



## European Findings on VET for Professional Drivers



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The European 2020 Strategy sets out the vision of Europe's social market economy in the 21st century. The European Commission wants to achieve a higher percentage of employees, less early school leavers and less people at risk of poverty. To achieve the goals of the EU2020 strategy a challenge for Europe is bringing the worlds of education, training and work closer together. In order to achieve an increase in jobs and growth, as Europe takes on the challenge of becoming an advanced, knowledge-based economy; promoting mobility between countries and facilitating lifelong learning is of great importance.

With initiatives such as Europass, EQAVET, EQF and ECVET the EU is working towards lifelong learning and increased mobility.

In the present project ProfDRV it becomes once again clear that, when interpreting and implementing the Directive 2003/59, there is not one solution in bringing the worlds of education, training and work closer together. At the moment it is not clear in what sense this Directive contributes to the growth of employment for professional drivers. Several case studies, carried out by the project partners, are referring to this.

### EU VET pillars and the Directive 2003/59

The European Directive 2003/59 provides regulations to the member states for the establishment of a system of initial qualification and mandatory five-yearly training of professional drivers for the transport of passengers and goods on the road.

The date of introduction for passenger transport was 10 September 2008 and for the transport of goods 10 September 2009. The member states were required to have the guideline embedded in the national legislation by 10 September 2006, after which they are to notify the commission.

The Directive offers an amount of options, which enables the EU countries to adjust the implementation thereof to their own national possibilities.

From 11 September, 2008 all the Member States have brought into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with Directive 2003/59 on the initial qualification and periodic training of drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods or passengers. To this time the currently compulsory training of drivers was only required by a few Member States, the majority of drivers then driving on Community territory were carrying out their profession solely on the basis of a driving license. The establishment of new Community rules is aimed at ensuring that, by means of his or her qualification, the driver is of a standard to have access to and carry out the activity of driving. The minimum requirements to be met for the initial qualification and the periodic training concern the safety rules to be observed when driving and while the vehicle is stopped. The development of defensive driving - anticipating danger, making allowance for other road users — which goes hand in hand with rational fuel consumption, will have a positive impact both on society and on the road transport sector itself.

Strategy EU 2020 is an workable framework for reviewing the case studies. The collaboration between the European partners in VET in the EU 2020 strategy is based on the following four pillars:

- First of all, ownership of VET between social partners and industry is vital for the success of European social market economy in the 21st century. In the received case studies it was showed that this is not the case in all EU countries.
- Secondly, labour market research as an instrument to create a clear and future view on what knowledge, skills and competences the European knowledge-based economy needs for now and the near future. *"The competition will always be limited as the biggest problem with periodic training is the fact that a number of EU countries refuse to recognize part-periodic training that has been completed in another country. Also, the Directive it is down to interpretation, which has given rise to differences across the EU. The ambition to improve driving standards across Europe will always be limited when you have different interpretations of the Directive 2003/59, so I don't believe it is a level playing field."*<sup>1</sup> There is a big difference between day-to-day practice and the theory of Brussels.
- Thirdly, working and learning in real life working situations. Our economy is constantly and rapidly changing. Our future employees need to have skills and competencies that will match these changes and needs in industry. The best and most powerful learning environment is that of the real life situation of a transport company. The development of a European concept of accredited work placement companies will promote and improve the quality of VET. Annex 1 of the Directive 2003/59 indicates the following: *"The knowledge to be taken into account by Member States when establishing the driver's initial qualification and periodic training must include at least the subjects in this list. Trainee drivers must reach the level of knowledge and practical competence necessary to drive in all safety vehicles of the relevant license category."* This list contains only topics, nothing has been said about the level and the way on which the topics have to be trained and examined. *"Some stakeholders expect a positive effect in terms of quality in future but doubt that a real similar qualification level can be reached in Europe or only in Germany. Same applies for the public image of drivers, some stakeholders*

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<sup>1</sup> Case study UK, FTA (UK)

*nevertheless expect an improvement in future but this is also doubted because information about qualification requirements and these changes in the qualification requirements on drivers are not enough communicated to public in order to have a real positive effect. Employers and drivers evaluate the directive as having no effect on road safety because there are far more aspects that are dominant in this regard but are not touched by the introduction of the driver CPC."*<sup>2</sup> The education and training of professional drivers is underpinned by a Directive, which can be interpreted in different ways. So, it should not be a surprise when the learning outcomes in the different countries of Europe differ. Work placements in countries where VET system is already in place will adjust the interpretation of the Directive to the need of the carriers. In other words an operational VET system prevents an approach of the training of professional drivers that is too much directed by a ministry without the influence of the transport branch. *"The common understanding among drivers, entrepreneurs and to a certain extent even schools about the Directive, however, is a wrong one. The whole implementation is rather perceived as an additional burden, which is making their everyday, hard life in times of a bigger economic crisis even more complicated – independent from the fact, that the changes are for some of the stakeholder rather small or even invisible."*<sup>3</sup>

- Fourthly, a sustainable structure that will facilitate and bridge the collaboration between (sectoral) social partners and education in VET on regional-national and European level. A possible option to develop such a structure is to adopt a link with national agents or coordinators as is done with other EU tools such as EQF, Europass et cetera. In the Netherlands it has been legally established that employers, employees and educational institutes are involved in the description of the qualifications. Within its sectoral councils, the Centers of Expertise [like VTL for the transport and logistics sector] provide a platform to the three stakeholders to discuss on these matters. The development and implementation of NLQF is following the same routing.

## Concluding remarks and recommendations

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### Vocational education and training (VET)

About half of the labour force in Europe is qualified at the level of (senior) secondary vocational education. A strong VET system, including close cooperation between VET providers and industry and social partners, is fundamental for a strong economy and a lifelong learning labour force. Each trainee in logistics should be appropriately equipped for a profession and a future career matching his or her personal skills and competencies. VET must focus on professional knowledge, skills and competencies with sufficient 'working and learning' and experience in the work placement companies.

### Knowledge, skills and competences for future employees

To provide job opportunities for transport and logistics personnel and to create a more advanced, knowledge-based economy, Europe needs a highly skilled workforce in transport and logistics able to meet current and future challenges. To ensure this, it is urgent to invest in the right knowledge, skills

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<sup>2</sup> Case study Germany, DEKRA (DE)

<sup>3</sup> Case study Hungary, DEKRA HU (HU)

and competencies by effectively anticipating future trends. Brussels focuses on knowledge, skills and competencies, but the Directive is only paying attention to knowledge. There is at least remarkable.

### **Sufficient work placements as part of a lifelong learning strategy**

The work place offers the best learning opportunities. Especially for potential professional drivers or employees who feel more at home in practice than in school. Basically, every firm could become a work placement company, but only if quality is guaranteed.

### **Cooperation between education and labour market: the key for a healthy transport market**

Good vocational education and training play a crucial role in meeting the many socio-economic, demographic, environmental and technological challenges facing the European transport industry today and in the years ahead. Cooperation between education and the labour market and sufficient work placements is of great importance for Europe and will improve the occupational mobility of professional drivers in Europe and help to achieve the EU 2020 goals. At this point we have to mention the fact that mutual recognition of periodic training between EU countries is not completely settled yet.

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List of references:

- European Commission, A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, March 2010
- European Commission, Council conclusions on the role of education and training in the implementation of the 'Europe 2020' strategy, March 2011
- European Commission, Youth on the Move An initiative to unleash the potential of young people to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the European Union, September 2010

Annexes:

- Case studies of ProfDRV partners on the implementation of directive 2003/59/EC in Austria, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK (see <http://www.project-profdrv.eu/index.php?id=39>)

For further information on the project please consult:

[www.project-profdrv.eu](http://www.project-profdrv.eu)

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