is still strong demand in occupations requiring secondary and primary level of education, most vacancies being recorded in trade, administrative and auxiliary services, and tourism and hospitality industry. Although there is still an insufficient percentage of the highly educated population compared to many EU countries, on other side there is not enough demand for tertiary graduates.

Cross-institutional collaboration is found essential to get early warnings about emerging mismatches and tackle causes and effects of such imbalances, as stated in the Report on Mismatch between education and labour market needs (2016) developed by the Montenegrin Employers` Federation. This

¹³ See EAM labour market demand analyses, including vacancy monitoring, similar studies done by business sector associations etc.

¹⁴ Tracer study is promised to become regular practice of the Ministry of Education

paper recommends improved quality of education, effective ALMPs, career guidance and lifelong learning, Enhanced cooperation among stakeholders could also serve a periodical in depth analysis of mismatches using available data set (MONSTAT, EAM) and additional empirical surveys/studies with an underlying methodology compatible to European practices to allow comparability (MEF, 2016).

The National Strategy for Employment 2016 – 2020 builds on the priorities and actions identified in the Employment and Social Reform Programmes. The Montenegrin Employment Agency implements a wide range of measures through continuous education and training programmes, public work, promoting entrepreneurship, as well as through mediation in the recruiting process.

Specific projects have been designed and are currently in implementation to facilitate youth's inclusion in employment: Stop to Grey Economy programme, Career Orientation and Labour Market in Elementary Schools and High Schools programme. Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare seeks to address these gaps with a focus on improving cooperation of employment offices, municipalities and other actors at local level, to deliver tailor made activation services to jobseekers and exposed social groups. Most active labour market measures implemented are subsidised employment schemes, while provision of (re)training and start up incentives remained scarce (mainly due to underfunding). This is worrying since most unemployed are low educated or hold mismatched qualification profiles against the demand on the labour market.

With the aim of overcoming challenges on labour market, the Employment Agency, through increasing the efficiency of measures of the active employment policies, with special emphasis on the inclusion of youth, women and long-term unemployed persons on the labour market, implements: The Program of professional training for persons with acquired higher education diplomas (in cooperation with the Ministry of Education); programs of education and training for persons registered with the Employment Agency (acquisition of professional qualifications and key skills, priority for unemployed persons of more profitable occupations); program for creating temporary non-market affairs of public interest for priority, long-term unemployed persons (Public work); training programs for work with the employer, training for independent work and other programs for increasing the employment and employability of disadvantaged people in the labour market; programs aimed at greater inclusion in the labour market of young people, women and long-term unemployed persons (Youth Training and Employment Program on Preventing Informal Business – “Stop to gray economy”); professional orientation programs for those who need these program activities (professional selection programs, careers orientation, development of a web platform for career guidance and other programs).

In order to increase the number of employers using the services of the Employment Agency, the level of interconnection between employers and the unemployed through the information system and the development of forms of direct communication is enhanced (IT, visits to employers, employment fairs, roundtables).

With a view to securing greater employment in undeveloped areas of Montenegro, with an emphasis on northern part of the country and less developed municipalities, the Employment Agency implements an innovative program for continuous stimulation of employment and entrepreneurship, aimed at fostering the development of entrepreneurship through loans, under most favourable conditions than the market ones, of those business ideas that provide new employment; provide financial and advisory support to those who start new business, especially in the north of Montenegro, in order to promote agro tourism and other alternative forms of economic activity, such as green jobs and trainings for entrepreneurs and starters of businesses.

In order to promote the approach and participation of adults in lifelong learning, priority, improvement of qualifications and competencies adjusted to the needs of the labour market, the Employment Agency independently and in the framework of interdepartmental cooperation carries out career guidance programs in vocational schools, participates in the promotion of vocational education oriented towards the needs of the labour market and strategic commitments of Montenegro; as well as organizing various activities aimed at promoting adult education (Event: “Adult Education Days”, etc.)

In order to improve the quality of education at all levels and to harmonize with the needs of the labour market, the Employment Agency actively participates in the planning and development of vocational education. The Agency, as one of the social partners, is present in the development of modularized and credit-worthy educational programs, as well as the development of educational programs in order to improve educational offer for different target groups.

In order to better cover and activate vulnerable groups, the Agency with partner institutions implements measures of social inclusion of capable users of financial support (individual plans for activating capable users of financial support) as well as measures for greater inclusion in the labour market of beneficiaries of financial support for unemployed persons (provided, primarily professional assistance and support in reactivating and creating a personal professional goal in accordance with their capabilities and abilities, while respecting the needs of the labour market).

B.1.3 Specific challenges and opportunities: migration

The new Aliens Act was adopted in February 2018. It regulates: entry, exit, movement, stay and rights to work of foreigners in Montenegro, as well as return, including voluntary returns and entry bans (thus harmonizing the legal framework with the acquis in both legal and illegal migration).

With regards to emigration, National Strategy for Sustainable Development up to 2030¹⁵ is pointing out that the depopulation trend will be continuous, and the population of Montenegro in 2050 would count only 542,000, or by 78,000 less (12.6% less) than in 2011, which approximates the population of the 1970s. There is no reliable register referring to number of population that emigrated, although most of the people leaving the North of Montenegro are on the temporary stay in Western Europe countries (up to three months in one slot) or USA (up to six months), so they are still investing back in Montenegro whatever they earned outside. However, most of the investments is on improving household conditions, and not focusing so much self-employment activities in Montenegro. These economic migrants, going out from Montenegro to WE or USA on temporary or permanent stay, are mainly employed in construction and maintenance sectors.

Within the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare is the Directorate for the Care of Refugees consisting of two sectors: a Sector for the protection of legal and other assistance and accommodation of persons required by azil and Sector for general affairs and finance.

In the Sector for Providing Legal and Other Assistance and Accommodation for Asylum Seekers, inter alia, the activities related to the accommodation of asylum seekers who are recognized as refugees are granted additional or temporary protection at the Center for accommodation of asylum seekers or other accommodation facility; accommodation and care for persons with special needs who seek asylum and who receive asylum; providing assistance in exercising the right to social protection, health care, education, humanitarian aid and others.

In the Affairs for general business and finance, activities relating, inter alia, to: preparation of plans, projects, programs, donations and preparation of appropriate reports for the care of asylum seekers, who are recognized as refugee status, are granted additional or temporary protection, internally displaced persons and others.

In Montenegro, according to the UNHCR - Podgorica office, the number of asylum seekers has tripled in the past two years, but significantly fewer people have been granted international protection. In 2017, 849 people applied for asylum in Montenegro. In 2018, a total of 4,722 people expressed their intention to seek asylum, of which 3,104 applied for asylum. In 2019, there were 2,078 intentions to seek asylum (this is the first step), but only 838 people applied.

UNHCR estimates that approximately 70 people live in Montenegro as refugees or persons who have received subsidiary protection, which is enabled by law. It is estimated that approximately 21 people are capable of working (who are family heads, whether men or women), have a stable access to the labor market and approximately 57 percent or 12 people out of these 21 have found work with the help of the UNHCR, while others have come to work on your own. Persons currently employed work in the field of providing services, mainly in the catering industry. Some work as housemaids, nannies, and are perfectly integrated in families where they work.

Regarding the availability of education for asylum seekers and refugees, every child who has stayed in Montenegro for some time had complete access to the education system.

¹⁵ [National Strategy for Sustainable Development by 2030](#), 2017

B.1.4 Specific challenges and opportunities: digital transformation

In Montenegro, several strategies highlight the value of using digital and online learning in education and training. For example, the **Information Society Development Strategy 2016–2020** recommends the use of digital and online methods in education to diversify knowledge acquisition and develop students' digital skills. However, there is no explicit reference to digital and online learning in VET curricula.

The ICT department of the Ministry of Education is responsible for its implementation in education and training. The legislation on teaching and learning contains no explicit rules or reference concerning the use of technology or the development of digital skills in vocational education and training. However, the strategy for introducing the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) advocates reforming VET curricula to provide students with the digital skills covered by the ECDL modules. Currently, VET students acquire digital skills through compulsory ICT lessons (72 hours per year for two years) and through their compulsory and elective vocational subjects. Three-year VET students are also obliged to study ICT in their first year with two lessons a week. VET students are therefore expected to acquire basic digital skills in a cross-curricular manner. There is no formal framework and monitoring system to measure students' progress in acquiring digital skills and competences in line with the relevant national strategy and policies. The Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2015–2020 advocates the introduction of different forms of continuing professional development (CPD), including digital and online learning and platforms for sharing good practice and provide teachers and trainers with formal and non-formal options to improve their digital skills. However, entering the VET teaching profession requires a university diploma in a relevant field, with no specific requirement for digital skills, which are assessed neither on recruitment, nor during the exercise of the profession. Montenegro's national strategy on teachers' education 2017–2025 emphasises the need for the CPD of teachers and training to focus on digital skills.

Each school, including VET School, has so called ICT coordinator, responsible for introducing digitalization in education process of the school, which includes also use of MEIS, but also relevant didactic software's and digital literacy in teaching and learning process.

To date, digital skills remain under-developed in continuing VET. Most continuing VET providers report a lack of up-to-date hardware and a shortage of licensed teaching software, which is a major obstacle to digital and online learning.

ETF Fact-Sheet referring to Digital skills and online learning in Montenegro¹⁶ reports there is no formal framework and monitoring system to measure progress of students in acquiring digital skills and competencies in line with relevant national strategies, but VET students are spending 4.9 days in the seven days on internet, whereby one third of the students use internet regularly and 43% on their time on internet they use for searching and browsing the information.

B.1.5 Strategic policy responses involving education and VET

Montenegrin labour authorities are revising the employment legislation and seek improving the design and outreach of active labour market measures.

The implementation of the National Strategy for Employment and Human Resources Development 2016-20 is carried out through annual action plans and reports on their implementation. At the end of December 2017, the Government of Montenegro adopted the Action Plan for Employment and Human Resources Development for 2018, while at the end of April of the current year it adopted a Report on the implementation of the Action Plan for Employment and Human Resources Development for 2017.

Montenegro Government adopted the development of the Smart Specialization Strategy, as a high priority policy task, in early 2017. There are no visible results until now. This included a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the economic, scientific and innovation potentials in Montenegro and involved representatives from public, private, academic and civil sector. Preliminary priority sectors identified include ICT, agriculture, construction and manufacturing, health and tourism. Montenegro is progressing well with the development of the smart specialisation strategy and has already closed the

¹⁶ [Digital skills and online learning in Montenegro](#), 2017

entrepreneurial discovery process. The strategy finalised with TAIEX support in 2019 and the regional IPA project for WB 6 is expected to start to complement countries initiatives.

There is a concern that the strategy addresses only partly skills development and that support tools only to a certain extent reflect the interests of transition and, particularly the pre-accession countries, which are being increasingly integrated into wider EU smart specialisation developments.

Active labour market policies (ALMPs) and public employment services (PES). In order to reduce labour market imbalances and contribute to better access to the labour market, the strategic framework in the field of employment, designed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in collaboration with key partners, aims at providing better and more opportunities to get employed, in particular to groups exposed to a marginal or precarious position on the labour market, such as women, youth, hard to employ categories etc.

The Employment Agency of Montenegro (EAM) implements annually a set of active labour market programmes (ALMPs). Over the last years, the EAM has made efforts to diversify and expand the number of ALMPs, in a rather challenging context characterised by rather low level of labour demand reflected in a significant gap between number of openings/vacancies and number of registered unemployed. Over the last years, EAM intensified as well the provision of labour market services, such as job mediation and counselling in order to increase overall employment and improving the quality of labour supply. For example, to all newly registered unemployed persons, EAM organises informative meetings, motivational workshops and prepare an individual employment plan. These activities are intended to increase activation and job search readiness, particularly among discouraged, long term unemployed.

In 2016-2017, ALMPs focus was on adult education and training programs, training for work with the employer, training program for independent work, public works, seasonal employment, as well as a program for continuous stimulation of employment and entrepreneurship. EAM conducts as well specific measures targeted to vulnerable groups, like youth, Roma and persons with disabilities.

While efforts are made to increase ALMPs provision and better targeting, actual funding and coverage remains rather modest with around 0.18% GDP spent on labour market policies in 2017. According to 2018 budget law, it is expected that funds for ALMPs implementation would be increased by 80%. In the forthcoming year, EAM will develop methodology for monitoring and evaluation of the active labor market measures with support of EU funding and technical support provided through this funding scheme.

The main reasons behind is as stated above the limited budget available for such programmes. Apart from an increased budget, there is a need for further strengthening institutional capacities in order to improve ALMPs efficiency and effectiveness (e.g. to outreach hard-to-employ categories, young graduates and NEETs and other categories exposed to joblessness; to provide tailored activation support; to expand cooperation with social work centers and employers etc.). These shortcomings and recommendations were also revealed by a recent review of ALMPs, carried out within the IPA project 'Active labour market measures for employability'¹⁷ (2017). Certain innovations were introduced in targeting vulnerable groups such as youth, women, people at social risk and a systematic monitoring and evaluation of ALMPs short to long term effect would further help decision-makers to design new or redesign existing activation measures.

B.1.6 The role of VET in remedies through active labour market policies (ALMPs)

One of the main roles of the Agency is to provide information about the possibilities and conditions of employment to the following target groups: unemployed persons, employers, students. These services are provided free of charge, through direct contact with beneficiaries, by telephone, through printed and electronic media, information material, as well as the web site of the Agency.

The Employment Agency implements programs designed to prepare unemployed persons for job search, psychosocial and motivational support for inclusion in non-formal education programs, personal development, counseling in choosing, or changing occupations or employment. These are short

¹⁷ Report on 'Efficiency analysis of existing active labour market measures in Montenegro', 2017

programs, lasting from two to three days, with additional, as needed, individual counseling treatments, which take place within regular activities.

In accordance with the recommendations, the Law on the Budget of Montenegro for 2018 provided about 80% more funds for active employment policy measures implemented through the Employment Agency of Montenegro, with the aim of improving the participation of women, youth and those who have been unemployed for a long time in the labour market. (Figures –what does 80% mean?)

There has been joint work between the ETF and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare/IPA Department on the design of new IPA programmes for active labour market measures and local employment development (tender dossiers are currently prepared by the Ministry). The smooth implementation of projects could enable Montenegro Employment Agency, social work centres, civic organisations etc. to reach out vulnerable groups, such as low qualified people or persons with obsolete skills.

Skills development programmes are as well included in the ALMPs portfolio of Montenegro, targeting both (re)training or upskilling jobseekers to acquire vocational qualifications or particular knowledge and skills to practice a specific occupation (namely, adult education and training programme) or stimulating employers to train unemployed people and employ them upon completion of training programmes. Another specific training programme seeks to enhance the capacity of jobseekers to become self-employed, start up a business etc.

Skills development programme include inter alia Adult education and training programs - 684 people registered with the Employment Agency were involved in the programs of adult education and training (553 in 2017 and 113 until 30 June 2018). Through these programs, 451 persons acquired vocational qualifications and 233 persons acquired the knowledge and skills necessary for the performance of particular occupation.

Montenegro is monitoring the Active Employment Policy Program implemented by the Employment Agency. Participants are monitored after and during the duration of the program, their presence and satisfaction, as well as employment after the program. In 2017, after the program, 30.4% of the participants were employed. Furthermore, in addition to the monitoring and evaluation carried out by the Employment Agency, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, through the implementation of the Action Plans for Employment, monitors the implementation of active employment policy measures, since in the AP itself there are mentioned activities, programs for the implementation of these measures.

B.1.7 Identification of skills demand and its bearing on VET provision

For the 2018/2019 school year, the Ministry of Education announced a competition to award 300 scholarships for deficient qualifications. Funds for 30 scholarships were provided by the Chamber of economy of Montenegro In accordance with the established dynamics, the National Council for Education adopted ten modularized and credit-rated educational programs in the period May-July 2017, the implementation of which began in the school year 2017/2018. The adoption of these programs was preceded by the creation and adoption of 27 occupational standards and 10 standards of qualification levels by the Qualifications Council.

In 2018, according to Employment Agency of Montenegro, 1295 unemployed people from their register went through the adult education programmes implemented by the 47 adult education providers. Out of this number, 554 were involved in the programmes referring to vocational qualifications and remaining 741 went through the programmes of key skills.

By attending this kind of programmes, and obtaining specific qualification, employment capacity of unemployed individuals increased, whereby 306 are later employed in the trade sector, 101 in hospitality and tourism and 98 in construction sector.

Training programmes for learning English, German and Russian language are organized for 373 individuals; IT skills for 156, training programmes for drivers of different kind of vehicles for 202 individuals and 10 individuals are trained on entrepreneurship skills.

Regarding gender proportion, 52,8% are females, 38,6% of young people and 39.5% of long-term unemployed individuals. 40% of total number is from the north of Montenegro. With regard their

qualification background, 14% are with elementary education level, 58% of individuals are with level III and level IV qualifications and 58% are from the qualification level VII.

The Employment sector continues its work on skill needs identification with the annual employers' survey run by the Employment Agency of Montenegro. Also, annually, the Agency prepares statistical-analytical information - Labor market analysis for the purposes of enrollment policy. This is one of the most important instrument to identify skill needs and guide training and employment service delivery. Results are shared and discussed among employment and education stakeholders.

In Montenegro a partnership participation is used in the form of support to national activities in the field of education and employment. The activities of the Employment Agency representatives in the professional bodies that regulate the field of adult education contribute to the creation and implementation of education policy, such as the National Education Council, the Qualifications Council, the Vocational Education Committee, the Adult Education Committee.

B.1.8 Supporting migrants and refugees through VET

Refugees and asylum seekers have equal access to education and employment as other residents in Montenegro. However, until now there are no specific education and employment measures developed to target in particularly this target group. It is important to mention that RAS mainly perceive Montenegro as their transitional destination, so their motivation to get engaged in education and employment is generally low.

In accordance with the General Law on Education, foreign citizens who have temporary residence or permanent residence in Montenegro are equal in exercising the right to education with Montenegrin citizens, in accordance with a special law. The provisions of the Law on Gymnasium and the Law on Vocational Education stipulate that the school is obliged to provide a student who does not know or insufficiently knows the language in which the teaching is delivered, to assist in mastering the language. In the budget of the Ministry has planned funds for this purpose. Also, Iso, adults can engage in training to acquire qualifications in accordance with their previous qualifications and preferences.

B.2: Entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurship

B.2.1 Job creation and VET

Date on self-employment are as follow: 2010: 16.8% (21.5 m; 10.6f) and in 2017 21.8% (27m; 15 f.); so there is definitive an increase over the years, with more men than women self-employed;

B.2.2 VET policies to promote entrepreneurship

The Government has promoted entrepreneurship a lot in education sector the last decade, also in particular to develop and entrepreneurial mind-set, which means a lot of cultural change. There is the entrepreneurial learning strategy of the Ministry of Economy and Education (2014-2019) and the National Entrepreneurial Partnership at an informal level. A new Strategy is planned to be developed in 2019. Montenegro scores high in the Eurydice assessment of entrepreneurship in schools and the latest SBA findings say the following: „Nearly 70 % of value added and more than three quarters of national employment in Montenegro is generated by SMEs, compared with an average of 57 % and two thirds respectively for SMEs in the EU. SMEs are the main growth driver in Montenegro. Value added increased by almost 20 % in 2012-2015, while employment rose around half as much in 2011-2015. Growth is estimated to have been particularly strong in micro firms, where employment is projected to have increased by over a third between 2011 and 2015. Given the scale of SMEs' contribution to the economy, further SME employment and value added growth can be expected. Real GDP is expected to grow by around 3 % annually on average in 2016-2018”.

There are important ENT initiatives provided under Active Labour Market Measures and also by the Ministry for Minorities and there in particular for women and also by the Ministry of Science in linkage with the HORIZON programme. There is a UNDP study on Youth and ENT and UNDP is very active in this area in Montenegro. Montenegro also participates in the COSME programme.

10 trainings for 60 high school students about designing and starting their own business were organized. Lectures were organized by coordinators from four Entrepreneurship Centres established in four secondary vocational schools and teachers running Entrepreneurial Clubs in secondary vocational schools. School competitions for business plans and virtual training firms were organized. These activities were organized through extra-curricular activities.

Successful realization of the Action Plan for Implementing Gender Equality 2017-2021 has required the cooperation and coordination of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, i.e. the Division for Gender Equality, with all ministries, state administration bodies, the Parliament. An analysis of local policies and capacities of importance for the development of women's entrepreneurship was drawn up. 134 women were trained. 24 women developed a business plan, and 27 of them are in the process of developing one. 13 women registered businesses (6 in Podgorica and 7 in Niksic). A study was prepared including the proposed best practices for establishing guarantee funds for entrepreneurship. In their respective budgets for 2018, 6 municipalities (Podgorica, Budva, Bar, Danilovgrad, Berane, Herceg Novi) allocated special funds in the total amount of €120,000 (between €15,000 and €30,000) for women's entrepreneurship, at the initiative of the Women's Political Network (the network includes representatives of 14 ruling and opposition parties, and it was established through the IPA 2014 project).

A website has been set up to promote successful women entrepreneurs' stories and marketing of their products: www.zenski-biznis.com A draft analysis has been prepared to serve as a basis for discussing the models for introducing guarantee funds for women. An increasing number of women entrepreneurs has been recorded and according to the latest data of the Tax Administration in 2017 this percentage is 24.29%.

The EAM also organises trainings targeting unemployed that could become potential entrepreneurs. Trainings in basic knowledge of entrepreneurship skills are provided on how to start your own business. In 2017, 26 persons attended the start-up trainings. In addition, also the Montenegrin Employment Federation is providing start-up training for youth and women in order to enhance self-employment.

In new competency based programmes, Entrepreneurship is standalone subject with annual quote of 72 hours per year. In some of the sectors, such as Economy, next to this subject, student of grade 3 and 4 also attend additional subject called Training firms¹⁸ with annual quote of 144 contact hours.

In addition, entrepreneurship is promoted as cross-curricula theme whereby students are exercising skills such as self-initiative, communication, creativity, team work etc...

With purpose to promote entrepreneurship in VET school, students are attending different international and national competitions related to entrepreneurship. In the VET schools, and as a part of extracurricular activities, students are initiating entrepreneurship school clubs. VET Centre is national reference point for entrepreneurial learning supported by the Government of Montenegro, and key activities of the members are about organizing events and be a part of different events by organizing round table discussions. Promotion of entrepreneurial learning is also done through media on occasional basis.

Promotion of the entrepreneurship is done through the entrepreneurial centres constituted in 4 VET Schools in Mojkovac, Bar, Bijelo Polje and Bar.

II. 'Open floor'

Approx. 200 students Secondary VET School from Berane has joined the **global project "Innovate your dreams 2019"**. This project currently brings together teachers from around 60 countries, a total of 1,700, as well as 100,000 students. The aim of the project is to help students understand and prepare for the future skills and occupations portfolio. The project is promoting three out of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. Project is focused on developing communication, cooperation, critical thinking and problem solving skills, creativity and innovation of students, as well as digital competences. Project key topic is the future that still does not exist, role of technology in the world

¹⁸ <http://www.serviscentarpozv.me/en/>

of change, as well as the industries of the future. The project is bringing together all students in this school attending programmes for engineer for mobile and web applications.

The past few years, Montenegro is in particular working on matching the skills needs trend reflected by the industry sector. As there is a solid infrastructure which helps analytical approach toward this issue (different national registers governed by different institutions), there is a solid ground for creation of permanent tracking mechanism on VET graduates, which will make enrolment policy on secondary and tertiary level much more improved.

There was not enough response to the Questionnaire that was sent by the Ministry to the student's e-mail addresses. For this school year, class elders collected student mail addresses to directly contact students periodically and collect information about their status. It is considering connecting the databases of the Ministry, the Employment Bureau, the Revenue Administration, the University in order to follow the destination of the students according to the identification number. The Ministry of Labor also prepares software for monitoring the situation on the labor market which will help in a more realistic way of looking after the students after the completion of secondary education.

III. Summary and analytical conclusions

Due to huge changes in the structure of industries contributing the most to the country development, as also the structure of unemployed population is very much similar from year to year, Montenegro is continuing VET sector development in line with VET Strategy and recent policy framework changes (laws and bylaws). The developments are mainly focused on engagement of employers in developing VET standards, as also creating flexible qualifications in order to establish more flexible paths for students and adult learners to acquire skills needed on the labour market.

Further digitalization of the teaching and learning process is based on improving IT infrastructure, as also improvement of digital skills of students, teachers, but also institutions in introducing online collaborative spaces.

It is necessary too improve connection between education and labour market needs and flexibility learning path. The challenge of skills shortages is present. VET, together with the employers and the other partners, will need to address this challenge and support the competitiveness. It is necessary more investments in development of skills anticipation mechanisms and foresight methods, including at sector and technological level in view of understanding specific impact of changes within sectors and occupation.

It is necessary too continue to prepare VET system to help young people for entering and successfully participating in the labour market. At the same time, VET will need to respond to increasing needs for upskilling and reskilling of the adult population including the socially disadvantaged as well as high potentials, migrants, refugees, low-skilled and unemployed which will enable them to stay or re-enter the labour market and to move freely and in a self-determined manner through their educational and professional careers.

BUILDING BLOCK C: SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND INDIVIDUAL DEMAND FOR VET

Building block C focuses on people – on the young people and adults who could, should or do participate in VET – and the demands and expectations they might have as actual or prospective participants in VET. The questions in this building block discuss problems and solutions in VET from the point of view of individual demand for education and training, structured along the lines of the social rights of individuals to access and participate in education and training, to enjoy equal opportunities to succeed there, and to find fulfilling employment.

C.1: Participation in VET and lifelong learning

C.1.1 Participation

Initial VET education is continuously accessible for each elementary schools graduate, with no limitations related to geographical area or on base of any differences (cultural, ethnical or gender).

Percentage of students attending initial Vocational education and training in Montenegro in this reporting period remains on the level of previous school years as during previous reporting period, whereby the majority of secondary school children are attending VET programmes. Although there are positive examples, for example in the field of electrical engineering, construction, medicine, economics, IVET is facing continuing challenges with attracting the best students coming out of elementary schools, as they are more in the favour of choosing a gymnasium., IVET is facing continuous challenges with attracting best students coming out from the elementary schools, as they are more in favour of choosing gymnasium.

With purpose to attract more students and increase interest about VET education, Ministry of education is each year conducting a campaign "Vocational is crucial - learn, works, build yourself", as part of the preparation for enrolment of students in the first grade of secondary VET school.

Tradition in Montenegro is that number of students finishing VET schools is continuing their education toward university (approx. 64%). However, the new measures should contribute in students choosing labor market opportunities, instead of passing to the higher education

At the moment, there are no students attending 2 years IVET programmes and there is low number of students enrolled in higher VET (only tourism school from Podgorica has a number of students attending higher VET schools, but there are no students in 2-year programmes. There is no student interest. Through the Interreg Project, 3 new higher VET educational programs are being developed. However, current curricula reform is opening a space for better mobility of students inside of the education system and acquiring new qualifications in more flexible manner even of level 2 qualifications, in the cases of drop-out.

Starting from school year 2017/2018, register of companies and students attending practical education is designed as part of MEIS portal www.meisportal.edu.me. Data used by this application are used for different kind of analysis: volume of practical learning regarding specific school and specific programme, students attendance, students achievement, education of instructors, size of the company offering practical education, etc

With regard to the attractiveness of the VET programmes for students, VET Centre is currently conducting intensive reform of IVET curricula based on new occupational standards and qualifications standards, making them more suitable to labour market demand, and on this way making VET programmes more attractive to the students. These new, competency based, programmes are suitable for each students group, including students with special education needs.

In Montenegro there is a network of organizers of adult education providers, providing two type of training programmes: either VET qualifications or key skills (such as languages, etc.). The majority number of adult education providers are located in the central part of Montenegro – 78 in total, while 28 adult education providers are located in northern part of the country and the others in southern region. So far, the Ministry of Education has issued 106 licenses to organizers of adult education.

Through the EPAL project called "**National support service for Montenegro**", the VET Centre of Montenegro and the Ministry of Education designed separate register to be part of the Management Education Information system (MEIS) with purpose to capture all relevant information about adult education providers. This register is capturing general information on organizers of adult education as well as the following type of data:

- Adult education programs the carry out;
- Teaching staff who carry out programs (gender, age, qualifications, professional experience in education, adult education skills, license to work, etc)
- Data about training participants (gender, age, previous education, etc)
- Certificates issued and confirmation letters received at the end of the successfully completed program

- Vacancies announced by adult education organizers in the current year
- Source of funding used for the specific program. For example, if the programmes is financed by the Employment Agency or by relevant Ministry, employment associations, etc...).
- Tracking students after successful completion of their program

The database will help in preparing different reports, which will give a better insight on:

- Educational offer in Montenegro available to adults (by cities and regions)
- The involvement of citizens in adult education programs (by programs, cities, regions, gender, age, etc.)
- Sources of program financing and overall funds being invested in adult education, etc.

The Report Analysis is expected to determine:

- Which programs are not being implemented and on the other side it will indicate about which programs are missing in the educational system of Montenegro
- In which part of Montenegro there is no access to high quality adult education

This kind of data collection will use as ground for developing efficient adult education system on national and local level.

C.1.2 VET opportunities for vulnerable and marginalised groups

At the request of the European Commission on the issue of education of marginalized groups, in particular Roma and Egyptians (RE), the Government of Montenegro established a special Directorate for the Education of Members of Minorities and Other National Communities. The promotion campaign for enrolment of RE in pre-school education in primary and secondary schools is also conducted in this reporting period.

In addition, in order to build better connection between schools and specific communities, the role of the Mediator is introduced in the education system, which has a role also of social worker, and is financed from the REF (Roma Education Fund) project.

As a consequence, there is a proof that more RE children are involved in the education system every year. A specific set of protocols is established on the school level to prevent early school leaving by Roma students. Also, a team for preventive school leaving was formed, especially for girls in the places where most RE children attend classes: Podgorica, Nikšić, Berane. Also, early and contractual marriages prevention training is organized as one of the biggest problems of Roma community is the marriages of underage girls.

Each year, a promotion of elementary schools is organized in kindergartens for the children of the Roma population and in this way, they are preparing for formal education and each year there is a campaign for enrolment of Roma children for pre-school and primary education. Transport for Roma students is ensured in almost each location, countrywide. From 2019, the Ministry of Education will grant scholarships for high school students in the amount of 60 euros, and for university students in amount of 150 Euro. It was emphasized that at the end of each year the number of students in faculties is increasing, and currently there are 27 students of the Roma population.

The key obstacle for members of Roma and Egyptian population relate primarily to the

- lack of education and educational opportunities (over 95% of RE from the employment agency records are persons without occupation and professional qualification),
- difficult economic and social situation, due to which they are unable to accept education and training programs that last for a long period of time.

In this reporting period, the VET Centre organized CVET education on general knowledge and skills (literacy, numeracy, etc....) for 130 RE beneficiaries.

Inter-institutional support to RE is formalized by the Strategy for social inclusion of RAE population for period 2016-2020, whereby special focus is on education and access to employment.

General education is enabling possibility whereby each education programme can be adjusted to the needs of the specific vulnerable group, in particularly individuals having difficulties to attend education process on equal level as others. Methodology for development of training programme is enabling programmes to be adjusted to the needs of these target groups. Initiative for adjustment of the training programme can be submitted to the VET Centre with full details on how the adjustment should be done. In the process of adjusting the training programme to the individuals or group, key institutions are prescribing requirements referring to the training providers capacity, staffing, equipment as also instruction for development of individual development plan for each trainee.

Each programme can be adjusted in relation to number of modules, volume of content, duration of training and assessment format

Having in mind that education is one of the most important areas for integration of Roma and Egyptian population into one society, project named "Increasing access of Roma students in secondary education and transition to the labour market" has been recently initiated. This project has regional character is financed by the EU, and implemented by the local NGO called "Young Roma", as national partner organization, and under the supervision of Roma Education Fund. Ministry of education and Ministry for human and minority rights are project partners. The project purpose is to influence inclusion of RAE from very early childhood into education system.

This project is focused in education of RE in secondary schools (including VET schools), so that it will influence early drop-out of the students as also to provide further support for employment. Throughout the project, the focus will be on improving success of the RE students as also their better employability. Key objectives of the project are:

- To increase employment rate of RE population in general
- To increase employment rate of RE after finishing schools
- To increase number of RE students enrolled in further education.

This will be insured through financial support of the students, providing mentorship schemes, as also through better support towards their employment. Project implementation period will be 3 years.

On annual basis, during each school year:

- 50 students will receive scholarship
- For 46 students, designated mentor will be assigned
- 12 students will have opportunity to access work based learning into specific company, as part of regular form (not dual education)

Having in mind low number of Roma students attending secondary education (during school year 2017/2018 this number was 110), project will target all of these students. Project activities will be implemented in municipalities where these students are attending classes: Andrijevica, Bar, Berane, Bijelo Polje, Budva, Herceg Novi, Mojkovac, Nikšić, Plav, Podgorica, Tivat i Ulcinj..

Every year, in the annual work programs, activities and funds are planned to improve the employability and employment of Roma and Egyptians, in accordance with the **National Employment and Human Resources Strategy and the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro** and accompanying action plans.

In 2017, EU Delegation to Montenegro funded the project implemented by the German NGO HELP "**Social inclusion of Roma and Egyptians through employment**".

The project aimed to contribute also to implementation of National Strategy for Social Inclusion of RE in Montenegro 2016-2020 (in further text: Strategy) in particularly to measures addressing employment (section 7 of the Strategy) through active labour market measures. Through internship and on-the job training scheme, with specific results whereby 38 Interns successfully finished traineeship process, and

¹⁹ [Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro 2016-2020 and AP for 2016](#)

14 employers were engaged. This project also reflected a need for more technical skills identified so the training of RAE should be more intensive, by providing specific skills to increase their employability.

Members of the Roma and Egyptian population are mainly involved in training programs aimed at gaining vocational qualifications for lower-level occupations (auxiliary occupations for hairdressers, chefs, gardeners, maids).

In 2017, 66 members of the Roma and Egyptian population were involved in the education and training programs (35 women)²⁰.

Through the activities within the project "A Step Closer to the Labour Market", 57 persons (29 women) were included in the education and training programs for a gardener, maid, construction machinery operator, assistant chef, and hairdresser²¹.

Although there are no precise data's, there is a sense of increase in the number of students with special educational needs in preschool, primary and secondary education. Also, for the child with special needs, the conditions for learning and studying are now improved. The key reason for this increase is that parents are now much more aware of the advantages for their children to be registered as SEN students.

Currently, there are three new programmes adjusted to the students with special education needs: Hairdresser, Assistant to hairdresser and Cook, and first students will attend this programmes from school year 2019/2020

Number of students for which there is individual plan developed in the VET Schools is 203.

Among the specific measures related to employment persons with disabilities, EAM focuses on professional rehabilitation. It includes measures and activities that enable persons with disabilities and other hard-to-employ persons to prepare for the labour market in an appropriate manner. One of the important segment of the professional rehabilitation are Grant Schemes. The main goals are prevention of social exclusion of persons with disabilities, creation of equal opportunities, as well as increase employability of the persons with disabilities and accelerate of their integration into society and labour market. **Financial resources for grants are provided by the Found for Professional Rehabilitation²² which is organized within the EAM.** In addition, EAM conduct program of improving the employment of people with disabilities through subsidizing the employment of persons with disabilities²³. In 2017, employment of over 300 persons was subsidised. In addition, EAM conducts specific measures of inclusion of RE population into active policy programs, mainly in public works.

The Law on Adult Education has created possibilities for publicly accredited educational programs for primary, secondary general education, as well as vocational education to adapt to adults in scope, organization and duration, in order to facilitate different target groups to gain a higher level of education.

In accordance with the Methodology for developing educational programs, adult programs can be adapted to vulnerable groups, primarily to persons with disabilities.

²⁰ Nine people (six women) were involved in two education programs through regular program activities (eight people (five women) undertook education and training program for a hairdresser for women, and one woman underwent education and training program for the occupation of a maid).

²¹ In Q1 2018, 22 people (eight women) were included in all education and training programs. One woman underwent the program of education and vocational training for a beauty care professional for face and body care; 20 people (six women) underwent the program for the occupation of a hairdresser for women, and a woman underwent an education program for acquiring key skills - English language learning.

²² In 2017, it is financed 41 project proposal and total funds amounts 2,085,622.59 EUR.

²³ Employer who failed to employ person with disability (Employer, who has 20 – 50 employees, shall be obliged to employ at least one person with disability and employer, who has more than 50 employees, shall be obliged to employ at least 5% of people with disabilities in total number of employees), shall be obliged while performing monthly payment of wages and compensation for employees, to pay special contribution for professional rehabilitation and employment of people with disabilities

The initiative for adjusting the educational program is submitted by a physical or legal person to the VET Centre. The initiative explains in detail the need for adaptation and the target groups for which the program is being adapted.

The VET Centre, specifically the Working Group which includes experts with an appropriate profile from the resource centres or centres for professional rehabilitation, adapt the educational programs in terms of the number and type of learning outcomes, the scope of the content, the duration of the program and the method of verification. Adapted programs include the supplement to the certificate, identifying modules, ie units of learning or group of jobs, or skills that the individual has mastered. In the process of adapting the program, special conditions for organizers of education regarding the teaching staff, equipment and tools necessary for the successful implementation of the adapted program are determined. Based on the assessment of the competence of the target group by the competent commission, the organizer of the education creates an individual plan (IP) for each participant

The same approach is also followed for the VET programmes, whereby VET Centre is currently adjusting 3 programmes for the students with special needs, attending resource education centres. The programmes are: Cook, Hairdresser assistant and Hairdresser. Individual adjustment of programmes for the students coming from the elementary schools is done in the way that these students should at the end achieve same standards as other students.

C.1.3 Policies to improve VET access and participation

The overall focus of interventions to improve participation in VET is on better career guidance services and enhancing flexibility and accessibility of VET through modularisation of curricula and wider use of distance/e-learning, as well as through further implementation of the national qualifications framework and validation of non-formal and informal learning procedures.

As mentioned previously, the Ministry is stimulating more students to be enrolled in VET, in particularly on 3 years education programmes.

With amendments of the VET Law, conditions for dual education are created and in school year 2017/2018, 280 students were allocated to 101 employers in 12 Municipalities and 18 VET schools.

In the school year 2018/2019, 579 students are attending dual form of education at 189 employers coming from 26 schools and 18 municipalities.

C.1.4 Promoting VET access and participation for vulnerable and marginalised groups

In addition to the regular promotional activities and campaigns, as well as to developing VET programmes for specific vulnerable groups (Roma, people with disabilities), **Montenegro has introduced individual transition plans in secondary schools and developed more modularised programmes for adults.** Within the framework of the EPAL²⁴ project opportunities exist to better use e-tools and platforms for adult learning.

When it comes to inclusive education, the new law recognized a teaching assistant that provides technical assistance for children with particular difficulties. The assistant has only technical assistance but does not take on the educational function. The current number of teaching assistants is about 300. This initiative is promoted by the Employment agency of Montenegro initiative through "**Teaching Assistant**" model – whereby 262 persons registered with the Employment Agency have been employed as teaching assistants for a fixed period in the second half of the school year 2016/2017.

²⁴ Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe, an initiative of the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission

One of the employment targets under the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians for 2016-2020 refers to an increase in the participation of Roma and Egyptians in active employment policy measures. One of the measures to achieve this goal has been the introduction a vocation of an **associate** in social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian people in the field of employment (Roma mediators in employment) into the system. Until now, there are no results recorded on this initiative, appropriate for future analysis.

Pilot program of support to hard-to-employ people in the preparation and activation at the labour market **"Empower me to succeed"** - In late June 2018 , the Employment Agency In cooperation with other employment agencies, started implementing the Pilot program of support to the hard-to-employ persons in the preparation and activation in the labour market "Empower me to succeed". The program was created on the basis of national and European guidelines and recommendations, in order to provide support to the hard-to-employ, especially **women former beneficiaries of allowance on the basis of the birth of three or more children and beneficiaries of family material allowance**, in the preparation and activation on the labour market. A partnership approach to tackling the unemployment problem of hard-to-employ will contribute to strengthening the capacities of personal and professional development of these persons in the process of recognizing, planning, creating and managing careers, as well as developing and improving job seeking skills as a key precondition for solving the unemployment problem. The program encompassed 925 hard-to-employ persons, of whom 538 women ex-beneficiaries, who were receiving allowance on the basis of birth of three or more children, and 185 beneficiaries of family material allowance. Program activities will be realized for up to six months. During the program implementation, participants will primarily be provided with the psycho-social support in personal and professional development during the first part of the program implementation, for a period of one month. After the provision of psycho-social support, in the second part of the program implementation, lasting for up to five months, immediate help will be provided to 50% of successful participants of the first part of the program to find employment.

Legal and strategic frameworks for inclusive education:

Education of SEN children is based on the law on education for SEN children ("Official Gazette of Montenegro", no. 45/10, 47/17). Currently, there is an initiative by the Ministry of education to create mechanism which will permanently collect data on SEN students as part of the MEIS, with purpose to have ground for future analysis. The Inclusive Education Strategy (2008-2013) laid the foundations and set out the directions of the education system development for SEN children. The 2014-2018 Inclusive Education Strategy strives for an even more intense observation of the rights and characteristics of these children, whose development and education needs must be met, to the purpose of enabling them to lead independent lives.

Children with special educational needs are enrolled in regular preschool institutions or schools where they attend classes according to the customized program. In accordance with the guidance on guidance for each child, an individual developmental education program (IROP) is being prepared. School 2017/2018. With the decision on guidance in the education system, there were 2,042 children.

In accordance with the IROP and timetable, the scope of technical support provided by the teaching assistant is supervised by teachers, the professional service and the director of the institution. School 2017/2018. In the year 291 teaching assistant was engaged.

Children with special educational needs, as the first choice, attend regular schools. In December 2018, with the decision on guidance in the education system there were 2,367 children.

The Inclusive Education Strategy 2019-2025 has been developed and adopted. with the Action Plan. The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Health, the Institute for Education, the Centre for Vocational Education, representatives of the institutions of education and education and the non-governmental sector participated in the drafting of the Strategy. The support and contribution in the review was provided by the UNICEF Office in Montenegro. The document was first available through the website of the Ministry of Education as part of a public hearing, followed by three public debates.

Four training sessions of secondary school teachers for IROP were realized as a basic document for working with children with special educational needs, as well as six seminars for ITP-1 (document accompanying the transition of students from elementary to secondary school) and ITP- 2 (document accompanying the transfer of pupils from education to the labor market).

In all three resourcing centers, assistive cabinets were established in accordance with developmental disabilities.

A Guideline for working with children with intellectual disabilities was developed and training for 120 teachers from 30 primary schools in which the largest number of children with intellectual disabilities is formed.

In partnership with the NGO Special Olympics, the Youth athletes program is being implemented in eight preschool institutions.

Through the project "Strengthening democratic culture in schools" - EU / SE Horizontal mechanism of the Western Balkans and Turkey has established a network of 26 pilot schools (which educate a significant number of children of the RE population). In order to promote equality on October 11, 2018, the Inclusion Day was marked. The final event presented the results of the project.

Inclusive Education Strategy 2019-2025 has as its guiding principles the promotion, protection and insurance of full and equal participation of all SEN children in the inclusive education, without discrimination and exclusion, based on equality with others. The vision is to provide SEN children with access to good quality inclusive education on all levels. The goal is to be reached operationally through three strategic goals: Strategic goal 1: Provide for and apply accessibility and equality of education for all children; Strategic goal 2: Provide for and apply continuity of inclusive education from the moment of detecting a disability/ difficulties in order to ensure the child's full and effective inclusion in society; Strategic goal 3: Support and improve the quality of inclusive education.

During the 90's 20th century, Montenegro recognised the need for modernising the education system and introducing the inclusive orientation for children with disabilities and difficulties. As a first choice, SEN children attend regular schools (inclusive education). Special institutions have been reformed into resource centres: Individualisation is achieved through adjustments of the system to meet physical, emotional, social and psychological needs of a child with a disability. The backbone of the work with children with disabilities and difficulties is the Individual Development Education Programme (IDEP). Kindergartens and schools make IDEPs that define academic and developmental goals to be achieved.

Inclusive vocational education in Montenegro: Vocational education in Montenegro is acquired through primary, secondary and high education levels and in the following types of vocational schools: two-year vocational school, three-year vocational school, four-year vocational school, high vocational school and school of arts. Transition was made from content focused to out puts oriented education programmes.

In accordance with the Inclusive Education Strategy 2014-2018, SEN children must be provided with access to and continuity of good quality education that will enable them to live and work independently (Task 2). Individualisation is achieved through modularised programmes. Criteria define check-up methods, that is, if and to what degree the education results were achieved (laid out in a hierarchical order – by difficulty). This requires interconnection, team work and coordination achieved "through individual transition plans".

In order to facilitate a smooth transition between educational levels of children with special educational needs, a program for transition from kindergarten to elementary school was created. Individual Transition Plan-1 (ITP-1) serves to facilitate the transition of students with special needs in education from elementary to secondary school. The aim is to consider the child's abilities and skills. The format specifies the roles and responsibilities of the team established to develop and implement the ITP, proposes the activities to be implemented with a view to assess the student's abilities and interest in his/her prospective occupation, and school collaboration in acquainting the students with the vocational education programmes and selecting the appropriate education programme. The film titled Not Giving Up follows three children with special needs in education throughout the transition from elementary to secondary school.

Individual Transition Plan-2 (ITP-2), which links education and employment, was designed and adopted to facilitate students' transition to the labour market. With regard to this segment, schools cooperate with various service providers for the purpose of assessing the capacity for employment, professional rehabilitation providers, Resource Centres, employment services, employers etc.

In order to enable SEN children to adopt the education programme gradually and finish their education, to the best of their abilities, modularised education programmes based on vocational qualifications for

different education levels are of special importance. This allows for attainment of 2nd and 3rd degree qualifications under the 4th degree programme, so that a child that leaves the education process earlier, as further pursuit of the education programme becomes too demanding for her/him, can obtain a 2nd or 3rd degree certificates, depending on what the specifications of a particular programme are, enabling her/him to enter the labour market. By completing a certain number of modules, a child can obtain: **1) assistant qualification (2nd degree), 2) craftsperson qualification (3rd degree), by completing a few more modules and 3) by completing several more modules, technician qualification (4th degree).**

In the period of **Strategy of inclusive education 2019 – 2025 for the vocational inclusive education** are planned through the Strategic goal 2:

It is important that elementary and secondary school intensify their cooperation during the transition period and involve their staff to an equal extent. The transition process needs to begin at the end of the eighth grade, so that the Individual Development/Education Programme for the ninth grade recognizes and supports the choice of the secondary school. Secondary school staff need to get acquainted with the student in time, so that they are ready to create the necessary conditions and timely develop and implement the Individual Programme. The process should include a larger number of teachers of practical subjects, while the range of vocational education options should be expanded. Also, career guidance services need to work in a coordinated and collaborative manner (Career Information and Guidance Centres, expert services etc.), and parents need to be more involved. Additional training for VET trainers in secondary vocational schools on topics related to methodology, pedagogy, inclusion, characteristics of developmental disabilities, individualization, adaptation, assessment, etc. should be conducted. It is necessary to strengthen the cooperation between primary and secondary schools during the implementation of ITP-1 among the schools themselves, the resource centres, and the referral panel. The development of a greater number of modular programs should be encouraged, alongside the expansion of the offer of vocational education and training programs, using dual education as a model that will focus on practice and have the most direct impact on changing attitudes of employers. Developing adapted tests for the customized assessment of child's potentials and interests. It is necessary to strengthen the capacities of professional school services and counsellors from the Centres for Information and Professional Counselling preparing them to work with students with special educational needs.

The principal idea behind ITP-2 is linking education with the labour market; this is a section of the Individual Programme developed for those in senior grades of secondary school. Besides the transition to the labour market, in the case of students with special needs in education, ITP-2 also defines adaptations of the workplace or the environment etc. In order to meet its purpose, ITP-2 needs to be promoted and presented to all the stakeholders in the process. Schools need to be encouraged to work with the service providers when assessing capacities, as well as with the providers of professional rehabilitation, Resource Centres, Employment Agency, employers etc. The next period should see the development of ITP2 guidance component for the purpose of better professional orientation of children with SEN, as well as the development of the role of the case manager in the centres for social work.

Employment should be promoted as an advantage over the present reliance on and preference of social benefits.

In the forthcoming period, ITP should expand to include the promotion of and access to tertiary education. This will require development of guides with recommendations concerning the adaptation of teaching, provision of accessible and adapted teaching materials; relevant university departments need to be encouraged with regard to assistive support.

In Action plan related to the secondary SEN education are proposed:

- Development and trainings for the implementation of mentor concept for the SEN students in secondary schools
- Development and trainings for the positive attitudes of secondary schools' staff
- Strengthen development of new modularized programs, spreading of secondary schools programs offers, dual education for the SEN students
- Developing and licencing of the new service: coaching for the SEN career guidance and counselling and employment
- Develop tools for the SEN students assessment
- Promotion of the employment of SEN students

Creation and promotion ITP – 3 that are oriented to the tertiary education.

In school year 2017/2018, the Ministry of Education allocated scholarships in amount of 186.000 euros for occupations needed on the labour market, and 250, 000 euros for scholarships for students from dual education. In 2018/2019 these amount are 292.000 euros and 262.000 euros.

Ministry of Education initiated payment of incentives to students attending VET programmes referring to occupations where there is shortage of supply on the labour market. In school year 2017/2018, 119 scholarships are paid to the students of the level 3 qualifications coming from 13 schools, 8 Municipalities and referring to 7 educational programmes (cook, waiter, baker, electro installer, welder, plumber and ceramist

This school year, the number of scholarship increased to 300, whereby 30 are insured by the Chamber of economy of Montenegro, for the students of 27 VET schools from 19 municipalities, attending 16 different level 3 qualifications.

C.1.5 Flexible VET provision in support of participation in VET

Current education system ensures good mobility of students within and beyond the VET system. 4-year vocational education has been completed by sitting a Matura examination that gives access to post-secondary VET as well as to higher education. Furthermore, again with the objective of enhancing transfer and flexibility of learning, in June 2016, amendments to the Law on national vocational qualifications were adopted in Montenegro that introduced the possibility of gaining partial qualification. This offers more options to adults to obtain vocational qualification over a period of time in accordance with their interests and availability.

One of the key objectives of the Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2015-2020 is to build flexible education system aligned with the needs of society and individuals, and based on learning outcomes. On base of new methodology for development of **educational programmes in VET, 16 learning outcome-based programmes based on 49 occupational standards and qualifications standards are adopted by the National Council for Education, referring to 7 industry sectors**²⁵ (different figures, c.f. annex a list)

New structure of the programmes enable students to easily access to education process and obtain partial or full qualification, and this structure of the programme is defined by the General Law on Education and further developed in the methodology for developing educational programmes. Flexibility of programmes is based on fact that each education programme for educational level qualification is developed on base of at least 2 occupational standards belonging to the same or different level of job complexity.

However, as each programme is based on two or more occupational standards, there is also opportunity for each student to get vocational qualification during the education process. This enables each student to access the labour market even earlier, before finishing educational level qualification. This is huge step forward compared to the composition of previous VET standards, as students can obtain partial qualification in case of dropping out from the system during initial VET education, but also come back and upgrade even in the form of adult education.

Second element of flexible system introduced recently is that student attending level IV or level III qualification can drop out in year 3 or year 2 of secondary schools, and by completing some additional modules in the industry, it is possible to get educational level qualification diploma and obtain the right to go out to the labour market or even continue with academic education in some latter period.

Third feature of flexibility is that next to obligatory modules, there are also elective modules, approx 6.3% of total number of hours on the level of 4 year education programme. This also enables the opportunity to update some of the educational programmes with new content referring just to some of the modules. In general, modules successfully completed in one programme can be transferred to other educational level qualification programme or adult education programme.

²⁵ Tourism, trade, agriculture, engineering, communication technologies and personal services

Regarding the flexibility in organizing and delivering of teaching process, approx. 400 teachers and head-teachers went through the one-day training process on how to implement competency based programmes on the school level, whereby school are introduced with the possibility to adjust delivery of teaching and learning process without jeopardising the structure of the programme and minimum standards established on the level of each module. The delivery of the programme can be adjusted to the needs of the local market and community.

Qualification can be obtained on two ways: by finalising specific unit of qualification as part of vocational qualification, or by completing specific module, as part of the educational level qualification. In the first case, the adult education provider provides confirmation that the student completed specific unit of qualification and in the second case, the school provides confirmation that the student completed specific module. However, it is still not precisely defined the way how partial qualification is recognised by the labour market.

In each qualification standard, used as a basis for adult education programme, and through modules, as base of educational level programmes, there are clear references on which key competencies should be exercised through that qualification standard or module.

As part of each new educational programme, there is a section prescribing minimal number of classes that each student should attend in company, and for level IV programmes, the minimum in year 3 and year 4 is 36 hours on annual basis.

VET Centre developed number of programmes referring to inclusion of RE population in domain of social protection (level 3), producer in agriculture (level 3). Educational and training programmes contain also component referring to which kind of key competencies are developed by that programme.

Starting from academic year 2017/2018, dual education is promoted through level 3 programmes, and students are attending approx. 40% of the programme in the real working environment. 101 employers were identified as suitable to be engaged in this kind of student's education, and that number increased about 200 employers in 2018 which are going to host specific numbers of students in dual education. Modularized programmes offered through dual education are: Cook, Waiter, Car-mechanic, Hairdresser, Sanitarian, Sanitary, Heating and Air Conditioning mechanic, Electrician, Baker, Salesman, Installer of Telecommunication System, Locksmith, Car electrician and Noble materials specialists

C.1.6 Validation of non-formal and informal learning

Montenegro has adopted relevant legislation and related procedures and identified institutions to conduct validation of non-formal and informal learning for qualifications of levels 1-5.

Amendments to the Law on National Vocational Qualifications were adopted in June 2016 that govern the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and the acquisition of national vocational qualifications: the responsibility of the verification process in order to acquire national vocational qualifications (the testing and certification) was transferred from the Examination Centre to licensed training providers..

Adults may, for the purpose of acquiring a national vocational qualification and key skills, check or demonstrate knowledge, skills and competences regardless of the manner of their acquisition under the Article 28 of the Law on Adult Education, and take exam in front of Adult education provider with support of Examination Centre of Montenegro.

Educational programs and programs of education are being developed on a modular basis with qualification units and learning - units that are credit rated, enabling connection with other programs and the possibility of their recognition in the continuation of education.

In order to create conditions for recognition of previous learning, a revision of the Methodology was carried out, primarily for the transferability and recognition of professional qualifications and key skills for those who wish to continue education and those who left education before attaining the qualifications of the level of education, but have successfully completed the part of the program corresponding to the module.

The methodology also envisages that learning units can be common to multiple modules, or programs, and can be credit-rated or transferable from one program to another.

Based on the observed deficiencies, by the organizers of adult education, in the realization of the educational program for acquiring key competences and key skills, it is envisaged that programs of this type should be defined individually through the establishment of general learning outcomes and leave the possibility for adult education organizers to introduce the content that meets the needs of a specific target group and requirements of employers.

C.2: Equity and equal opportunity in VET

C.2.1 Success of learners in VET

Figures for early school leavers have traditionally been low in Montenegro with 7.2 in 2011 and 5.4 in 2017 with the tendency to go down since 2012. Montenegro does better than the EU average in 2017 at 10.6 and by 2020 below 10.

In secondary VET the completion rate for four year programmes is 88% (90.5%^m; 86.2%^f); for 3 year programmes 84.% (80.2%^m; 89,1%^f). This figures suggest that drop-out is a minor problem and is in line with the early school leavers trends, *ibid* for gender issues.

C.2.2 VET learners in need of additional learning and training support , C.2.3 Measures in support of equity in VET

(See also text under C.1.2 and C.1.4)

In the framework of the recent VET reform, 26 competency programmes are introduced in the VET school in Montenegro. In 2019 there are additional 16 learning outcomes based programmes which are currently under development. In next two years, each year 16 learning outcomes based programmes will be developed/revised. Key feature of these programmes is that there is very prescriptive guide on how teaching process should be delivered, especially in adjusting educational programme to the student with special educational needs. Such programmes are overseen by the coordinators for implementation of the educational programme in each school. They regularly report to the VET Centre on implementation of these programmes, including those students of special needs. Currently there are **104 coordinators** for each VET programme implemented in each VET School in Montenegro, and their report about implementation of specific programmes also gathers information on how the students with special needs are attending it. During last school year, this kind of report made solid based for evidence based adjustments to be incorporated in teaching and learning process of specific programmes. The adjustments are mainly related to obtaining specific skills of specific SEN group, whereby teaching technique or teaching facilities should be accommodated for the needs of SEN students.

C.2.4 Inclusive education and VET

Current reform process, which is focused on revision of the VET programmes, is making considerable progress in enabling access of students with special needs to the VET education. As mentioned in previous sections, there are already some VET programmes which are completely adjusted to the needs of these students, but also a general possibility that each programme can be adjusted to the needs of the SEN students. .

C.3: Active support to employment

C.3.1 Employability of VET graduates

In education there are 1846 job vacancies in 2017 and in Human Health and Social Work Activities 3713 and in Accommodation and Food Service Activities 6045. This is mainly in alignment with national strategies to focus on specific sectors, although IT and digital sector in digital should be focused in the forthcoming period.

C.3.2 Economic factors with an impact on transition

Information already provided in section B

C.3.3 Overview of policies in support of employability and transition to employment

In September 2017, the Ministry of Sports launched the process of drafting a new Law on Youth. The aim of the new Law is to eliminate identified legal gaps in the current legal provisions of certain areas of youth policy. The main objective of adopting the new Law on Youth is to improve the planning and implementation of youth policy, by strengthening the institutional framework, empowering youth services through which young people can get skills and knowledge that contribute to their personal and social development. Also, the draft law prescribes new mechanisms for financing priority areas of public interest for the development of youth policy and addressing other issues of importance for young people. The Draft Law specifies methods of constituting youth advisory bodies, as well as the realization of youth policy by non-governmental organizations, with a focus on their participation in the process.

Also, youth clubs and youth centres are one of the key infrastructural mechanisms for improving youth participation, networking of young people and development of life skills and non-formal education. Montenegro has opened dozens of youth clubs in municipalities throughout Montenegro, as well as the Youth Centre in Podgorica.

In line with the strategic orientation to promote youth employment, EAM implements specific measures that include, for example, the programme - **Professional Training of People with Acquired Higher Education, which has been implemented since 2012**. This programme is designed to support the take-up of internships and provide work experience for the period of ten months after university graduation to all graduates that do not have prior work experience in their specific field of study. In 2016, total number of participants in this programme was 3,319, while this number in 2017 was slightly lower and amounts 3,196. Programme monitoring shows that around one third of participants get a job after completing professional training. This initiative is funded by the state budget.

Also a youth oriented measure is the Programme for stimulating youth employment in seasonal jobs during winter season, i.e. "**Young people in winter tourism**". This program continues another the programme "Employ our young people in seasonal jobs", which was implemented from 2011 to 2015. As part of the programme, subsidies are provided to employers from less developed municipalities who employ young people (up to 24 years). Subsidies were largely concerned to tourism sector (78%).

Another measure targeting youth is a programme focused on training and employment of young people in the fight against grey economy, i.e. "Stop grey economy". It aims at resolving the problem of youth unemployment and the suppression of informal business. This programme covers 100 unemployed persons with higher education (up to 29 years) with work experience at least nine months. In more concrete terms, the participants in the programme provided technical support and assistance to the officials of the Directorate for Inspection Affairs, the Police Directorate and the Tax Administration in combating informal work, informal economic activities etc. Participants were employed for a fixed time, for duration of 3 months, benefiting from continuous mentoring throughout their participation in the programme. There are no visible results of programme beneficiaries, so this is the measure which is not perceived as measure which will lead to direct employment.

C.3.4 Career guidance

Montenegro has undertaken some steps to strengthen the guidance and counselling services in VET schools to guide young people towards suitable and relevant to the labour market VET and qualifications. Guidance and mentoring for potential IVET learners is conducted through specialised services offered by school psychologists and pedagogues on the school level, as well as by specially trained teachers. Career guidance for adults is mainly provided through eight Centres for Professional Information and Guidance operating within Employment Agency offices throughout the whole territory of Montenegro. These centres provide wide range of career guidance information and services to future students and students, unemployed and employed individuals, and others.

the VET Centre and the Bureau for Educational Services, with the support of IPA Project IV »**Modernization of educational programs and teacher training**«, an **accredited three-day teacher training program named »Career Skills in Secondary Vocational Schools«**. The program »Career Skills in Secondary Vocational Schools« was piloted/ realized with 48 teachers from 18 vocational schools.

As a result, **most VET schools have trained teacher teams (3 members in each team)** for career guidance advice to complement the main delivery of the services by the 8 Centres for Professional Information and Guidance operating within the Employment Agency system. Furthermore, Montenegro adopted a **Strategy for lifelong career development 2016-2020**, together with Action plans for 2016, 2017 and 2018. A Coordinating body to monitor the implementation of the action plan 2017/2018 was established including representatives of line ministries, employers, universities and schools. Disadvantage of the strategy is that there are no clear and measurable indicators to be achieved, but it mainly talks on activities to be implemented with purpose to improve overall conditions.

A manual for teachers was created - "Career guidance and counselling in vocational schools".

Career guidance is also provided in elementary education for students and their parents to be acquainted with different professional trends and career possibilities in vocational education. Every year as a part of preparation of student enrolment, schools are organizing open doors days. The Ministry of Education of Montenegro, within the campaign „Vocational is key! Get employed, earn and build yourself“, organized a large number of presentations of secondary vocational schools in Podgorica, Berane and Budva. In these municipalities, a large number of secondary vocational schools presented on stands the professions for which they carry out the education, such as: mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, cooking, construction, cosmetics, etc. in various ways (through presentation, real performance of the job within a profession, presentation of products for the work of certain occupations, etc.).

The school presentations were followed by a large number of students enrolled in the last year of elementary school, and their teachers. Besides such events, the Ministry of Education organized the closing ceremony following the end of the campaign, where certificates of acknowledgments were handed to best students and most active employers in dual education.

Montenegro also participated at the European »Euro Skills« competition in Budapest in 2018. Montenegro had its representatives for 5 disciplines: 3 individual (cooking, restaurant services, hairdressing) and 3 team (entrepreneurship and mobile robotics).

Students from the Faculty of Economics - Podgorica won the second prize and a silver medal in the field of entrepreneurship. The young chef from the »Center Ville« hotel in Podgorica won the »The best of nation« medal for scoring most points among the competitors from Montenegro.

The XXI International Fair of virtual firms training 2018, was organized in Plovdiv by the Ministry of Education of Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Servis center of firms training and international organization EURPEN. 3 firms for training and 2 entrepreneurial club from 5 secondary schools from Montenegro presented their services and products on the fair. The entrepreneurial club „Montestrik“ from Gymnasium „Petar I Petrović Njegoš“ from Danilovgrad, won 2 prizes, for » Most active participation on the fair« and »Most active product presentation on French language«. The Training firm »Božanske kapi« and the entrepreneurial club from Gymnasium »Slobodan Škerović« from Podgorica presented on a gathered stand and won the prize »Best presentation on French language«. The participation of participants from Montenegro was organized with the support of the Montenegrin Servis center of firms training.

11 promotional activities were organized within the »**Festival of adult education**« (Panel discussion on the topic » Managing human resources in economy«, a seminar on the topic »Risk management in modern business«, a Workshop on the topic »The role of educational institutions in prevention and protection of children and youth from domestic violence«, two EPAL presentations in Kolasin and Budva, five round tables and the Closing conference of the Project National coordinator for the implementation of the European agenda on adult learning, on the topic »The professionalization of adult education«). Besides these activities within the festival, several presentations were organized, as well as promotions and »open door« days for organizers of adult education.

The programs of these events were designed for different target groups: representatives of human resources offices, labour market and institutions of social partnership, employers, students, unemployed people and employed people, organizers of adult education, teachers and citizens.

Several institutions were involved in the organization of the abovementioned activities: The Ministry of Education, Center for Vocational Education, Chamber of economy of Montenegro, SOS telephone for women and children victims of violence – Podgorica and organizers of adult education.

During 2017 and 2018, 30 entrepreneurial clubs were established, within whose work participate around 150 students from 10 secondary and mixed schools and 2 gymnasiums.

The **Chamber of economy of Montenegro** organized a round table on the topic »Vocational schools and dual education as a driver of economic development « with the aim to promote possibilities of dual education. The representatives of the Ministry of Education and the VET Centre, presented the system of dual education in Montenegro and possibilities for businessman to engage in this process, in the first quarter of 2018, at the sessions of various boards of associations of the Chamber of economy of Montenegro. The role of the Chamber is to encourage the involvement of a larger number of its members in dual education, through active promotion of this sort of education, cooperation with employers involved in the process, through active participation in coordination bodies, as well as identifying new companies to include in coming years.

The **Employment Agency of Montenegro** and centres for information and professional counselling have supported activities at youth employment fairs: Summer Job, Career Days and Stock market; in 2017-2018 there were 10 of these organized, in 3 municipalities. Activities included the preparation, printing and distribution of brochures »Youngsters, earn money while on summer vacation« designed for school and university graduates, in order to motivate them through school visits, with the aim to make them come to the fair and apply for seasonal jobs.

In summer 2018, on the official website of the Employment Agency, an online search and a possibility to apply for summer jobs was provided for young people

During the seven-day duration of the Book Fair (May 2018) a survey was conducted on the quality of services and the satisfaction of the users of the Advisory Interview in the Career Orientation Process. (can you please say what this is? Based on the results, service users expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of service received by the career orientation Advisor and CIPS services.

In a TV show "Let's move" which reports on the situation and labour market needs, the topic Professional orientation was represented in 20 shows. The leaflet »Where after secondary school« is prepared, and 7000-8000 printed copies were distributed, by the organization of the Employment Agency of Montenegro and CIPS, to all elementary schools in Montenegro .

The Ministry of Education formed a Coordinating body comprised by the representatives of the ministries of labour and education, the Bureau for educational services, Center of vocational education, Employment Agency, Chamber of economy of Montenegro, Montenegrin Employers Federation, University of Montenegro and schools. The Coordinating body has reviewed the specificity of career orientation in vocational education and designed guidelines for the implementation of activities on career orientation in vocational schools and defined basic elements of quality in vocational education. Likewise, the body also participated in the drafting of the Action plan on career orientation for 2019/2020 and the Report on the implementation of the activities on career orientation for 2017/2018.

In 2017/2018, the Bureau for educational services implemented 2 regional seminars for secondary school professors (gymnasium and secondary vocational schools). The training program is accredited in the Training Catalogue of the Bureau for educational services for 2017/2018 and 2018/2019.

The realization of the two seminars that encompassed 15 schools covered all secondary schools in Montenegro with this program, which implies a five-phase model of training, since the program was realized gradually in the previous years. Teams for Career Orientation have been formed in schools and their work is periodically monitored by the Bureau for Educational Services.

With the support of IPA project, a teachers training program has been developed and accredited in the Centre for vocational education, the »Career skills in Secondary vocational schools«.

In November 2016 and March 2017, with the support of the IPA project, two three-day trainings were organized for teachers on conducting career guidance in secondary vocational schools. The training gathered 48 teachers from 18 vocational schools. If we focus on the 2017 data, in March 19 teachers from 12 secondary vocational schools passed the training.

The program »Career orientation and the labour market in elementary and secondary schools« is realized by the Employment Agency through school visits. In 2017, the number of visited elementary

schools was 57 - which means 3.692 informed students, and 18 secondary schools - the number of informed students was 1.850.

In 2018, the number of visited elementary schools was 57 - which means 4.437 informed students, and 26 secondary schools - the number of informed students was 2.247.

In cooperation with the University of Montenegro, 10 workshops were organized for students in order to improve their skills on presenting themselves to the employers. Through the program »Encouraging career development of directly employed« in 2017, the professional orientation services were given to 4.771 persons, out of which 1.560 are from the unemployed register, and the rest are still in education students, their parents, employers, as well as persons seeking to change employment. The program is based on informing, motivating and educating the unemployed with the techniques and skills necessary for active job search, as well as potential entrepreneurs-beneficiaries of loans for self-employment.

The programs of one-day and three-day workshops in 2017 passed 681 persons from the records of directly employed persons, and in 2018 - 384 unemployed persons.

During 2017, CIPS representatives actively participated in the Project »**Promoting solutions for an inclusive labour market in the Western Balkans**«, which implemented by the UNDP and the International Labour Organization (ILO), financed by the Austrian development agency (ADA), UNDP and ILO. The main identified problem is the lack of access to information on career orientation, on the basis of which ethnographic research was conducted in order to determine the main obstacles in the field, generate conceptual solutions and create prototype solutions, ex. developing the opportunity to improve the communication practices of the Employment Agency/CIPS. Through the project for easier access of youth to information on labour market, a new face book page of the Center for Information and Professional Counselling (CIPS) was opened. The Facebook site was created and presented during a ten-day training, in order to present the work of the Employment Agency and CIPS to the youth. The UNDP engaged the NGO digitalizuj.me in order to conduct re-branding, opened the facebook page and made a communication strategy for running CIPS social networks.

Advisers for professional rehabilitation and professional orientation of the Employment Agency/CIPS are involved in workshops on the topic Design and realization of ITP 1 and 2 in Primary and Secondary Schools, organized by KulturKontakt Austria in cooperation with the Center for Vocational Education, in order to achieve easier and better quality transition of young people with disabilities from the education process to the labour market.

The Ministry of Education activities regarding career counselling are conducted through the activities of the National Europass and Euroguidance center²⁶. During 2017 and 2018, several workshops were organized in secondary vocational schools, gymnasiums and higher education institutions on the topic of promotion of Europass documents (Europass CV, Europass Language Passport, Europass Diploma supplement, Europass Certificate Supplement and Europass mobility). Likewise, the following guidelines were prepared: Europass Guide, Europass CV Guide, and a manual for teachers of professional subjects „Career counselling and guidance in vocational schools“. The following guidelines will be finished: „Using Social Networks in Career Leadership“, „Conducting interviews with students“, „Europass Mobility“ and „Europass Language Passport“, translation of the book „Good Career Guidance“ by John Holman, as well as questionnaires for different peers group, which will be able to fill in an electronic version on the site of the National Euroguidance and Europass Center.

II. 'Open floor'

From the very beginning, the Government of Montenegro provided an open and indisputable support to the entire process of establishing the **Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)**. We are particularly proud of the fact that Montenegro was the first country of Western Balkans which fulfil all three conditions for establishing the Regional Youth Cooperation Office arising from the Berlin Process. The opening of this Office located in the Youth centre in Podgorica since July 2017 represents an additional stimulus for the mobility development of young people's at national and regional level which is a regional

²⁶ <http://www.euopasscrnagora.me/euroguidance/index.php>

response to the common challenges and problems of young people. The EU Enlargement Strategy for the Western Balkans from February 2019, highlights the six new flagship initiatives to support the

Regional Youth Cooperation Office's (RYCO) project will enhance youth mobility, youth cooperation and youth activism in the Western Balkans thereby supporting the process of reconciliation in the region.

The project activities will contribute to increasing levels of youth participation, but also raising awareness of young people about opportunities for youth cooperation across the region, and to strengthening capacities of the CSOs in the Western Balkans for the implementation of regional youth projects.

The project will further support RYCO in the implementation of its Strategic Plan 2019-2021 by grouping its efforts to promote and achieve opportunities for young people to engage in regional activities that build mutual understanding and reconciliation in the civic, social, educational, cultural and sport sectors.

About migration and emigration measures in field of education - as it is obvious that migration and emigration trend will continue, it is very much necessary that create specific measures treating immigrants and emigrants. As recommended in the European Commission's Report for 2018, although Montenegro is currently out of the main Western Balkan migrant route on its path to the EU, it must strengthen its capacity to cope with the sudden rise in migration-related pressures and urgently address issues of reception capacities, including special attention to be paid to children. Bearing this in mind in action plans, it is necessary to define the measures that would be taken if it happens.

III. Summary and analytical conclusions

Montenegro made a good progress on creating inclusive environment in VET for all students interested to attend VET education. Flexibility of the system is achieved through revision of the VET standards, enabled mobility of students, continuous decrease of numbers referring to early drop out, but also possibility for continuing education after dropping out from the formal education system. System measures for inclusion of marginalized or socially vulnerable groups has been established, and the success of these measures is still to be measured.

Emerging new technologies and work organisation formats will need to be faster captured through skills anticipation systems and translated to VET provision in terms of needed skills, qualifications and curricula per sectors and occupations.

VET systems will need to develop 'fast response' mechanisms of both stable quality assured core qualifications/skills pathways and flexible formats of adding new or higher-level skills.

VET will need to move from process-oriented, input and supply driven model to a result-oriented approach, in view of meeting expectations of learners in terms of adequate and quality skills, of employers in terms of productivity gains and of society in view of a contribution to growth and social stability.

Further digitalization of the teaching and learning process is based on improving IT infrastructure, as also improvement of digital skills of students, teachers, but also institutions in introducing online collaborative spaces.

The promotion of vocational education has gained a recognizable format through the creation of a campaign for the promotion of vocational education that is carried out every year during the enrolment period.

Focus in the forthcoming period is to extend number of programmes referring to inclusion of students with special education needs, so that they can have equal access to the VET programmes.

There are already some general mechanisms which can follow outplacement of the VET students, but this area is something to be focused in the forthcoming period, in particularly by integrating data about success in MEIS and other registers owned by other state agencies (employment agency, university, tax authorities, etc..), so that permanent system of tracing VET graduates can be established.

Career guidance system for VET students should be further empowered at the school level (end of primary and throughout secondary education) and quality control of this support should be established at the system level. This will significantly influence the choice of proper VET education for the students, but also give them opportunity to identify appropriate employment opportunities also during education process.

BUILDING BLOCK D: INTERNAL EFFICIENCY AND OPERATION OF THE VET SYSTEM

Section D discusses efficiency in the VET delivery system. The IVET and CVT delivery system refers to all formal and non-formal VET provision in the country and all forms of input (tangible and intangible) into their operation. VET deliverables are the knowledge, skills and attitudes of VET graduates. Efficiency generally describes the extent to which the education system (and VET in particular) is delivering the maximum possible value with the minimum possible input.

Section D proceeds with a selection of key topics, such as the teaching and learning environment, policies for teachers and trainers, and quality/quality assurance mechanisms and policies.

D.1: Teaching and learning environment

D.1.1 Teaching and learning methods, including work-based learning

When it comes to teaching and learning practices, focus in this reporting period is on the changing teaching approach towards facilitation of learning process. Opportunity for this raised by designing and introducing new competency- based curricula from school year 2016/2017, which are promoting student centred learning and change of teaching practice by shifting to student centred learning practice, whereby students are more challenged to work in teams and on the project work. As part of each curriculum, there is a section referring to *Didactic recommendations for the implementation of the module*, prescribing teaching and learning methods. Current plan is that all existing VET programmes offered in IVET (approx. 100) will be competency based by 2020.

New programmes are also advocating for more work-based learning experience, as existing programmes had more school based learning focus, mainly due to lack of appropriate work-based learning opportunities, but also due to lack of proactivity of schools and institutions to interact with employment sector on the practical skills issues. In addition, recent reforms of the legal framework are encouraging dual education, which is currently implemented just in 3 year programmes, whereby student spend one day per week in the company in the first year, in the second year two days and in the third year three days. The Ministry of Education subsidises the pay of students during the first and second year, while employers have to cover the third year. According to the Law on VET, the amount of the scholarship for first grade students is 10% of the net average wage in Montenegro, which is approx. 50 euros, for the students who are second grade, the amount is 15% of the average net wage, which is approx. 70 euros, and for students of the third grade, this amount is 20% of the average net wage, which is approx. 100 euros (to be paid by the employer)

In 2015, Montenegrin policymakers acknowledged the importance of work-based learning in VET, prioritising it in the context of the Riga Conclusions follow-up. The developments in this reporting period is in line with the work-based learning goals in the Vocational Education Development Strategy (2015-2020), aimed to provide a stimulating environment for the cooperation between companies and VET schools. A stronger role for intermediary organisations like employers' associations or chambers had been identified as a key priority. Another key priority was to strengthen the training of in-company instructors. Also, each school has appointed an organizer of practical learning (in addition there are CPD and ICT co-ordinators in each school) with key responsibility to establish and maintain cooperation between industry and the school with purpose of implementation of practical learning.

In the reporting period, the Government has put emphasis on providing opportunities for practical learning throughout the education system as well as through active labour market measures. The revised vocational education and training law includes dual education as a new way for in-company

experience for learners. The Ministry of Education is continuously trying to engage employers to subsidise expenditures of students attending dual education, by paying sanitary books, fees for instructors, transport for students, etc. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education and the Chamber of Economy facilitates its implementation.

First feedback from the Ministry of Education and the Chamber of Economy suggests that the take-up from students and companies is promising (200 companies are involved in the second year, compared to 100 in the first year, number of students) as well as the majority of municipalities. Furthermore, the government programme that provides practical training for higher education graduates to support their insertion into the labour market continues in its sixth year and reports a good success rate (around 50% insertion rate).

There are also significant regional disparities, with VET schools in the North of Montenegro often struggling to secure sufficient work-based learning opportunities for their students as employers do not show enough interest. In contrast, some of the VET schools located in the centre and in the coastal areas of the country have been able to conclude cooperation arrangements with over 50 companies, mainly from the tourism sector.

Among the challenges, monitoring and evaluation of the quality of work-based learning has been identified as a major one.

D.1.2 Teaching and learning environment

More and more schools in Montenegro are getting better equipped for proper school-based learning of the students. New competency-based programme are prescribing more in details learning conditions, and for each module there is spatial and material requirements for teaching.

Next to regular refurbishment of school facilities of VET facilities done by each school on annual basis, which is still modest intervention due to lack of budgetary resources, In previous period, and trough EU IPA funds, 8 schools were equipped to provide practical learning of students, in amount of 344,832.60 euros from the area of electro technic, agriculture, hospitality, mechatronic, and textile.

General state of equipment and teaching resources in the VET Schools is on considerable level, having in mind that most of the schools have specialized laboratories and even workshops for school based learning.

D.1.3 Policies to improve training/teaching and learning methods in VET

Through EU IPA funded project, new approaches in designing and developing curricula are introduced, and key institutions and stakeholders went through extensive process of training during this project, but in particularly after it. In 2017 approximately 300 teachers from 26 schools were trained in how to design VET standards, as also 180 teachers are trained on how to implement new, competency based, programmes.

- Based on the research conducted and results, training plan for teachers is drafted. In 2018, total number of teachers training was 33, going through the training process on 22 topics in total, training programmes accredited in the Catalogue for teachers training. Number of teachers attending these training is 605.
- Training for development of VET programmes passed in total 150 teachers, during March 2018. This training programme is also part of the Catalogue for teachers training.
- After new VET programmes are adopted, training of teachers to implement these programmes is implemented as also importance of the key competencies in the VET programmes and how to integrate it in teaching process. Training is organized for 339 teachers who are implementing the teaching process in line with new modularized curricula.
- Vocational education and training center in 2018 organized training for school principal with purpose to equip them how to implement modularized (competency based) programmes. In total, 21 school principal and 9 deputy principals from 30 VET schools. Training is also part of the Catalogue for VET teachers.

-VET Centre organized also trainings for school pedagogists and psychologists in planning and implementing learning outcomes based curricula. Training is part of the Catalogues for teachers training and was organized for 30 pedagogists and psychologists from the VET schools.

-During 2018, training for coordinators, coordinating implementation of the modularized programmes in the VET schools. Key assignment of the coordinators is to facilitate implementation of the new modularized programmes and to support their implementation on the school level, write progress reports to the VET Centre, etc.. Training is organized for 104 coordinators in total and each of them is assigned to coordinate implementation of the single modularized programme.

VET Centre is continuously organizing training of teachers focusing on improvement of teaching practices. Focus is on correlation between theory and practice. In planning the teaching process, peer learning among students is recognized as best way for students to achieve results and acquiring new skills.

In the area of continuous professional development of teacher, the following activities are completed:

- Competence standards for teachers are developed and adopted by the National council
- Teachers are introduced with the standards. Indicators for external evaluation are in line with the standards of competence of teachers
- The initiative for expanding MEIS has been launched with the data on teacher training and continuous professional development of teachers
- Since the Rulebook on the organization of professional development of teachers and the method of selection of the authors of the professional development program enables the current Catalogue to be annexed by the missing programs of professional development of teachers, 10 new training programmes for teachers are developed which are added to the Catalogue of Professional Development of Teachers, after adoption by the National Council for Education.

In the forthcoming period, special attention will be paid to the continuing professional development of teachers, both from the aspect of accessibility and determining the effects of professional development on the quality of educational work, as well as from the aspect of a sustainable model of financing.

D.1.4 Improving the training and learning environment

With the support of IPA Component IV, the Project "Procurement of equipment for schools in accordance with modernized educational programs", equipment for agriculture, electrical engineering, mechatronics, textiles and catering sectors for 8 vocational schools was delivered in the total amount of 344,832.60 euros.

New competency-based curricula are designed based on the labour market skills shortage and they include also requirements related to equipment. In some of the cases, employers are even ready to donate part of the equipment to the school Example for this is a company working with web and mobile applications donating 58 laptop computers to 4 schools to implementing the new programme Web and mobile application developer. Schools are also encouraged to apply for EU for funding opportunities which are going to help them improve their school labs.

D.2: Teachers and trainers

D.2.1 Composition of the workforce of VET teachers and trainers

Law on Vocational Education ("Official Gazette of Montenegro", no. 064/02 from Nov 28th, 2002, no. 049/07 from Aug 10th, 2007, "Official Gazette of Montenegro ", no. 045/10 from Aug 4th, 2010, no. 039/13 from Aug 7th,.2013, no. 047/17 from July 19th,2017) recognizes the following categories of teachers working in vocational schools.

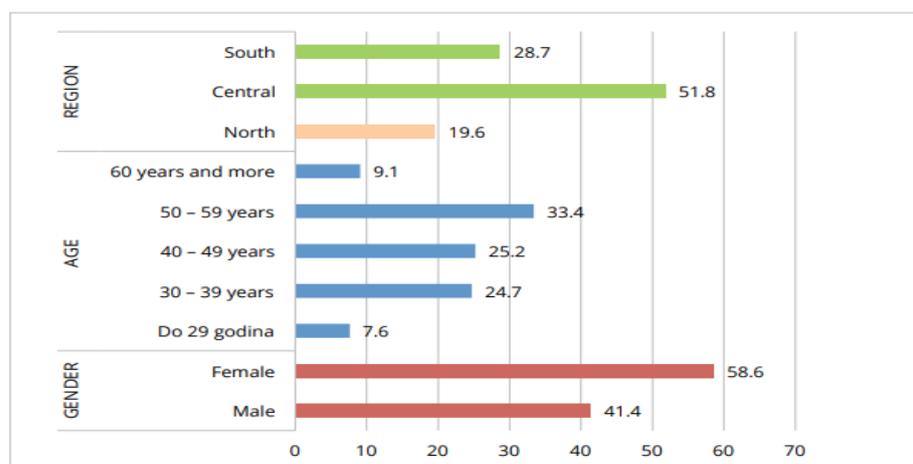
A **teacher** in a school can be a person who has a seventh level of qualifications framework, sub-level 1 or sub-level two (240 and 300 CSPK credits), of an appropriate profile. Exceptionally from paragraph 1 of this Article, classes in individual subjects or modules may be conducted by persons with the sixth level of qualifications framework (180 CSPK credits), unless there is an adequate study program (240 and / or 300 CSPK credits).

An **expert associate** (pedagogue, psychologist, librarian, etc.) can be a person who has a seventh level of qualifications framework, sub-level one or sub-level two (240 and 300 CSPK credits), of an appropriate profile. A teaching assistant (a lab worker, an assistant, etc.) can be a person with at least a fourth level of qualifications framework, sub-level one (240 CSPK credits), of an appropriate profile.

A **teacher of practical education** can be a person who has a seventh level of qualifications framework, sub-level one or two (240 or 300 CSPK credits), i.e the sixth level of qualifications framework (180 CSPK credits) of the appropriate profile or a master's exam and passed pedagogical - andragogic exam (necessary pedagogical-andragogic education).

An **In – company Instructor** may be a person who has the appropriate education at least of the same level of the qualifications framework for which the student is educated and five years of work experience.

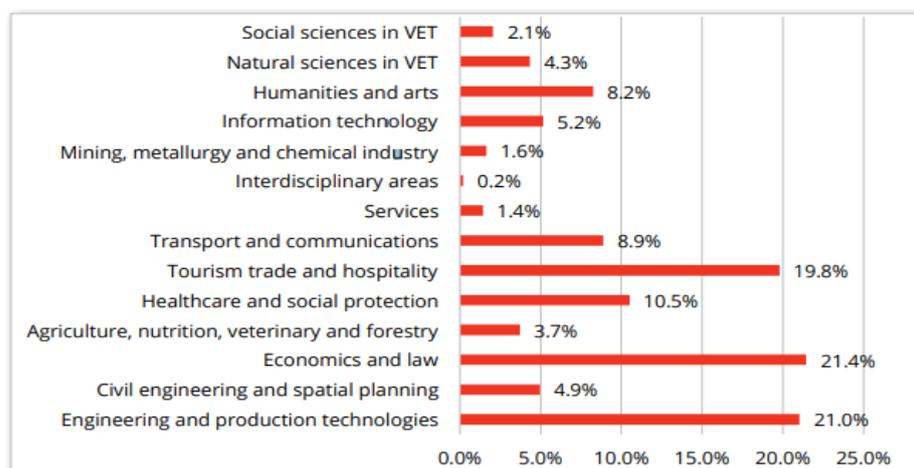
According to the recent research done by the VET Centre²⁷, **more than half of teachers from secondary and mixed schools have between 11 and 20 years of work experience.** Most of them acquired the working experience in the school as a teacher, with an average of 14.5 years of work, while the rest of the number of years of work experience was acquired by working in the economy (5.8) or in the economy on jobs related to professional modules, that the teacher teach in secondary vocational or mixed school (5,3).. There are about 60% of women compared to 40% of men.



The highest percentage of teachers from secondary vocational and mixed schools (75.5%) possesses a degree in higher education level VII1, 12.2% of those from secondary and mixed schools hold a degree in master studies, level VII2, while a significantly lower percentage, 10% hold a degree in pre-university education.

Most of the teachers from secondary and mixed schools carry out teaching in the sectors of Economy and Law 21.4%, Engineering and Production Technologies 21.0% and Tourism, Catering and Trade sector 19.8%. This sector are priorities for the Montenegro in developing HR strategies and labour markets skill supply strategies.

²⁷ Research of the needs for the CPD of VET Teached and accredited adult educators in Montenegro, VET Centre 2018



In addition, the Regulation on Types of Degrees, Conditions, Manner and Procedure for Nominating and Awarding the Title of Teachers is setting up conditions for teachers to apply for specific titles. Teachers can accumulate points by fulfilling specific requirements (years of teaching, published specific number of works, attending training programmes in specific volume, etc.) and value of this is converted into specific number of points which help to qualify for career progress.

The Regulation on Types of Degrees, Conditions, Manner and Procedure for Nominating and Awarding the Title of Teachers defines several teachers' ranks. The numbers promoted since 2009²⁸ are as follows: teacher mentor (out of 263 teachers, 65 are coming from VET schools), teacher consultant (137 teachers in total / 48 VET teachers), teacher higher consultant (82 teachers in total / 20 VET teachers), and teacher researcher (16 teachers in total/ 1 VET teachers).

Practical guide to support in-company training for students is also developed for organizers of practical education in schools and instructors of practical learning (these are mentors in the companies assigned to the students). For instructors of practical learning, 88 instructors went through the training process supported by the ETF and such training will continue in the future. An **In – company Instructor** may be a person who has the appropriate education at least of the same level of the qualifications framework for which the student is educated and five years of work experience

D.2.2 Entering the teaching profession in VET

Commonly accepted specific requirements for becoming a trainer/mentor in a company have been missing, some criteria or standards existed but were developed and valid within some companies. There has been no strategy in place for initial and continuing professional development of instructors/trainers or mentors in enterprises.

A requirement was introduced that trainers can become persons with Master of crafts exam and pedagogical-andragogic exam. The entire necessary infrastructure for taking these exams in Montenegro was established. Changes to the Rulebook on organisation of teachers' professional development were made, so that - in addition to accredited teachers' training courses - a much wider scope of continuing professional developments activities could be recognised, such as conducting action researches, participation in professional networks at different levels, observing lessons, participation in conferences, etc.

Recruitment of teacher in the school starts with obligatory public call, announced by the school, after being validated by the Ministry of Education. Teachers teaching students with special needs or on minority languages, should have also relevant qualifications (such as knowledge of the language or additional relevant certificates)

The decision on the employment of teachers is made by the director of the institution, upon the proposal of the commission, within 15 days from the expiration of the deadline for filing applications. The

²⁸ [List of promoted Teachers in Montenegro, 2018](#)

commission referred to in paragraph 4 of this Article is appointed by the director of the institution, in accordance with the statute of the institution.

The teacher can be recruited without announcing a public call for a period of up to 30 days, in the case of:

- Replacement of a temporarily absent teacher;
- Temporary increased scope of work;
- Work on a particular project.

There are no issues recorded with the system of teacher's recruitment.

According to the General Law on Education, a person who has accepted employment in a school for the first time is considered a "teacher-intern" who is qualified for training in a job whose purpose is to independently perform the job within the scope of his qualifications. An intern with a VI or VII level of education of the national qualification framework is on probation work for nine months or one year. "The internship is conducted according to the established educational program in the institution, under the direct supervision of an authorized teacher (mentor), who has at least the same level of education that the trainee teacher has." The mentor is appointed by the director of the school, at the proposal of the expert or the teaching council of the institution. The intern should take the professional examination at the end of the internship, which consists of three parts and includes:

- The didactics of the subject being taught,
- Pedagogy and psychology,
- School legislation for teachers.

The professional exam is taken before the competent commission. After passing the professional exam, the teacher receives a license that proves the necessary level of general and professional competences for performing the work of a teacher, director and assistant director for a period of five years.

D.2.3 Employment status of teachers in VET

Nearly 90% of teachers have full time classes and 80% of them have contracts for an indefinite period of time. About 9% of teachers have between 50-90% of the envisaged norm, while only less than 2% work with a norm less than 50%. Typical for VET Schools is that they do engage temporary teachers, in particularly of VET related subjects, which can be an issue if they are on the service contract more than 9 month, as then they do not have chance to go through the structured induction programme, as the novice teachers have.

D.2.4 Quality of teachers and trainers in VET

Public policies focused primarily on the competences, roles and professional development of teachers and trainers in IVET, and to a much lesser extent in CVET.

A major quality issue in pre-service teacher education in the country has been the gap between theory and practice. Cooperation between teacher training faculties and schools is weak, which prevents student teachers from gaining satisfactory teaching practice and hands-on experience prior to their employment in schools. Another issue that concerns the pre-service preparation of VET subject teachers is that it usually lacks courses in pedagogy, psychology, special needs education or andragogy and these gaps have to be filled once the teacher service begins. In the area of pre-service preparation of VET teachers, the University of Montenegro introduced as of September 2017 a Master programme for teachers to address the existing lack of pedagogic, didactic and psychological training of VET subject teachers. First results?

In order to create a general picture of the didactic-methodical knowledge and skills of teachers acquired through initial education, it was analysed how many teachers in primary studies were prepared through some programs or subjects to be teachers. Teachers from secondary and mixed schools confirmed the initial hypothesis that the majority (62.7%) completed study programs during which they did not prepare for the teaching profession, while 37.3% of the respondents answered that during the studies they partially prepared for this call.

About 50% of teachers in secondary vocational and mixed schools had some kind of training in acquiring knowledge of the teaching profession at the beginning of their employment. This form of training of interns - teachers is regulated by the Rulebook on teachers traineeship. It prescribes the content, program, method of monitoring and evaluation of the traineeship of teachers, educators, professional associates, teaching associates and other providers of educational work in institutions in the field of education (pre-school institution, school, Bureau, organizers of adult education, etc.).

Also, 60% of teachers participated in non-formal and informal forms of learning and learning with the teaching profession, while 41.9% participated in the general and administrative introduction of the school.

This high percentage can be justified by the deficit of the teaching staff for certain module-subjects, which were in need, and that there were no personnel who passed a professional exam. In practice, it is not a rare case that only people who do not pass a professional examination for school work are invited to the open public call for teachers, so the schools are obliged to receive employment and candidates without a professional exam.

The General Law on Education, with the Article 99b regulates the establishment of professional associations of teachers. They do not have any particular role in governing education on the school level, but teachers are encouraged to form this associations mainly as mechanism to improve the quality of education) This article of the Law defines that Professional Associations of Teachers can give opinions and suggestions: to improve educational work, educational programs, strategic documents and regulations in the field of education, but also to perform other tasks in accordance with the Statute. The analysis showed that 30% of teachers are members of the professional association. It is necessary to create a better environment for the establishment and operation of as many professional associations of teachers, all with the aim of their continuous professional development and monitoring of contemporary trends in the profession.

The programs included in the catalogue are aimed at professionalizing teachers by offering content that allows teachers to track all the changes that involve reforming the education system, changes in the profession, teaching materials, and so on. Teacher participation in programs included in the Catalogue allows teachers to obtain the necessary hours for renewal of the teaching license. The method of selecting the program of professional development of teachers, as well as the time of publication of the selected programs in the Catalogue and its content is prescribed by the Rulebook on the Organization of Professional Training of Teachers and the Method of Choosing the Author of the Professional Development Program. Of the total number of teachers in secondary vocational and mixed schools, a percentage of 84.3% of teachers declared that they were familiar with the Catalogue, while 15.7% said they were not. 70% of teachers from vocational and mixed schools believe that programs in the Catalogue can respond to their case needs, stated that they can respond in part or in full, while 30% of respondents think that they do not know/cannot evaluate.

Two-thirds of the teachers think that training in the field within subject-modules they teach, acquiring pedagogical competences, acquaintance with the curriculum, student assessment, were very useful or their effect was at the intermediate level. When it comes to training of teachers in the field of career guidance and student counselling, lectures in multicultural environment, classroom management, and working with students with special needs, 40% of teachers said that there was no training on this topic, while over 20% said that they do not know or cannot assess the impact of training within the mentioned areas on improving the quality of their teaching. Teachers' responses to these questions are a clear indication of the need to change the strategic approach in planning teacher training. It is clear that teachers need more training in these areas. When it comes to the field of New Technologies in the workplace or place of learning, 28% of teachers think that there was no training on this topic, while almost half of them think that the training held had a certain effect on improving the quality of teaching. A very small percentage of teachers, below 5%, finds that training courses passed in all of these areas were not useful, while 20% think they do not know or cannot assess the impact of training on improving the quality of teaching.

The in-service training of VET teachers in Montenegro has been underfunded and designed in a way that provided more training opportunities for general education teachers than for VET subject teachers. On-the-job and in-company teacher training is minimal. The professional development opportunities for VET teachers is fewer in number and less relevant for their vocational specialism. On top of this, motivation of teachers to attend face-to-face training offered is mainly driven by the need for relicensing, which is a legal obligation on the level of 5 years.

Training programme „ training of teachers in company “ is accredited and part of the catalogues for VET training providers.

The Law on Adult Education stipulates that teaching staff or providers of educational programs who are engaged with a licensed education organizer must be able to work in adult education.

Andragogic training is acquired by completing the program of andragogic training, which is issued by the competent council. Andragogic training is organized by the Center, upon the request of the candidate. Upon completion of the training, the Center issues a certificate of andragogic training to the candidate.

The program of andragogic training consists of six modules that are realized through the cycle of seminars:

- Specificity of adults in the process of adult education and learning
- Communication in adult education
- Organization, planning and programming in adult education
- Modernization of the education process and group dynamics
- Methods of adult education and
- Evaluation and self-evaluation in adult education.

The General Law on Education prescribes that the tasks of teachers can be performed by persons who, in addition to the conditions prescribed by the Law on Labour and this Law, have a work permit.

The license is a public document proving the necessary level of general and professional competencies of teachers. The license is issued after passing a professional exam for working in educational institutions for a period of five years.

The license for performers of educational work at the organizer of adult education, issued after passing the professional exam, is valid for work only with the organizer of adult education.

By the Regulation on teachers and school staff licensing²⁹ each teacher should accumulate 40 hours of trainings in the period of 5 years, whereby 16 hours of training should refer to priority areas (defined by the VET Centre and the Ministry), 8 hours of elective training and 16 hours related to pedagogical, psychological or methodical competencies.

Licensing and relicensing is done by the commission of the Bureau for Educational Services (for general subject teachers) and VET Centre (for VET teachers)

The conditions, method and procedure for acquiring, issuing and renewing the license of teachers, directors and assistants of directors of the institutions and the content and form of the license were prescribed by the Ministry of Education by a Rulebook.

Teachers have the right and obligation to professionalize themselves in different fields through vocational training programs and other forms of continuous professional work of teachers.

The programs of professional development of teachers are passed by the National Council, at the proposal of the Bureau for Educational Services or the Center for Vocational Education.

The author of the program for the professional development of teachers may be an individual of legal person performing educational and scientific research activities, licensed higher education institutions and professional associations of teachers.

The priority areas for professional development of teachers are determined by the Ministry of Education for five years, on the proposal of the Bureau of Educational Services and the Center for Vocational Education.

²⁹ [Regulation on teachers and school staff licensing, 2014](#)

The organization of professional development of teachers and the choice of the author of the program is prescribed by a Rulebook.

For teaching staff working in adult education, very few licenses have been issued because they have not passed the professional exam for working in an educational institution. This is creating considerable impact on adult education system, as the number of trainees is very low.

D.2.5 Attracting and retaining teachers and trainers in VET

As mentioned in the previous sections, there are well developed legal norms for teachers entering VET Schools, and well-defined profiles existing in VET; including their professional progression and licensing process. The system of improved teacher titles has been established as a motivating factor to support teachers who are ready to professionally improve and improve their knowledge and skills, and use what has been learned in practice. The system offers the opportunity of teachers progress into one of four vocations: teacher mentor, teacher advisor, teacher senior advisor and teacher researcher. The title is obtained on the basis of proof (certificate, confirmation) of attending accredited training programs and engagement of teachers in professional development activities at the school level, in the field of vocational and teaching activities. The possibilities for gaining a higher title are prescribed by the appropriate rules on the types of vocations, conditions, method and procedure of proposing and awarding the title to teachers. So far, 134 teachers who work in vocational schools has acquired the improved teacher title (65 mentors, 48 teacher advisers, 20 teachers of senior counsellors and 1 teacher researcher).

VET Centre and the Ministry of Education, with the financial support of the European Training Foundation (ETF), from January 01 to April 15, 2018, implemented the project “Networking Teachers through a web platform” and two teacher associations were formed: Association of Mechanical and Traffic Teachers and the Association of ICT Teachers in Secondary Vocational Schools

D.2.6 Steering, motivating and supporting professional development

CPD of VET teachers, and general teachers, is more specifically defined and driven by:

Regulation on teachers and school staff licensing, stating that In order to be relicensed, VET Teachers should attend 40 hours of training during 5 years period in the following proportion: 16 hours of training from priority areas, 8 hours of elective training and an additional 16 hours in case that teacher or principal didn't gain pedagogical education during pre-service education.

The regulation on Types of Degrees, Conditions, Manner and Procedure for Nominating and awarding the Title of Teacher, defining ranking of teachers and procedures for ranking. There are several teachers' ranks starting from: teacher mentor, teacher-advisor, teacher-higher advisor, to teacher researcher Regulation recognizes different forms of professional development and ranking of teachers is based on number of points collected through different forms of professional development.

The catalogue of the training programmes for CPD of teachers includes variety of programmes, and the National Council for Education approves in on biannual basis. Most of these programmes are subject specific, but there are also cross-curricular themes important in particularly for implementation of new competency-based programmes.

Placement Programme, led by the Ministry of Education, the Chamber of economy of Montenegro and the VET Centre, supported by ETF, was piloted in 2016. There is a willingness of the Government to mainstream the initiative.

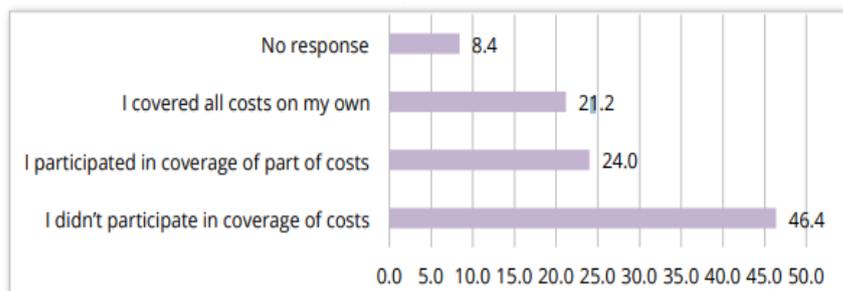
Within the framework of the EPAL project, a review was carried out on Educational Needs for Professional Development of Teachers in Vocational Schools and Licensed Organizers of Adult Education. The research involved 555 teachers, out of which there were 485 teachers in secondary vocational and mixed schools, and 70 teachers with licensed adult education organizers. The results of the research with the recommendations were published and delivered to the decision-makers and other interested partners. Based on the conducted research and the obtained results, a training plan for teachers was developed.

When it comes to providing funds for the permanent improvement of teachers, the General Law on Education prescribes, in Article 136, the provision of funds in the sense that the Public Institution from the network of institutions provides funds from the budget of Montenegro for permanent professional development of teachers. Of course, schools can organize and fund teacher training, as well as teachers themselves, from their own resources (generated revenues, donations, projects) from their own funds.

During 2017 and 2018, more than 1000 teachers of vocational schools has undergone CSO trainings under accredited professional development programs for teachers.

Asked if they had borne the costs of professional development in the period from obtaining a working license, 46.4% of teachers from secondary and mixed schools stated that they did not participate in the payment of expenses, while 21.2% stated that they themselves paid the costs of vocational training. 24% of them participated in costs, while 8.4% of the teachers did not respond.

Chart 21. VET teachers (Since obtaining the license for teaching, have you covered the costs of professional development on your own?)



One of the key factors when it comes to professional development of teachers is the time when teachers are professionally trained, as well as a certain type of support they receive for professional development. It is known that professional development of teachers during working hours can cause problems for school management in the organization of classes and seeking replacement for absent teachers in order to conduct the teaching process according to the planned schedule, especially if there are a large number of teachers absent. On the other hand, teachers insist that professional development takes place during working hours, not in their free time.

45% of teachers from secondary vocational and mixed schools attended trainings outside the working hours, while 62% of them received an approval from the school for the trainings during working hours.

When it comes to out-of-work activities, 8% of teachers stated that they were financially awarded by the school for participation in these activities, while 10% said they were rewarded in kind for the training and out-of-work activities.

Teacher participation in trainings related to their narrow specialization rose from 40% in 2015 to 67% in 2018. The CPD, which is implemented in the business environment with the employer, also records a rise from 27% to 32%. Teachers in vocational education in Montenegro participated in trainings, achieving an average of 41 hours of training (inside or outside the school). 61% of teachers went through at least 30 hours of training during the previous 12 months in 2018.

D.2.7 Ensuring the quality of teachers in VET

Quality assurance of teachers in vocational schools is carried out through external and internal evaluation processes. The external evaluation is carried out in accordance with the General Law at least once in four years, according to the current Methodology for determining quality. The methodology contains an indicator that deals with the quality of teachers, trainers and instructors in vocational education. Students' satisfaction with the support they receive from teachers, trainers and other staff are tested, teaching materials prepared by teachers, whether teachers and trainers regularly attend trainings, etc.

The internal evaluation process is followed by the realization of professional development of teachers at the school level by establishing a Self-Assessment Commission in schools, which evaluates every two year on the basis of the offered instruments

The Commission consists of:

- The school principal,
- coordinator for professional development,
- one, maximum three teachers, depending on the size of the school (if possible a holder of a improved teacher title).

The President of the Commission writes the Self-Evaluation Report on Professional Development at School Level using the offered instrument.

When it comes to teacher training programs that are published in the CSO Catalogue, they pass the process of validation and accreditation by the expert bodies and commissions to evaluate them. During their training, they receive feedback from teachers who undergo training. Also, feedback from teachers is required after applying the acquired knowledge in the classroom. In this way, information about the relevance of the program itself and its application in practice is obtained.

In the area of initial teacher education, activities completed are:

- All study programs at the University of Montenegro, at all levels of the studies, are based on learning outcomes. Study programs are based on standards of competence for teachers.
- The contents of the curriculum have been revised during the accreditation process, and each year an audit is conducted, in accordance with the Statute and the Rules of Study
- Cooperation between Universities, the Vocational Education and Training Centre and Bureau for Education is established
- Teachers attending programmes related to teacher's education in the University of Montenegro are regularly participating in international scientific meetings, international projects, and publish articles in the specific professional magazines (including Clarivate Analytics)
- Evaluation of the teaching process, evaluation of the course, as well as evaluation of the work of the subject teachers and associates is continuously carried out.
- Practice is compulsory at all levels of study and all study programs that educate teachers. Contracts on implementation of practical teaching were concluded.
- Foreign language is obligatory in all semesters, on all study programs that educate teachers at all levels of study.
- The subject focused on the acquisition of digital competence is mandatory in the process of initial teacher education.

In the following period will be worked on:

- Introducing standard on minimum representation of the pedagogical-psychological and didactic-methodical group of subjects in the study programs for the education of teachers
- Prescribing the volume of key competencies in the study programs in which teachers are educated in educational institutions of non-university education.
- Contextualising the scope of the study of the content of inclusive education, which will improve the quality of learning for students with special needs, as also for their teachers.

D.3: Quality and quality assurance

D.3.1 Quality and relevance of education and training content in VET

The problem of quality education applies to the system overall (as mentioned by the Education Minister in the PET 2017 and 2018;) and is also a particular challenge for higher education. The World Bank loan (HERIC – Project) had a major component on quality assurance (c.f. www site EUA); a tracer system for higher education students is available (now third round ongoing), as well as evaluation reports of institutions. Recently the Agency for Quality of Higher Education has been established.

A systematic Labour Market Information System is lacking in the country. A monitoring system on employability of VET graduates and their transitions and state funds allocated to this are on its way. Montenegro has launched a tracer system for IVET graduates in 2017. The focus is on collecting information on VET graduates' labour market entry and career that was missing so far. In October 2018 the second round of data collection has started.

The Ministry, in cooperation with schools, collected the mail addresses of students who finished their education in the current school year, so that after the completion of the enrolment deadlines at higher education institutions, they sent prepared questionnaires to all available addresses.

The State Statistical Office collects – from labour force surveys - data on employment and unemployment rates by level of education. ILO carried out a survey of youth labour market transitions (2015).

New modularized educational programs are developed based on two or more standards of occupation following the rule of different levels of education. When drafting occupational standards, employers determine key job functions for a particular qualification. This tells us that the content in the curriculum, determined on the basis of key jobs from the occupational standards, is well selected and that the programs are relevant for a particular qualification. In modularized educational programs, a part of practical instruction is required to be conducted by employers. The recommendation for schools is to establish as much cooperation as possible with employers and that students spend as many hours at practical lessons with employers.

In the last two years, dual education has become popular, which has led to increased students' interest in the third level of education. About 200 employers took part in this form of education in the last two years, which shows the interest of employers for cooperation, all in order to better educate and train students.

D.3.2 Defining the quality of learning outcomes

VET Centre is coordinating development based on The General Law on Education (2002), the Law on Vocational Education (2010), the Law on Adult Education, as well as a few acts of secondary legislation define quality assurance activities for the VET system/schools and the quality standards for curricula and teachers. VET Centre is coordinating development of all VET standards, including also initiatives for new qualifications submitted by external or internal party.

During the process of developing these standards, key stakeholders from the employment sector are consulted and they do also participate and lead on developing occupational standards. When it comes to qualification standards, key developers are coming from the education sector, in particularly the members of the working groups developing these standards are teachers from the VET schools. Validation process is ensured in the way that final VET standards are approved by the sector committees. With regard to the educational programmes, they are also developed by the assigned working groups composed of VET teachers, and these programmes are firstly validated by the VET Committee and later on by the National Council for Education.

Montenegro started to participate in the activities of the EQAVET Network since the second half of 2012. The country reported to have devised a comprehensive national framework for quality assurance in VET that was legally binding and compatible with the priorities and the tools of the EQAVET Recommendation. Montenegro established a national reference point in the Ministry of education in 2012 to support the quality assurance aspects of IVET, CVET, adult education, EQF, ECVET and other areas.

Since 2010 Montenegro has made efforts to harmonise national indicators for assessing quality in VET with EQAVET ones. In the beginning of 2014 Montenegro reported compatibility of national with EQAVET indicators 1A, 2A, 8A and 10B, while the work on the alignment of the rest was in progress.

The indicators that Montenegro – together with the other candidate countries - used most frequently included 1A and 1B (in both IVET and CVET), 3 (in IVET) and 4 (in CVET), while outcome indicators were less used.

D.3.3 Quality assurance processes in VET

On biannual basis, the VET Centre is announcing a public call for individual adult education providers to submit their training programmes to be accredited for further teachers training process.

Each VET provider is obliged to conduct bi-annual internal evaluation, as also external evaluation on the level of 4 years. External evaluation for the VET providers is conducted under coordination of the VET Centre.

Curriculum revision process is initiated in 2016, including revision of the other VET standards (occupational standards and qualification standards). In this moment, there are approximately 25 education programmes of level 3 and 4 revised. Occupational standards are developed in cooperation with relevant employers' involvement.

Regarding work-based learning and cooperation with employers on system and local level, in the recent period there is significant increase of formal agreement between employers and the schools.

Quality assurance in vocational education is defined by the provisions of the General Law on Education and the Rulebook on the content, forms and methods of ensuring the quality of education in institutions. These Rules prescribe the contents, forms and manner of determining the quality of education in educational institutions.

Areas of educational work in which quality is determined are:

- managing the institution, organization and performance of educational work and the work of professional associates;
- quality of teaching and learning, or educational work;
- achievement of knowledge and skills of students, or learners, according to educational standards of knowledge, or learning outcomes;
- the ethos of the institution;
- cooperation with stakeholders;
- the support provided to students by the institution, that is, to participants;
- the resources of the institution;
- other contents relevant for determining, providing and improving the quality of educational work in institutions.

The methodology defines: the key areas, the requirements of the standards and indicators according to the specifics of the institutions (vocational education and adult education providers), the method of quality assessment, as well as the procedures for determining quality.

Self-evaluation and evaluation are forms of determining the quality of educational work in institutions.

The provision and improvement of the quality of the work of the institution is carried out by undertaking measures for quality improvement, national and international research, professional development, external assessment of knowledge, projects and other forms of work carried out by competent institutions.

Self-evaluation is carried out by the institution by assessing the conformity of its work with the requirements of the standards, as well as by applying other criteria and indicators it brings itself, in order to take appropriate measures and activities for the provision and improvement of quality.

Self-evaluation includes planning, carrying out activities, reports with recommendations, developing a plan for securing and improving the quality of educational work after self-evaluation.

The Annual Plan of Self-Evaluation is proposed by the Team (each institution has a Quality Team) and is an integral part of the Annual Work Plan of the institution and, as a rule, contains: priority areas, objectives, activities, bearers, dynamics and success indicators, instruments and the way of tracking the realization.

The report on self-evaluation is developed by the Team. The Self-Evaluation Report contains a status analysis, an assessment of the performance of the requirements of the standards of educational work and recommendations for the provision and improvement of the quality of the work of the institution.

The self-evaluation report is considered by the teacher's/expert council, expert's activities and the advice of the parents and it is adopted by the institution's management body.

The institution submits the Self-Evaluation Report to the Bureau for Educational Services and the Center for Vocational Education.

Based on the Self-Evaluation Report, the Team adopts the Self-Assessment Action Plan.

The self-evaluation action plan includes: priority areas, recommendations from the Self-Evaluation Report, activities, bearers, dynamics, success indicators, necessary resources and the way of tracking the realization.

Based on the Self-evaluation Action Plan, priority objectives of the annual work plan of the institution are set.

On the basis of the Self-Evaluation Action Plan, measures are implemented, monitored and evaluated, and then expert bodies periodically report achievements.

The process of internal evaluation (self-evaluation) is the legally defined obligation of the school, for quantitative indicators each year, and for qualitative indicators every second year.

Expert evaluation is carried out by the Bureau for Educational Services and the Center for Vocational Education by determining the quality of the work of the institution, by assessing compliance with the requirements of the standards of educational work, as well as by applying other criteria and indicators, in order to ensure and improve the quality of educational work and encourage self-evaluation.

The evaluation shall be conducted at least every four years in whole or in part on the basis of an assessment by the Bureau or the Centre.

Evaluation may also be carried out upon the request of the Ministry, that is, the inspection in charge of the field of education or on the reasoned request of the parents whose justification is assessed by the Bureau and the Centre.

Evaluation is carried out by educational supervisors or advisers-supervisors for quality in vocational education.

The evaluation process includes:

- preparing the evaluation;
- immediate insight;
- development of evaluation reports;
- monitoring the realization.

Preparation of the evaluation implies the preparation of an evaluation plan for the institution, the provision of information to the institution, the collection and analysis of data and the interviewing of participants in the educational process.

Evaluation is done by formulating key findings based on:

- analysis of records and pedagogical documentation of the institution;
- direct monitoring of teaching and other forms of educational and educational work;
- conversation with participants in the educational process;
- other actions according to the supervisor's assessment.

The evaluation report contains:

- the explanation of the non-conformity of the requirements of the standards in the work of the institution (shortcomings);
- assessment of the fulfilment of the requirements of the standards of educational work, key areas and institutions;

- proposal of measures for improvement (recommendations);
- attachment to the Evaluation Report containing reports on subjects and appropriate vocational education programs.

Based on the evaluation report, the director of the institution adopts a plan for providing and improving the quality of work and delivers it to the Bureau, or the Center, within 30 days from the date of receipt of the evaluation report.

The quality assurance and improvement plan contains: supervisor recommendations, goals to be achieved through the implementation of recommendations, specific activities, success indicators, time, activity holders, monitoring means and the necessary resources of the institution.

Based on established measures and activities from the plans, at the proposal of the expert bodies of the institution and the development program submitted by the principal, the managing authority adopts the development program of the institution with the aim of long-term development of the institution.

The development program of the institution is periodically monitored and coordinated, based on self-evaluation and evaluation.

The Bureau or Center periodically visits the institution in order to monitor the implementation of the recommendations for a period of two years.

After two years, the Bureau or the Center may conduct a control evaluation in cases where quality in key areas is assessed with "not satisfying" and "satisfying" in the manner and procedure prescribed for evaluation.

For the period 2017-2018, the external evaluation teams carried out an evaluation in 15 schools and one supervision with the organizer of adult education. Teams from the Center for Vocational Education visited about 280 employers to determine the material and technical conditions for involving employers in dual education, which is prescribed by the recent law amendments.

There were 13 additional supervisions of the organizer of adult education. The goal of supervision is to determine the functionality of institutions and better cooperation with the relevant institutions, the Center for Vocational Education and the Ministry of Education.

D.3.4 Creating and updating VET content

The process is led by the Ministry of Education and is done in close co-operation with the Sector Committees involving education and labour market institutions. Capacity-building of stakeholders in education and training is regularly implemented to support the learning outcomes approach. The 15 Sectoral Commissions actively participated in the qualifications development cycle.

In the frame of the IPA 2012 Programme, this was the focus of the activities and it will continue to be the main focus of the up-coming IPA 2015-2017 Programme

The NQF has been under development since 2010. Legislation provides for the development of a comprehensive NQF, encompassing all types and qualification levels for general, vocational and higher education, based on learning outcomes and referring to the eight EQF levels. A number of outcome-based qualifications is available; the development of new ones was in progress.

Montenegro referenced to the EQF in 2014. The NQF website includes the register of VET qualifications.

For the 2018/2019 school year the preparation of 16 new modularized educational programs based on learning outcomes has started, based on the adoption by the National Council for Education in June 2018. Educational programs are in the field of electrical engineering (6), hospitality (2), commerce (2), services (2), food processing (2) and traffic (2).

In 2018, 51 standards of occupation in the field of Engineering and Production Technologies, Information Technologies, Services, Tourism, Commerce, Catering, Agriculture, Food Processing and Veterinary and Transport and Communications were completed. 51 standards of professional qualifications were

completed. All of these standards have been adopted by relevant sectoral commissions and adopted by the Qualifications Council. 18 standards of qualifications of the level of education from the mentioned sectors were completed on the basis of the adopted standards of professional qualifications. These qualifications are classified in the National Qualifications Framework. In the preparation of standards and educational programs, more than 300 members of working groups participated for which training was organized in 2017.

For the school year 2019/2020. The Vocational Education Center has prepared, in cooperation with employers and educational institutions, 13 new educational programs, of which 8 programs are for a four-year duration, 5 in three years. In addition, three educational programs for students with special educational needs were adapted, 16 programs were prepared in total.

New educational programs are in the fields of construction, food processing, veterinary, traffic, chemical-pharmaceutical technology and music.

Adequate educational programs for students with special educational needs for school 2019/2020. year are:

- Cook, Level III for a four-year period,
- Hairdresser, Level III for a four-year duration and
- Hairdresser assistant, level II for three years

Process of developing qualifications in the VET system is defined by the Rulebook on procedures and development of qualifications from level 1 to level 5. The process starts with an initiative for new qualification submitted by any legal entity and approved by the sector committee and Council for qualifications. Next step is development of occupational standard, based on methodology and with significant involvement of employer's community. Based on occupational standard, qualification standard is developed and later training programme for adult education. All documents are developed based on specific methodologies, and coordination of the VET Centre.

Educational programmes are developed based on two or more occupational standards defining educational level qualification standard. The National Council approves educational programmes for Education. One stage in validating educational programmes is also public debate on the programmes, among professional community and any external audience.

The VET Centre or teachers associations mainly initiate revision of the educational programme in Montenegro.

D.3.5 EU key competences

Some of the key competences, especially those concerning basic skills such as mother tongue, foreign language, maths, science and computer literacy, have always been part of the curriculum of secondary VET in the country and their place has been preserved or even strengthened in the process of developing new curricula. Qualifications standards promoted further key competencies as integral part of any qualification. National competency standards for teachers and principals in all kinds of schools requiring that teachers promote the acquisition by students of the key competences and other soft skills (critical thinking and decision-making, cooperation, problem solving, creativity, adaptability, persistence, empathy and solidarity) were adopted by the Bureau for Education Services in 2016.

Three key competences - mother tongue, mathematics and a foreign language - formed integral part of the final (Matura) exams of VET schools graduates. External assessment of key competences was a relatively new area and only recently established in the country. The PISA 2015 results provided updated evidence for another ET2020 target - "underachievement in reading, math and science" - with half of 15-year-olds in the country functionally illiterate in the second and third tested subject areas and 41% of them functionally illiterate in reading, far worse than the respective EU averages. Montenegro had slightly improved its results in reading and maths as compared to the PISA 2012 survey (albeit from very high levels), while results in science had worsened.

When asked about PISA, Montenegro pointed out that a working group was formed in the Ministry of Education, which was divided into four groups, visited by all secondary schools in Montenegro. The aim was to bring PISA testing closer to all groups. Also, an inter-ministerial working group was formed, and

a document entitled quality and equity of education in Montenegro was prepared. The document aims to present what needs to be done in the education system and includes four parts: the significance of PISA, experience, what can be learned from the experiences and recommendations of what institutions should take in order to improve the education system. Also, an Action Plan that should be implemented by 2020 is prepared.

With regard to the implementation of the strategy for lifelong entrepreneurial learning (2015-2019), the Eurydice study “Entrepreneurship Education at School in Europe” and the 2015 Small Business Act (SBA) assessment evidenced good progress with integrating entrepreneurship key competences into Montenegrin education system, including VET. Further mainstreaming of entrepreneurship as a key competence as well as creating sustainable change in teacher training remain a challenge.

Promotion of key competences is also conducted by other means, e.g. through students’ competitions and events (4th National fair of student practice companies and entrepreneurial clubs from Montenegro), launching a bilingual secondary education (a pilot gymnasium was established in September 2016 in Podgorica; depending on the results, the option of introducing a similar concept in VET schools will be considered), etc.

The opportunities for acquiring underdeveloped key competences in CVET are primarily through active labour market policies for unemployed and vulnerable groups (e.g. Roma), helping them to catch up with functional literacy, ICT skills and foreign languages. The Annual plan for adult education in 2017 promotes the inclusion of the key competences in programmes for basic and vocational education of the adults.

Key competencies for Lifelong learning in Montenegro

VET law is providing definition of the key competencies stating that „Key competency is a transferable multifunctional package composed of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by an individual for personal development, inclusion and employment“.

In VET education, key competencies can be obtained on three ways: through general education, through VET/elected subjects and through extracurricular activities. In the process of developing specific qualification, first document which refers to the key competencies is qualification standard whereby for each learning unit, a specific key competence is listed. In addition, key competencies are listed in educational programme, whereby next to the list of learning outcomes to be achieved for specific module, also the list of key competencies for specific qualification is listed.

New modularized programmes are ensuring to students with special educational needs to acquire qualifications gradually, in accordance with their capabilities. Also, students who dropped-out the education system will also be able to acquire professional qualifications for a part of the program that has been successfully completed. Particular attention is paid to key competences and basic skills and their development through vocational education programs as the basis of lifelong learning and adaptation to individuals through rapid changes in technology and labour market requirements

As example of how the key competencies are formulated inside of specific educational programme, here is the sample from the Economy technician from one of the modules of this programme (so for each module there is specific definition of the key competencies and how should be integrated)

Key competences which are developed through this module

- Communication in the mother tongue (use of professional terminology verbally and in writing, expressing own arguments and conclusions in a convincing manner, developing critical thinking in the field of organisation of business entities)
- Digital competence (use of customized software for developing particular plans of business entities)
- Learn how to learn (encouraging students to work independently and persist in learning through motivation and desire to apply previously acquired knowledge)
- Social and civic competence (encouraging team work in the class for the purpose of constructive communication, expressing different opinions, encouraging responsibility and division of tasks in the performance of specific assignments)
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship (developing ability to plan, organise, prepare reports, assess, record, etc.)

- Cultural awareness and expression (encouraging comparison of own opinion with the opinion of others, identification and implementation of social and economic opportunities within a cultural activity)

In addition to empowering key competencies through VET and elective modules from any area, dedicated election modules have been developed to reach key competencies that relate to the Global Education Recommendations:

1. "Everyday Growth", including challenges of growth and adolescence, the importance of family as a socialization factor, the role and content of young subcultures, the influence of mass media on young people, the importance of applying healthy lifestyles, youth risk behaviours and prevention mechanisms.
2. "Social Networking and Globalization", which includes the position of young people in the process of globalization of society, the characteristics of basic human rights and freedoms, the social context of gender roles in culturally diverse societies, the importance of developing political awareness and achievement of sustainable development goals, opportunities and demands of the global labour market, literacy in everyday life, the features of cherry culture as a social phenomenon.
3. "Business culture", which includes techniques of successful communication, rules for resolving conflict situations, the influence of cultural differences among peoples on their mutual understanding, the rules in various areas of personal and professional activity

In all educational programs, there are compulsory general education subjects that meet the relevant key competences: Montenegrin / Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian and Literature, Mathematics, English, Informatics, as well as VET module in all educational programs named Entrepreneurship.

Key competences are also an integral part of the annual planning of teaching that teachers are doing at the beginning of the school year. In the form related to the planning of the educational work, there is a point related to the plan of realization of key competences in the appropriate module, when teachers are expected to undertake a more detailed plan for the development of key competences in their module.

During the curriculum development process all the teachers who were members of the working groups went through the program writing training, which included a part related to the importance of key competences in secondary vocational education, in addition to the profession that is certainly represented. Over 200 teachers have been trained in developing VET curricula.

After the adoption of educational programs, the Center for Vocational Education has organized trainings for teachers, directors and pedagogues for the planning of educational work. A significant part of the training related to the way of achieving key competencies within the professional modules. In the training, the presence of key competencies, especially in vocational education, is presented to the present, where students have fewer opportunities to acquire competences that are not related to the profession.

There is a need to work on the development of key competences in secondary vocational education because the significance they imply in personality development and lifelong learning is enormous.

D.3.6 Policies to strengthen quality assurance

Key areas of observation during the external evaluation of the VET provider are:

Area of managing the organization – whereby positive results identified are that there is comprehensive pedagogical and administrative documentation that gives an overall picture of the work of the school; school development plan is developed in most of the cases based on the possibilities of the school and the local community with realistic goals and tasks; continuity was established in most of the schools and the quality of work of the professional bodies of the school was raised. Areas of improvement are - analysis of success and governance at professional bodies of the school, as also to pay more attention to the analysis of the results of internal and external evaluation.

Area of teaching/learning and training - positive things identified through the external evaluation: teaching involves different learning strategies with a combination of different forms and methods of work; constructive feedback is provided to the students and they to achieve autonomy in their work. Area of improvement is to support students through additional and additional means, motivate teachers, CPD

of teachers, unify the criteria of assessment at the level of the assets, apply active methods of teaching preceded by creative preparation, improve cooperation between professional assets, include in a larger frontier employers in planning practical lessons in dual education, involve students in the planning extra-curricular activities.

Area of student's achievement - positive things identified through the external evaluation: in a growing number of schools, students' achievements are more specifically and more regularly analysed; schools plan realization of practical teaching in real working environment for all educational programs; schools prepare employers to work with students and provide assistance in planning, monitoring and evaluating pupils' achievements. Area for improvements are: to implement measures aimed at reducing pupils' absences and imposed educational measures; realize and involve more students in various projects; Include more students in school competitions; pay more attention to the analysis of the achievements of practical knowledge and skills..

Areas of cooperation with social partners - positive things identified through the external evaluation: most schools make a program of work with employers and social partners; schools within the quality team as affiliated members have employers, parents and students; In most schools after the quarterly period, joint meetings with employers and social partners are conducted and analysed and agreed on ways of improving practical teaching. Areas of improvement: researching the needs of social partners; plan and implement measures for more precise monitoring of each student; more involve social partners in planning, organizing and implementing education; make partnerships with social partners about joint projects.

Area of teaching resources - positive things identified: In schools, classrooms, workshops and laboratories are spatially and materially equipped for minimum working conditions; in all schools, a schedule for the use of workshops and laboratories has been made, and equipment and resources for achieving the goals of education are available to all the people. More attention should be paid to: adapt the spatial-technical conditions to students with special educational needs; make a plan for the priority procurement of missing equipment; material resources for support continue to improve continuously.

Area of quality of teachers, trainers and associates - positive things: schools make plans for professional development of teachers; pupils are mostly indifferent to the quality of work and support, as well as communication with teachers; over 95% of teachers have appropriate profession education and teacher training; there is an increasing incentive to award higher professorships. More work should be done on: motivating teachers for further training; plan and implement visits to relevant institutions; organize guest lectures; consider reports on hospitality with recommendations for improving the work of teachers; to enhance the organizing of lecture lectures and mutual visits of teachers; work on the organization of internal forms of training; form internal databases on teacher training.

In all schools, coordinators for modularized programs are appointed and they monitor the organization and implementation of educational programs and draft half-yearly reports and send them to the Center for Vocational Education, where the analysis is performed and recommendations are given. Based on the monitoring reports, school are in favour of this model as it bring more in focus correlation in teaching process. Impact is still be measured.

In schools where students perform practical training with the employer, there are Practical Teachers who monitor the organization and realization of practical training with employers and make half-yearly reports and send them to the Center for Vocational Education, where the analysis is performed and recommendations are given.

Vocational trainings with employers are organized for teachers of professional theoretical modules and practical classes.

Trainings from pedagogical knowledge are organized for instructors who follow children through practical training with employers.

A new Rulebook on the content, forms and methods of quality assurance of education was drafted, with purpose to improve efficiency in implementing external evaluation of the mixed schools, where emphasis was placed on joint supervision of the Center for Vocational Education and the Bureau of Educational Services. Furthermore, frequent visits to institutions that received poorer grades was planned as well as their plans of improvement were developed in detail.

It is planned to train the principals for managing changes in schools, the implementation of internal evaluation, as well as the development of an improvement plan.

It is planned to develop a methodology for conducting internal evaluation for adult education organizers.

The electronic database of the Ministry of Education has been expanded with the data of all adult education organizers.

II. 'Open floor'

III. Summary and analytical conclusions

The analysis shows that Montenegro has been addressing the main lines of the Riga conclusions. The country could make further progress along these lines if - in the remaining period till 2020 – takes into consideration the following issues:

- Introducing variety of CPD forms for teachers, in particularly school-based training
- Design tailor-made approach for induction period of the VET teachers.
- Improve teachers' skills in the field of key competences, digital skills and formative assessment and how it can act as a bridge between teaching and learning.
- Extend and make more sustainable system of financing CPD of teachers and adult education trainers.
- Strengthen the use of EQAVET indicators for quality monitoring and ensure the quick putting in place and regular functioning of VET tracking mechanisms
- Develop further engagement of the employment sector in CPD of VET teachers.
- Enhance participation in adult learning, while continue with NQF implementation and scaling up of the arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning
- Further strengthen the promotion of key competences in VET curricula, with a particular focus on opportunities to acquire/develop those skills through CVET, and reinforce monitoring of the acquisition of key competences, too
- Implement the Strategy for Teachers' Training in Montenegro 2017-2024 with special focus on in-company training of VET teachers and the continuing professional development of trainers and mentors in enterprises.

BUILDING BLOCK E: GOVERNANCE AND FINANCING OF VET

Building block E collects updates on governance and financing in VET. 'Governance' refers to all institutionalised multi-level participation in VET policy making and management, including the setting of objectives and their implementation and monitoring in any given domain of VET policy and at any given governance level (multi-level governance).

'Financing of VET' refers to the consistency between the policy framework and the budget mechanisms in place that channel the resources towards the achievement of policy objectives. Three elements are analysed: VET budgeting, mobilisation of resources for VET, and allocation and use of resources in VET.

E.1: Institutional arrangements

E.1.1 Effectiveness of institutional and governance arrangements

The Ministry of Education (MOE) leads the design of the strategic approach to VET (initial VET) and demonstrates a strong ownership of the European agenda. The Ministry of Education entrusts public

education institutions with its implementation, with a fair level of intra-sectorial coordination (with VET Centre, etc.). Stakeholder commitment is high and the strategy enjoys undiminished support by the country's political leadership. Stakeholders of designated institutions are involved at all levels (school-boards, National education council, National council for qualifications...). Past record of the previous action plan shows that the MoE and its institutions effectively ensured implementation.

E.1.2 Accountability, leadership and control

Each level of VET Governance is well defined in the legal framework. In each body responsible for development of government of the VET education, there are representatives of different stakeholders, from the government, civil and industry sector.

The main challenge in terms of accountability is linked to the absence of result-oriented indicators, which limits the accountability of stakeholders to reporting on the completion of planned activities as per the strategy and action plan, following a traditional, administrative approach, and does not instil a performance or impact measurement culture. This administrative activity reporting is performed quarterly.

With the information provided, it is not possible to draw a chart with the involved stakeholders, their lines of communication and interaction, including reporting and accountability lines.

There are no well-defined monitoring and evaluation tools, except an instrument that is used for checking if an activity or an action was implemented or not. Yet the Ministry of education is implementing a graduate tracer study targeting 2000 people, with a return rate still low (deadline is end October). There also exist different databases in Montenegro (Montenegrin Education Information System, databases from the Employment Agency, Tax Directorate, and University) with potential for monitoring and the need to harmonize them.

Financial reporting and auditing is relatively good, but the periodical financial reports are limited to recording if a spending was made or not. What is missing is cost effectiveness or efficiency elements

E.1.3 Governance reforms

In the changes to education laws in 2017 there were no changes in governance.

E.2: Involvement of non-state actors

E.2.1 Distribution of responsibilities between state and non-state actors in VET

The General law on education prescribes the responsibilities of state bodies and institutions and all other partners in planning, implementing and determining the quality of vocational education, in preparing and adopting standards, qualifications and programs, in teacher training, evaluation etc.

Non-state actors will be members of sectoral commissions that propose revision of existing and development of new qualifications, they are members of all national bodies that make the most important decisions in the field of education - define occupational standards and programs, participate in drafting draft laws, participate in the preparation and adoption of strategies and action plans. .

As regards social partners, the main challenge is their more effective contribution to the vocational education system, and therefore their operational participation in the implementation of strategic documents of vocational education. Therefore, in the phase of drafting laws, strategies and action plans, occupational standards and qualifications, adoption of educational programs, social partners actively participate. In the phase of implementing strategic measures and determining the effects of measures, their active participation is required.

E.2.2 Policies in support of participation of non-state actors

In addition to participating in the work of sectoral commissions and councils in the capacity of representatives of associations of employers, the Chamber of Economy of Montenegro participates in scholarship for students for deficient qualifications. It provides 10% scholarships for one academic year.

Fees for the work of non-state actors in commissions and other bodies are provided from the Budget. The budget provides benefits to students in dual education for first and second grade.

E.3: VET budget

E.3.1 Expenditure planning, VET budget formation and execution

Public expenditure on education in 2016 was 4.5% of GDP and 9.7% of total expenditures. In 2010 it was 4.4% of GDP and 9.5% of total public expenditure. Expenditure in 2016: 34,993 Euro for VET and General Secondary Education; out of which 27,797MEuro for VET and mainly on salaries; in 2013, 28.510; in 2014: 31.295;

The inter-sectorial prioritisation (at government level) of policies and strategic measures takes place through the medium-term strategy of the Government set out in the Economic and Fiscal Programme. Mid-term sectorial priorities are defined by those documents and therefore the budgetary resources are planned accordingly. Mid-term strategic priorities are translated into annual priorities, aligned to the Fiscal Strategy 2017 – 2020 and set on the basis of the Action Plan. The envelope of resources received from MoF is distributed among the sub-sectors of primary, secondary (where VET is included) and higher education according to the needs derived essentially from the number of students in each sub-sector. For secondary education, no distinction is done between general education and vocational education despite the highly different cost levels.

Financing of education

Budget designated for education, on annual level, is part of the general annual budget approved by the Government of Montenegro. From the budget of the MoE and in accordance with article 136 of [General Law on Education](#), all expenditures are financed, including wages, running costs, utilities costs, etc...

More specifically, this article defines that schools are financed by the state and the type of costs covered are:

- gross salaries and other personal earnings of employees;
- ongoing investment maintenance;
- material costs and expenditures for energy;
- continuous professional development of teachers;
- primary education of adults;
- external examination of students (final exam and matura);
- scholarships for talented students;
- scholarships for deficient qualifications;
- student competition;
- accommodation and nutrition of students in the home, or in the institutions;
- subsidizing textbooks with small circulation and textbooks for the education of national and ethnic groups;
- the cost of feeding children in a preschool institution whose parents are beneficiaries of maternity security;
- development, advisory and research work in education and upbringing;
- participation of pupils and others.

In addition to these allocations, the Government allocates special funds for the education system through the *capital budget*, within which a significant amount of funds is allocated for the improvement of school infrastructure.

Preschool institutions, primary schools, gymnasiums and vocational schools as well as institutions for education of children with special educational needs - resource centers, adult education institutions, pupils' homes, students dormitories and educational centers, receive funds from the budget of Montenegro on annual basis, based on:

- the economic cost of enrolling pupils for a particular educational program,
- the number of students, the coefficient of the program group in which the educational program is classified and other criteria typical for the educational program, and certain area. [Rulebook](#)

[on norms and standards for acquiring funds from public sources for institutions which are implementing educational programmes³⁰](#).

Amount of wages in education is regulated by the [Sectorial collective agreement for the field of education](#). This Agreement regulates certain rights and obligations of employees in public institutions in the field of pre-school education, basic education and basic education, secondary general education (gymnasium), vocational education and upbringing and education of children with special needs and rights and obligations of employers towards employees, as and the mutual rights and obligations of the contracting parties

Other sources of financing for public institutions:

In addition to the funds from the Budget of the State or the municipality, educational institutions may, in accordance with the Law, also be financed from:

- tuition fees in private institutions;
- fees paid by parents;
- income from property (lease);
- funds from the sale of services and products;
- donations, sponsorships and legacies;
- other sources.

The public institution that is part of the network of institutions is prohibited from funding from political parties. Also, an institution that is financed from public revenue, ie from a budget, can not require students, that is, participants to participate in the cost of education. Exception from this is more professional education where for the costs of practical education it can be determined participation in the amount of up to 20% of the cost of education for students for that educational program in a public institution as well as art education where students can be charged the participation of education costs, consent of the Ministry of Education.

Financing of private institutions

Private institutions are financed from the founders' funds that determine the amount of scholarship fees per student or child. Exceptionally, a private institution that performs publicly valid educational programs can be financed from the Budget of Montenegro in accordance with the General Law on Education if:

- runs an education program from the first to the final grade of education;
- performs an educational program for children of preschool age for at least one year;
- at least two classes of the first grade have been enrolled, and at least 35 pupils for art school;
- has recruited teachers and associates needed for the implementation of the educational program, in accordance with the law and other regulations.

The Ministry determines whether a private institution meets the conditions for financing the work from the funds from the Budget. And can finance the costs in accordance with the institution's compliance with the prescribed requirements. Secondary religious schools that perform publicly available educational programs can be financed from the budget of Montenegro, in accordance with the Rulebook on standards and standards for obtaining funds from public revenues that realize publicly available educational programs.

If a private institution is financed from the budget, the tuition fee per student or child can be up to max 10% higher than the funds provided by the student or the child in the public institution.

30

<http://www.mps.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=231272&rType=2&file=Pravilnik%20%20%20normativima%20i%20standardima%20za%20sticanje%20sredstava%20iz%20javnih%20prihoda%20za%20ustanove.docx>

If a private institution meets the requirements for financing educational activities from the budget, mutual rights and obligations between a private institution and a state are regulated by an administrative contract.

Fund for quality and talents

A public institution in the field of primary and secondary education that realizes income from property (leasing), funds from the sale of services and products or other sources is obliged to pay up to 30% of these funds to a special account of the Ministry used for improving the quality of teaching and talents. The criteria, method and procedure of allocation of funds are regulated by the [Rulebook on the criteria, method and procedure for allocating funds for improving the quality of teaching and talents](#)³¹.

Scholarship and incentives for deficitary occupations

From school year 2017/2018. In accordance with the General Law on Education, the Ministry of Education provides scholarships for short-term qualifications to pupils who are educated on three-year programs for acquiring qualifications recognized as deficient in the labor market. In addition, the Ministry of Education, in accordance with Article 49 of the Vocational Education Law, provides compensation to pupils of the first and second grade of educational programs for a three-year period that they practically practice with the employer and have signed an individual contract on practical education (dual form of education). The amount of compensation is for the first year of education of at least 10% and for the second year of education at least 15% of the average net salary in Montenegro. Third year compensation is provided by the employer.

E.4: Mobilisation of resources for VET

E.4.1 Sources and mechanisms of funding for VET

Financing mechanisms (including for resource allocation, and reporting and auditing) are well defined by the Ministry of finance. Resource allocation methods are based on standard unit costs common to general secondary education and secondary VET, which should be changed. Wages are the main cost element and their implementation falls under the responsibility of existing MoE staff and subordinated institutions.

The main financing source is the state budget, with international donors contributing until recently mainly through technical assistance (EU also provided equipment directly to VET). Recently private enterprises started to contribute, mainly through in-kind contribution, investing their physical resources through the dual system of education. VET schools are allowed to raise their own resources, but their level is rather modest and affected by MoE rule of retaining one third of school own income. The VET resources are insufficiently diversified, while their distribution to VET providers follows a disadvantageous mechanism (the calculation method is the same as for general education despite intrinsic higher VET costs).

E.4.2 Diversification and mobilisation of funding for VET

The diversification of financing sources to incur the costs is a recurrent challenge. There is no decentralisation of the sector; there was an intention to transfer parts of the financing responsibilities to municipalities, but the conditions for implementation do not seem to be yet in place. In terms of financial decentralisation (links between central budget and municipalities' budgets), the Law on Local Self-Government Financing establishes the financial autonomy of the municipalities, which are funded for half by their own resources (real estate tax, surtax on personal income, local administrative and communal charges and fees, etc.), and for another half by the State budget. Funding from central budget is regulated by the Local Government Finance Law and it takes the form of conditional grants, respectively assigned revenues. An equalisation fund also provides additional revenues to poorer municipalities. Conditional subsidies can also be granted by the State for specific capital investments.

³¹ <http://www.mps.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=305717&rType=2&file=Pravilnik%20-%20Fond%20za%20kvalitet%20%20i%20talente.docx>

E.5: Allocation and use of resources in VET

The school budget is determined in accordance with the norms and standards established by law and other regulations. The number of teachers is determined depending on the number of students, ie children and the number of classes, that is, the groups and norms of classes determined by law. The required number of non-resident personnel is determined depending on the number of students, ie children, the mode of heating, etc. in accordance with the norms established by the Rulebook on standards and standards for obtaining funds from public revenues for institutions that implement publicly valid educational programmes. School work is financed entirely from the State budget.

E.5.1 Patterns of resource allocation

E.5.2 Policies to ensure adequacy of resources for VET and equity in their allocation

ensure that the allocations are sufficient to address the financial needs in the VET system Rulebook on norms and standards for acquiring funds from public sources for institutions which are implementing educational programmes ensure that the allocations are sufficient for address the financial needs in the VET system.

II. 'Open floor'

III. Summary and analytical conclusions

Governance in VET will be expected to move towards shared and complex governance system with the participation of main stakeholders and implemented at national, regional, local, institutional and sector level. Establishing a real monitoring and evaluation function will enable the assessment of policy progress in VET and help further engagement of stakeholders and increase their accountability and accountability for a more transparent process of reform.

The priority for strengthening partnerships with the private sector should be supported by decisions that allow and authorize stakeholders (ministries, social partners, chambers, sectoral associations, ..) to have clear responsibilities and responsibilities in the financing of vocational education.

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Montenegrin VET systems will deliver excellent and inclusive education and training that offers opportunities for both economic and social integration and which fosters democratic citizenship and values - thus helping all individuals to develop their full potential. They should be built on:

- Skills and competences which ensure employability, adaptability and the personal development of individuals
- Provision which is accessible, valued, modern and attractive to all
- Integrated, responsive and diversified systems with governance and funding which foster excellence, inclusion and effectiveness.

2.1 Main findings per building bloc

Montenegro made a good progress on creating inclusive environment in VET for all students interested to attend VET education. Flexibility of the system is achieved through revision of the VET standards, enabled mobility of students, continuous decrease of numbers referring to early drop out, but also possibility for continuing education after dropping out from the formal education system. System measures for inclusion of marginalized or socially vulnerable groups has been established, and the success of these measures is still to be measured.

Due to huge changes in the structure of industries contributing the most to the country development, as also the structure of unemployed population is very much similar from year to year, Montenegro is continuing VET sector development in line with VET Strategy and recent policy framework changes

(laws and bylaws). The developments are mainly focused on engagement of employers in developing VET standards, as also creating flexible qualifications in order to establish more flexible paths for students and adult learners to acquire skills needed on the labour market.

Further digitalization of the teaching and learning process is based on improving IT infrastructure, as also improvement of digital skills of students, teachers, but also institutions in introducing online collaborative spaces.

It is necessary too improve connection between education and labour market needs and flexibility learning path. The challenge of skills shortages is present. VET, together with the employers and the other partners, will need to address this challenge and support the competitiveness. It is necessary more investments in development of skills anticipation mechanisms and foresight methods, including at sector and technological level in view of understanding specific impact of changes within sectors and occupation.

VET will continue to prepare young people for entering and successfully participating in the labour market. At the same time, VET will need to respond to increasing needs for upskilling and reskilling of the adult population including the socially disadvantaged as well as high potentials, migrants, refugees, low-skilled and unemployed which will enable them to stay or re-enter the labour market and to move freely and in a self-determined manner through their educational and professional careers.

As recommended in the European Commission's Report for 2018, although Montenegro is currently out of the main Western Balkan migrant route on its path to the EU, it must strengthen its capacity to cope with the sudden rise in migration-related pressures and urgently address issues of reception capacities, including special attention to be paid to children. Bearing this in mind in action plans, it is necessary to define the measures that would be taken if it happens.

Emerging new technologies and work organisation formats will need to be faster captured through skills anticipation systems and translated to VET provision in terms of needed skills, qualifications and curricula per sectors and occupations.

VET systems will need to develop 'fast response' mechanisms of both stable quality assured core qualifications/skills pathways and flexible formats of adding new or higher-level skills.

VET will need to move from process-oriented, input and supply driven model to a result-oriented approach, in view of meeting expectations of learners in terms of adequate and quality skills, of employers in terms of productivity gains and of society in view of a contribution to growth and social stability.

The promotion of vocational education has gained a recognizable format through the creation of a campaign for the promotion of vocational education that is carried out every year during the enrolment period.

Focus in the forthcoming period is to extend number of programmes referring to inclusion of students with special education needs, so that they can have equal access to the VET programmes.

There are already some general mechanisms which can follow outplacement of the VET students, but this area is something to be focused in the forthcoming period, in particularly by integrating data about success in MEIS and other registers owned by other state agencies (employment agency, university, tax authorities, etc..), so that permanent system of tracing VET graduates can be established.

Career guidance system for VET students should be further empowered at the school level (end of primary and throughout secondary education) and quality control of this support should be established at the system level. This will significantly influence the choice of proper VET education for the students, but also give them opportunity to identify appropriate employment opportunities also during education process.

The overall financing mechanism (at the level of the Ministry of Finance) is well defined and sufficiently effective in relation to budgetary principles. Cross-sectoral prioritization (at government level) policies and strategic measures are implemented through the Government's medium-term strategy outlined in the Economic and Fiscal Program. These documents define medium-term sectoral priorities, and based on this, budget funds are planned. Medium-term strategic priorities are transposed into annual priorities, which are in line with the Fiscal Strategy 2017-2020 and set up on the basis of the Action Plan. The total

funds received from the Ministry of Finance are divided into primary, secondary (including vocational) and higher education in accordance with needs. The needs arise essentially from the number of students and students in each subsector.

Regarding social partners, the main challenge lies in their effective contribution to the VET system and therefore their operational involvement in the VET strategy implementation. At the design phase, the VET strategy is the product of a broad consultation process involving public and private stakeholders, with the joint decision-making process.

2.2 Recommendations for action

This section presented the country key priority areas, recommendations and targets for improvement actions, bearing in mind the level of development of vocational education and training, the challenges and recommendations of the relevant EU bodies:

VET needs to stay strong, stable and predictable at the core by providing learners with the skills and transversal competences that will empower them to lead a self-determined professional life and master numerous career transitions. In this respect, VET should build on the foundations of proficiency in basic skills, including digital and entrepreneurial skills.

VET needs to be flexible and its governance structures need to be informed by skills anticipation and graduate monitoring systems to provide learners with quality relevant vocational skills that respond to current skills needs, and also meet the market's future demands.

VET needs to be learner-centred, providing individualised learning composed of an appropriate mix of modern learning environments, including all forms of work-based learning and ICT based learning

VET systems need to ensure effective access and training entitlement for all learners with a particular focus on socio-economically disadvantaged, migrants, refugees, the low-skilled and the NEETs

VET needs to be career-long and transparent, facilitating validation and recognition of prior learning, VET should be more attractive through permeability and well-established progression routes supported by quality and effective guidance services.

Regarding quality assurance and teacher training, it is needed:

- Introducing variety of CPD forms for teachers, in particularly school-based training
- Design tailor-made approach for induction period of the VET teachers.
- Improve teachers' skills in the field of key competences, digital skills and formative assessment and how it can act as a bridge between teaching and learning.
- Extend and make more sustainable system of financing CPD of teachers and adult education trainers.
- Strengthen the use of EQAVET indicators for quality monitoring and ensure the quick putting in place and regular functioning of VET tracking mechanisms
- Develop further engagement of the employment sector in CPD of VET teachers.
- Enhance participation in adult learning, while continue with NQF implementation and scaling up of the arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning
- Further strengthen the promotion of key competences in VET curricula, with a particular focus on opportunities to acquire/develop those skills through CVET, and reinforce monitoring of the acquisition of key competences, too
- Implement the Strategy for Teachers' Training in Montenegro 2017-2024 with special focus on in-company training of VET teachers and the continuing professional development of trainers and mentors in enterprises.

VET systems need to be integrated within overall education and training and skills governance systems and with employment and social policies as well as forward looking economic and innovation strategies with a proactive role of VET in co-shaping innovation

VET systems need to be based on governance models which involve all relevant public and private stakeholders, ensure effective and equitable social dialogue with the trade unions and employers and

provide with an appropriate degree of autonomy of VET providers as well as equitable and sustainable funding which rewards / stimulates excellence and flexibility in VET.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1.1 Quantitative evidence

TABLE 1. TITLE

	Heading	Heading
Heading	16.9	18.8
Heading	53.2	55.6
Heading	8.5	11.2

Source: National Office of Statistics

Annex 3: Benchmarking annex [for Candidate Countries]

How the benchmarking and monitoring of the MTDs will be done in the Torino Process?

Benchmarking is not something new, it was already included within the Torino Process 2014 and 2016 to encourage the Candidate countries to use more of evidence in policy-making in the field of education and training.

These topics are also included in the overall objectives of raising the quality of VET, following the Riga Conclusions, and this is where the link with the monitoring of the progress on VET and the MTDs will come into the picture. The analytical framework includes specific information (quantitative and qualitative) which can be used to monitor progress of countries in each of the five areas.

The benchmarking and the monitoring of the MTDs remain indicative and based on voluntary participation. It will be primarily up to the countries to take action and to follow up the conclusions of the monitoring and benchmarking exercise.

Which benchmarks will be used in the Torino Process 2018-2020?

A few indicators related to Education and Training 2020 Framework have been selected for benchmarking of the Candidate and potential candidate Countries within the Torino Process 2018-20 round:

INDICATORS USED FOR BENCHMARKING¹

Early leavers from education and training

(ET 2020 headline target)

The share of 18–24-year-olds having attained at most lower secondary education and not receiving further education or training

Montenegro: NEET 2017 (aged 15-24): 16.7%, 16.3 M and 17.1 W; goes down, but high

Tertiary education attainment

(ET 2020 headline target)

The share of 30–34-year-olds having successfully completed university or university-like education

Underachievement in reading, maths and science

(ET 2020 target)

The share of 15-year-olds failing to reach level 2 in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) for reading, mathematics and science

Montenegro: Math: 2009: 403; 2012: 410; 2015: 418

Reading: 2009: 408; 2012: 422; 2015: 427

Science: 2009: 401; 2012: 410; 2015: 411

Adult participation in lifelong learning

(ET 2020 target)

The share of 25–64-year-olds receiving education or training

Montenegro: 2015: 3%, 2016: 3.3%, 2017: 2.8%

Employment rate

(EU 2020 headline target)

Individuals aged 20–64 in employment as a percentage of the total population in the same age group

Montenegro: 52-53%

Early leaving from education illustrate the difficulties young people face in today's world, as well as the economic and social consequences of their finding themselves outside both the labour market and the education system. They also underline the importance of keeping young people in education and training.

Tertiary educational attainment. A highly skilled workforce is fundamental to global competitiveness and a driver of economic growth and prosperity. Furthermore, it is expected that in the future most new jobs will require high levels of skills. Older cohorts of workers with low educational attainment should be steadily leaving the workforce to be replaced by better educated younger generations.

Underachievement in reading mathematics and science. In the context of high youth unemployment and a deteriorating labour market situation, building the foundation skills is seen as a key outcome of initial education. Acquiring these competences is crucial in building the foundations for long-term economic growth and ensuring individuals' social inclusion. It should also be pointed out that socio-economic status is still by far the most important determinant for acquiring key basic competences.

Adult participation in lifelong learning. Evidence shows that those most in need of upgrading their skills are barely represented in continued learning. Same patterns could be observed in adult participation in lifelong learning which holds true both for EU Member States and also for the ETF partner countries: is negligible among the low skilled or unemployed. The lack of lifelong learning opportunities creates a low-skills trap, especially for adults without an upper secondary education (a large proportion of the population in the partner countries, see above), who are most in need of up-skilling.

Employment rate. This indicator is used at the EU level for monitoring at a glance the developments and challenges in the field of employment for the EU and each Member State. The EU has set itself the target of reaching an employment rate of 75% by 2020. This target should be seen in relation to the EU's agenda for increasing overall employability. It is complemented by a specific benchmark on **employability of recent graduates** from upper secondary to tertiary education aged 20–34. This benchmark is mainly used to illustrate a labour-market rigidity that is disproportionately affecting new entrants to the workforce. It also highlights the need to raise the employability of graduates through strengthening the quality and relevance of their education and training, which is also a goal shared by the partner countries.