Preparatory year in vocational grammar schools

Grade 9 can be preceded by a preparatory year in vocational grammar schools with the consent of the minister responsible for vocational and adult education. The content of teaching shall be determined in the pedagogical programme of the institution. A pilot school has already launched such a preparatory year putting emphasis on the development of basic skills and key competences independent from one but necessary to all professions.

Introducing the Chancery System in Vocational Education

The government has submitted the modification proposal of the Act on Vocational Education to the Parliament. The most important element of the modification is the introduction of the chancery system in vocational pedagogical centres. The model to be followed is the one adopted in higher education. The chancellor is not going to be a financial director with enhanced power; rather, he/she is going to be a senior manager in charge of operating the institution. On the basis of the modifications, the most important leader of the vocational centre is still going to be the general manager. However, as a new stakeholder, the chancellor will also be present being in charge mainly of economic, financial, legal and labour-related issues. Besides, he/she is going to be responsible for overall asset management. Chancellors will be appointed by the minister responsible for vocational education. The employer of teachers and employees helping the pedagogical-educational work directly is going to be the general director but the salary of these employees has to be approved by the chancellor. All other employees, however, are going to be appointed by the chancellor. In this latter case, the employer is also going to be the chancellor. The chancellor will have a right of consent in all issues regarding the operation, the structure and the finances of the institution in case the general director makes any decision or adopts any measures related to any of the issues described above.

The establishment of the Council for Innovations in the Vocational Sector

On the initiative of the Ministry for Innovation and Technology, the Council for Innovations in the Vocational Sector has been established. The most important goal of the council is to provide a regular forum for dialogue between key stakeholders of the vocational sector and the government. The task of the council is to determine future developmental trends and to formulate recommendations for infrastructural developments and for the content-related supervision of the vocational and adult training sectors. In addition to the government, the members of the Council for Innovations in the Vocational Sector are the following: chambers, enterprises, trade unions, representative organisations, educational organisations, maintainers of institutions and delegates of student representations.
Changes in the Regulation of Vocational Education

In December 2017, the Parliament accepted the modification of the Act on vocational training and adult education. These modifications came into force on 1st January 2018. As a result of these changes, the system of training in vocational grammar schools has become even more flexible and diverse. Also, more and more learning opportunities are available for students. The primary objective of the modifications was to broaden the spectrum of available possibilities in the dual vocational training system and to create a stronger bond between the vocational training sector and the economy. Besides, a further goal is to provide new, flexible learning opportunities to deal with labour shortages by modifying the regulations related to adult education.

By the modification of certain acts related to the educational sector, vocational training and adult education, vocational qualifications that are not linked directly to the high school graduation exam are separated. Also, it becomes optional to follow such supplementary lessons. As a result of the introduction of these measures, the student may decide whether he/she would like to take part in trainings that reinforce the professional content of other classes, develop other competencies or facilitate the acquisition of more practical knowledge. In the latter case, these lessons are available instead of vocational training classes and may be taken as electives.

Modifications concerning the practical training system with student contract are aiming at further reinforcing the dual vocational training scheme. This scheme is becoming more and more popular and widespread. On this basis, students may sign a student contract as early as year 11 or 12 of vocational grammar schools. The spectrum of participating organisations and companies is broadening gradually. The fact that the employees of a given company dealing with the training of students can receive relevant training further supports the realisation of a more efficient and productive dual practical training system.

In addition to the above, the system of agreements concerning vocational training is about to undergo a reform procedure involving non-state educational stakeholders in state-funded task implementation. As a result, the allocation and compliance of capacities related to vocational training can be realised in a more comprehensive and uniform manner thus making these trainings more organisable in the long run.

Skill Councils based on Sectors

On the basis of modifying the Act on vocational training, skill councils were formed. These councils make it possible for stakeholders of a given economic sector to control and modify the professional content of vocational training and adult education. This process is carried out by the means of representatives from each sector. The council follows the development of the structure of vocational training and the various economic, labour force-related and technological processes. It can make suggestions concerning the modification of the National Qualifications Register, the modernisation of the content of trainings and the operation of the vocational training system. Also, it can make prognoses to determine the goals and trends of trainings. It is a significant element that representatives of each economic sector participate in the work of the council directly. Therefore, the demands of a given sector are represented straightforwardly when formulating vocational contents and developing the whole vocational system. Regulations concerning the skill councils came into force on 1st July 2018.

Modifications of the Act on Adult Education

The modifications concerning the Act on adult education promote the realisation of company requests. The aim is that the re-training and other types of further trainings be accomplished in the shortest time possible. Besides, a further goal is that employees acquire up-to-date relevant knowledge related to their present scope of activities. In addition, it is desirable that administrative burdens decrease throughout the process. As a result of these objectives, it is necessary that the strict requirements regarding the content regulations of adult educational trainings be softened. The modifications of the Act on adult education are in effect from 1. January 2018.
The definition of other types of trainings (the so called ‘D’ types of trainings) has been modified. The concept of ‘D’-type trainings is the following: ‘trainings that last for no longer than 30 hours or trainings that are longer than 30 hours but are aiming at increasing general knowledge and developing competencies that are not linked directly to a specific (vocational) qualification or foreign language knowledge. In addition, it contributes to the development of personality traits and to the promotion of equal opportunities in society as well as to the formulation of competencies as a citizen’. Besides, the concept of inner trainings in a given company has been modified. Also, regulations concerning the external evaluation of institutions managing adult trainings have been softened. In addition, the submission of proposals concerning the vocational requirements of a given adult training has been modified. Besides, the rate of penalty to be possibly imposed on institutions dealing with adult education has been altered.

**White Book about the Development of Basic Competences**

Measures have been taken to strengthen the development of key competences in institutions dealing with vocational training. These measures determine that vocational training centres must devise a comprehensive action plan concerning the development of key competences. The aim is to provide an inclusive document which is in line with the main requirements of quality assurance. The analysis of the status quo regarding vocational training centres was to be completed by February 2018.

**The class of those who are entitled to student contracts expanded**

The scope of organisations engaging in dual education in the framework of student contracts has expanded. Institutions belonging to the Social and Pedagogical sector as well as public institutions organising trainings leading to qualifications under the oversight of the Minister of Defence may become involved in practical training. The precondition for this is the fact that the institution has to be a public institution or, alternatively, it has to be maintained by a foundation, a specific organisation or a church. In practice, this means that, in the case of social and pedagogical qualifications, student contracts can be signed with nursery schools and schools also.

**Training and Exam concerning the Instructors of Practical Trainings**

On the basis of the modification of the Act on vocational training, the instructors of practical trainings must follow a practical course organised by the chamber of commerce and industry and pass the relevant exam. Exceptions to this rule are those instructors who possess a ‘so called’ master title, had previously acquired a higher education degree or are older than 60 years. This practical training course for instructors, organised by the chamber, is a course devised for experts who had already acquired the pertaining qualifications and have relevant professional background. Also, these instructors have to be teaching students in the framework of practical trainings (the students must participate in school-type institutional education). This course organised for instructors concludes with an exam leading to a qualification issued by the chamber. During the course, instructors are equipped with the necessary administrative, pedagogical, socio-psychological and communicational knowledge to teach students and to prepare them for the given complex vocational exam. Although this modification of the original act has been in effect since 1st January 2018, instructors are required to obtain this practical qualification issued by the chamber only from the 2019-2020 school year (as a result of a transitional phase granted by the modification of the act).

**2017**

**Vocational Intermediate-level Secondary School-leaving Examination**

In upper-secondary vocational schools, the vocational intermediate-level secondary school-leaving
examination has been introduced. It was the first time that the intermediate-level secondary school-leaving examination had been organised in vocational subjects.