

Non-formal and Informal Education: Where Does It Go in the Slovak Republic?

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The article describes importance of education, not only as an initial education for kids, pupils and students, but, which mainly, for adult is a part of LLL (lifelong learning) and development. People are constantly learning everywhere and at all times. Especially for teachers, in recent years, there has been an increasing appreciation of the importance of learning in non-formal and informal settings. For the Slovak, educational system is highly important to identify and validate these learning experiences. The aim of this article is to highlight the definitions and understandings of what counts as formal, non-formal and informal learning/education which can vary between the Slovak educational system and other countries educational systems. In 1996, the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) ministers of education agreed to develop strategies for “lifelong learning for all”. The concept of “education from cradle to grave” includes formal, non-formal and informal learning. What does it mean by non-formal and informal education in practice for Slovak teachers? What is the implementation of EQF (European Qualifications Framework) and development of national qualification framework? Where is the Slovak non-formal and informal education?

Keywords: education, non-formal education, informal education, LLL (lifelong learning), recognition and validation, perspectives

Introduction

New information and communication technologies exceed the traditional framework of the learning process. Learning and education can no longer be viewed as a ritual that one performs only in the earlier part of life. ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) are being used to cross the barriers of age, time and space, bringing LLL (lifelong learning) to all people. People of all ages, in all places and in all different environmental contexts are learning all the time. Therefore, regardless of what activities are performing, they comprise the learning society (Kinelev, Shenikov, & Ovsjanikov, 1999).

Knowledge is a valuable foundation of all social and cultural development. However, information society in itself is not sufficiently challenging to provide a goal for which we should strive. Only knowledge is not enough. Humanity is more important than knowledge.

The key issue in education is no longer the amount of knowledge learned, but the ability to use knowledge and know-how. In order to be able to find the essential knowledge among the information overload and to be able to apply it to other contexts, people have to learn the necessary skills. Knowledge and know-how alone are not enough. Information and knowledge can be taught, but skills need to be learned. The constantly changing

environment makes the task even more challenging. Instead of one uninterrupted educational chain before entering the labor market, education in the learning society is a continuous process (Korhonen, 1997).

Learning from the experience is the most fundamental and natural means of learning. Experiences need not to be expensive, nor does the learning process require the support of substantial technological hardware and software.

Kolb's (1984) definition of experiential learning is learning derived from a direct experience. Experiential learning is consequently a complex, vague and ambiguous phenomenon. Experience cannot be by passed and experience is the central consideration of all learning. Learning builds on and flows from experience, no matter what external prompts to learning there might be (Kolb, 1984).

Philosophy of LLL (Lifelong Learning)

The European Commission's 2006 Communication "Adult Learning: It Is Never Too Late to Learn" highlighted adult learning as an important component of LLL. It stated that adult learning, through the acquisition of key competences by all, delivers an essential contribution to social inclusion and to employability and mobility in the labor market (Multilateral Cooperation Project in the "Lifelong Learning Program" of the European Commission—Grundtvig, 2008).

The necessity of LLL is not merely a matter of political will. It involves more aspects than the will to enhance the civilization of all the citizens. It is also a question of changes in the working life and the challenges business enterprises. The entire industrialized world continues to live in an extremely rapid pace of change. Parallel to the persistently high unemployment rate, many areas of European industry are suffering from a tremendous shortage of skilled employees. The skills and knowledge of those employees who have engaged in working life for a long time are not sufficient for more demanding tasks. On the other hand, the basic education of children and young people does not sufficiently encourage them to find out how they should learn to learn (Markkula & Suurla, 2000).

Personal philosophy of learning is based on a person's own fundamental values. It should provide answers with the following questions: Why should I study continuously? Where will success lead to and who will be beneficiaries? Will it be enough if I benefit from process myself or do I want to help other people to succeed? (Markkula & Suurla, 2000).

This kind of learning, which could be called maintenance learning, is discussed by the Club of Rome in their book *No Limits to Learning*, which was published in 1979 and was considered as the basic volume on the principle of LLL. Traditionally, societies and individuals have adopted this idea of maintenance of learning, which is only interrupted by a short period of reform (Boud, Koegh, & Walker, 2009).

The philosophy of LLL is not only about learning itself, but also about development in learning. Unexpected preparation makes learning more effective both for individuals and for society. Although it has often been said that learning should be enjoyable, the learners' duties and responsibilities for the development of their own skills and the expansion of their scope of thinking are of equal importance.

Learning is more effective if it is a goal-oriented. The goal and career choices, even the meaning of life can change, and perhaps, they should change during the course of a person's life. Therefore, the policies of LLL should be re-assessed at regular intervals (Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, 2009).

If a person learns to learn in early childhood, their capacity of learning will be tremendously enhanced. Learning begins at birth, and the first four years of life are said to be the most essential for the development of

learning capacity. The idea of LLL challenges us to make our learning potential to be better used. People aged 65 or more could still learn effectively and pass on their experience by advising others and doing creative works (Hagstrom, 1997).

As a consequence of educational reforms and developing knowledge society, there are more initiatives and opportunities to learn in various contexts and participate in processes of change. The importance of assessing and recognizing the achievements of non-formal and informal learning has, therefore, been increased in this context. Education policy makers emphasize the necessity of raising the quality and prestige of VET (vocational education and training), which is highly dependent on the qualification and competence of vocational teachers. The course of development processes in VET has caused changes in the roles of vocational teachers, making their pedagogical activities more complex and require them to make self-supporting decisions. Teachers are, therefore, encouraged to continuously develop their competences. It is important to stress that knowledge, skills and abilities are not gained for life, and they need to be permanently renewed throughout the care of a teacher (Fokiene et al., 2009). This means that a teacher should be able to act as a role model for LLL on the basis of their teaching practice.

Learning Situations

Non-formal Learning

Non-formal learning is also organized and may not have specific learning objectives. Non-formal learning may occur at the initiative of the individual, but also happens as a by-product of more organized activities, which may or may not, has learning objectives. On-the-job training is often viewed as non-formal learning (Gross, 2009).

The primary means by which the lay leaders who serve as volunteers in a variety of community settings develop the skills of proficiencies needed for their particular roles, is through on-the-job-experience. Richmond's (1997) survey all revealed that the majority of practicing teachers gain needed skills and knowledge through experience, trial and error, modeling, peer groups, collegial contacts, and collaborative efforts, as well as through self-directed study that utilizes human and material sciences (Galbraith & Zelenak, 1991).

Another form of preparation of VET (vocational education and training) teachers is through in-service training, which is typically sponsored by employing agencies, corporations, professional associations, colleges, universities, resource centers, and private consultants. Such training, usually in a short-term in nature, is conducted by a human resource developer or trainer whose purpose is to focus on learning that advances the development of specific job-related competences, behaviors, and attitudes needed or desired by the sponsoring organization (Marsick & Volpe, 1997).

In-formal Learning

In-formal learning results from daily activities to work, family or leisure. Informal learning is an element of non-formal learning. Informal learning may be understood as accidental and consequently experiential learning. Informal learning takes place wherever people have the need, motivation and opportunity for learning. Marsick and Volpe (1997) concluded that key characteristics of informal learning are:

- (1) Routine—integration with daily routines;
- (2) Jolt—internally or externally triggered;

- (3) Sub-conscious—not highly conscious;
- (4) Accidental—haphazard and influenced by chance;
- (5) Inductive—process of reflection and action;
- (6) Linked to learning to others (Gross, 2009);

(7) Various forms of non-formal and informal learning situations of vocational teachers can be distinguished. Viable example are educational events, qualification improvement courses, supervision and evaluation of individual lectures, lectures taught by colleagues, participation in various process of development, projects and programmes and study groups of research regarding pedagogical activities (Marsick & Volpe, 1997).

In general, four areas for acquiring teaching knowledge and skills of vocational teachers can be defined:

- (1) Formal learning institution;
- (2) Non-formal educational events;
- (3) The workplace;
- (4) Personal life-experience.

Factors which affected vocational teachers-participation in LLL process can be divided into internal factors, internal attitudes and external factors in Table 1 (Marsick & Volpe, 1997).

Table 1
Factors Affecting VET Teachers in LLL Participation

Internal factors—related to personal features and activities of learning teachers	Internal attitudes	External factors—related to the learning context
Biological Genetics Somatic	General values Curiosity Inclinations Ideals Viewpoints Needs	EU (European Union) development Work force mobility Foreign investments Rapid economic restructuring Free/market
Mental Psychological Spiritual	Professional values Curiosity Inclinations Ideals Viewpoints Needs	Societal environments National Cultural Organizational Administrative Industrial Micro Macro
Potential Ability Aptitude Nurturing Creativity Talent Skill		Knowledge economy Technology Improvement Development Rapid changes Innovations at work Lack of knowledge Unemployment ICT Adjustment of ideas Information abundance
Activities Professional Participatory		Pedagogical Interdisciplinary relations Learning by cooperating Practical Professional Opportunities for active participation Tool modeling pedagogical maturity

The OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), EU and national policies all stress the importance of recognizing non-formal and informal learning by calling for exploration of ways to recognize prior learning in these areas and developing tools to implement it. All these must be in line with the development of common structures of education across Europe and is associated with the ECTS (European Credit Transfer system) and the EQF (European Qualification Framework) (Queeney, 1995).

The EQF aims to relate different countries' qualifications systems to a common European reference framework. Individuals and employers will be able to use the EQF to better understand and compare the qualifications levels of different countries and different education and training systems. Agreed by the European institutions in 2008, the EQF is being put in practice across Europe. It encourages countries to relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF, so that all new qualifications which will be issued from 2012 carry a reference to an appropriate EQF level. An EQF national coordination point has been designated for this purpose in each country (Education and Training, 2012).

Concept of LLL (Lifelong Learning)

The concept of LLL involves formal, non-formal and informal learning or by one word—prior learning (Rose, 1989). The concept of prior learning involves recognition of the fact that people learn in many different places and ways. Instead of focusing on the process of learning, this approach emphasizes the outcome. That is, it does not matter how individuals acquire particular pieces of knowledge as long as they can demonstrate what they have actually learned (Merriam, & Cunningham, 2005).

ASP (assessment of prior learning) can be used for all these above mentioned types of learning. It gives recognition to skills and knowledge on the basis of learning that has occurred previously at some time in the past and possibly elsewhere. In LLL, societal learning processes are based on various sources:

(1) Formal education and training—which occurs within an organized and structured context and has learning objectives. Formal learning/education is always intentional: the explicit goal for the learner is to gain knowledge, skills and/or competences. Graduates of formal education receive the State diploma or certification (Gross, 2009);

(2) Non-formal learning—work experiences, non-for-profit workplace courses. Learning, which is embedded in planned activities, not explicitly designed as learning, but which contain an important learning element. It does not lead to certification;

(3) Informal learning—hobbies, voluntary work, natural, daily learning or other life experiences.

The idea of APL is to recognize that a teacher's competence has been developed in a variety of learning situations in job or life experiences. Assessing a VET teacher's prior learning slightly differs from assessment of traditional formal learning (see Table 2, Fokiené et al., 2009).

Situation in Slovakia

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a societal need of adopting of LLL and LLG (lifelong guidance) strategies being the tools for forming a knowledge society, forming of which is undoubtedly a priority of the government, declared in the Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the period 2006-2010 (2006, p. 35), in accordance with the program goal:

The government of the Slovak Republic considers the forming of the knowledge society to be its priority, because only such society constitutes a precondition of democratic development, science and technological progress, economic growth and social security, employment and growth.

Table 2

Comparison of Features of Assessment in Non -Formal, Informal and Formal Learning

Assessment in formal education	Assessment of informal and non-formal learning
Quantitative assessment methods dominate	Qualitative assessment methods dominate
The main assessor is the teacher	Integration of assessment and self-assessment
Oriented towards measurable learning achievements, which are assessed at the end of the course or topic	Assessment through the process, promoting self-progress, recording individual accomplishments and development possibilities
Assessment results are expressed in points and percentages regarding standards	Learning assessment expressed verbally in a particular context, weak and strong elements of professional activity are revealed
Prevalence of declarative knowledge and reproduction skills	Prevalence of operative knowledge, integration of operative knowledge and skills and their appliance in non-standard situations
Assessment as objective reality	Meaning of context in assessment
Learning achievement are easier to assess	Complex assessment

The current subsystems of LLL and lifelong guidance in Slovakia are not mutually open and interconnected, and they do not enable the people to flexibly access and achieve the required education and qualification according to the development of needs of employers during the entire span of their active life.

Taking into account the high speed of economic development of the country, one would logically expect an increased need of frequent and flexible change of qualification of citizens as well as increased need of employment in new professions from the side of the employers whereby from the time and financial reasons, it is no longer possible that the newly achieved qualifications were available exclusively through the formal system of education (Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, 2009).

The terms of “non-formal education” and “informal education” are not well known in Slovakia, despite this kind of education without any doubt exists. There are institutions in the country that offer people such situations which are impossible to be carried out at schools or within the family. The following terminologies as free time, education out-of-school hours, leisure activities and so on are more common. All terms that are mentioned above could be called just as one term—non-formal education.

But, there is a great potential in non-formal learning and informal education in Slovakia. They are able to react much more flexibly to new needs and offer what is required by the education system and labor market in matter of time, content and organization. Nowadays, when educational institutions have lost their monopoly on spreading information, the importance of non-formal and informal learning is growing (Tamášová, 2010).

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to “instantly respond to new education needs, innovation and implementation of new technologies through creation of “tailor made” education programs”. Its “deficit” is that it does not provide formally recognised certificates on partial or full qualification and also that it does not have a state controlled management quality system, which would provide a high quality of non-formal education equal to the quality of formal education.

Informal learning is at present the least utilized subsystem of education based on natural abilities of men to know and to learn, which has a potential to lead to obtaining the formally recognised qualification, whereby it provides all conditions for practical mastering of professions (learning by doing) (Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, 2009).

Current Slovak Educational System

The education system and guidance in the last decades insufficiently responds to the needs of the labour market in the Slovak Republic, which mainly shows in the following:

- (1) Absence of an open system of LLL for the labour market;
- (2) Insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to raised needs of new qualifications through creating and implementation of new learning and study programs;
- (3) Mutual closeness between formal and non-formal system of education;
- (4) Absence of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining of qualification;
- (5) Insufficiently guaranteed high quality of non-formal education by the state;
- (6) Absence of ongoing monitoring and survey of education needs on the national level;
- (7) Absence of the system of lifelong guidance for all phases of education and active life of a man;
- (8) Insufficiently transparent and effective way of investing in both formal and non-formal education and informal learning;
- (9) Insufficient development of key competencies for LLL;
- (10) Lasting gender stereotypes (Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, 2009).

Table 3 show the short SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the education system.

Table 3

SWOT Analysis of Educational System in the Slovak Republic

Strength	Weakness
(1) Very well organised formal system of education (2) Wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education (3) Informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills	(1) Low flexibility of the formal system of education (2) Unresolved system components in non-formal education: (a) guarantee of quality; (b) financing; and (c) recognition of education achievements (3) High level of non-organisation in informal learning
Opportunity	Threat
(1) Equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system (2) Utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: (a) certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and accreditation of education programs; and (b) national qualifications authority; (3) Change of paradigm of evaluation of achievements of education based on measurement of inputs (length of education) to measurement of outcomes (result of education, the so-called "learning outcome principle"), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning	(1) Resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system (2) No interest of the decision making sphere to create conditions for implementation of innovative components into the non-formal system and the resistance of the formal system to accept these innovative components (3) Possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

Education in Slovakia consists of a free education system based on ten years of compulsory school attendance. Most institutions, especially universities, are owned by the state, though since the 1990s, there have also church-owned and private schools (Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, 2009).

Perspectives in Non-formal and Informal Education

In Slovakia, validation of informal and non-formal learning is a new issue on the policy agenda. At present,

there is no systemic or legal provision for identification, assessment and recognition of skills, and competencies acquired through informal and non-formal learning or through the work experience in Slovakia. Although certification of completion of continuing training courses is regulated by legislation, the real weight of such certificates on the labor market cannot be compared with the qualifications attained in the formal system of education. At the level of policy innovation, a number of important strategic and programming documents have been adopted recently. Implementation of these decisions may create real preconditions for setting up a system of validation of informal and non-formal learning (Striestka, 2006).

CVT (continuing vocational training) is regulated by the Act No. 586/2009 as amended (No.567/2001)¹. The act recognizes CVT as a legitimate part of the education system of the Slovak Republic and defines it as a part of LLL (Striestka, 2006).

Act No. 455/1991 on Small Business as amended stipulates special qualification requirements for doing business in handicraft industry or in selected crafts (e.g., blacksmiths, construction workers, food production, etc.). The requirements may be fulfilled by the presence of a certificate of a formal vocational qualification in the relevant field or a certificate of completion of general education along with the certification of at least three years of experience in the given profession (Striestka, 2006).

Slovakia has signed and ratified the “Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications”. The Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education is the Slovak ENIC/NARIC (European Network of Information Centers/National Academic Recognition Information Centers) body, responsible for the recognition and evaluation of foreign credentials. Europass National Reference Point was established in 2004. There is a discussion underway on whether it should remain to be part of the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education, or whether it should be transferred to the Ministry of Education. Currently, higher education institutions are issuing a diploma supplement upon request from students. Secondary school certification supplement was also issued (Kinelev, Shenikov, & Ovsjanikov, 1999).

Although there is no credit transfer system and the linked system of recognition at secondary and post-secondary levels or in the non-formal training, the Slovak NARIC is involved in a number of activities to recognize partial qualifications and courses especially those received abroad. Finally, NARIC also reports on the cases’ limited number the academic recognition of education and training parts (e.g., examinations, credits), attended abroad with the purpose of continuation of education and training, including (but not limited to) higher education. Such recommendations are provided to individual schools, including universities, in study fields, such as ICT, foreign languages, arts (Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, 2009).

Over 85% of the Slovak working age population achieved at least the ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education) three level of education—a mark well above the EU average¹⁸. The share of enrolments to technical and vocational paths of initial education is almost 80% as compared with enrolments to general education ¹⁹. Initial VET has a longstanding tradition in the country. Participation in CVT among adult population is also relatively high ²⁰. CVT is provided by various education and training institutions, including basic, secondary and higher education schools, enterprise training establishments, sectoral administration training providers, private institutions, etc.. The third sector plays an additional or supplementary role in the CVT provision, especially in the fields, where state and private training providers are not too active (Striestka, 2006).

The framework standards, which could define minimum competence requirements for specific activities

are absent. The content of non-formal training is not linked to a specific standard or objective of a specific learning outcome, and therefore, the certificates cannot be validated in the same way as qualifications with regard to certain occupations or activities (Masson, 2003).

Barriers to Validating Non-formal and Informal Learning

Stakeholders are already envisaging some barriers of implementing policy relating to the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. Notably in “resistance of the formal system towards validation in the non-formal system”. Also in “lack of interest within the decisive sphere to create conditions for implementation of innovative features into the non-formal System and resistance of formal educational system to accept these features” (ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd., 2007).

There is no national qualification framework in Slovakia, which could embrace outcomes of IVET and CVT. However, various steps have been taken towards the development of qualification standards. The main task of EC is to deal with the content of VET, and conceptual and methodological issues of VET. Activities of EC (European Commission) are coordinated by Coordinating Council created in 2002 and create the basis for the decision-making with regard to VET in Slovakia (Czesaná & Matousková, 2004).

In February, 2004, the Government approved “The Concept of Lifelong Learning in the Slovak Republic” (Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, 2009). The latter acknowledged the importance of certification of training outcomes for employers and the necessity to reconsider the system of recognition of certificates outside formal education. The document recognized that as the result of the economic transformation and greater demands for adaptability of the labor force, the number of the population who attain competences and skills outside the formal system of education has grown. Thus, the specific steps towards elaboration of the system of validation and recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning have to result in the attainment of formal documents (e.g., certificates, attestations and confirmations).

The concept also recognized that the absence of the system of recognition of informal and non-formal learning results in dead ends between the school and outside-school sub-systems.

The Ministry of Education is the central body responsible for LLL. There is now a separate department dedicated to LLL, which will ensure that the SR (Slovak Republic) adheres to EU policies, implements the LLL strategy and within that supports the validation of non-formal and informal learning. They will work with other ministries, e.g., the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and the Family, self-government and social partners in implementing (Concept of Lifelong Learning in the Slovak Republic, 2004).

The LLL strategy itself has a number of priorities. For example, monitoring and forecasting the educational needs of citizens and employers, providing information services, etc., but those priorities are specifically relevant to validation, including “recognizing non-formal and informal learning outcomes” and “transmittance between the non-formal and formal educational systems” (Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, 2009).

In line with EU policy, the LLL strategy relating to validation of non-formal and informal learning looks to:

- (1) Verify knowledge, skills and competence gained in non-formal or informal learning;
- (2) Validate non-formal and informal learning through the use of “credit”, which will allow parity to be achieved within the formal and non-formal education sectors;
- (3) Allow flexibility across national boundaries, e.g., EUROPASS (European Passport), ECTS (European

Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) and ECVET (European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training);

(4) Allow citizens to shape their educational activities according to their own need, e.g., accumulating credits at his own discretion and according to his personal or work needs (ECOTEC, 2007).

One of the solutions suggested is the development of a modular structure of education and training and the corresponding system of the credit-based validation of learning outcomes, but also in diversification of other forms of education and training (ECOTEC, 2007).

LLL in the Slovak Republic comprises formal and non-formal education, and the legislative framework for both subsystems of education is deficient. Slovakia is still developing a system for validation of non-formal and informal learning. Competences acquired through non-formal education are not accepted for academic purposes in Slovakia, only education acquired through the formal (school) system is accepted for academic purposes. A law on the acceptance of competences acquired outside the formal system is being prepared, but it will only accept qualification for performing a certain profession (e.g., a craft), not for academic purposes (Boud et al., 2009).

In Slovakia, the concept of LLL has been embraced by national authorities, since numerous strategic documents and pieces of legislation drafted and adopted during the past five years referred to LLL as top priority. In 2004, a concept of LLL was approved by the government. The main weakness of this concept is that it largely failed to address the coherence of partial policies and financing of LLL. Slovakia has a national LLL strategy, but against proclaimed efforts and policy commitments, a comprehensive national strategy of LLL is still not established. The failure to adopt this coherent strategy underlines the overall lagging behind of the education system in the reform process. LLL in the Slovak Republic comprises formal and non-formal education, and the legislative framework for both subsystems of education is deficient. Slovakia is still developing a system for validation of non-formal and informal learning. Competences acquired through non-formal education are not accepted for academic purposes in Slovakia, only education acquired through the formal (school) system is accepted for academic purposes. A law on the acceptance of competences acquired outside the formal system is being prepared, but it will only accept qualification for performing a certain profession (e.g., a craft), not for academic purposes (Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, 2009).

Conclusions

The Slovak Republic currently does not have legislation in place to support validation of non-formal or informal learning. It does not have a National Qualification Framework which is capable of recognizing formal, non-formal or informal learning, collectively. The country does not have any national experience of developing methods or “tools” to validate non-formal or informal learning and does not have the necessary quality assurance systems in place to ensure the quality of non-formal or informal learning.

Recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning is one of the key components (subsystems) of the lifelong system. It strengthens the position of LLL as one of the main tools of flexibility of the society and development of knowledge society. There are two possible ways of recognition:

(1) Credit system for the programs of non-formal education;

(2) Recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning to persons from the practice through the national authority with limited competencies.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unifying its individually functioning

components, rooted in the decision making sphere on the level of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic. Elaboration of the system requires a long period of time to focus on co-ordinated activity of the group/groups of relevant experts, representing all components of guidance, for creation of original partial concepts in order to make the particular components of the guidance functional and for the draft of legislation governing their operation in the practical life. On one hand, elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organization, management and time, intellectual and financial sources, and on the other hand, it also requires particular authentic way of resolving the complex issue of lifelong guidance with the aim to reflex these issues in the content of the legislation. At present, there are only a few numbers of experts in Slovakia, who are specifically dedicating themselves to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance, or at least to its particular components (Report on Education Policy, 2007).

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