



Vocational education and training in Cyprus

Short description





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Foreword

Cyprus takes over the European Union Presidency in the second half of 2012 in a period of continuing uncertainty due to the world economic crisis. The vocational education and training (VET) system of Cyprus is playing a significant role in dealing with the immediate adverse effects of the crisis on the labour market as well as in laying the foundations for future development.

Cyprus, a country with limited natural resources, has always relied on its human resources to achieve a competitive advantage in an era of globalisation, technological advances and demographic changes. The education and training system is vital in providing Cyprus with people who have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes and are able to respond flexibly and efficiently to the challenges of the 21st century. To continue to fulfil the expectations of the Cypriot economy and society, the education and training system, including VET, is undergoing essential reforms.

The major challenges of the education and training system, as outlined in the national reform programme, is to encourage further participation in lifelong learning and to increase participation in VET. Crucial milestones in this direction are the establishment of post-secondary institutes for technical and vocational education and training, which will offer students an intermediate level of education between upper secondary and tertiary education, as well as the establishment of new modern apprenticeship, designed to constitute a viable, alternative form of training and development for young people.

This report provides a concise insight into the state of the VET system of Cyprus in a period of major reforms and amidst the uncertainties resulting from the economic crisis.

Christian F. Lettmayr
Acting Director

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Cyprus



Capital:	Nicosia
Government:	Presidential Republic
Geographical position:	Eastern Mediterranean
Area:	9 251 km ²
Population estimate:	862 000 in 2011
GDP per capita:	EUR 22 000 in 2011

Key dates:

1960:	Gained independence from the United Kingdom
1974:	Turkey occupied the northern part of the island
2004:	Joined the European Union
2008:	Adopted the euro

CHAPTER 1.

External factors influencing VET

1.1. Political and socioeconomic background

Cyprus became an independent sovereign republic in 1960 with a presidential system of government. The 1960 constitution institutionalised communal dualism between the Greek and Turkish communities on the island in all spheres of government activity. Turkey occupied the northern part of the island in 1974 ⁽¹⁾.

Executive power is vested in the President of the Republic. The President exercises executive power through a Council of Ministers ⁽²⁾ appointed by him. The House of Representatives ⁽³⁾ exercises legislative authority. Cyprus is divided into six administrative districts. Each district has a district officer, who is the local representative of central government.

The Planning Bureau ⁽⁴⁾, a coordinating and policy-making body, in cooperation with all governmental services, collects and analyses information on the economy and proposes measures for future action, including the overall planning of education.

The Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) ⁽⁵⁾ has overall responsibility for the development and implementation of educational policy. The Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance (MLSI) ⁽⁶⁾ has overall responsibility for labour and social policy.

The Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA) ⁽⁷⁾ plays an important role in vocational training. The HRDA is a semi-governmental organisation whose mission is to create the prerequisites for the planned and systematic training and development of the human resources.

⁽¹⁾ All the information and data contained in the report refer to the government-controlled area.

⁽²⁾ Council of Ministers [Υπουργικό Συμβούλιο].

⁽³⁾ House of Representatives [Βουλή των Αντιπροσώπων].

⁽⁴⁾ Planning Bureau [Γραφείο Προγραμματισμού].

⁽⁵⁾ Ministry of Education and Culture [Υπουργείο Παιδείας και Πολιτισμού].

⁽⁶⁾ Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance [Υπουργείο Εργασίας και Κοινωνικών Ασφαλίσεων].

⁽⁷⁾ Human Resource Development Authority [Αρχή Ανάπτυξης Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού].

Cyprus economy is open, free-market, flexible and predominantly service-based. Since gaining independence from the United Kingdom in 1960, Cyprus has experienced strong economic growth, full employment conditions with high employment and relatively low unemployment.

The Cypriot economy was adversely affected by the world economic crisis and contracted by 1.9% in 2009, mainly due to the poor performance of the tourism, construction and manufacturing sectors. The persistent economic downturn continued in the period 2010-11, with growth rates of 1.1% and 0.5% respectively, which resulted in further deterioration in the labour market, adversely affecting employment growth and increasing unemployment to exceptionally high levels.

1.2. Population

Cyprus is an island located in the Eastern Mediterranean, covering a total area of 9 251 square kilometres. According to the Statistical service of Cyprus ⁽⁸⁾, the population of the area not occupied by Turkey (the government-controlled area) is 862 000 (end-2011) and it has increased by around 2.6% from the previous year. The Turkish-Cypriot population in the occupied area was estimated by the Statistical service of Cyprus to be 89 200 (end of 2009), representing 10% of the total population in 2009.

The low fertility rate (1.5 in 2009) increases the old-age dependency ratio and leads to the ageing of the population. The population over 60 years of age, as shown in Table 1, is forecast to reach 24% in 2025 compared with 18.2% in 2011.

Table 1. **Age-specific demographic trends (end-of-year population estimates)**

									(%)
Age group	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2025
0-24	38.1	35.3	34.8	34.4	33.8	33.3	32.8	32.1	27.7
25-59	46.5	47.9	48.2	48.4	48.7	49.0	49.2	49.7	48.3
60+	15.4	16.7	17.0	17.2	17.5	17.7	18.0	18.2	24.0
Total	697.5	744.0	757.9	776.3	796.9	819.1	839.8	862.0	933.0

Source: Statistical service of Cyprus and Eurostat.

⁽⁸⁾ Statistical service of Cyprus [Στατιστική Υπηρεσία Κύπρου].

Table 2 presents the old-age dependency ratio projections (number of persons aged 65 and over expressed as a percentage of the number of persons aged between 15 and 64). This ratio is expected to increase from 18.6% in 2010 to 47.6% in 2060, which is still lower than the average EU-27 ratio, which is projected to be 52.6%.

Table 2. **Projected old-age dependency ratio**

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	2055	2060
EU-27	25.9	28.5	31.4	34.6	38.3	42.3	45.5	48.0	50.2	51.8	52.6
Cyprus	18.6	21.6	24.9	28.2	30.8	32.0	33.3	35.5	39.8	43.8	47.6

Source: Eurostat.

The number of migrants (EU nationals and third country nationals), as shown in Table 3, has more than doubled since 2000. The percentage of migrants in the population increased from 8.6% in 2000 to 17.9% in 2011, due to the policy to employ foreigners in sectors facing labour shortages and the influx of EU nationals after Cyprus joined the EU in 2004. Consequently, according to labour force survey (LFS) data, in 2011 foreign workers, including EU-27 nationals, represented 22.2% of the total employment.

Table 3. **Migrants (EU nationals, third country nationals)**

	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
EU nationals	34 675	46 354	49 991	54 786	62 485	69 904	82 576	88 656
Third country nationals	23 061	35 619	34 952	38 578	45 007	45 119	49 663	49 976
Total migrants	57 336	81 973	84 943	93 364	107 492	115 023	132 239	138 632
% of population	8.6	11.3	11.5	12.4	14.2	15.1	17.1	17.9

Source: Statistical service of Cyprus.

1.3. Economy

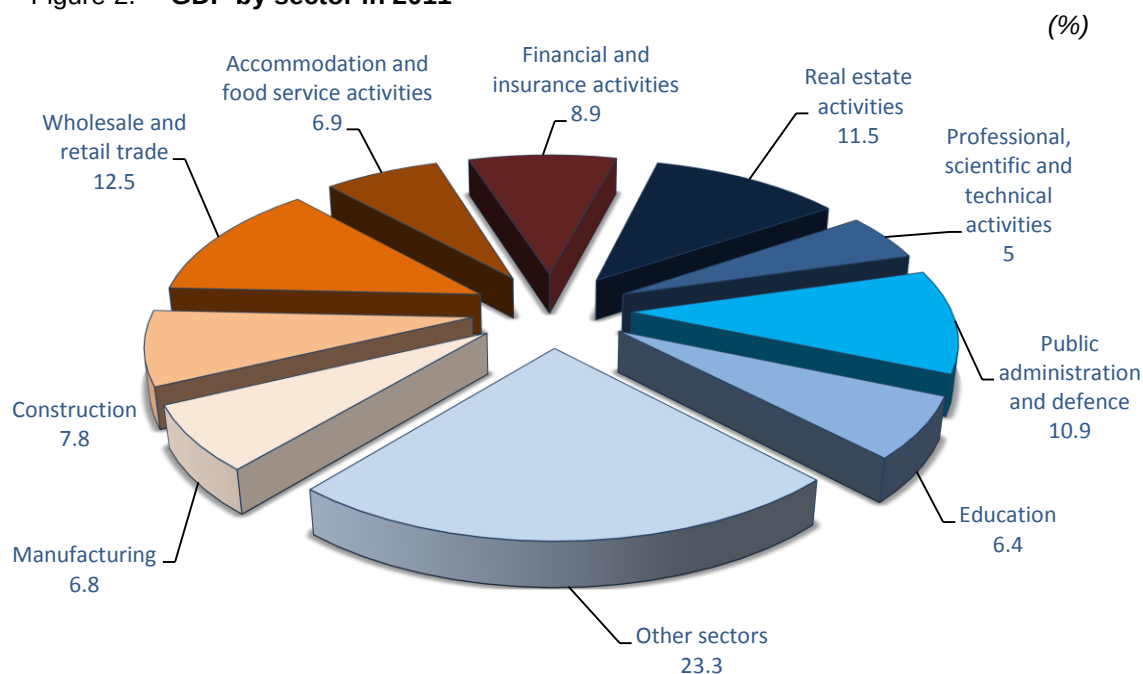
The Cypriot economy grew by an average of 3.8% a year during the period 2000-08, prior to the outbreak of the world economic crisis. However, as shown in Figure 1, during the period 2009-11 the Cyprus economy experienced the negative effects of the economic crisis, as it contracted by 1.9% in 2009 and grew only modestly by 1.1% and 0.5% in 2010 and 2011, respectively.

Figure 1. **GDP growth**



Figure 2 presents the distribution of GDP by sector in 2011. The Cypriot economy is mainly service-based and the tertiary sector amounts for about 81% of GDP, while the secondary sector amounts to about 17% of GDP. More specifically, the five largest sectors in 2011 were the wholesale and retail trade (12.5% of GDP), real estate activities (11.5%), public administration and defence (10.9%), financial and insurance activities (8.9%) and accommodation and food service activities (6.9%).

Figure 2. **GDP by sector in 2011**

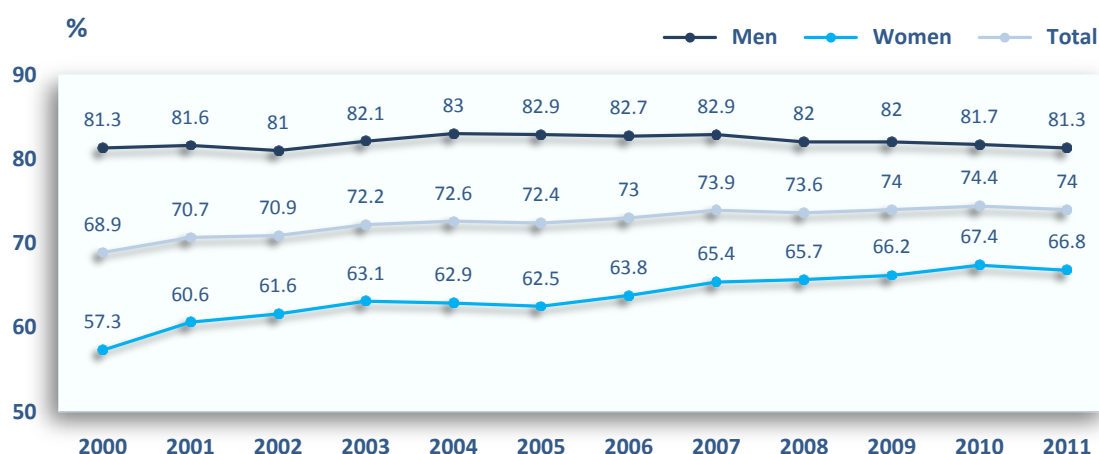


Most enterprises are very small. According to social insurance data for 2010, 93.6% of enterprises employed 1-9 persons, while 5.5% employed 10-49 persons and 0.9% employed over 50 persons.

1.4. Labour market

Increasing the level of labour market participation is a central challenge for Cyprus, given the ageing population. This is being addressed mainly by increasing women's participation, since men's participation is already quite high. The activity rate for the population of 15-64 years, as presented in Figure 3, increased from 68.9% in 2000 to 73.9% in 2007, mainly driven by an increase in the activity rate of women as a result of the introduction of specific policy measures and has remained rather stable thereafter (74% in 2011).

Figure 3. Activity rates for the population 15-64 years by gender



Source: Statistical service of Cyprus.

Table 4 shows employment rates by age group and Table 5 shows employment rates by highest level of education attained. The tables show that employment rates in Cyprus are highest for the age group 25-49 (81.6% in 2011) and increase as educational attainment increases.

The unemployment rate rose from 3.7% in 2008 to 7.7% in 2011, but still compares favourably with the EU-27 average (9.6% in 2010). The unemployment rate in Cyprus has been higher for women than for men, although the gap has narrowed and in 2011 it was smaller, as shown in Figure 4.

Table 4. **Employment rates by age group**

Age group	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
15-24	36.7	36.7	37.4	37.4	38.0	35.5	33.8	29.3
25-49	77.9	81.8	82.6	83.8	83.7	82.6	82.5	81.6
50-64	49.5	50.6	53.6	55.9	54.8	56.0	56.8	55.2

Source: Statistical service of Cyprus.

Table 5. **Employment rates for the population 20-64 years by educational attainment**

	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
ISCED 0-2	62.6	64.8	66.6	66.4	64.1	65.2	67.0	65.2
ISCED 3-4	72.4	74.6	75.1	75.8	76.1	74.9	73.9	71.8
ISCED 5-6	85.6	85.0	85.6	86.5	86.5	84.8	83.1	81.5
Total	72.0	74.4	75.8	76.8	76.5	75.7	75.4	73.8

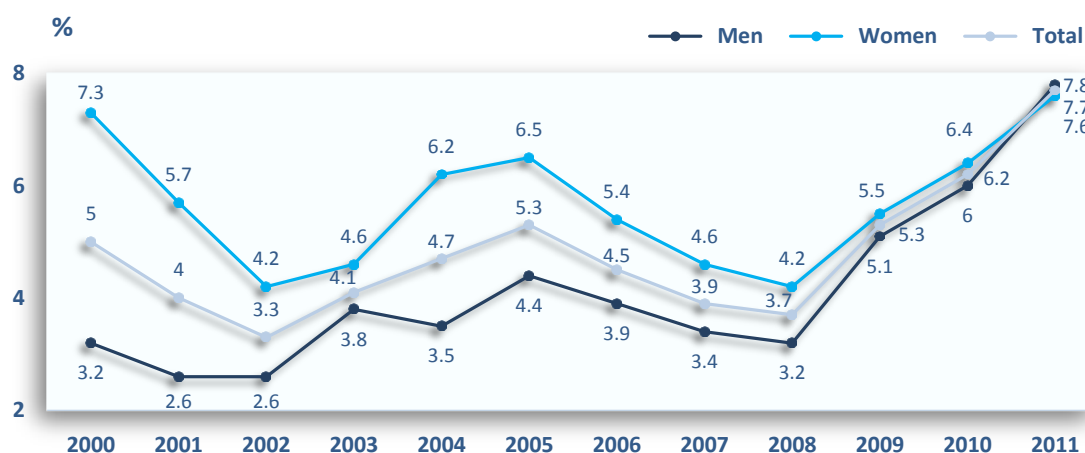
ISCED 0-2: pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education.

ISCED 3-4: upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

ISCED 5-6: tertiary education.

Source: Statistical service of Cyprus.

Figure 4. **Unemployment rates for the population 15+ by gender**



Source: Statistical service of Cyprus.

From Table 6, which presents unemployment rates by age group, it can be seen that the unemployment rate for young people under 25 increased from 13.8% in 2009 to 16.7% in 2010 (the EU-27 average was 20.9% in 2010), reaching finally 22.4% in 2011.

From Table 7, which shows unemployment rates by highest level of education attained, it can be seen that unemployment rates usually decrease as educational attainment increases. However, it is worth noting that in 2011 the unemployment rates were higher (8.5%) for the population with upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

Table 6. **Unemployment rates by age group**

	(%)							
Age group	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
15-24	10.2	13.9	10.0	10.2	9.0	13.8	16.7	22.4
25-54	4.5	4.5	4.1	3.4	3.2	4.6	5.4	6.8
55-64	3.5	3.5	3.3	3.1	3.2	4.3	4.7	4.9
65+	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.2	0.6
15+	5.0	5.3	4.5	3.9	3.7	5.3	6.2	7.7

Source: Statistical service of Cyprus.

Table 7. **Unemployment rates for the population 15+ by educational attainment**

	(%)							
	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
ISCED 0-2	6.2	6.0	4.8	4.7	4.8	6.0	7.0	7.4
ISCED 3-4	5.4	5.5	4.5	3.9	3.6	5.6	6.2	8.5
ISCED 5-6	2.9	4.4	4.4	3.4	3.0	4.5	5.6	7.1
Total	5.0	5.3	4.5	3.9	3.7	5.3	6.2	7.7

ISCED 0-2: pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education.

ISCED 3-4: upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

ISCED 5-6: tertiary education.

Source: Statistical service of Cyprus.

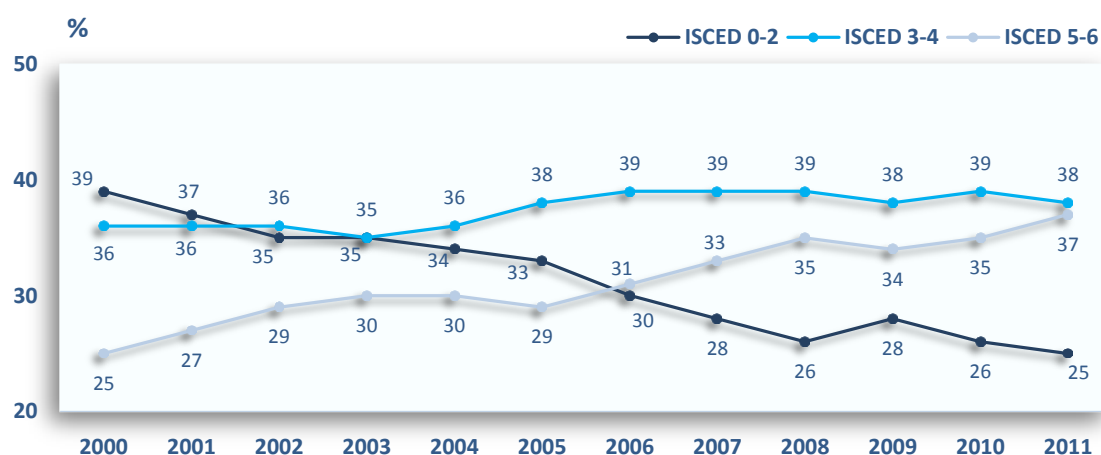
1.5. Educational attainment

Human resources in Cyprus are characterised by a high level of educational attainment. As shown in Figure 5, the percentage of people 25-64 years with tertiary education was 37% in 2011, significantly above the corresponding EU-27 average (26% in 2010).

There is a strong cultural trend among the Cypriot population in favour of general secondary education followed by higher education. About 82% of students completing upper secondary education seek places in institutions of higher education. Family plays a significant role in encouraging and supporting young people to continue to higher education. The number of places in Cyprus is rather limited as there are only three public and four private universities, so a

large proportion of young people continuing to higher education (about 55%) enrol in education institutions abroad. High education attainment is also due to economic reasons, as tertiary education graduates usually receive higher remuneration.

Figure 5. **Educational attainment of the population 25-64 years**



ISCED 0-2: pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education.

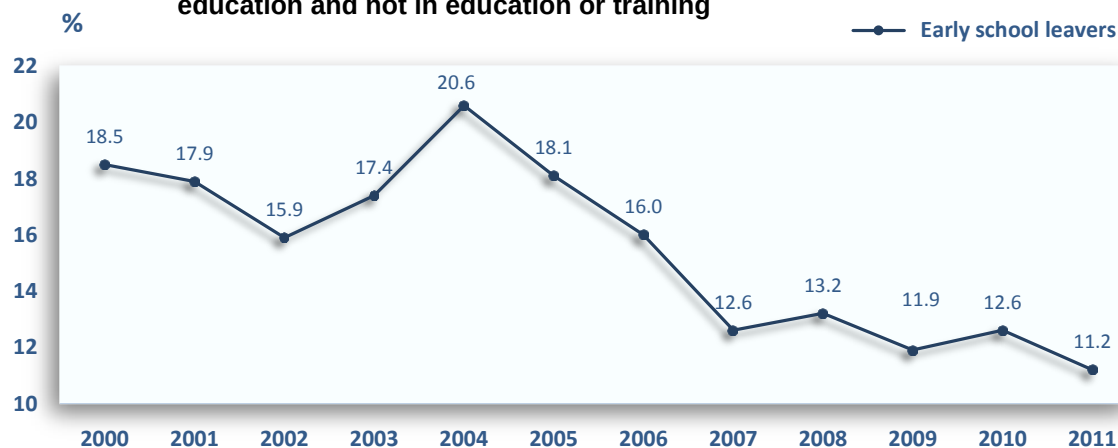
ISCED 3-4: upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

ISCED 5-6: tertiary education.

Source: Statistical service of Cyprus.

The percentage of early school leavers has decreased from 18.5% in 2000 to 11.2% in 2011, as shown in Figure 6. The EU-27 average in 2010 was 14.1%.

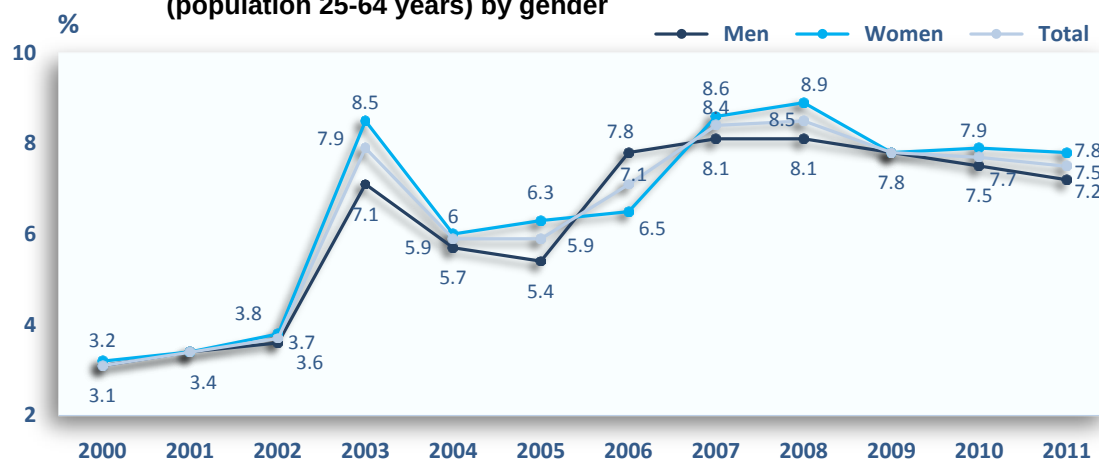
Figure 6. **Percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in education or training**



Source: Statistical service of Cyprus.

According to the LFS, the percentage of the population of 25-64 year-olds participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey was 7.7% in 2010, which is lower than the EU-27 average of 9.1%, while in 2011 it decreased slightly to 7.5%. The national target for this percentage in 2020 is 12%. The participation of women, as shown in Figure 7, was generally higher than that of men (exception in 2009).

Figure 7. **Lifelong learning –Adult participation in education and training (population 25-64 years) by gender**



Source: Statistical service of Cyprus.

CHAPTER 2.

Providing vocational education and training in a lifelong learning perspective

Education developed significantly after 1960, when Cyprus gained its independence and the Cyprus economy posted spectacular growth. The need for an adequately trained workforce in all sectors of the economy led educational institutions at all levels to increase in number and scope. Adult education was also promoted through various initiatives and institutional arrangements, and the establishment and operation of the Human Resource Development Authority provided significant impetus to the training of employees and the unemployed.

Education in Cyprus is available from the pre-primary to the postgraduate levels. It is compulsory at the pre-primary, primary (grades one to six), and lower secondary (grades seven to nine) levels, until the student reaches the age of 15.

In upper secondary education, which lasts for three years (grades 10 to 12) there are two types of schools: the unified lyceum ⁽⁹⁾ and technical schools ⁽¹⁰⁾.

Tertiary education, including postgraduate courses, is provided at three public and four private universities, and several private colleges and institutions provide courses at the post-secondary non-university level.

Public expenditure on education increased from 5.6% of the GDP in 2000 to 8.1% in 2010 (Table 8).

Table 8. **Expenditure on education**

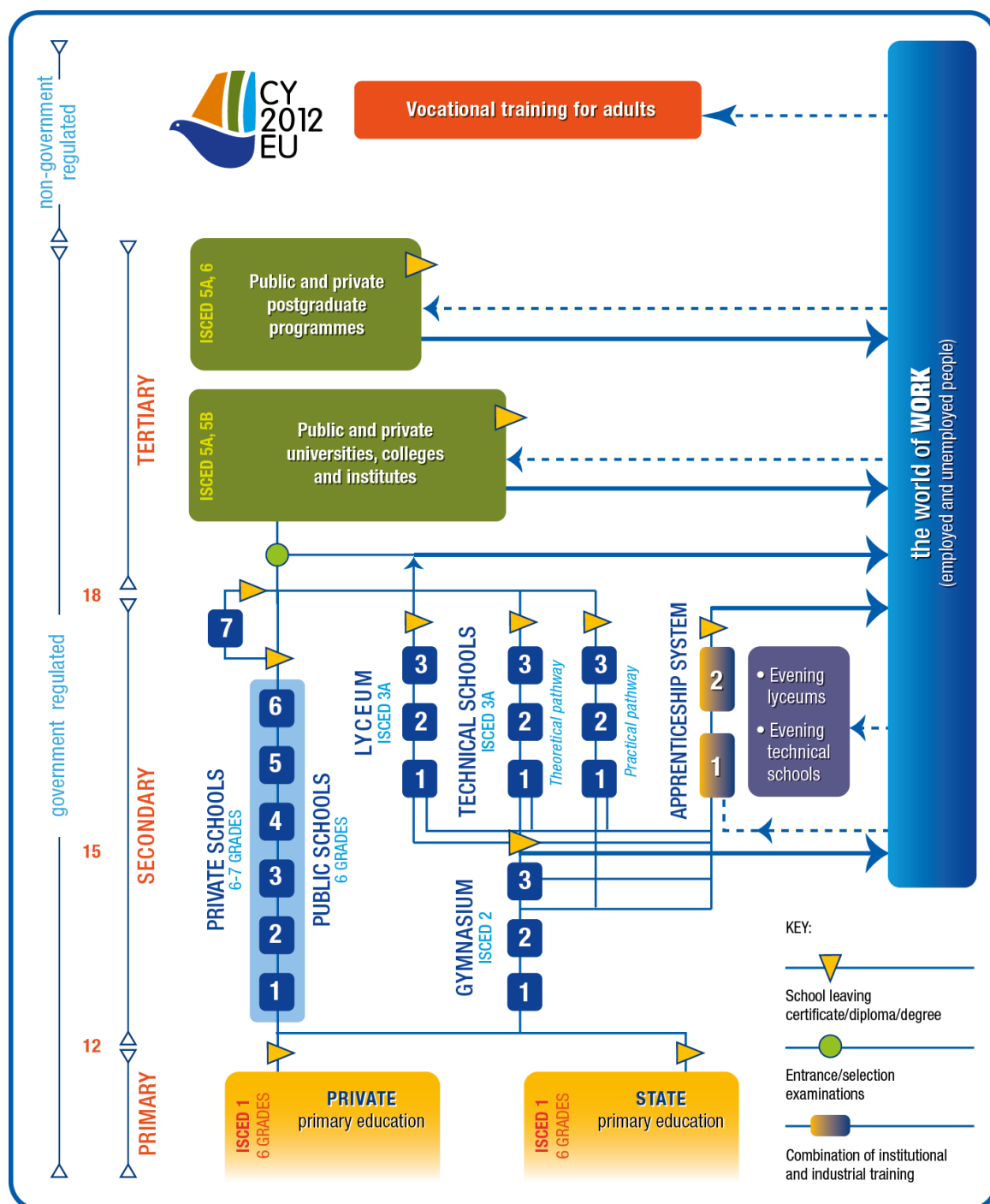
	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Public expenditure on education (% on GDP)	5.6	7.0	7.1	7.1	7.5	8.0	8.1
Total expenditure on education (% on GDP)	9.2	9.1	9.2	9.3	9.6	10.5	10.5

Source: Statistical service of Cyprus.

⁽⁹⁾ Unified lyceum [ενιαίο λύκειο].

⁽¹⁰⁾ Technical schools [τεχνικές σχολές].

Figure 8. The education and training system of Cyprus



The earliest level at which VET is available is the upper secondary level at technical schools, including the evening technical schools. VET is also available through the apprenticeship system ⁽¹¹⁾, which accepts students who leave formal education between grades 8 and 10.

Post-upper secondary VET will be provided as of the academic year 2012/13 at the post-secondary institutes of technical and vocational education and training ⁽¹²⁾.

VET at tertiary level is provided by four public institutes/colleges, which come under the jurisdiction of various ministries, and at several private institutes.

Furthermore, vocational training is extensively available in Cyprus for employees, the unemployed, other vulnerable groups and adults in general through a mixture of public and private provision such as colleges, training institutions, consultancy firms and enterprises.

VET is an important and prominent part of the Cyprus lifelong learning strategy ⁽¹³⁾ for 2007-13. The main actions designed to achieve the objectives of the strategy include enhancement of lifelong guidance and counselling services, development of a national qualifications framework and promotion of the actions outlined in the education reform ⁽¹⁴⁾ that have a specific impact on VET such as the creation of new VET pathways and facilitate horizontal and vertical movement within education.

2.1. Government-regulated VET provision

Government-regulated VET provision refers to defined VET qualifications, such as diplomas, degrees or certificates, and to the public or private training routes leading to them within the education and training system. All activities relating to the provision of VET are legitimised by decisions of the Council of Ministers and/or Acts passed by the House of Representatives.

2.1.1. Apprenticeship

The apprenticeship system is a two-year initial VET programme providing practical and theoretical training to young people who have not successfully completed their secondary compulsory education and wish to be trained and

⁽¹¹⁾ Apprenticeship system [σύστημα μαθητείας].

⁽¹²⁾ Post-secondary institutes of technical and vocational education and training [Μεταλυκειακά Ινστιτούτα Επαγγελματικής Εκπαίδευσης και Κατάρτισης].

⁽¹³⁾ Cyprus lifelong learning strategy [Εθνική στρατηγική δια βίου μάθησης].

⁽¹⁴⁾ Education reform [εκπαιδευτική μεταρρύθμιση].

employed in technical occupations. The apprenticeship system applies to students who do not intend to continue their education in schools in the formal education system past the third grade of Gymnasium. Students eligible to register in the apprenticeship system are those who have studied in the second grade of Gymnasium and have reached their 15th year of age, or will reach it at the latest by the end of the year of their registration. The apprenticeship system is not compulsory and attendance is free of charge. Apprentices follow practical training in enterprises for three days a week where they are remunerated for their work, and they receive theoretical training for two days a week when they attend classes at technical schools.

Responsibility is shared between the Cyprus productivity centre (CPC) ⁽¹⁵⁾, a dedicated centre of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, and the Ministry of Education and Culture, while the HRDA compensates employers for wages paid to apprentices while attending classes at technical schools. Additionally, under a new policy measure cofinanced by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the CPC, enterprises receive subsidies to cover part of the salary of the in-company trainers who train the apprentice and their social insurance contributions.

During the school year 2010/11, 256 apprentices were trained in occupations such as builder, plumber/welder, auto mechanic, auto electrician, furniture maker/carpenter, electrician, domestic appliances repairer and hairdresser.

Assessment of apprentices in technical schools follows the rules of the education system, with regular tests and final examinations. During the practical training, apprentices are assessed by their supervisors and their grades appear on the apprenticeship certificate issued by the CPC to apprentices who successfully complete the course.

The apprenticeship certificate allows access to several regulated occupations (e.g. building contractor and electrician), provided that all other requirements of the relevant legislation are observed.

In 2007, the Council of Ministers approved the proposal for the establishment of the new modern apprenticeship (NMA). The NMA, which provides an alternative pathway for education, training and development for young people who withdraw from the formal education system, is geared towards meeting the needs of the labour market. Implementation of the NMA has begun and will embrace young people between 14 and 21 years of age at two

⁽¹⁵⁾ Cyprus productivity centre [Κέντρο Παραγωγικότητας].

apprenticeship levels (preparatory and core). The NMA is cofinanced by the ESF and will become fully operational by 2015.

The Apprenticeship Board ⁽¹⁶⁾, which supervises the operation of the apprenticeship system, has a tripartite character, and the design of the NMA is the outcome of lengthy and detailed deliberations with the social partners.

2.1.2. VET at upper secondary level

VET at upper secondary level is provided at technical schools and evening technical schools, as well as in the afternoon and evening classes of technical schools. Secondary technical and vocational education (STVE) ⁽¹⁷⁾ provides a broad range of initial training programmes to gymnasium leavers and adults.

2.1.2.1. Formal mainstream upper secondary initial technical and vocational education

Formal upper secondary technical and vocational education programmes are offered free of charge in both the theoretical pathway ⁽¹⁸⁾ and the practical pathway ⁽¹⁹⁾. The duration of studies is three years for both types of course. The first year of studies is common for all fields in both types of course and students select a specialisation offered in the field of their choice in the second and third year of their studies.

Theoretical courses and the first and second years of practical courses are completely school-based and combine general education subjects with technological and workshop subjects. The third year of studies in the practical pathway combines a school-based environment with a real workplace, with final-year students being placed in enterprises for one day a week, where they follow a practical training programme.

The programmes provided include various fields in both the theoretical and practical pathways. Examples include mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, building and civil engineering, hotel and catering, woodwork and furniture making, fashion design, graphic arts and interior design.

The criteria used to assess students include class participation, workshop and laboratory work, written assignments, projects, tests and a final examination.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Apprenticeship Board [Συμβούλιο Μαθητείας].

⁽¹⁷⁾ Secondary technical and vocational education [Μέση Τεχνική και Επαγγελματική Εκπαίδευση].

⁽¹⁸⁾ Theoretical pathway [θεωρητική κατεύθυνση].

⁽¹⁹⁾ Practical pathway [πρακτική κατεύθυνση].

School leaving certificates are awarded upon successful completion of either programme and are equivalent to those of secondary general education schools. Therefore, STVE school leavers are eligible for admission to universities and other tertiary education institutions in Cyprus and abroad. Qualifications provide access to regulated occupations, if all other requirements of the relevant legislation are met.

Curriculum development is a collective effort involving qualified STVE staff, experts from other training institutions, STVE advisory committee members, trade unions and employers' representatives. The STVE curriculum is subject to approval by the Council of Ministers before being implemented.

The restructuring of STVE is underway as part of the education reform with the direct involvement and cooperation of VET stakeholders. The quality and efficiency of VET has been improved through further development of the infrastructure of technical schools and the introduction of modern technology in VET curricula. The new curricula, which are expected to be developed by 2015, will enhance the attractiveness of VET and match the specialisations offered with the current needs of the labour market. The objective of the curricula revision is to reduce the number of specialisations offered by STVE, thus providing students with an opportunity to acquire the key competences they need to make them more competitive in the labour market.

The 2010/11 enrolments in STVE include students in theoretical and practical pathways as well as evening classes. As shown in Table 9, only 12.7% – one of the lowest percentages among European countries – were students in technical schools, as most students prefer to follow general education due to the prejudice against technical occupations. Moreover, the economy is characterised by a thriving services sector and a declining manufacturing sector. This has led to a decline, over the years, in the number of people employed in technical occupations and consequently to a decline in the number of students in technical schools, which cater mainly to those occupations.

Table 9. Students in upper secondary education by programme orientation (general/vocational)

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Upper secondary education pre-vocational and vocational programmes	13.3	13.0	12.6	12.8	13.2	12.7
Upper secondary education general programmes	86.7	87.0	87.4	87.2	86.8	87.3

Source: Statistical service of Cyprus.

2.1.2.2. *Second chance formal initial vocational education*

Evening technical schools

The MoEC also offers formal education programmes through the two evening technical schools, one in Nicosia and another in Limassol, to further promote participation in STVE and support the integration of school dropouts in the workplace and in society in general. The programmes are equivalent to the STVE programmes that are offered in mainstream technical schools.

The duration of studies varies from one to four years, depending on the educational background of the students. Attendance is free of charge and leads to the award of a leaving certificate, which has the same legal status as the one awarded by the unified lyceum and mainstream technical schools. Adult graduates then have an opportunity to compete for a place in higher education in Cyprus or abroad or to enter the labour market.

Three-year programmes of afternoon and evening classes at technical schools

The three-year programmes are provided in the form of afternoon and evening classes at technical schools, which are administered by the Directorate of STVE of the MoEC. The objective of these programmes is to offer formal initial education and training to employed or unemployed adults, to respond more efficiently to the contemporary demands of the labour market and labour market reintegration in areas where there is a shortage of skilled workers.

Successful completion of the three-year programmes leads to the award of a leaving certificate equivalent to that awarded to graduates of upper secondary general or technical and vocational education, as far as the technical component is concerned. This means that individuals who already hold an upper secondary education leaving certificate are given an opportunity to obtain a second leaving certificate in their chosen field of study.

2.1.3. VET at post-secondary level

VET at post-secondary level is not yet available in Cyprus. As part of the education reform, the MoEC, in cooperation with the MLSI and other stakeholders, is promoting the establishment of post-secondary institutes of VET, cofinanced by the ESF, which will offer further technical specialisation and will operate as of the academic year 2012/13.

Students who attend these institutes, especially those who wish to enter the labour market directly, will have an opportunity to acquire or complete their technical and vocational education. The institutes will provide opportunities for

Cypriot citizens, especially young people, to acquire, improve or upgrade their qualifications and skills so that they are better prepared for the labour market.

Post-secondary institutes of vocational education and training will operate at existing technical schools and lyceums, as public education institutions, within the remit and under the supervision of the MoEC. The one- and two-year programmes on offer will include practical training in enterprises.

2.1.4. VET at tertiary level

VET at tertiary level is provided by four public institutions of tertiary education, which come under the jurisdiction of various ministries, and by 35 private institutions of tertiary education.

According to Table 10, about one-third of people in higher education (32.4%) participate in tertiary education programmes that are practically oriented and occupation-specific, while most participate in programmes that are largely theory based. However, large numbers of Cypriot students are enrolled in educational institutions abroad. During 2010/11, there were 19 199 Cypriot students abroad (ISCED 5-6) compared to 21 884 Cypriot students in Cyprus, while the total number of students in Cyprus, including 10 275 foreign students, was 32 159.

Table 10. **Participation rates in higher education by programme orientation (2010/11)**

	Total ISCED 5-6	ISCED 5a		ISCED 5b		ISCED 6	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Cyprus	32 159	21 151	65.8	10 419	32.4	589	1.8

ISCED 5a: tertiary education programmes that are largely theory based and are intended to provide sufficient qualifications to enter advanced research programmes and professions with skill requirements.

ISCED 5b: tertiary education programmes that are practice-oriented and occupation-specific, which do not provide direct access to advanced research programmes.

ISCED 6: second stage of tertiary education, leading to an advanced research qualification.

Source: Statistical service of Cyprus and Eurostat.

2.1.4.1. *Public institutions of tertiary education*

There are four public institutions of tertiary education (non-university level) offering programmes in forestry, culinary arts and other occupations. These institutions operate under a relevant ministry or organisation as follows:

- (a) the Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus operates under the aegis of the MLSI;
- (b) the Forestry College ⁽²⁰⁾ operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment (MoA) ⁽²¹⁾;

⁽²⁰⁾ Forestry College [Δασικό Κολέγιο].

- (c) Tourist Guides School (operates whenever there is a need) operates under the aegis of the Cyprus Tourist Organisation;
- (d) Cyprus Police Academy ⁽²²⁾ operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order ⁽²³⁾.

The basic admission requirement for public tertiary education institutions is completion of 12 years of primary and secondary education, as certificated by the leaving certificate issued by the lyceum or technical school. The selection of candidates is based on the applicants' success in the common final examinations, and in some cases success in an oral interview is also required.

Cypriot and EU students studying in public institutions of tertiary education pay no fees. In some institutions, all students receive free accommodation and board. International students are required to pay fees to attend these institutions. The student tuition fees range from about EUR 3 700 to EUR 4 500 per year. All fees are paid to the institution.

Studies are organised in diploma programmes, which include different specialisations. The competent ministry of each institution has to approve each programme but to a large extent the institutions themselves design the curricula. The diploma programmes consist of basic professional studies and practical training.

Students are assessed on the basis of semester and often mid-semester examinations. Workshop and laboratory assignments, project work and industrial training are also assessed and considered when assigning final marks. Successful completion of the programme, which lasts 2-3 years, leads to a diploma or higher diploma awarded by the institution.

Depending on the job specifications, teachers must hold an appropriate diploma in their subject area or a degree relevant to the subject they teach; work experience in their area of specialisation is also required. Pre-service training is usually not a requirement. In-service, continuing training of VET teachers in public institutions is common practice but only on a voluntary basis.

⁽²¹⁾ Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment [Υπουργείο Γεωργίας, Φυσικών Πόρων και Περιβάλλοντος].

⁽²²⁾ Cyprus Police Academy [Αστυνομική Ακαδημία Κύπρου].

⁽²³⁾ Ministry of Justice and Public Order [Υπουργείο Δικαιοσύνης και Δημόσιας Τάξης].

2.1.4.2. *Private institutions of tertiary education*

Private institutions of tertiary education offer a wide range of academic and vocational programmes at various levels (one- or two-year diploma, three-year higher diploma, four-year bachelor's degree and one- or two- year master's degree) in secretarial studies, aesthetics, food preparation, music, arts and drama, graphic design, hotel and tourism management, computer science, social sciences, education, business studies and engineering. The language of instruction is English for most programmes of studies offered, which attracts scholars and students from other countries.

All private institutions of tertiary education must register with the MoEC. Each institution sets its own regulations on their operation, entry requirements, methods of evaluation, qualifications awarded, teachers' pay and tuition fees, which must be approved by the MoEC.

Teachers in private institutions of tertiary education usually hold the qualification of the level they are teaching, or higher. Previous work experience and pre-service training are not usually required, although colleges will consider them as an advantage when hiring teachers. In-service, continuing training of teachers in private colleges is voluntary.

2.2. **Other forms of training provision**

Other forms of VET provision are VET programmes which do not lead to a formal qualification but to professional development and updating of specific skills and competences, and which are addressed to adults, employees, the unemployed and other groups at risk of exclusion from the labour market.

2.2.1. **Training for employees**

The main bodies promoting training provision for employees are the HRDA, the MoEC, the MLSI, and other ministries and public institutions. Moreover, private institutions such as colleges, training institutions, consultancy firms and enterprises offer various courses for adults, including many that are not subsidised by the HRDA.

2.2.1.1. *Human Resource Development Authority*

The provision of training programmes for employees has been encouraged and strengthened primarily through the approval and subsequent subsidising of training activities by the HRDA, a semi-governmental organisation funded by the human resource development levy paid by all companies. Civil servants and the self-employed are excluded from the HRDA's remit. The HRDA is governed by a

13-strong Board of Governors, comprised of representatives of government, employers and trade unions.

The training programmes are implemented by public and private institutions and enterprises. To be approved they need to adhere to the criteria laid down by the HRDA. An important development with regard to trainers is the introduction of a system for the assessment and certification of training providers. Through this system, which is expected to be fully implemented by the end of 2012, trainers of vocational training, vocational training institutions and vocational training infrastructure are assessed against specific criteria to ensure that they qualify for certification.

As far as the training provision is concerned, the HRDA subsidises various training activities that are addressed mainly to employees:

- (a) single-company initial and continuing training programmes in Cyprus provide in-company training to employees to allow them to meet the specific needs of the enterprise. During 2011, 3 394 programmes were subsidised with 33 273 participants and total expenditure of EUR 4 193 764;
- (b) single-company continuing training programmes abroad train and develop employees of an enterprise abroad to allow them to meet the specific needs of the enterprise. During 2011, 1 038 programmes were subsidised with 1 038 participants and total expenditure of EUR 2 072 593;
- (c) standard multi-company continuing training programmes provide continuing training to meet the training needs of employees through participation in training programmes at public or private training institutions and organisations. During 2011, 1 467 programmes were subsidised with 19 760 participants and total expenditure of EUR 4 728 694;
- (d) high-priority multi-company continuing training programmes provide continuing training to meet the training needs of employees through participation in training programmes at public or private training institutions and organisations in specific high-priority subjects. During 2011, 72 programmes were subsidised with 1 230 participants and total expenditure of EUR 1 797 491;
- (e) multi-company continuing training programmes abroad aim at improving and enriching the knowledge and skills of senior personnel of enterprises through the transfer of know-how and the acquisition of practical knowledge and experience from equivalent successful units abroad. During 2011, one programme was subsidised with 16 participants and total expenditure of EUR 44 511.

2.2.1.2. *Ministry of Education and Culture*

The MoEC offers continuing education and training to employees through the one-year programmes of afternoon and evening classes at technical schools and it is responsible for the training of secondary education teachers.

As part of the afternoon and evening classes at technical schools, the Directorate of STVE of the MoEC offers one-year programmes which lead to the award of a certificate. These programmes are designed to offer continuing education and training to employees, enrich their knowledge and skills and thus place them in a position to respond more efficiently to the contemporary demands of the labour market. No qualifications are required to attend these programmes and the teaching methods used vary, depending on the programme.

2.2.1.3. *Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance*

The MLSI is responsible for CPC, which offers short modular programmes for employees in technical occupations and management, and for the Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus ⁽²⁴⁾, which offers upgrading courses for employees in the hotel and restaurant sector.

2.2.1.4. *Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment*

The MoA is responsible for the training of farmers in the Department of Agriculture's training centres.

During 2010, agricultural training centres organised 26 courses lasting a total of 74 days with 670 farmers participating. In addition, 23 courses were organised in handicrafts such as basket-making, embroidery, weaving, etc., and 274 farmers participated. Apprenticeship schemes are also organised in a range of subjects. For persons under 40 years of age, a daily allowance is granted of EUR 20 per day of training. During 2010, nine schemes were implemented of 29-days duration, in which 90 young farmers participated, some of whom were not entitled to allowance. During 2010, expenditure amounted to around EUR 6 072.

The MoA is also responsible for the training of foresters and forestry graduates provided by the Forestry college.

2.2.1.5. *Cyprus Academy of Public Administration*

The Cyprus Academy of Public Administration (CAPA) ⁽²⁵⁾, which has a budget of EUR 1 521 637 for 2011, is the learning and development centre for the Cyprus

⁽²⁴⁾ Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus [Ανώτερο Ξενοδοχειακό Ινστιτούτο Κύπρου].

⁽²⁵⁾ Cyprus Academy of Public Administration [Κυπριακή Ακαδημία Δημόσιας Διοίκησης].

civil service. It was established in 1991 and is part of Public Administration and Personnel Department ⁽²⁶⁾ of the Ministry of Finance ⁽²⁷⁾. CAPA's overall objective is to contribute to the continuous improvement of the Cyprus civil service through learning activities in the broad field of management, organisational development projects and applied research.

CAPA's main projects and activities are:

- (a) developing the capacity for management of learning in civil service organisations by setting up a learning unit in each civil service organisation to systematically manage its learning activities;
- (b) developing personal and interpersonal skills;
- (c) organising induction courses for newcomers;
- (d) offering EU training programmes;
- (e) offering training programmes for foreign public officials;
- (f) application of common assessment framework (CAF)–quality management tool for self-assessment of public service organisations;
- (g) designing and organising workshops on a wide variety of management skills;
- (h) EU-funded projects.

2.2.1.6. *Ministry of Health*

The Ministry of Health ⁽²⁸⁾ is responsible for the training of public sector nurses provided by the School of Nursing ⁽²⁹⁾.

2.2.1.7. *Ministry of Justice and Public Order*

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order promotes the training of police officers and sergeants by the Cyprus Police Academy. The Police Academy also offers part-time training in the use of computers for members of the police force. The lessons are taught by qualified teachers appointed by the MoEC and they take place in the computer laboratory of the Police Academy. The courses run from autumn until summer of the following year.

⁽²⁶⁾ Public Administration and Personnel Department [Υπηρεσία Δημόσιας Διοίκησης και Προσωπικού].

⁽²⁷⁾ Ministry of Finance [Υπουργείο Οικονομικών].

⁽²⁸⁾ Ministry of Health [Υπουργείο Υγείας].

⁽²⁹⁾ School of Nursing [Νοσηλευτική Σχολή].

2.2.1.8. *Foundation for the management of the European lifelong learning programmes*

The Foundation is the body which manages education programmes and promotes the goals and the EU education and training policies in Cyprus. The Foundation uses funds obtained from the European Commission to subsidise educational institutions and organisations active in this field, as well as teachers, students, educators, trainers and trainees.

According to the Foundation, in 2011, an amount of EUR 960 034 was approved for funding activities under the Leonardo da Vinci mobility programme. This amount funded the mobility and training of 345 learners/trainees in VET (compared with 237 in 2010). Furthermore, 43 teachers and trainers (compared with 51 in 2010) and 38 enterprises/organisations (compared with 25 in 2010) participated in VET mobility schemes.

2.2.2. Training for the unemployed

Over recent years, training provision for the unemployed has become vitally important for combating the effects of the economic crisis. Resources have been redirected to the prevention and reduction of unemployment. The main bodies promoting training provision for the unemployed are the HRDA in cooperation with the MLSI, the MLSI itself and the MoEC.

2.2.2.1. *Human Resource Development Authority*

The HRDA offers the following training activities:

- (a) a scheme to improve employability of the unemployed. It is cofinanced by the ESF in the programming period 2007-13. It aims at improving the employability of the unemployed by offering opportunities for participation in training activities and work experience. The programmes are offered free of charge and participants receive an allowance. During 2011, the HRDA subsidised the participation of 692 unemployed persons in 50 training programmes and the participation of 163 persons in work experience programmes. Total expenditure amounted to EUR 2 044 144;
- (b) training programmes for upgrading the skills of unemployed persons. They cover important horizontal and job-specific skills, which will help people to return to productive employment. The programmes are offered free of charge to unemployed persons, with priority given to the long-term unemployed. For the duration of these programmes, participants are also entitled to training allowances from the HRDA. During 2011, the HRDA subsidised the training of 854 unemployed people and total expenditure was EUR 516 622;

- (c) the accelerated initial training scheme is a multi-company initial training scheme operated by the HRDA aimed at remedying significant labour shortages by providing theoretical and practical training in occupations that are currently in demand. The HRDA covers all the costs for the institutional training. In addition, trainees receive a weekly allowance. During 2011, 392 persons benefited from the scheme and total expenditure was EUR 1 067 252;
- (d) the training programmes for newly employed tertiary education graduates aim at strengthening the management capacity of enterprises and organisations through the employment and training of young university and other tertiary education graduates. The HRDA provides subsidies to employers for the delivery of in-house training programmes of six months duration. These programmes are supplemented by participation in other training courses. During 2011, 544 participants were subsidised and total expenditure was EUR 4 641 445;
- (e) job placements and training for unemployed Cypriots and EU nationals to allow them to fill vacancies and/or replace labour from non-member countries. This scheme provides a subsidy and guidance to employers as incentives to encourage them to employ and provide individualised training for unemployed. As of 1 March 2012, the scheme is directed exclusively at the long-term unemployed. During 2011, 683 persons benefited from the scheme and total expenditure was EUR 3 154 861.

2.2.2.2. Ministry of Education and Culture

As part of the afternoon and evening classes at technical schools, the Directorate of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education of the MoEC offers one-year programmes leading to the award of a certificate.

One of the objectives of these programmes is to offer continuing education and training to the unemployed to help them to rejoin the labour market, in areas where there is shortage of skilled workers. Therefore, these programmes help to meet the workforce needs of the economy, both in terms of quality and quantity. No qualifications are required to attend these programmes and the teaching methods used vary, depending on the programme.

2.2.3. Training for other groups at risk of exclusion from the labour market

The training programmes for groups at risk of exclusion from the labour market, such as inactive women, public assistance recipients, single parents, dropouts, persons with disabilities and asylum seekers, are provided mainly by the MLSI, the MoEC, the HRDA and other ministries.

2.2.3.1. *Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance*

The Centre for the vocational rehabilitation of the disabled ⁽³⁰⁾ provides specialised programmes to promote the acquisition of professional skills by disabled persons, which are promoted by the MLSI. It provides training and offers employment opportunities in the following specialisations: leather goods/shoemaking, furniture industry/carpentry, broom-making, knitting and sewing/embroidery. The MLSI also provides a special allowance in addition to the regular training allowance.

The Department of social inclusion of persons with disabilities promotes a vocational training scheme for persons with disabilities to expand their training opportunities by providing training in specialties and at levels not offered by the Centre for the vocational rehabilitation of the disabled. The scheme covers the training costs at an appropriate training institution or company with special programmes to facilitate the employment and career development of persons with disabilities. During 2011, 16 people were trained at a cost of EUR 9 855.

The Social welfare services ⁽³¹⁾ have launched the project 'Work and social activation of people in vulnerable groups through the development of social skills and other actions', cofinanced by the ESF in the programming period 2007-13. The aim of this project is to provide training in social skills to vulnerable groups (such as people aged 15-24 or over 50 years of age, single parents, public assistance recipients, former convicts and people with disabilities) and to reintegrate them in the labour market. It is expected that 1 300 people will participate in the scheme and the total budget for 2011-15 is EUR 2 385 979.

2.2.3.2. *Ministry of Education and Culture*

As part of the afternoon and evening classes at technical schools, the Directorate of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education of the MoEC offers one-year programmes leading to the award of a certificate.

One of the objectives of these programmes is to offer continuing education and training to specific groups of people at risk of exclusion from the labour market. As a result, special programmes for prisoners, aimed at their reintegration into the labour market, are offered at the central prisons in Nicosia. These programmes include classes in cooking, graphic design, woodcraft and furniture making and AUTOCAD design.

⁽³⁰⁾ Centre for the vocational rehabilitation of the disabled [Κέντρο Επαγγελματικής Αποκατάστασης Αναπήρων].

⁽³¹⁾ Social welfare services [Υπηρεσίες Κοινωνικής Ευημερίας].

2.2.3.3. *Human Resource Development Authority*

The HRDA is implementing a scheme cofinanced by the ESF in the programming period 2007-13 which aims at improving the employability of economically inactive women by providing opportunities for them to participate in training activities and work experience. The programmes are offered free of charge and participants receive an allowance. During 2011, the HRDA subsidised 406 women in 27 training programmes and 146 women in work experience programmes. Total expenditure was EUR 1 035 592.

2.2.3.4. *Ministry of Justice and Public Order*

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order (MJPO), in cooperation with the MoEC and the private sector, offers classes and other programmes of professional training to prisoners, on a voluntary basis.

2.2.3.5. *Ministry of Interior*

Based on the national employment strategy and labour market needs in general, the immigration strategy aims at integrating legal immigrants into society in a way that increases social cohesion. The action plan for the integration of nationals of non-member countries includes actions in several sectors such as education, vocational training, Greek language, health, information, etc.

2.2.4. **Training for adults in general**

The adult education centres ⁽³²⁾ of the MoEC offer a wide range of courses aimed at the holistic development of each individual's personality and the social, economic and cultural advancement of Cyprus' citizens, communities and society.

There are 400 adult education centres, in both urban and rural areas of the government-controlled area of Cyprus. They are run by the Directorate of Primary Education ⁽³³⁾ of the MoEC and offer courses in about 100 different subjects every year, including arts, literature, computers, foreign languages, Greek for foreigners, sign language, gymnastics, accounting, public relations, first aid, interior design, typing, journalism, cookery, woodcarving, knitting/weaving, pottery, car mechanics, gardening, building, jewellery making, photography and dancing.

⁽³²⁾ Adult education centres [Επιμορφωτικά Κέντρα].

⁽³³⁾ Directorate of Primary Education [Διεύθυνση Δημοτικής Εκπαίδευσης].

Classes take place from November to the end of May on the premises of public schools. No entry qualifications are required and anyone over the age of 15 can follow the courses. Lessons are held once a week and last for 90 minutes. Those who attend the courses pay a small fee and at the end of the year they receive a certificate of attendance. In 2011, expenditure amounted to EUR 2 239 326, including teachers' salaries.

The adult education centres also organise about 50 special classes each year, free of charge, for various disadvantaged groups such as illiterate people, prisoners, senior citizens and people with disabilities.

Furthermore, the Centres are implementing a project to teach Greek to foreigners, immigrants and other residents of Cyprus aged 15 and over, cofinanced by the ESF during the period 2010-15. The programme consists of 50 teaching sessions and attendance is free.

CHAPTER 3.

Shaping VET qualifications

3.1. Qualifications systems and frameworks

In Cyprus until recently there has been relatively limited implementation of frameworks and mechanisms on the transparency of qualifications and systems for the recognition of competences and qualifications. However, Cyprus is committed to introducing the relevant EU tools. A description of progress in implementing qualification systems and frameworks is provided below.

3.1.1. Implementation of a national qualifications framework (NQF)

The development of an NQF to promote recognition of academic and vocational qualifications acquired in Cyprus is a government priority. To facilitate the process, the Council of Ministers appointed a high-level national committee comprised of the Directors-General of the MoEC, the MLSI and the HRDA.

In February 2009, the national committee appointed a working group, which studied examples of good practices in other European countries before preparing an interim report on the state of development of an NQF in Cyprus. The report was finalised in March 2012 and will form the basis of further consultation with stakeholders and other interested parties.

The working group is in the process of appointing an international expert to carry out the detailed design and development of the referencing report. Furthermore, the level descriptors are being developed to make them relevant to the Cypriot education system. The project to establish an NQF in Cyprus is expected to be completed by June 2013.

Regarding the regulated professions, Cyprus has fully transposed the new Directive 2005/36/EC into national law by adopting eight different laws: one for the general recognition of regulated professions and seven others for the seven sectoral professions (nurse responsible for general care, dental practitioner, veterinary surgeon, midwife, architect, pharmacist and doctor).

Furthermore, the development of a competence-based system of vocational qualifications, which will constitute an integral part of a future NQF, is a high priority for Cyprus. The HRDA is establishing and implementing the system in two phases. During the first phase in the period 2006-09, five standards of vocational qualifications at level 2 were developed in the three economic sectors of hotel and restaurants, construction and retail trade for the occupations of waiter, cook, receptionist, stonemason and sales person.

During the second phase, which covers the period 2007-15 and is cofinanced by the ESF, 67 new standards in priority occupations were developed at various levels. The standards cover a broad range of occupations in the following sectors: hotels and restaurants, retail and wholesale trade, construction, manufacturing, motor vehicle repair, ICT systems and networks, hairdressing and the occupation of trainer of vocational training. The new standards are discussed by the sectoral technical committees on vocational qualifications and approved by the Board of Governors of the HRDA. It is expected that during the second phase, 7 000 persons will be given the opportunity to get their qualifications recognised according to the new standards.

3.1.2. Implementing a unit-based credit system

The European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET) is part of the overall project to develop European cooperation in VET and constitutes one of its operational tools. A working committee on the development and implementation of ECVET in Cyprus was set up in September 2011. This committee comprises stakeholders from the public and the private sectors, such as the MoEC, the MLSI, the Planning Bureau, the HRDA, the CPC, the Foundation for the management of the European lifelong learning programmes in Cyprus and private providers of VET. Furthermore, several pilot projects on implementing ECVET prepared by the ECVET European expert groups are under consideration as part of the ongoing reform of STVE curricula.

3.1.3. Quality assurance, accreditation and recognition

There are two bodies responsible for quality assurance, accreditation and recognition:

- (a) the Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications ⁽³⁴⁾, an independent body, is the authority responsible for the recognition of diplomas awarded by institutions of higher education;
- (b) the Council for Educational Assessment and Accreditation ⁽³⁵⁾ is an independent body that advises the Minister for Education and Culture on issues concerning the establishment, control and operation of tertiary education institutions in Cyprus.

⁽³⁴⁾ Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications [Κυπριακό Συμβούλιο Αναγνώρισης Τίτλων Σπουδών].

⁽³⁵⁾ Council for Educational Assessment and Accreditation [Συμβούλιο Εκπαιδευτικής Αξιολόγησης και Πιστοποίησης].

The MoEC is working towards the adoption of new legislation, to establish the Cyprus Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education (CyQAAE). The CyQAAE, which will be responsible for the external evaluation of all tertiary education institutions, will replace the existing separate evaluation and accreditation bodies and will simplify all evaluation and accreditation procedures and the quality assurance system.

3.1.4. Europass

The CPC, an institution of the MLSI, was appointed as the Cyprus National Europass centre (NEC) and is thus responsible for the coordination, management and promotion of all the activities related to Europass documents as well as for the provision of information regarding the documents and for cooperation with other organisations in the field of mobility and qualification transparency.

The Cyprus NEC, in cooperation with the Foundation for the management of the European lifelong learning programmes in Cyprus, is encouraging all organisations participating in mobility programmes to issue the Europass mobility document and during 2011, 221 documents were issued.

Additionally, in 2011 the Cyprus NEC managed to contact almost all interested organisations, both private and public, to promote the Europass documents and make them accessible to all citizens. Around 80% of the higher educational institutes automatically issue the Europass diploma supplement to their graduates, and the number of Europass diploma supplements issued in 2011 reached 3 903. Furthermore, most 2011 technical schools' graduates and the graduates of the CPC accelerated training programmes (1 431) received Europass certificate supplements.

In 2011, the Cyprus NEC organised 66 workshops with 773 participants. During the workshops, the participants created their own Europass CV and were advised on how to write a cover letter and on how to perform well in an interview.

3.2. Anticipation of labour market needs

Cyprus has a long experience in providing forecasts for skills needs. Employment forecasts in economic sectors and occupations are provided at a detailed level of analysis, including both expansion and replacement demand.

The main formal mechanism in place for the assessment of skill needs is operated by the HRDA. The Ministry of Finance provides projections for the growth of the economy, which include forecasts for different sectors. The MoEC is responsible for the identification of educational and special skill needs.

3.2.1. Human Resource Development Authority

For the systematic employment forecasting and the identification of skill gaps, the HRDA conducts the following research studies:

- (a) long-term employment trends and forecasting in Cyprus.

The provision of long-term employment forecasts in sectors of economic activity and occupations has become an established activity of the HRDA. The HRDA provides 10-year employment forecasts regularly every two to three years. The latest set of employment forecasts for Cyprus were completed in 2010, cover the period 2010-20 and provide forecasts of employment, expansion and replacement demand for 46 sectors of economic activity and for around 200 occupations, which cover the whole spectrum of the Cypriot labour market. Furthermore, the HRDA participates actively in initiatives and actions promoted at European level in the framework of the European network Skillsnet for skill needs forecasting;

- (b) annual investigations for the identification of skill needs with the involvement of the social partners.

This study provides annual estimates of the number of persons required for specific occupations by district. On the basis of these estimates, proposals are made for the implementation of multi-company initial training programmes. In the study, the views of employers' organisations, trade unions, district labour offices of the MLSI and the Cyprus Tourism Organisation ⁽³⁶⁾ are collected and analysed through a specially designed questionnaire;

- (c) study on the anticipation of green skill needs.

The HRDA study *Identification of green skill needs in the Cyprus economy 2010-13* (HRDA, 2010a) describes the green economy of Cyprus, provides employment needs forecasts for sectors of economic activity and occupations in the green economy and identifies green skill needs for the period 2010-13. A special action plan for promoting green skills in the Cyprus economy has been put forward as a result of the study;

- (d) study on the identification of employment and training needs for effective utilisation of natural gas in Cyprus.

The existence of natural gas in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus and the growth prospects of the Cyprus economy due to its future exploitation, has led the HRDA to conduct a research study, in cooperation with the

⁽³⁶⁾ Cyprus Tourism Organisation [Κυπριακός Οργανισμός Τουρισμού].

MLSI, entitled ‘Early identification of employment and training needs for the effective utilisation of natural gas in Cyprus’;

(e) thematic priorities setting.

Every year the HRDA prepares documents that contain the thematic priorities for the continuing training programmes it subsidises. It then examines, approves or rejects the submitted programmes, which must comply with the policy and subsidy manual, and it subsidises the implemented programmes.

The studies on anticipation of skill needs are used by policy-makers to develop appropriate policies to help public and private organisations involved in human resource planning, people involved in counselling such as secondary education vocational guidance teachers and employment counsellors and the general public to adapt to the forecast labour market situation. For this purpose, all research studies are widely disseminated on completion to prominent stakeholders. Special presentations are organised for secondary school guidance counsellors and employment counsellors, students and parents.

3.2.2. Ministry of Finance

The Ministry of Finance provides projections for the growth of the economy, which include forecasts of value added, productivity and employment for all sectors, and submits proposals for the required policy changes.

3.2.3. Ministry of Education and Culture

The MoEC and more specifically the Directorate of secondary technical and vocational education ⁽³⁷⁾ is responsible for the introduction, with the involvement of the social partners, of new branches and specialisations, the design of curricula and the identification of special skills needed.

To carry out these tasks, while taking into account the developmental needs of the Cyprus economy and the latest scientific and technological advances, the Directorate of STVE cooperates closely with all major stakeholders such as ministries and the Planning Bureau, the social partners (employers’ and employees’ organisations), teachers and their associations, the University of Cyprus, the Pedagogical Institute and the HRDA. The findings of the research studies of the HRDA are also taken into account in the design of curricula.

⁽³⁷⁾ Directorate of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education [Διεύθυνση Μέσης Τεχνικής και Επαγγελματικής Εκπαίδευσης].

The curriculum is revised whenever a need is identified. The last reform was completed in 2004. A revision of the curricula is underway as part of the education reform, based on a study focusing on the reorganisation of STVE. For the introduction of new branches and specialisations, the views of all major stakeholders are considered and the teachers of STVE provide their suggestions every year.

In addition, the Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation of the MoEC participates in the Programme on the international assessment of adult competences (PIAAC). PIAAC assesses the level and distribution of adult skills in a coherent and consistent way across countries. It focuses on the key cognitive and workplace skills that are required for successful participation in the economy and society of the 21st century.

CHAPTER 4.

Promoting participation in vocational education and training

4.1. Incentives for participation in vocational education and training

Incentives for promoting participation in VET are aimed at individuals and enterprises, the main ones being the free provision of various VET programmes, the allowances granted for participation in training programmes and tax incentives for enterprises.

4.1.1. Incentives for individuals

The main incentive for the participation of individuals in vocational education is the fact that the provision of secondary technical vocational education, including evening technical education, the apprenticeship system and public tertiary vocational education are free of charge, while various lifelong learning programmes are offered for a small fee. Public funds administered mainly by the MoEC are the primary source of financing for VET.

Furthermore, a government grant is paid to parents with a child in tertiary education based on specific income and property criteria.

In the case of unemployed and economically inactive persons, the HRDA provides a major incentive to participate in vocational training: the programmes, which are implemented by public and private institutions, are provided free of charge and participants receive training allowances.

The financing provided by the ESF has played an important role in promoting participation; the increased funding available led to the introduction of new training programmes. Many training programmes that are cofinanced by the ESF are addressed to the unemployed and groups at risk of exclusion from the labour market.

Educational leave schemes provide public sector employees with an opportunity to take educational leave for studies which are relevant to their job. The State pays up to 100% of the training and travel costs of civil servants awarded a scholarship from, through or with the approval of the government or any other authority approved by the Council of Ministers.

In some sectors, leave of absence for education and training purposes is included in the collective agreements, thereby ensuring a certain level of

education and training. Such sectors are the hotel industry, the banking sector, cabinet-making and carpentry and private clinics. Moreover, collective agreements in some sectors also provide for leave of absence for trade unionists for their trade union activities.

4.1.2. Incentives for enterprises

The funding provided by the HRDA has effectively motivated enterprises and their employees to participate in training and development activities. The funds of the HRDA come from the human resource development levy of 0.5% on the payroll of eligible employers. Enterprises are directly involved in training activities; they prepare and submit training programmes to the HRDA on a continuous basis. The HRDA subsidises up to 80% of the cost of approved training programmes.

The HRDA subsidies have also proved to be an important incentive for the development of efficient training institutions and providers, which prepare and submit for approval, every six months, continuing training programmes, in accordance with the thematic priorities that are communicated to them by the HRDA.

Furthermore, the scheme for the support of infrastructure and systems for the development of human resources provides several incentives. These include support for (a) development of centres providing services to enterprises and organisations; (b) development of cooperation among enterprises; (c) establishment of certified assessment centres.

In terms of tax incentives for enterprises, all expenditure on human resource development is tax deductible in the same way as other production expenses. It is therefore estimated that about 20-25% of total human resources development expenditure is borne by the State and the rest is covered by private funds.

4.2. Guidance and counselling

Enhancing the provision of guidance and counselling services for all population groups is a policy priority for Cyprus. The main bodies delivering guidance and counselling in Cyprus are the Counselling and career education service (CCES) ⁽³⁸⁾ of the MoEC, the Public employment services (PES) ⁽³⁹⁾ and the

⁽³⁸⁾ Counselling and career education service [Υπηρεσία Συμβουλευτικής και Επαγγελματικής Αγωγής].

⁽³⁹⁾ Public employment services [Δημόσια Υπηρεσία Απασχόλησης].

Euroguidance Centre Cyprus of the MLSI, the HRDA, the Youth Board of Cyprus and certain private organisations. Guidance is provided mainly for students and young people, to the unemployed and for the employed and economically inactive.

An important development with regard to guidance was the establishment in March 2012 of the National forum on lifelong guidance, which was a basic step in the upgrading of all guidance and counselling services in Cyprus. The Forum will act as a coordinating mechanism for guidance services provided in Cyprus through various channels. Its mission is to act as an advisory body to government policy-makers in the field of lifelong guidance. All major stakeholders are represented in the Forum, such as the MoEC, the MLSI, the HRDA, the Youth Board of Cyprus and the social partners.

4.2.1. Students and young persons

Guidance and counselling for students is provided mainly by the MoEC, the Euroguidance Centre Cyprus of the MLSI, the HRDA and the Youth Board of Cyprus.

4.2.1.1. Ministry of Education and Culture

The counselling and career education services of the MoEC provide students in public general and technical secondary schools with specialised assistance in developing their personal awareness of their interests, needs, abilities and skills so that they can take suitable decisions about their personal lives, education and careers.

Educational and vocational guidance is provided throughout upper secondary education, both through the careers and social education course offered in the third grade of lower secondary level and through personal and group counselling.

The services are provided by qualified guidance counsellors, who have undergone specialised postgraduate education in counselling and or career education/guidance. The counsellors are placed in schools and at the central and regional offices of the MoEC.

In the second grade of the lyceum (public upper secondary education), students have an opportunity to become acquainted with the world of work through a one-week traineeship in a job of interest to them. This scheme is organised and supervised by schools in collaboration with the world of work.

Additionally, students attending technical schools have traineeships in the specialisation of their choice as part of their curriculum. Furthermore, the third year of studies in the practical pathway at technical schools combines a school-

based environment with a real workplace: final-year students are found placements in industry for one day a week, where they follow a practical training programme.

Each year, the MoEC organises the International Education Fair where the students and other interested parties receive information about universities' study programmes, entrance requirements, fees and scholarships. Over 200 higher education institutions and universities from 35 countries, as well as the national universities and colleges usually attend the fair.

The Guidance and counsellors' association (part of the Association of Secondary School Teachers of Cyprus) also organises an annual careers fair. More than 150 professional bodies and organisations take part.

Educational fairs are additionally organised by the British Council and the Fulbright Commission with the participation of different universities and colleges from the UK and the US respectively to provide information to prospective students about further studies in these countries.

4.2.1.2. Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance – The Euroguidance Centre Cyprus

A website (www.nrcg.dl.mlsi.gov.cy) has been set up by the Euroguidance Centre Cyprus, in accordance with the Euroguidance initiative. The Euroguidance network is the European network of national resource centres for vocational guidance and currently includes 65 centres that are cofinanced by the European Commission and the relevant national authorities.

It provides among other things information on (a) education and training opportunities in Cyprus (private and public); (b) living and studying in Cyprus; and (c) the Cyprus education system, for the benefit of interested people in the EU countries, including expatriate Cypriots and local people (early school leavers, workers, unemployed and adult learners).

The target groups of the Euroguidance Centre Cyprus are guidance counsellors and individuals and organisations in need of counselling and guidance, especially students and parents seeking information on tertiary education.

4.2.1.3. Human Resource Development Authority

The findings of HRDA research on the anticipation of skill needs area significant tool for guidance. The HRDA presents the findings of its research studies to secondary school guidance counsellors in collaboration with the MoEC, employment counsellors in collaboration with the MLSI, as well as parents and students in secondary schools in all districts.

Additionally, the HRDA maintains a web page with information and advice on approved training opportunities. The HRDA also displays its research studies in a downloadable form. A special section in the web page contains occupational employment forecasts for all the occupations in the Cypriot labour market. Another section contains the latest available trends of human resources indicators for the labour market and education and training in Cyprus.

4.2.1.4. *The Youth Board of Cyprus*

The Youth Board of Cyprus ⁽⁴⁰⁾ is a semi-government organisation which promotes progress and prosperity for all young people in Cyprus, regardless of religion, ethnic or racial origin. It also promotes young people's active participation in the country's social, economic and cultural development. The Youth Board of Cyprus operates the youth information centres, which are based on European standards and provide young people with general information and counselling services.

4.2.2. Adults– Employed, unemployed and inactive

Guidance for adults is provided mainly by the MLSI through the PES and certain private organisations. Furthermore, the CCES of the MoEC is planning to extend access to guidance to other groups other than students and young people and thus promote the goal of lifelong guidance.

4.2.2.1. *Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance – Public employment services*

The vocational guidance service of the PES provides information to adults and secondary-school graduates on employment prospects and opportunities or on skills training possibilities. These services also cater for school dropouts, who may be interested in joining the apprenticeship system.

Furthermore, the PES provide assistance to employers, jobseekers and those in employment who wish to change jobs, by providing registration and placement services, information on training opportunities and job vacancies. Since 2006 the PES have offered individualised counselling at the district and local labour offices, which has been intensified as a result of the economic crisis, mainly targeted at the unemployed, economically inactive women and young secondary education graduates.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Youth Board of Cyprus [Οργανισμός Νεολαίας Κύπρου].

4.2.2.2. *Private employment services*

Private employment services and consultancy organisations in Cyprus have expanded in recent years, particularly for the recruitment of managerial or highly qualified specialised staff and for the recruitment of foreign workers. Private employment services act as human resource advisers to firms that do not have their own human resource departments.

4.2.2.3. *Ministry of Education and Culture*

The CCES also operates central offices at the MoEC and regional offices, which do not serve the needs only of students but provide services to all citizens. Furthermore, the central offices have an administrative and supportive role.

Annex 1

Acronyms and abbreviations

CAF	Common assessment framework
CAPA	Cyprus Academy of Public Administration
CCES	Counselling and career education service
CPC	Cyprus productivity centre
CyQAAE	Cyprus Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education
ESF	European Social Fund
GDP	Gross domestic product
HRDA	Human Resource Development Authority
ISCED	International standard classification of education
LFS	Labour force survey
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment
MoEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MJPO	Ministry of Justice and Public Order
MLSI	Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance
NEC	National Europass centre
NMA	New modern apprenticeship
NQF	National qualifications framework
OUC	Open University of Cyprus
PES	Public employment services
PIAAC	Programme on the international assessment of adult competences
STVE	Secondary technical and vocational education
VET	Vocational education and training

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Annex 3

Websites

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Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry: www.ccci.org.cy
Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation: www.oeb.org.cy
Cyprus productivity centre: www.kepa.gov.cy
Cyprus Workers Confederation: www.sek.org.cy
Europa: www.ec.europa.eu
Eurydice: eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php
Forestry College of Cyprus – Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment: www.moa.gov.cy/fc
Foundation for the management of European lifelong learning programmes: www.llp.org.cy
Higher Hotel Institute – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance: www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/hhic
Human Resource Development Authority: www.hrdauth.org.cy
Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment: www.moa.gov.cy
Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus: www.moec.gov.cy
Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance: www.mlsi.gov.cy
National resource centre for guidance Cyprus: www.nrcg.dl.mlsi.gov.cy
Open University of Cyprus: www.ouc.ac.cy
Pancyprian Federation of Labour: www.peo.org.cy
Planning Bureau: www.planning.gov.cy
Police Academy – Ministry of Justice and Public Order: www.police.gov.cy
Pre-service training programme: www.proy.ucy.ac.cy
ReferNet Cyprus: www.refernet.org.cy
School of Nursing: www.moh.gov.cy
Skillsnet – Cedefop: www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Projects_Networks/skillsnet/
Statistical service of Cyprus: www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat
University of Cyprus: www.ucy.ac.cy

Annex 4

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Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (www.hrdauth.org.cy)

Ministries/government departments

Planning Bureau (www.planning.gov.cy)

Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance/Department of Labour (www.mlsi.gov.cy/dl)

Ministry of Education and Culture (www.moec.gov.cy)

Statistical service of Cyprus (www.mof.gov.cy/cystat)

Cyprus Academy of Public Administration (CAPA) (www.mof.gov.cy)

Pedagogical Institute (www.pi.ac.cy)

Cyprus productivity centre (www.mlsi.gov.cy/kepa)

Social partners: employer and trade union organisations

Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation (www.oeb-eif.org)

Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (www.ccci.org.cy)

Cyprus Confederation of Professional Craftsmen and Shopkeepers (www.povek.com)

Cyprus Workers' Confederation (www.sek.org.cy)

Pancyprian Federation of Labour (www.peo.org.cy)

Democratic Labour Federation of Cyprus (www.deok.org.cy)

Cyprus Union of Bank Employees (www.etyk.org)

Other organisations/non-profit making organisations

University of Cyprus (www.ucy.ac.cy)

Research Promotion Foundation (www.research.org.cy)

National agencies/units for managing European programmes/initiatives

Foundation for the management of European lifelong learning programmes
(www.llp.org.cy)

National Eurydice Unit (www.eurydice.org)



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Vocational education and training in **Cyprus**

Short description

The vocational education and training (VET) system of Cyprus is playing a significant role in dealing with the adverse effects of the economic crisis on the labour market and in laying the foundations for future development. To continue to fulfil the expectations of the Cypriot economy and society, VET is undergoing essential reforms.

The structure of VET is being transformed by the introduction of a new modern apprenticeship, an alternative pathway for young people between 14 and 20, and the establishment of post-secondary institutes for technical and vocational education and training, which will offer students an intermediate level of education. The implementation of the new modern apprenticeship has begun and it will become fully operational by 2015.

Secondary technical and vocational education provides a broad range of initial training programmes in Cyprus. Its new curricula, expected to be developed by 2015, will enhance the attractiveness of VET and match specialisations with the current needs of the labour market.

VET is an important part of and features prominently in the Cyprus lifelong learning strategy. Its main actions include the enhancement of lifelong guidance and counselling services, and the development of a national qualifications framework (NQF).

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