



TESEUS Country snapshot:

## SLOVAK REPUBLIC



Provided by:

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## A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND MAIN FINDINGS

- Slovakia has a strong IVET tradition, with about 65% of all upper secondary learners participating in IVET programmes. Practically all initial education and training (IVET) takes place within the formal education system. 87% of learners in upper secondary VET are in public schools.
- IVET, regardless of ownership, is subsidised from the state budget through per learner financing. In addition to per learner state funding, schools also attract additional funding.
- There are several VET fields that are specifically related to business and entrepreneurship, either general or in connection to crafts and services. Except of these, other VET fields can be considered as not-business-focused. At least one of the business-focused fields of study is provided at 39.9% of the entire population of secondary VET schools. Altogether 12.1% of all secondary VET students in full-time internal study are studying in business-oriented VET fields.
- The main authority responsible for the school-based IVET is the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of The Slovak Republic. As a specially dedicated organization to VET, the ministry has established the State Institute of Vocational Education.
- Public secondary VET schools are established and governed by the self-governing regions. Out of 441 secondary VET schools in Slovakia, 337 are public, 87 are private and 17 are church-affiliated.
- Educational aspect of secondary VET schools belongs to the competence of the ministry. There is a two-level decentralized curricular model - schools can create their own curricula ("school educational programme") based on the "state educational programmes" (StEP). The StEPs are composed of content standards and performance standards (learning outcomes). For each educational level and each VET study field, the StEP defines the number of lessons (general and vocational - divided into theoretical and practical) and number of disponible lessons for schools.
- Entrepreneurship education (EE) is, in a rather limited scope and depth, a compulsory part of VET in Slovakia. All the 23 StEPs for VET at all levels comprise the "Economic education" educational standard. It includes content standards on "Education towards entrepreneurship" and "World of labour" and related performance standards. National standard of financial literacy (that comprises some attributes of entrepreneurial literacy) has to be implemented within these standards.
- To fulfil these requirements, schools have to develop (or adopt available ready-to-deploy) courses or integrate the necessary aspects into other subjects (mostly into "Civics").
- Also, they can join one of the two major initiatives aimed at EE for secondary students - Practice Enterprise programme (State Institute of Vocational Education) and JA Firma (Junior Achievement Slovakia). We estimate that more than half of business-focused secondary VET schools and one third of the non-business secondary VET schools participate in at least one of these initiatives.
- Individual small-scale projects and initiatives aimed at EE can occur at specific schools. However, they are often temporary or individual initiatives, rather than part of a systematic initiative.
- Access to mentoring and coaching for IVET students interested in entrepreneurship is facilitated especially through involvement in one of the above-mentioned training initiatives (they both involve mentors and tutors from business). Individual pathways to mentoring can lead through participation in work-based learning, or through generic mentoring schemes.
- There are no institutionalized support mechanisms and initiatives aimed at firm creation, and no information channels on available support programmes or start-up procedures specifically for IVET students. Also, business incubators are not present at IVET schools in Slovakia. However, IVET students (like anyone else) have access to generic measures, channels and incubators.
- There is no strategy or action plan explicitly covering promotion and support of entrepreneurship for IVET students and fresh graduates. The entire IVET agenda has a rather dominant "employee producing" setting, while focus on entrepreneurship is quite weak (of course, except of business-focused secondary VET schools or study fields).

## **B. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF IVET SYSTEM IN SLOVAKIA**

### **General overview of IVET in Slovakia**

In Slovakia, practically all initial education and training (IVET) takes place within the formal education system. Thus, the following information will, unless stated differently, consider the school-based VET system. Slovakia has a strong VET tradition, with about 65% of all upper secondary learners participating in VET programmes (SCSTI, 2018). Being among the most open in the EU and with a high employment share in manufacturing cars and electronics, its economy relies heavily on vocationally skilled people. Nevertheless, employers signal the need for reform: to move from school-based VET to combining school- and company-based learning and to ensure a better match between the type of VET programmes people choose and the skills employers need (CEDEFOP, 2016).

The Slovak education and training system aims at providing all learners with at least upper secondary education, mainly through school-based VET. Recently, a dual VET systems has been introduced, combining school-based VET with on-the-job training in the involved companies. VET at all levels – lower secondary, upper secondary and post-secondary – is delivered by secondary VET schools and is highly regulated through legislation and detailed curricula. Most VET providers are public – 87% of learners in upper secondary VET are in public schools. Initial VET, regardless of ownership, is subsidised from the state budget through per learner financing. Capital expenditures are covered by the bodies that establish the schools (and by the state in case of emergency). In addition to per learner state funding, schools also attract additional funding - private schools collect fees, church-affiliated VET schools can benefit from community donations (CEDEFOP, 2016).

The levels of IVET include lower secondary VET (2-3 years, ISCED 253); upper secondary VET that is divided into school-based four-year programmes (ISCED 354), four-year programmes (ISCED 354) with up to 50% work-based learning (school-based or dual), and three-year programmes (ISCED 353) with up to 60% work-based learning; and post-secondary non-tertiary VET. Most VET programmes are provided at upper secondary level. Participation in lower secondary VET, post-secondary and performing arts programmes is marginal (CEDEFOP, 2016).

In relation to business/entrepreneurship, it is important to distinguish one of the VET fields/branches – economics and services. This branch includes fields of study that are specifically related to business and entrepreneurship, either general or in connection to crafts and services (e.g. business academy, international trade, school of business, trade and business, business in crafts and services). These fields can be provided by special types of schools - so called “business academies”, “secondary vocational business schools” or “secondary vocational schools of trade and services”. In addition, these fields can be sometimes found in so called joint secondary schools that provide more study branches and fields (including business-focused as well as non-business-focused). As these VET study fields are essentially devoted to entrepreneurship as a career path, they shall not be considered in our perspective, which is aimed at firm-creation and entrepreneurship promotion in non-business-focused IVET.

### **Policies for IVET**

The main authority responsible for the school-based IVET is the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of The Slovak Republic (hereinafter in this section referred to as “Ministry”). The ministry supports VET schools by providing regulations for content, pedagogy, and staff qualifications. In addition, some VET schools are under the responsibility of the interior and health ministries.

VET governance on country-level comprises the following coordinating and advisory bodies (CEDEFOP, 2016):

- the National VET council – a coordinating body affiliated to the government
- regional VET councils (eight) – prepare regional policy documents related to VET
- sectoral (skills) councils – provide expertise and support creation of a national occupations system
- sectoral assignees – institutions selected by chambers and employer associations to represent employer interests by VET study field as professional counterparts to education authorities and experts
- Employer council for dual VET

As a specially dedicated organization to VET, the ministry has established the State Institute of Vocational Education. The institute acts as a coordinating, pedagogical, educational, research, informational, expert and methodological authority in the field of vocational education and training, life-long education and guidance. The institute operates as an independent legal entity that is directly subordinate to the ministry.

State policies related to school-based VET are regularly under revision to meet actual needs of industry, labour market and society as such. Stakeholder participation in policy making is assured and embedded in policy-making processes. However, some argue that the mismatch between graduates' qualification structure and skills level and needs of industry still remain considerable. Recently, the most significant policy change was the introduction of a dual VET system that combines school-based VET with on-the-job training in the involved companies. Due to its principal orientation on producing future employees in collaboration with companies or industries, we will not consider it in the context of this work.

### **IVET schools' founders and governance**

Public secondary VET schools are established and governed by the self-governing regions (note: Slovakia is divided into eight such regions). It is a part of their delegated competency in state governance. According to legislation, schools can be established also by private subjects and by churches. The ministry maintains a central school network – a list of schools that have a licence to provide education and training. Within the overall population of 441 secondary VET schools in Slovakia (as of September 2018; SCSTI, 2018), 337 of them are public, 87 are private and 17 are church-affiliated.

The self-governing regions are responsible for allocation of state per learner subsidy, as well as for setting thresholds for maximum number of students accepted for the 1<sup>st</sup> year of full-time study, for all schools within its territory. Also, it is responsible for controlling of certain aspects of educational and other processes at schools (division of competencies between self-governing regions, the ministry and its bodies is specified in the respective legislation). Within the schools established and governed by the self-governing region (i.e. the public secondary VET schools in our case), the self-governing region appoints schools' headmasters and supervises schools' operational and strategic management issues. Thus, in the sector of public secondary VET schools, self-governing regions are the most important governing bodies.

## **Curricula creation**

Educational aspect of secondary VET schools belongs to the competence of the ministry which supports schools by providing regulations for content, pedagogy, and staff qualifications. As for curricula development, a reform in 2008 introduced its decentralization, after which are schools able to create their own curricula based on the so-called “state educational programmes” – the national curricula setting the educational standards, which is issued by the ministry. As a result, there is a two-level curricular model, comprising of the state educational programme (1<sup>st</sup> level) and school educational programme (2<sup>nd</sup> level).

The state educational programmes are composed of content standards and performance standards (which can be perceived as equivalent to learning outcomes). This structure reflects the reduced emphasis on the content and increased importance on required competences and learning outcomes. Currently, there are 23 state educational programmes that cover the major VET fields. The state educational programmes for these fields are prepared by the State Institute of Vocational Education. In addition, several initial VET fields are under the competence of ministries of health and interior, that are autonomous in education programming. The state educational programme is obligatory for schools which need to respect it and embed it into their school educational programmes.

As stated above, schools prepare their own curricula – so called “school educational programmes”. They must follow the respective state educational programme, but they decide how to implement it and how to use the set of disponible lessons, which is set for each VET study field and educational level individually. In their decisions, VET schools can reflect their specific profile, needs of the region and inputs from stakeholders (e.g. representatives of the region and/or municipality, industry, employers, parents, students etc.). For each educational level and each VET study field, the state educational programme defines the number of lessons and its division between lessons in general education, lessons in vocational education (divided into theoretical and practical lessons) and disponible lessons (each school decides how to use the available set of disponible lessons).

A specific approach to educational programming is applied for the dual VET system. However, as this system is mainly aimed at training future employees for a particular industry or employer, we do not consider the business/entrepreneurship education aimed at firm creation relevant. Therefore, we will not further describe educational programming in dual VET system.

## **Business/entrepreneurship/related curricula**

As for business/entrepreneurship-related curricula in the context of school-based IVET, all state educational programmes for secondary vocational schools are aligned with the National standard of financial literacy (currently its version 1.2 from 2017) elaborated by the ministry. Within this standard, some basic aspects of entrepreneurial competences are embedded. However, their coverage is very elementary and low. Unfortunately, there is no equivalent document especially covering business/entrepreneurial literacy or entrepreneurial competences. Ministry has issued a methodological guidelines document on implementation of the National standard of financial literacy into state educational programmes for VET. All the 23 state educational programmes for VET include the “Economic education” educational standard as a common curricular standard for all fields of study on the respective educational level. This educational standard includes, for different educational levels, (besides others) the content standards on “Education towards entrepreneurship” and “World of labour”, as well as the related performance standards (equivalent to learning outcomes). As they are part of the state educational programme, these standards must be implemented by schools.

Across all VET fields, the “Education towards enterprise” content standard and related performance standards for the respective educational levels are very similar. Thus, we provide below an example of these standards for the VET field “Food industry”:

#### Lower secondary level (ISCED 253)

- Content standard: The content is aimed at education towards entrepreneurship, the nature of entrepreneurial activity and different forms of small and medium-sized entrepreneurship and its state support. Students learn about financial sustainability of a private business, basics of business ethics, and responsibility of businesses to consumers and the state.
- Performance standard: Describe own possibilities on a labour market and for own personal and career development. Explain an example of setting up a sole-trading in crafts.

#### Upper secondary 3-year (ISCED 353)

- Content standard: The content is aimed at getting familiar with the nature of entrepreneurial activity, different legal forms of businesses and their characteristics. Student gains basic knowledge on legal regulation of working relations in business. Students learn about financial sustainability of a private business, the importance of a business plan, its structure and contents, about basics of business ethics, as well as about responsibility of businesses to consumers and the state.
- Performance standards: describe main legal forms of business and their basic characteristics, consider appropriate legal forms of business in his/her field, describe main responsibilities of an entrepreneur towards the state.

#### Upper secondary 4-year (ISCED 354)

- Content standard: Students become familiar with legal terminology related to business, with the nature of entrepreneurial activity, principles of legal regulation of business in Slovakia. In more detail, they learn about sole-trading/sole-proprietorship form of business, and they learn to prepare a simple business plan.
- Performance standards: Describe the main aspects of entrepreneurship. Explain main principles of legal regulation of business in Slovakia. Explain the terms “sole-proprietorship”, “trade licence”, “illegal business”. Prepare a simple business plan – a sales and financial plan.

To fulfil the requirements of the above-mentioned standards, schools (and, in particular, the responsible teachers) have to develop (or adopt available) respective courses or integrate the necessary aspects into other subjects (very often, such subject is “Civics”). Also, one of the ways to provide education and training that meet the required standards is providing a practical experience by involvement in one of the two major initiatives aimed at entrepreneurship education for secondary students (see Section D. below) - Practice Enterprise programme (State Institute of Vocational Education) and JA Firma (Junior Achievement Slovakia). In its pedagogical and organizational guidelines, the ministry recommends to all secondary schools to participate in either of these initiatives to support entrepreneurial, economic and financial education and training of their students. Due to availability of these ready-to-deploy solutions, their approval by the ministry and their specific strengths, considerable number of schools (more than 4 in 10 – see Section C. below) adopt one of these concepts. Of course, some interesting individual efforts at individual schools might also occur, but their mapping is difficult.

The official materials aimed at helping teachers to implement the standards related to entrepreneurship/business (e.g. a didactical handbook for teachers responsible for delivering “Education towards enterprise” content standard) are based on process perspective on entrepreneurship (e.g. aimed at steps required to establish a business or perform business planning) and neglect the broader importance and applicability of the enterprising quality. They are stuck to traditional business perspective on enterprising. In addition, they emphasize assumptions that “people either are entrepreneurs or not” and “entrepreneurship cannot be learned”, that are nowadays considered as outdated. There is a need for modern approaches and switch from process perspective towards developing enterprising mindset of students and creating entrepreneurial atmosphere in classrooms and at entire schools.

### **Cooperation with business practice**

As the main purpose of VET schools is to produce well-trained and skilled graduates for the labour market (and also for further levels of education), cooperation with business sector is quite intensively embedded in the school-based VET system.

As indicated above, representatives of business sector are involved in IVET policy making and governance through participation in coordinating and advisory bodies on various levels. Also, business sector has a considerable influence on VET policy implementation. Namely, within school-based VET, business sector representatives can participate in the development of:

- VET programmes – participation in designing the national curricula and provision of VET in regions, cooperation with the State Institute of Vocational Education in education programming
- Individual school curricula (i.e. school educational programmes) – curricula developed autonomously by schools must be discussed with business sector to comply with labour market requirements
- Final examinations – participation in examination design and implementation

Business sector representatives can also approach schools if they perceive a need to establish a new IVET programme, and together they can develop its concept and approach education authorities. After passing through all levels and relevant subjects involved in VET governance and policy implementation, a new experimental IVET programme can be implemented.

Also, business sector representatives – particular companies (employers) cooperate with secondary VET schools in providing space for practical lessons and work-based learning (the work-based learning can take place at school or in a company) of IVET learners.

The most recent and a specific aspect of cooperation with business practice is the already mentioned dual VET system, that has been established in 2015. In fact, it stimulates provision of work-based learning in school-based secondary VET. Practical training is expanded and offered under the supervision of companies based on adjusted curricula. Companies take responsibility for training provision - they find learners and sign individual training contracts that must be complemented by an institutional contract between the company and a VET school. Learners in dual VET in Slovakia are students and not employees of a company that provides training. Companies can even partly (up to 40%) delegate the training back to schools. Thus, it is in the companies’ interest to attract learners to VET and to deliver job-relevant training. Development of this scheme and involvement of companies is stimulated by financial incentives from state dual VET budget (co-financed by the EU funds).

## C. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF EXISTING DATA AND ANALYSES FOR SLOVAKIA

### Analysis of policies, studies, reports and other documents

Relevant findings related to entrepreneurship education and firm creation support in the environment of Slovak (not only) IVET schools can be found in the Eurydice Report “Entrepreneurship Education at School in Europe” (EC/EACEA/Eurydice, 2016). According to the report, there is no specific national strategy for entrepreneurship education (EE) in Slovakia. However, in detail, EE is addressed in detail within the “National Youth Strategy 2014-2020”. Also, other strategic documents linked to EE include the “Lifelong Learning Strategy 2011” (one of the key areas is related to key competences, included the entrepreneurship competence) and the “Modernisation Programme Slovakia 21” (A long-term strategy on key fields of national policy, which also addresses EE as a measure to increase the employment of graduates. One of its goal is to support the development of entrepreneurial skills and the achievement of basic knowledge of entrepreneurship and economics in upper secondary school).

The National Youth Strategy 2014-2020 highlights creativity and entrepreneurship as one of nine priorities, breaking this down into four strategic objectives with 13 supporting actions. The strategic objectives are as follows:

- Information on opportunities - identify high-quality, functioning and sustainable programmes and projects.
- Entrepreneurial literacy - support education for entrepreneurship and EE.
- Entrepreneurship for the future - raise awareness through positive information on the achievements of entrepreneurs and the benefits they bring to society, and the possibilities of start-ups.
- Cooperation with entrepreneurs - mentoring for young people with innovative ideas.

As for the explicit integration of entrepreneurship in the curriculum, as the report continues, EE is part of the curricula as a topic integrated in compulsory subjects in primary and secondary education (including in school-based IVET). In school-based IVET it is integrated in civics, laboratory exercises and workshop practice. The report also mentions the Practice Enterprise programme by the State Institute for Vocational Education (see Section D. below).

A comprehensive overview has been recently produced by the working group responsible for “Creativity and enterprising” area of the 2018 Report on youth, which is linked to the National Youth Strategy 2014-2020. After mapping the overall situation and existing measures, it identifies several challenges and recommendations (2018 Report on youth):

- Provide more space and resources do development of entrepreneurial literacy and skills also in formal education
- Coordinate activities of different national-level actors responsible for strategies related to entrepreneurial environment support and development (ministries of economy, finance, education culture, ...)
- Coordination of instruments between authorities and with activities of NGOs
- Networking and good-practice sharing in formal and informal education, professional development of involved teachers, employees and volunteers
- Increase implementation capacity of public sector and educational institutions in relation to the prepared strategic measures
- Informing youth on available infrastructure, support tools and funding instruments
- Sustain the long-term interest of media in positive presentation of entrepreneurial stories and success



## Analysis of data

According to the “Overview of secondary schools” database provided by the Slovak centre of scientific and technical information (SCSTI, 2018), the overall population of secondary VET schools comprises 441 schools. The most frequently provided business-focused fields of study were: business in crafts and services (provided by 77 schools), business academy (76 schools), trade and business (27 schools), school of business (22 schools), and international trade (9 schools). Altogether, at least one of these five business-focused fields of study was provided at 176 secondary VET schools, which is 39.9% of the entire secondary VET school population (note: there are many schools that provide both business and non-business study fields, as well as schools that provide more business fields of study simultaneously). The rest of secondary VET school population (i.e. approximately 60%) can be considered as purely non-business focused.

As for the population of students, according to own analysis of the same source (SCSTI, 2018), as of September 2018, altogether 16 199 students were studying in business-oriented VET fields (study fields: business academy, international trade, school of business, trade and business, business in crafts and services) in full-time internal study at secondary VET schools, which represents 12.1% of all secondary VET students (133 989).

Own processing of school participation data of the two main providers of business education programmes for secondary schools in Slovakia (see Section D. below) shows that, as of April 2019, altogether 186 secondary vocational schools were participating in these programs (which represents 42,2 % of the overall school population). Out of the 186 schools participating, 96 schools (i.e. 51.6%) were the business-focused schools (such as business academies or secondary vocational schools of business and services, or joint schools that provided, besides others, at least one of the business-focused fields of study), while 90 schools (48.6%) were non-business focused.

Combination of the data from the two above-stated paragraphs leads to an estimate that more than half (approximately 54.5%) secondary VET schools providing business-focused fields of study, and one third (approximately 33.9%) of secondary VET schools with non-business fields of study participate in at least one of the two main large-scale educational initiatives related to start-up promotion and firm creation among secondary school students. However, there is no information on intensity of participation (e.g. number/share of students or classes participating, number of lessons per week).

#### **D. STATE OF EXISTING START-UP PROMOTION AND FIRM CREATION SUPPORT FOR IVET STUDENTS IN SLOVAKIA**

There are basically two main large-scale country-wide entrepreneurship training initiatives related to start-up promotion and firm creation aimed at (not exclusively) IVET students in Slovakia, namely:

- JA Firma - a training firm concept enabling high school students to get a practical entrepreneurial experience by starting a student training microcompany, developing its business concept, producing its products/services and selling them on a real market, and closing the company down at the end of the school year. The concept is provided by Junior Achievement Slovakia, a non-profit NGO.
- Practice Enterprise concept - implemented as a compulsory or elective course, where students simulate setting up and managing a business enterprise, and marketing activities aimed at other student practice enterprises. The concept copies actual legislation but remains a simulation, as both product and money are fictitious. It is provided by the State Institute for Vocational Education.

As stated in Section C. above, 186 secondary vocational schools were participating in these programs (which represents 42,2 % of the overall school population), out of that 51.6% were the business-focused schools while 48.6% were non-business focused (as of April 2019). According to combination of available data, we estimate that more than half of the secondary VET schools providing business-focused fields of study, and one third of the secondary VET schools with non-business fields of study participate in at least one of these initiatives.

In addition, individual small-scale projects and initiatives aimed at entrepreneurship education and development of enterprising spirit of IVET students occur at specific schools. However, they are results of (often temporary) project partnerships or individual initiatives of teachers, rather than part of a systematic programme or initiative. Their mapping is thus difficult.

The business/entrepreneurship literacy there is embedded in rather small breadth and depth in the National standard of financial literacy v. 1.2 (there is no equivalent document especially covering business/entrepreneurial literacy or entrepreneurial competences separately). All state educational programmes for secondary vocational schools have to be aligned with this standard - ministry has issued a methodological guidelines document its implementation. In particular, all the 23 state educational programmes for VET include the “Economic education” educational standard as a common curricular standard for all fields of study on the respective educational level. This educational standard includes, for different educational levels, (besides others) the content standards on “Education towards entrepreneurship” and “World of labour”, as well as the related performance standards (equivalent to learning outcomes). As they are part of the state educational programme, these standards must be implemented by schools. The above-mentioned training initiatives are one of the most frequent means that schools use to ensure this implementation. Other means include teaching the required topics as a part of “Civics” lessons.

According to available information, there are no institutionalized support mechanisms and initiatives aimed at firm creation provided to IVET students (except of the above-mentioned training initiatives), neither initiatives that would provide information on available support programmes or on business start-up procedures specifically to IVET students. Also, business incubators for IVET students and/or graduates are not present at IVET schools in Slovakia (own online research found just one mention of such concept at one secondary vocational school, still in idea stage). However, IVET students or graduates have, like anyone else, access to generic support mechanisms, information

about available support programmes, information about start-up procedures, and business incubators available to general population.

Access to mentoring and coaching for IVET students interested in entrepreneurship is facilitated especially through involvement in one of the above-mentioned training initiatives, as they both have mentoring systematically embedded and involve mentors and tutors from business practice. Also, individual pathways to mentoring can lead through participation in work-based learning. Moreover, IVET students interested in entrepreneurship and looking for an experienced mentor do have access (like anyone else) to generic mentoring schemes (e.g. mentoring schemes of the Slovak Business Agency or in mentoring and networking activities of third sector subjects, such as mentoring and networking activities of the Young Entrepreneurs Association of Slovakia, or Mentor Network Program by the American Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic).

There are several initiatives aimed at developing entrepreneurial culture, atmosphere and spirit for IVET students. Especially, both above mentioned training initiatives have their own such initiatives. First, JA Slovakia organizes a national fair of student training firms, where firms also compete for awards in several categories. The most recent fair was held under the auspices of the President of the Slovak Republic. Also, JA Slovakia is active on its Facebook channel where it regularly posts news and updates. Second, the State Institute for Vocational Education organizes contractual fairs, regional fairs and international fairs and competitions for student practice enterprises, and it also supports interaction between student practice enterprises (in terms of simulated marketing activities and transactions). Besides these two, there is one initiative aimed especially at IVET students – the “Young Creator” EXPO – a national presentation exposition of secondary VET school students. The event is linked with several awards (e.g. innovation and creativity of student products in several VET fields, best cooperation of VET schools and employers, best products in the area of transportation, confectionery, mobile apps, digital gaming, IT training etc.). In addition to specialized initiatives, IVET students might also be exposed (however, mostly individually rather than systematically) to initiatives fostering (directly or indirectly) entrepreneurial spirit and culture among the overall population or youth population, such as Creative Young Entrepreneur Award or Student Entrepreneur Award (Junior Chamber International) or Social Impact Awards (MladiInfo).

There is no strategy or action plan that would explicitly cover the promotion and support of entrepreneurship for IVET students and fresh graduates. Informing about potential career paths and entrepreneurship as one of them, is included in the “Economic education” educational standard (a common curricular standard for all VET fields). Also, it is included in career guidance that is available to IVET learners. However, the content and narrative analysis of VET policy and curricular documents shows that major attention tends to be devoted to employment perspective rather than to self-employment or firm creation.

## **E. SHORT DESCRIPTION OF SPECIFIC EXAMPLES FROM SLOVAKIA**

In Slovakia, the following two examples of practices in start-up promotion and firm creation support are present in larger scale. They are both described in more detail as TESEUS case studies.

### **JA Firma (Junior Achievement Slovakia)**

JA Firma is an educational programme with voluntary participation of secondary schools (both general and school-based VET). It is a training firm concept enabling students to get a practical entrepreneurial experience by starting a student training microcompany, developing its business concept, producing its products/services and selling them on a real market, and closing the company down at the end of the school year. The programme is not a fiction or simulation, but students work with real money and offer real products or services to real customers, which is the programme's main unique attribute. Thanks to this practical experience, students can apply their theoretical knowledge on running a business and related interactions (within their team, with customers, etc.) in an immediate real-life practice.

### **Practice enterprises (State Institute for Vocational Education, Slovakia)**

The Practice Enterprise concept is implemented as a compulsory or elective course for (mainly vocational) high schools both with business and non-business specializations. Within this course, students simulate setting up and managing a business enterprise (including undertaking the registration and administrative duties according to actual legislation), and they simulate marketing activities aimed at other student practice enterprises – they use e-commerce and traditional tools to approach them, attend contractual days and regional fairs, or even approach their peers abroad via an international network. Students get first-hand experience of the world of business. However, at the same time, the concept remains a simulation, as both product and money are fictitious.

Main goals of the Practice Enterprise concept include:

- Introduce students into the world of business enterprise from legal and economic perspective
- Equip students with comprehensive skills, abilities and knowledge related to setting up and managing a real business

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## INTERESTING LINKS AND FURTHER READING

- <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-data/slovakia>
- [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/home\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/home_en)
- <https://www.minedu.sk/>
- <http://siov.sk/>
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