



DEVELOPING, ASSESSING AND VALIDATING TRANSVERSAL KEY  
COMPETENCES IN THE FORMAL INITIAL AND CONTINUING VET

Assessment of transversal and social competences within formal vocational education and training – experiences of six European countries.

Results of the TRACK-VET project

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## TRACK-VET Partnership:

1. Fafo, Institute for Labour and Social Research (Norway)
2. Céreq, French Centre for Research on Qualifications (France)
3. Oeibf, Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training (Austria)
4. VISC, National Centre for Education (Latvia)
5. SGH Warsaw School of Economics (Poland)
6. NUCEM, National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements (Slovakia)
7. UMB, Matej Bel University Banská Bystrica (Slovakia)

## Main rationale of the project:

Although key competences including TKC are high on a policy agenda, still lots of issues related to development and especially assessment of TKC remain unsolved

## How did we want to achieve the aims of the project?

- preparing country reports of 6 European countries
- preparing synthesis of solutions implemented and used in European countries related to development, assessment, validation of TKC
- Interviews with more than 150 experts from six countries

In the TRACK-VET project proposal we decided to use the term *transversal key competences* (TKC), which is defined as a subgroup of the 8 key competences defined in the Council *Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning* (2018), namely:

- Personal, **social and learning competence**,
- Civic competences**,
- Entrepreneurship competence,
- Cultural awareness and expression competence

## Relation with the **DASCHE** project (1):

The competences chosen for the TRACK-VET project can be seen as the same field of competence as DASCHE project, but relate to different level of competences and application contexts.

TRACK-VET: mostly professional situations linked to mid-level vocational tasks and typical life situations

DASCHE: lifewide social participation, high level social awareness and professional situations linked to a different set of professions

## Relation with the DASCHE project (2):

Within the TRACK-VET project we are especially interested in summative assessment, leading to validation and certification

We see the tension with the VNIL trend in VET in Europe – if VNIL is more and more promoted than there is less opportunities for formative assessment during the studying process

## Formal initial and continuous VET system

We proposed to define formal initial and continuous VET, as systems that have some or all of the below characteristics:

- based on core-curriculum or national qualification (standard);
- lead to state recognised (and very often state examined and quality assured) qualifications;
- be funded by the state (at least partially);
- is not part of 1st or 2nd cycle in higher education.





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## **Main conclusions based on the research questions** (based on 120 interviews, analysis of documents, literature review)



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**1. Would descriptive categories related to competences defined in the Council of the EU adopted on key competences for lifelong learning (2018) be a useful platform in discussion between partners**

**Answer: yes**

Comment: for the purpose of country reports TRACK-VET transversal key competences had to be operationalised

DESCRIPTIVE CATEGORIES	COMMENTARY / EXAMPLES	TRANSVERSAL KEY COMPETENCES
<b>Methods and strategies of learning</b>	<p>The category 'Methods and strategies of learning' is linked with domains of knowledge and skills, it refers to specific 'tools' (i.e. strategies and methods) for enhancing one's learning. It could be observed as for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the ability to set learning objectives and plan learning,</li> <li>- the ability organize and manage learning activities,</li> <li>- the ability choose learning paths, sources, guidance.</li> </ul>	<p>PERSONAL, SOCIAL COMPETENCES AND LEARNING COMPETENCE</p>
<b>Motivation and autonomy of learning</b>	<p>Motivation and autonomy of learning is closely linked to the domain of attitudes and values. It could be observed as for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pursuing and persisting in learning (autonomy and self-discipline);</li> <li>- presenting a positive attitude towards learning and willingness to learn;</li> <li>- awareness (identification) of one's learning process and needs;</li> <li>- reflecting on one's learning activities and outcomes, self-assessment;</li> </ul>	
<b>Maintaining well-being</b>	<p>Maintaining well-being can be observed as for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understanding of the components of a healthy mind, body and lifestyle, with awareness of the environment and oneself;</li> <li>- coping with stress and uncertainty;</li> </ul>	

## 2. Is differentiation between professional / task specific skills and transversal (or social, or any other sub category) competences needed.

**Answer: yes**

Comments: although differentiation between professional / task specific skills and transversal (or social, or any other sub category) competences is a false dichotomy - it is an analytical concept used to describe similar aspects of human capabilities observed in varying situations.

As it turns out not using these artificial categories may in some cases (e.g. time limitation and assessment focus on specific skills) might lead to incomplete development of the relevant competencies

### 3. Should TKC including social competences be developed within formal vocational education?

**Answer: yes.** Formal VET should be contributing more strongly to challenges appearing currently in European societies (immigration, radicalisation of views, developments on the labour markets).

Comment: this is quite well reflected in the strategic documents and in VET core curricula

## Presence of TKC in the strategic documents and core curricula

	Personal, social competences and learning competence	Civic competences	Entrepreneurship competence	Cultural awareness and expression competence
Austria	X	X	X	X
France	X	X	X	X
Latvia	X	X	X	X
Norway	X	X	X	X
Poland	X	X	X	X
Slovakia	X	X	X	X

## Austria fragments of the VET curricula:

Students have the competence to:

- deal with religions, cultures and ideologies, to take part in cultural life and to show understanding and respect for others
- to deal with the essential question, with ethical and moral values as well as with the religious dimensions of life
- to effectuate lifelong learning as immanent part of life-planning and career management

*Austrian country report*

## Latvia fragments of the VET strategic documents:

“to ensure a student with the knowledge and skills necessary for **personal growth and development, civil participation**, employment, **social integration and continuation of education**”; “to promote the improvement of a student as a mentally, emotionally and physically developed personality and to develop habits of healthy lifestyle”; “**to promote a socially active attitude of the student, retaining and developing his or her language, ethnical and cultural particularity**, as well as to improve understanding regarding the basic principles of human rights included in the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia and other legal acts “ to develop the student’s ability to learn and improve independently, to motivate him or her for lifelong learning and an informed career”. (Section 2, Regulations Regarding the State General Secondary Education Standard, Subject Standards and Sample Education programs, Cabinet Regulations No 281, 21.05.2013)

### *Latvian country report*



## Reservation (1):

- the programme documents do not provide a representation of school reality
- realization of the policy-makers vision is formally expected of school principals and teachers, however the vision may be interpreted and implemented in different ways – this is especially relevant for transversal key competences

## 4. Should TKC be assessed within formal VET?

With regards to formative assessment – answer is yes

With regards to summative assessment - no conclusive answer

Based on the analysis of the six countries experiences – we do not know

## Should TKC be assessed within formal VET?

There is no formal or standalone assessment of TKCs in any of the participating countries. **Continuous assessment is in project countries largely left on the discretion of teachers**

But leaving aside TKC outside summative assessment is considered in some countries as a danger.

## Should TKC be assessed within formal VET?

Assessment of TKC does not need to be incorporated into the decision what mark is assigned to the student, but maybe an oral comment on them would be of some value – shifting some of the attention towards TKCs as integral part of professional skills and giving student a feedback

## Norway country report:

*„In extension of this discussion we were presented with what may seem to be a dilemma: in order for TKC to be acknowledged as important in practice, it must be measurable, but if TKC is laid down in curricula in ways that make it measurable, it loses its importance as TKC. This means that it requires a reduction of TKC – a type of operationalization – which appears to stand in contrast to the idea of TKC”*

## France country report:

*Generally speaking, the inspectors perceive TKCs as attitudes or behaviours which are not necessarily very objectifiable and therefore **difficult to assess, except perhaps in the workplace**. From this perspective, for some of them, periods of workplace training would be an appropriate situation for assessing these types of competence.*

## 5. Should TKC be assessed, even to limited extent, e.g. only knowledge?

No conclusive answer

Comment: Interviewed experts within countries had different views whether assessment in limited scope, should be done or not.

## 6. The role of employers

Consensus within all country experts: employers should be involved in development of TKC



## France country report:

*Anyway, there are some competences where the business is the best place because it's the most specific, maybe all the transversal competences where in a business people are much more vigilant, perhaps as to what is going on in collaborative and team projects and interactions between the various trades. I still think that the business world is perhaps more logical for developing those competences”* **General inspector for industrial sciences and technology**

## Actions for the policy level:

- Well defined learning outcomes and assessment criteria and procedures
- Extending summative methods beyond examinations (incorporation of portfolios, projects, thesis as integral part of the grade)
- Support to teachers (increasing competencies, materials, guidelines, examples)
- Putting stronger focus on foundation skills (literacy, language)

## Actions for the policy level:

- Enhancing involvement of employers
- International mobilities (e.g. Erasmus+), domestic and international competitions (e.g. Worldskills)



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## Thank you for your attention

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TRACK-VET project is funded by the Erasmus+  
Programme, KA2, VET

(September 2017 – August 2020)



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## TRACK-VET project conference 23rd of April 2020



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