

Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istitopolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

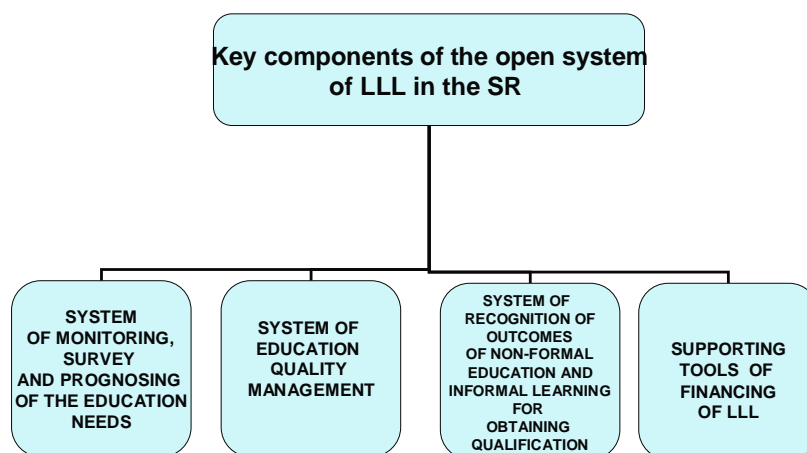
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

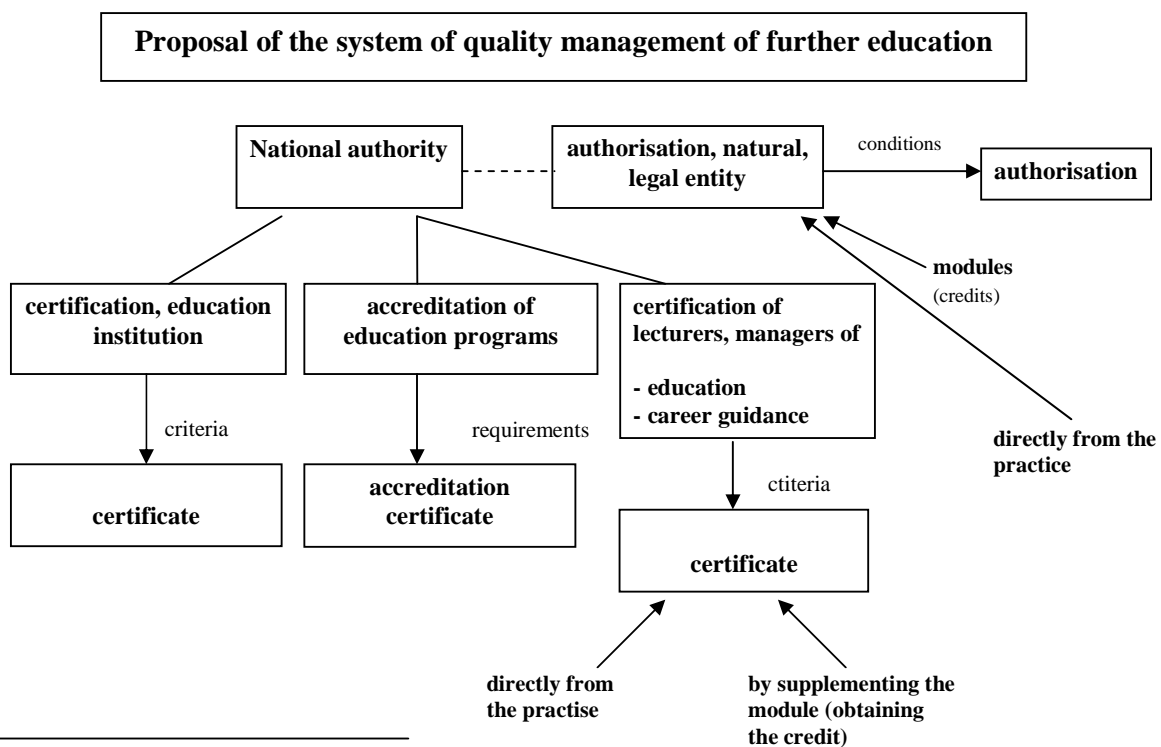
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

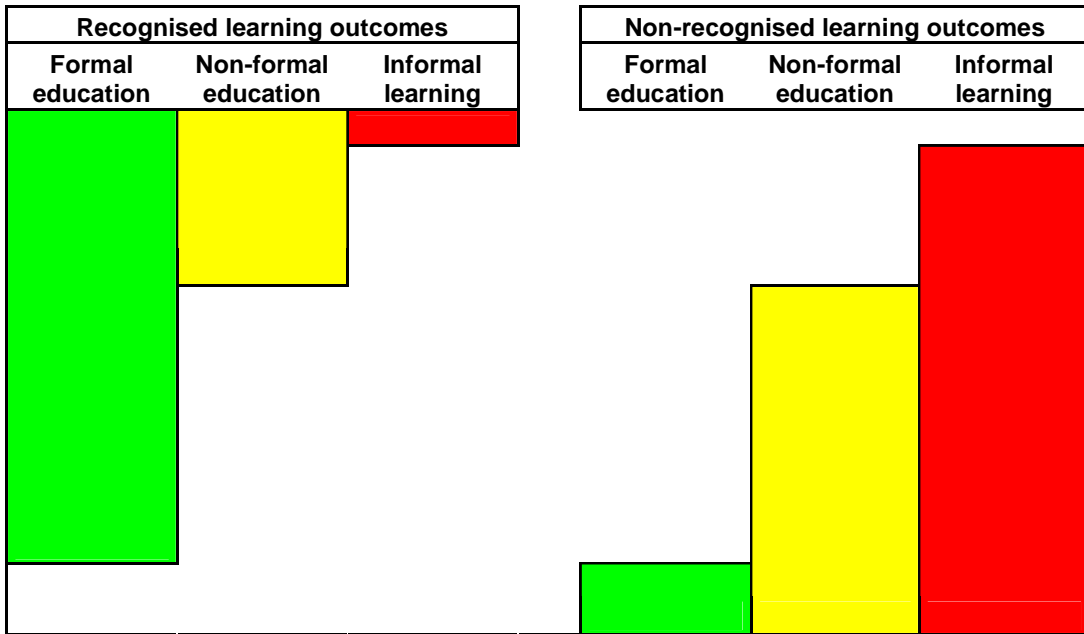
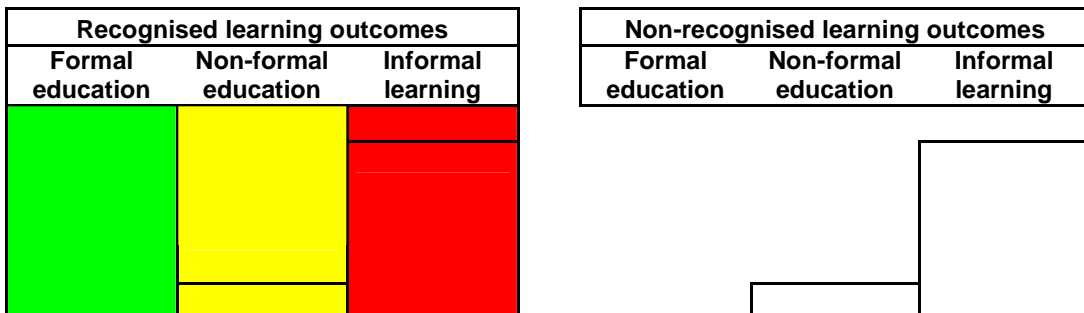
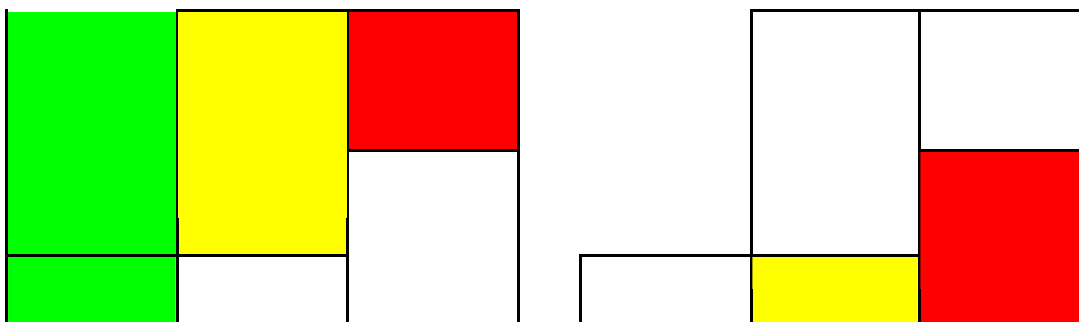


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istitopolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

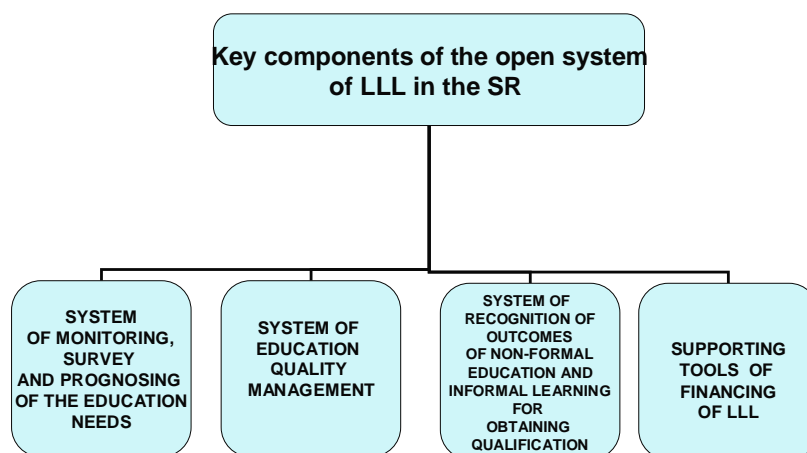
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

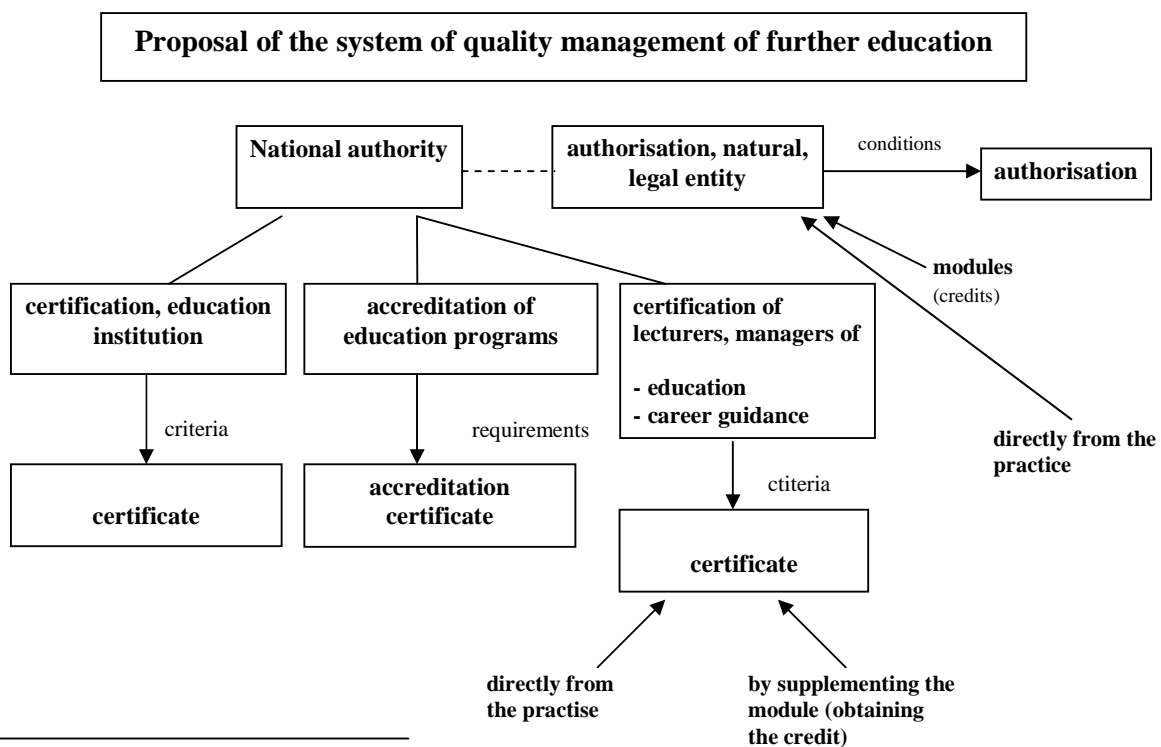
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Documents expected to be processed: NSP, NSK, qualification standards, evaluation standards

Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

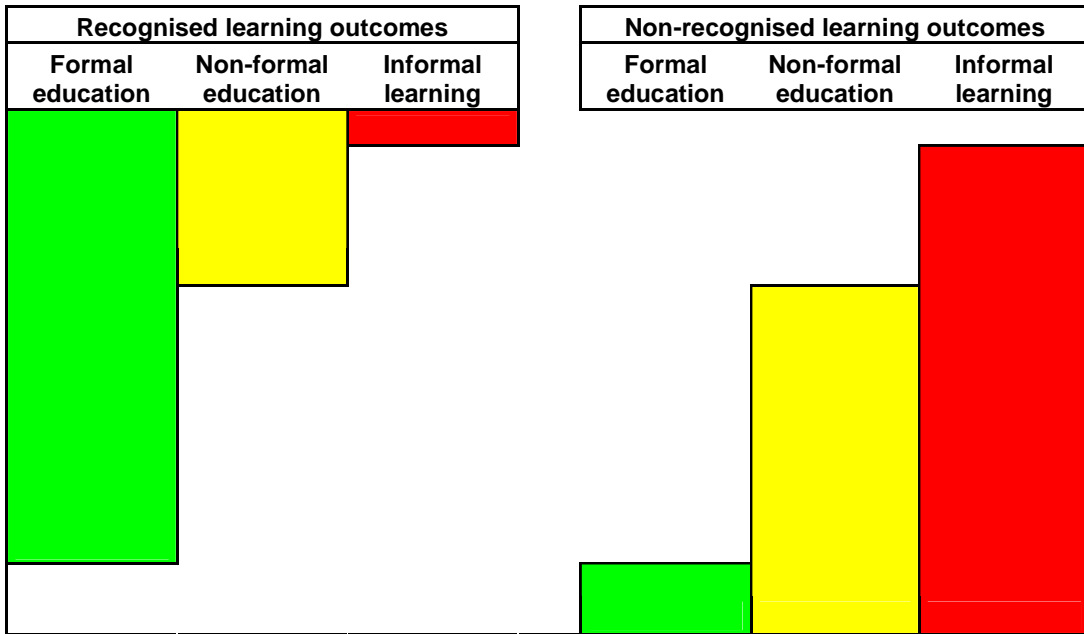
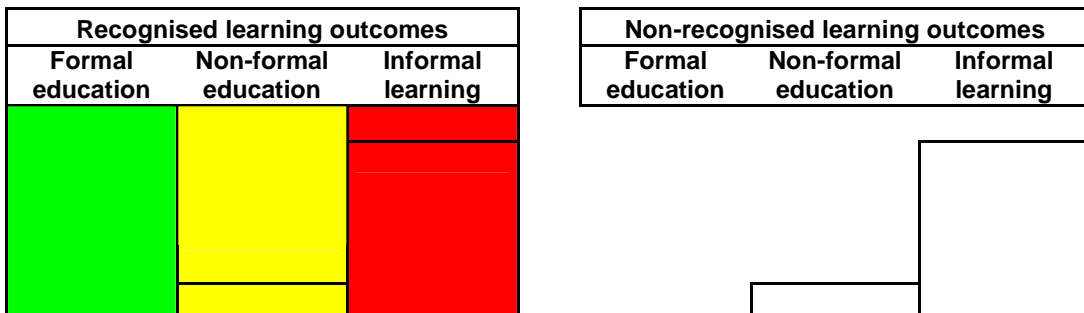
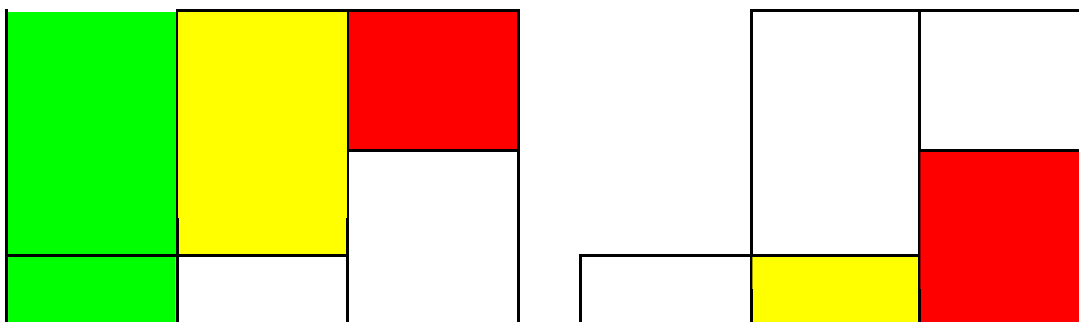


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istropolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

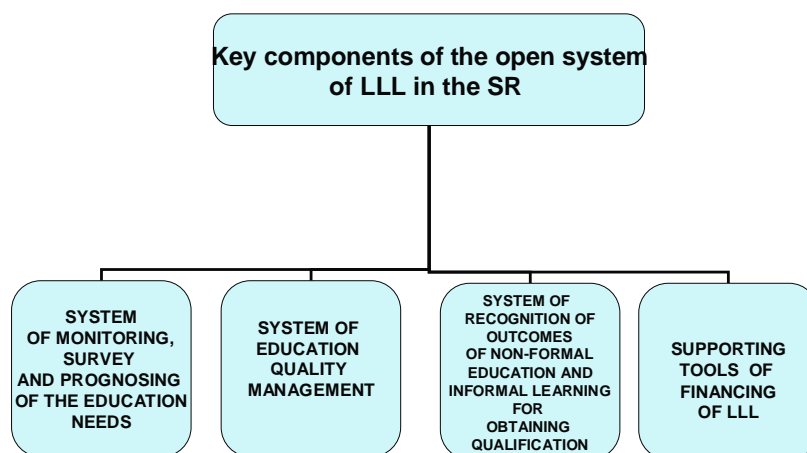
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

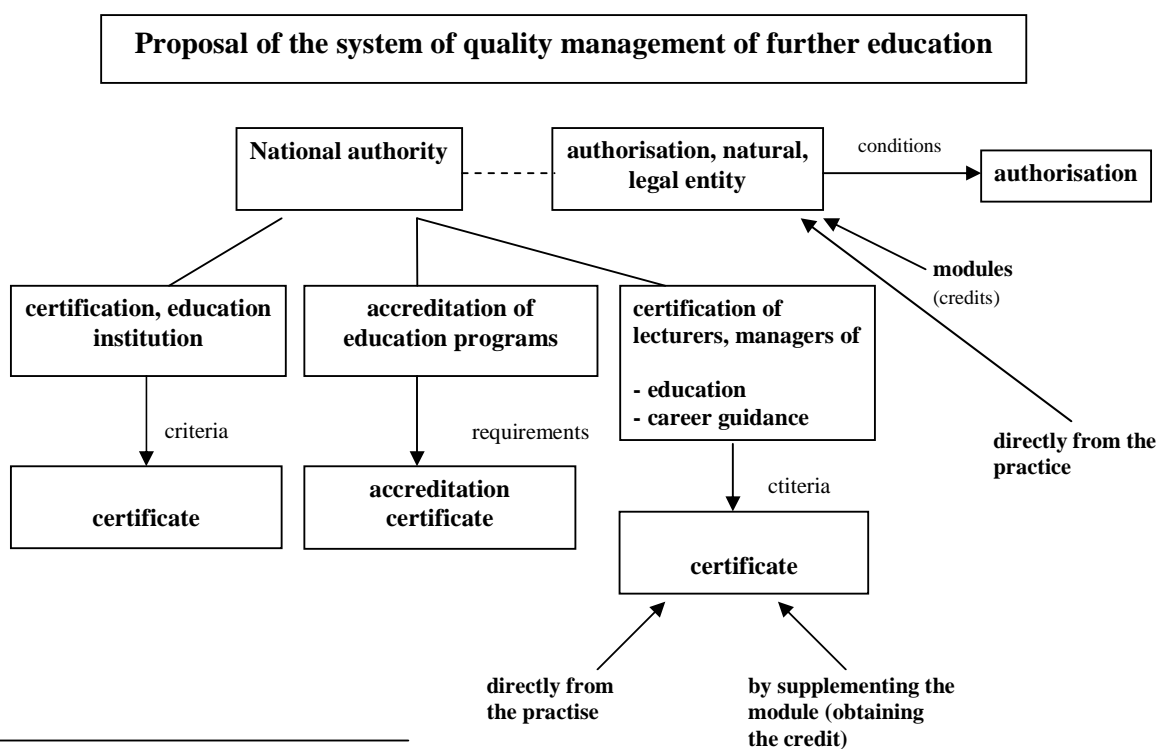
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Documents expected to be processed: NSP, NSK, qualification standards, evaluation standards

Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Ľubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Ľubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Ľubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Ľubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Ľubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Ľubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

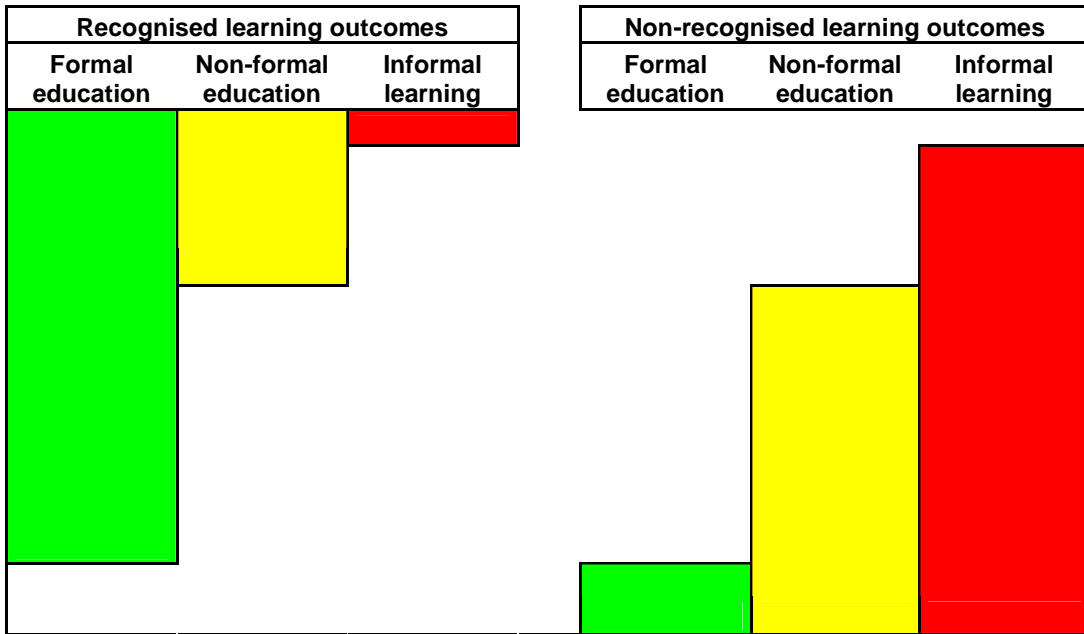
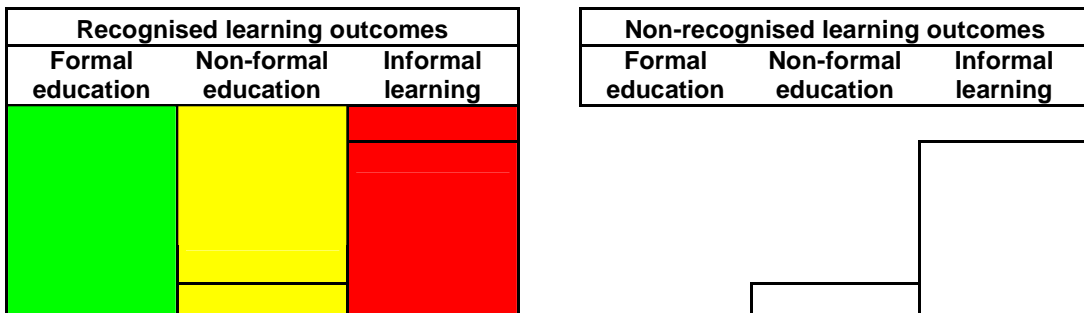
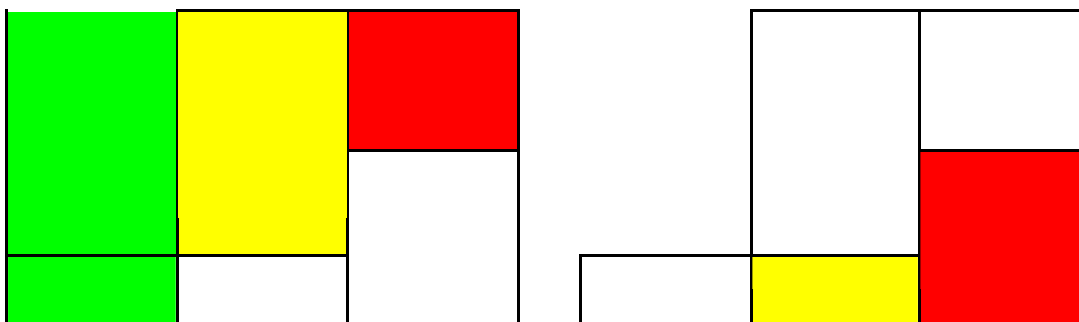


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

	make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istitopolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

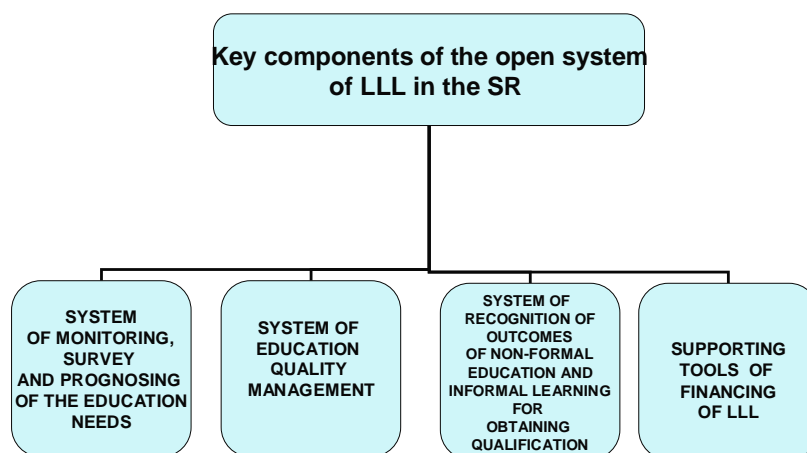
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

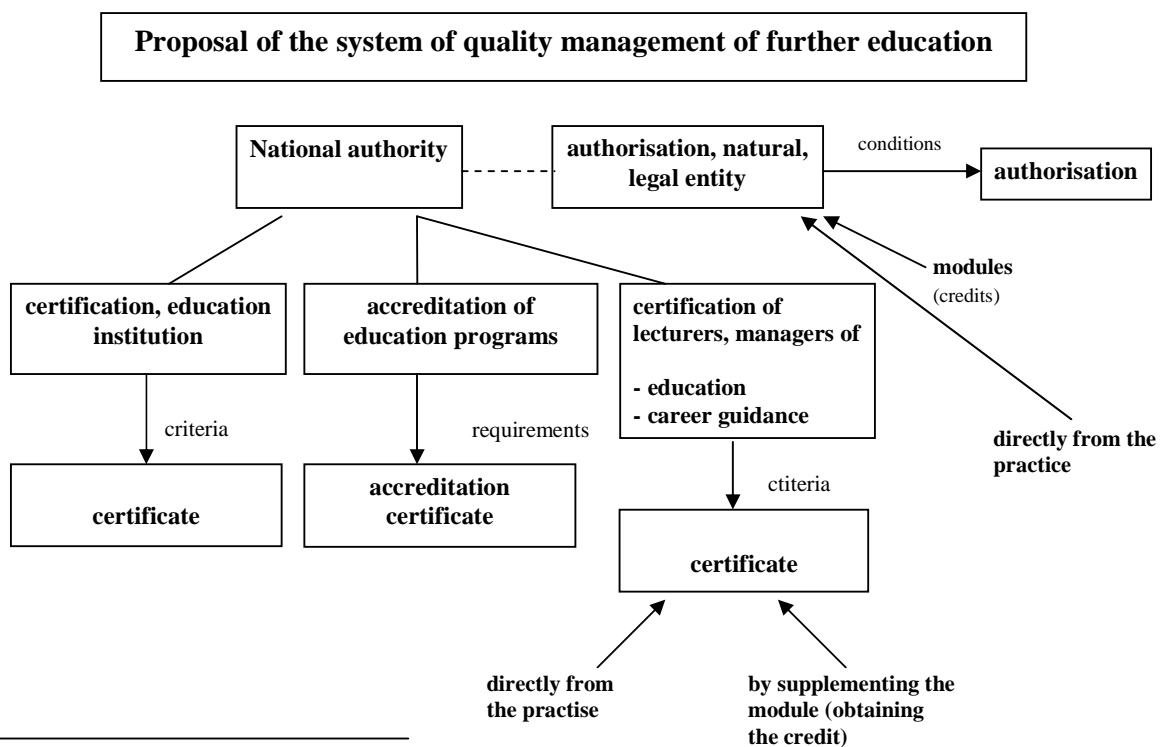
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

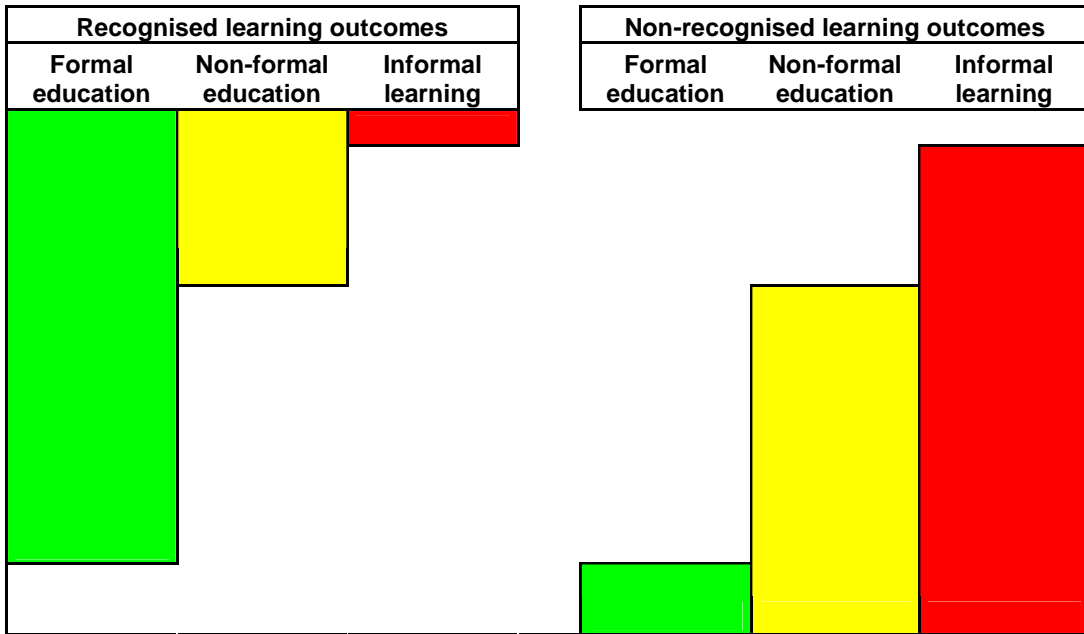
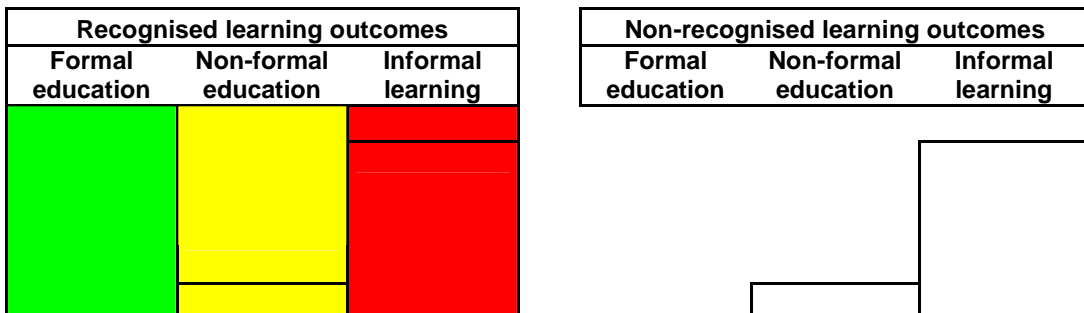
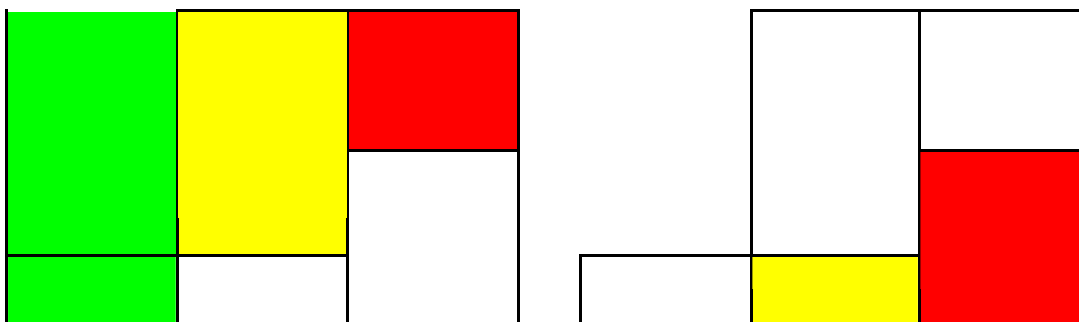


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in coordinated 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

	make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istropolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

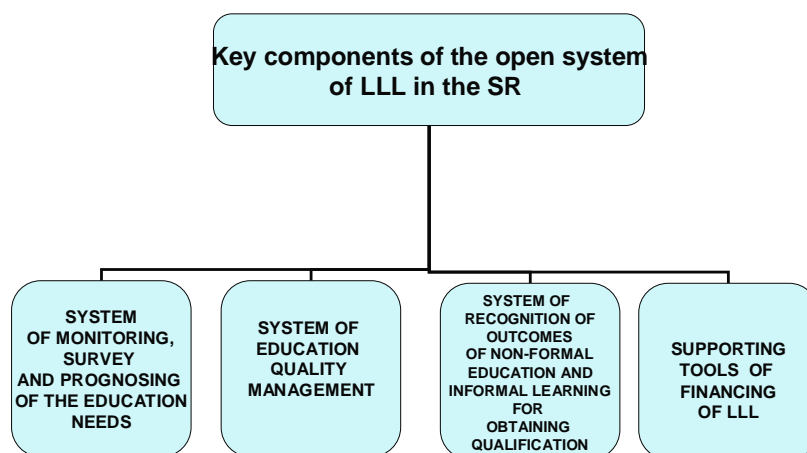
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

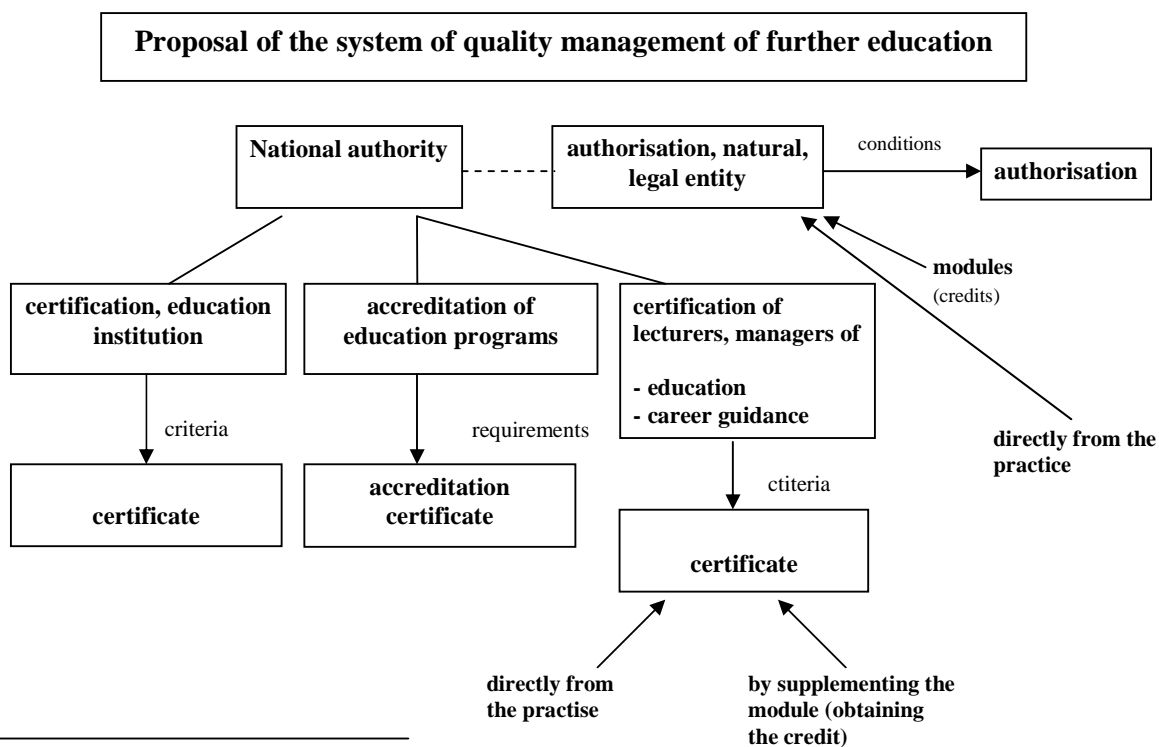
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

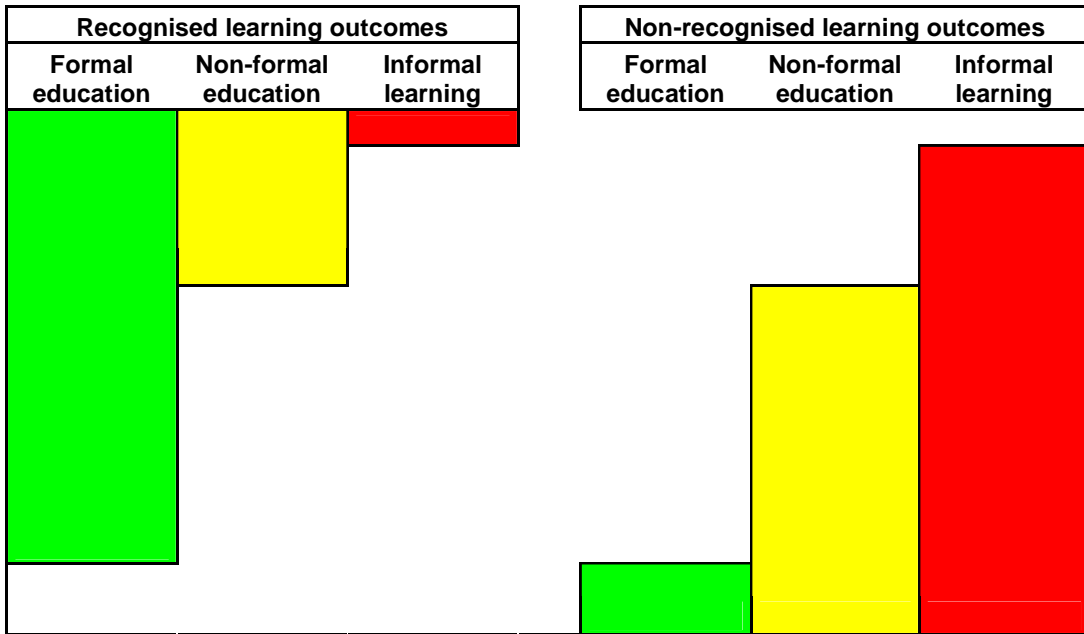
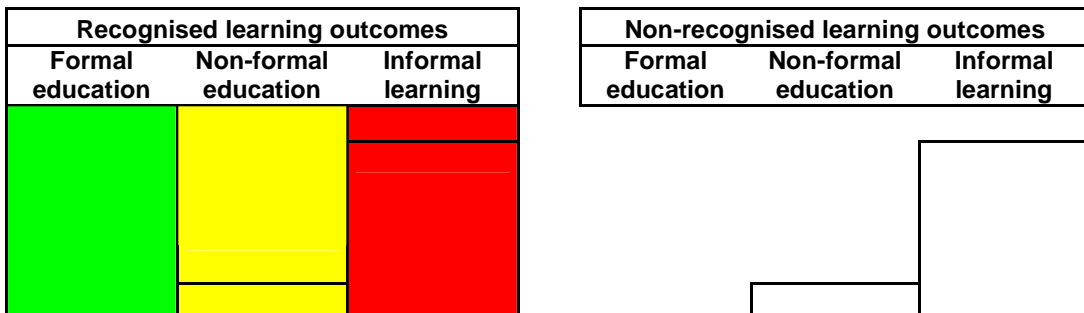
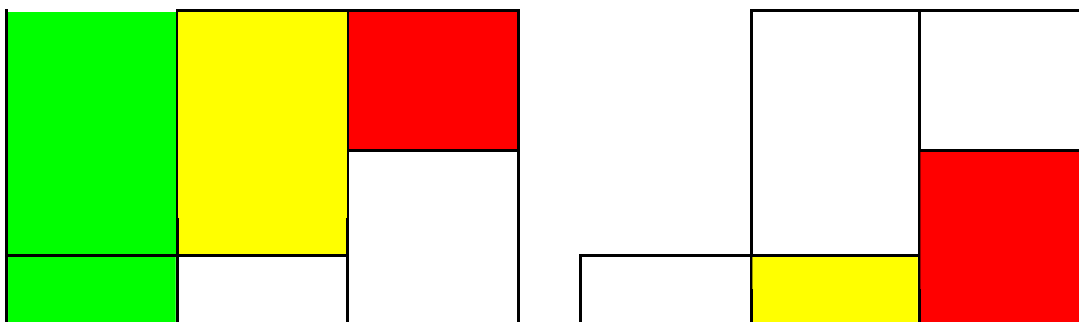


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in coordinated 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

	make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istropolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

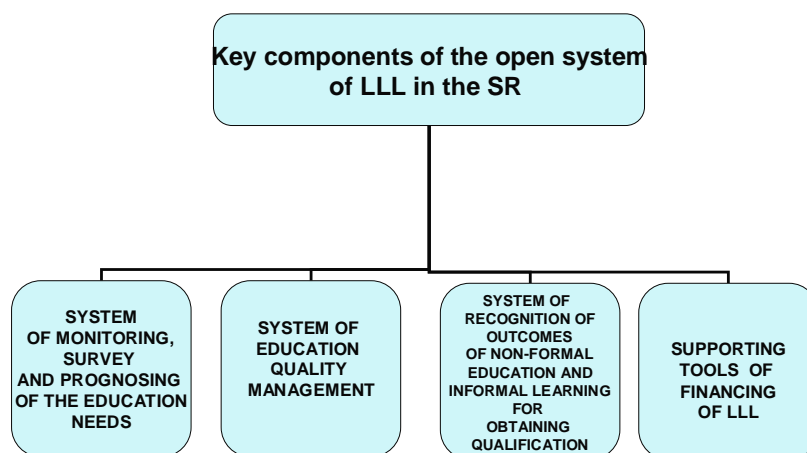
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

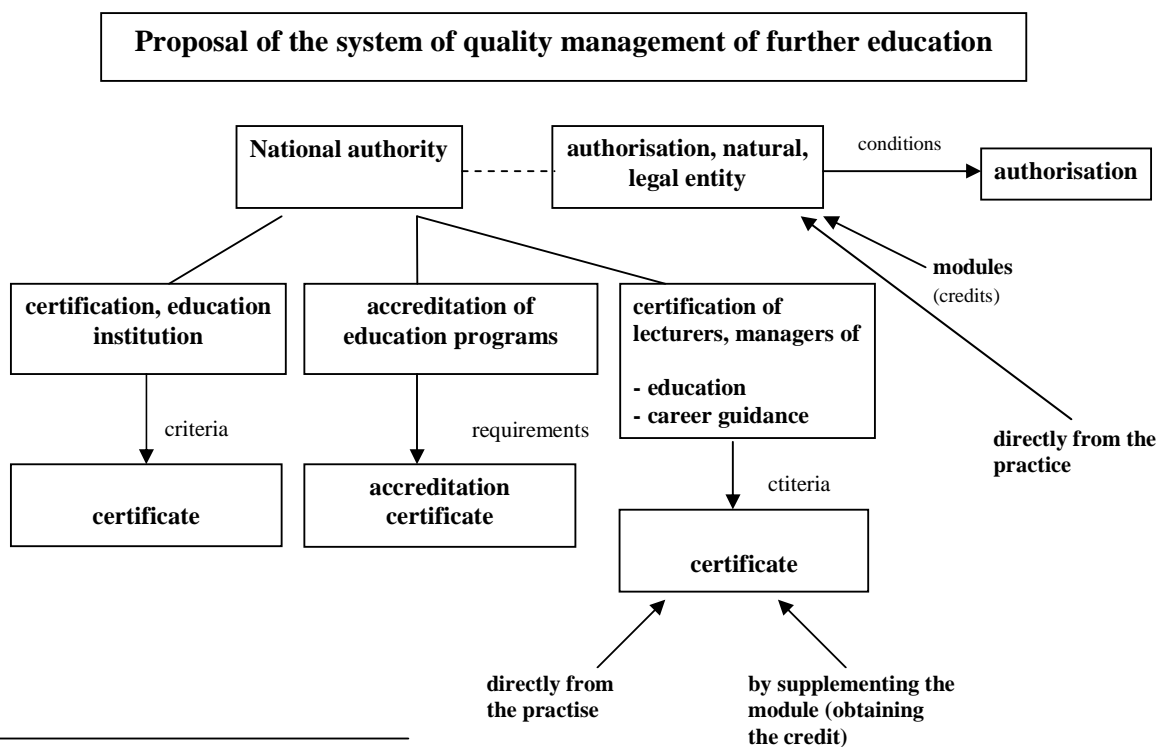
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

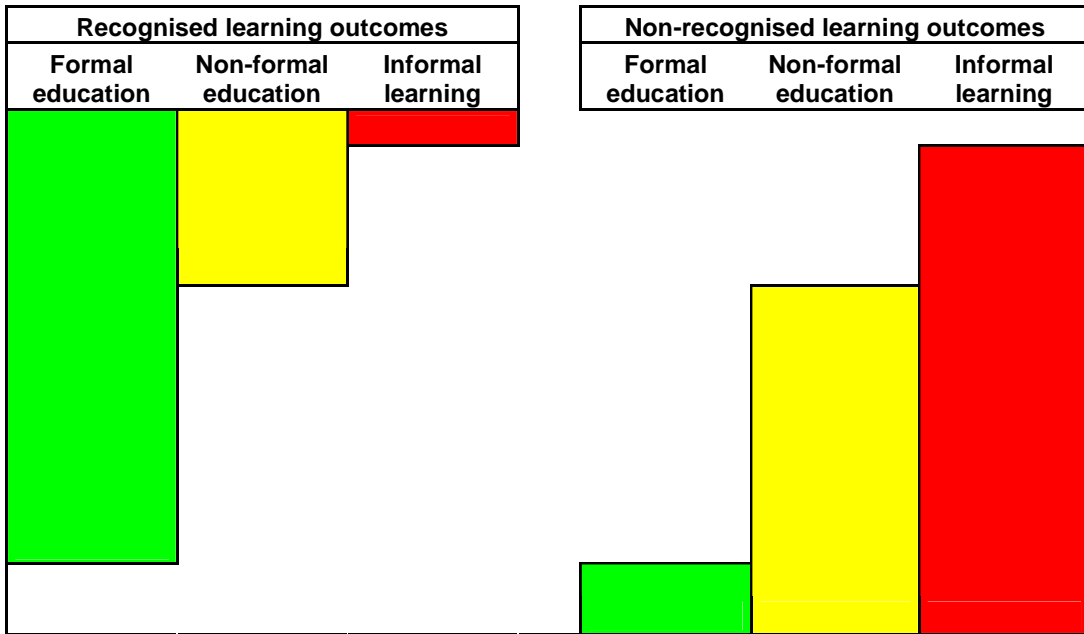
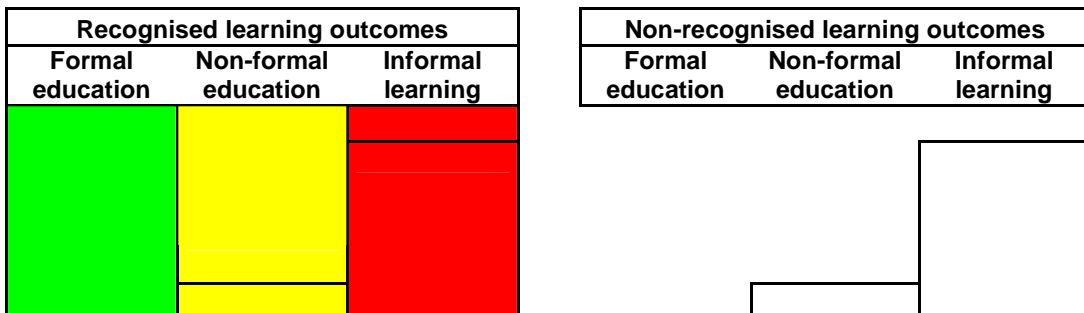
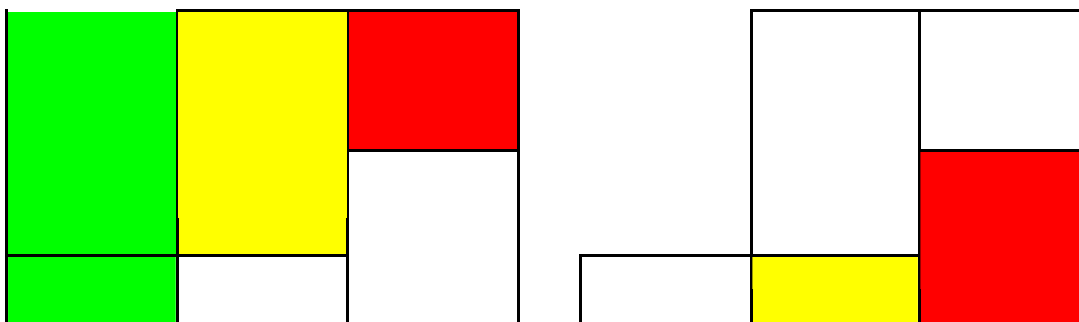


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in coordinated 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

	make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istitopolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

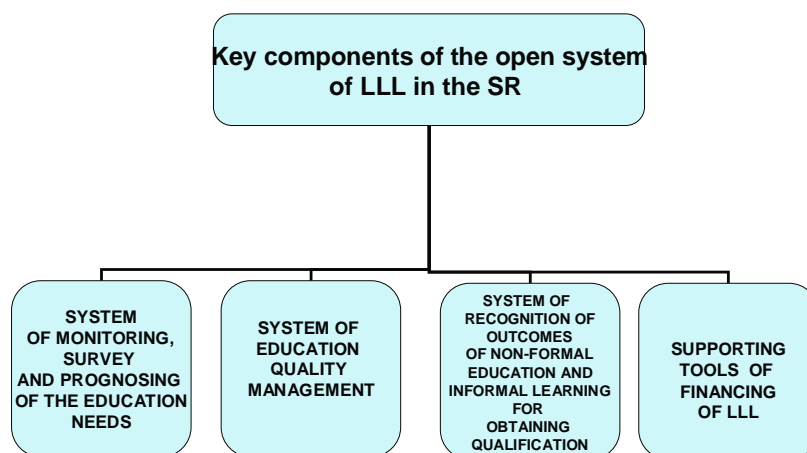
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

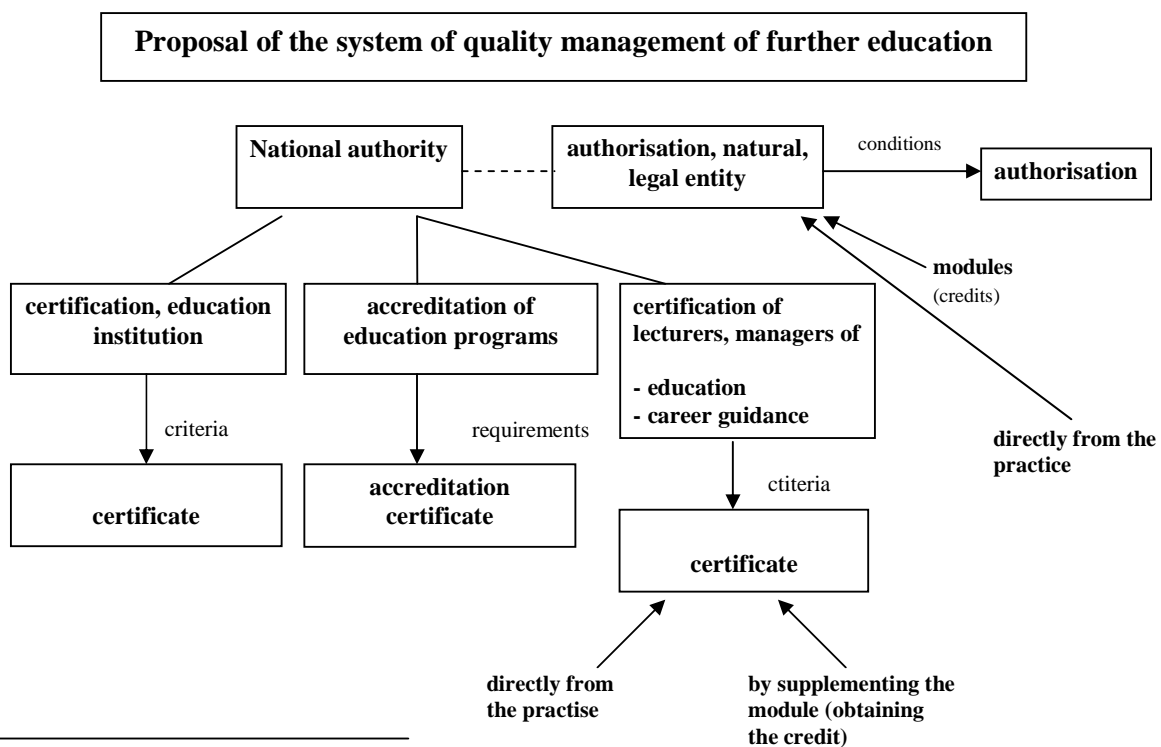
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Documents expected to be processed: NSP, NSK, qualification standards, evaluation standards

Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

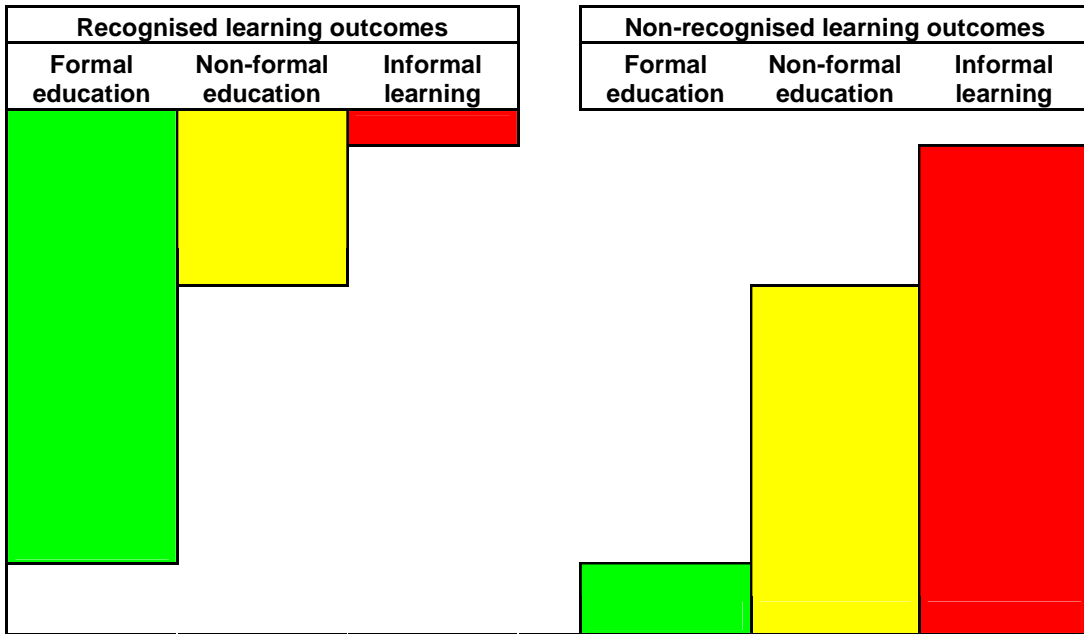
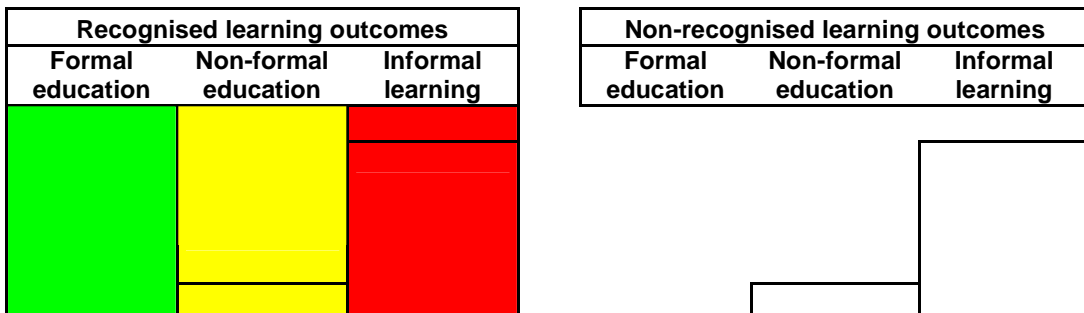
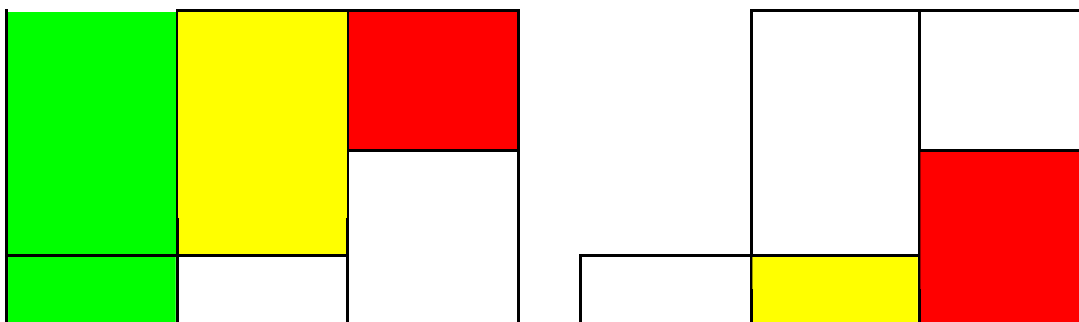


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istropolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

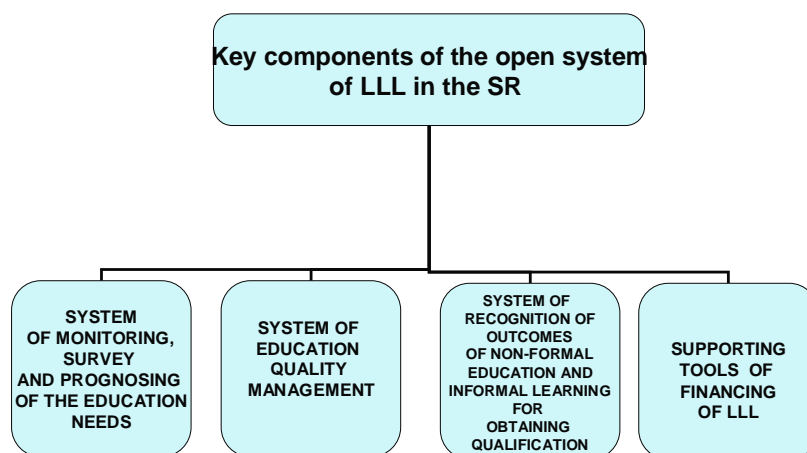
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

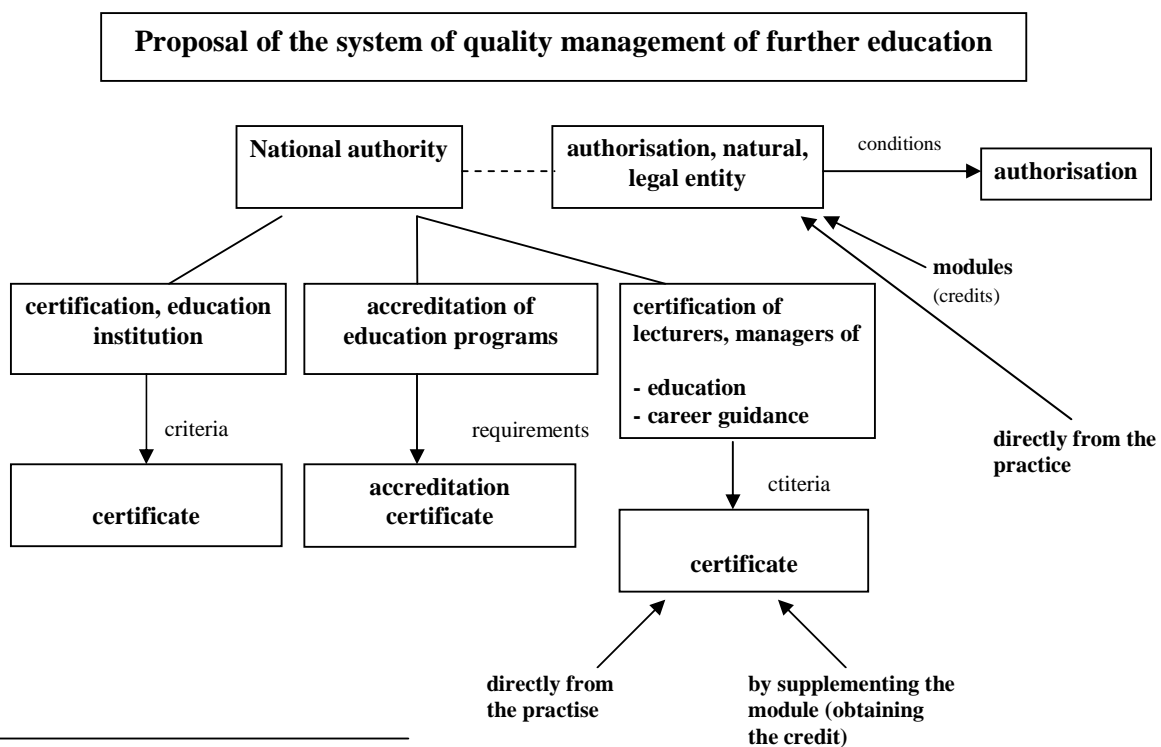
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Documents expected to be processed: NSP, NSK, qualification standards, evaluation standards

Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

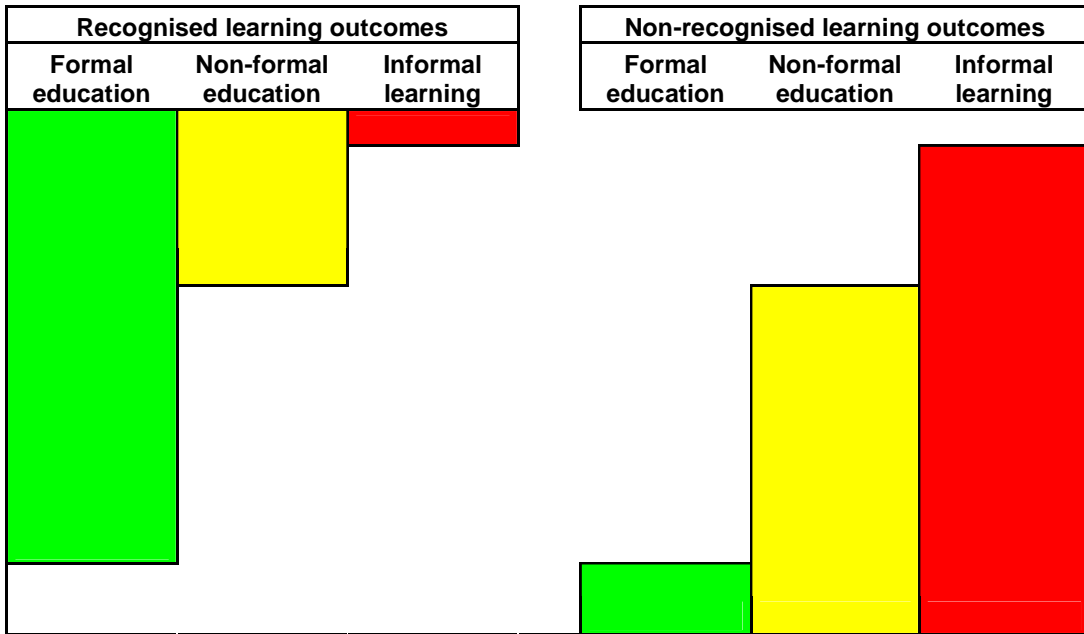
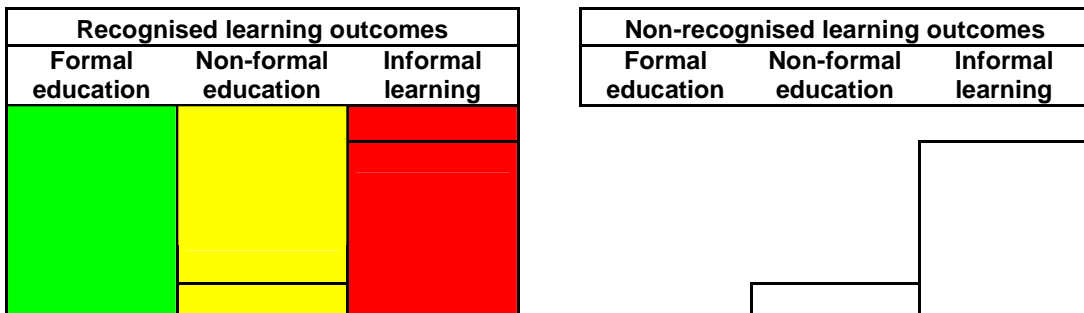
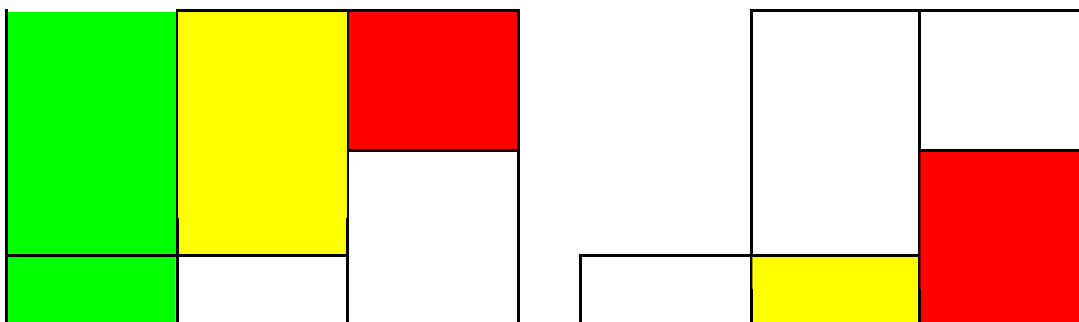


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

	make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istropolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

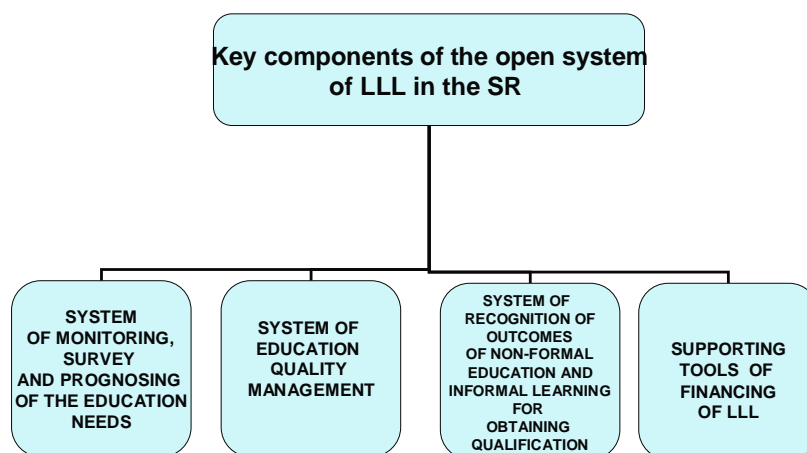
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

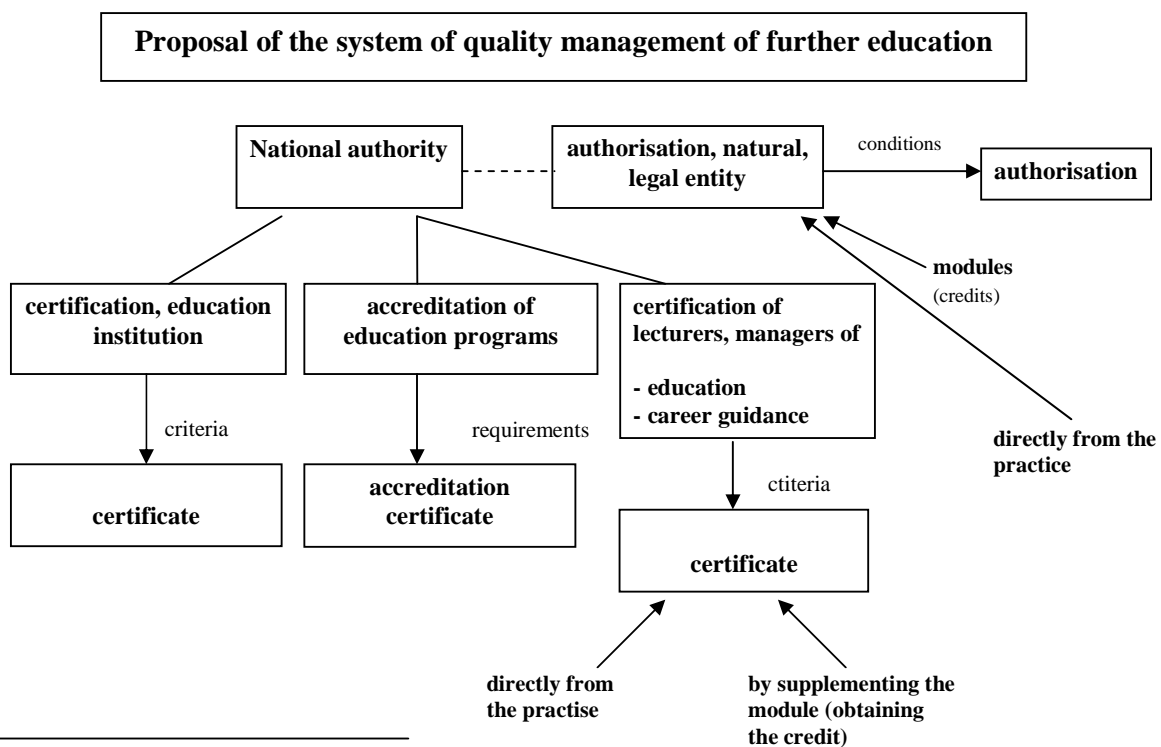
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Documents expected to be processed: NSP, NSK, qualification standards, evaluation standards

Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

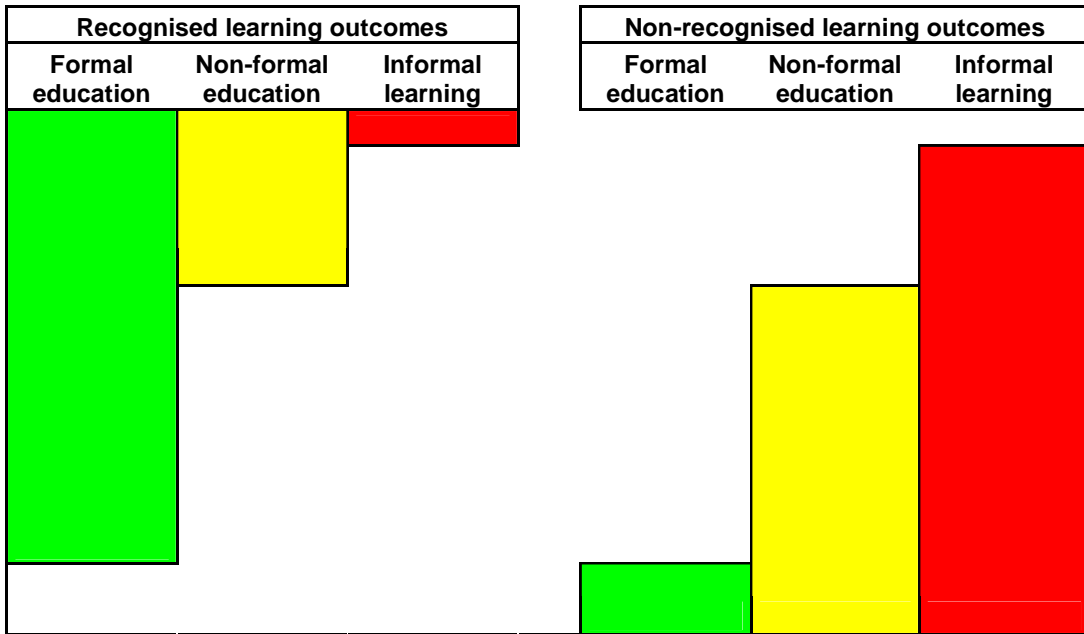
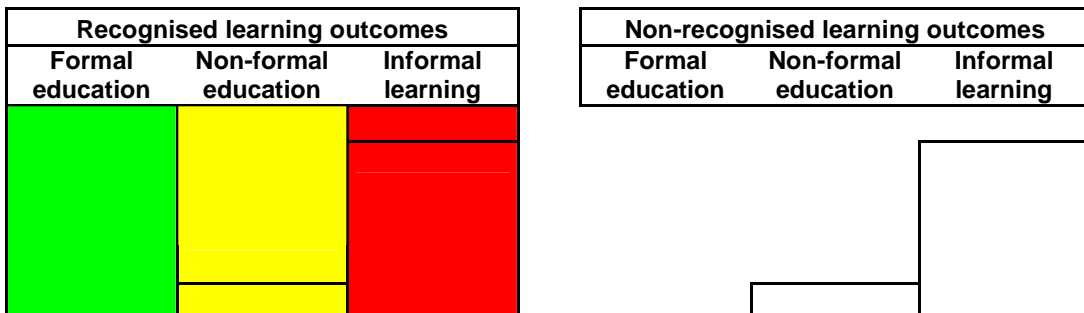
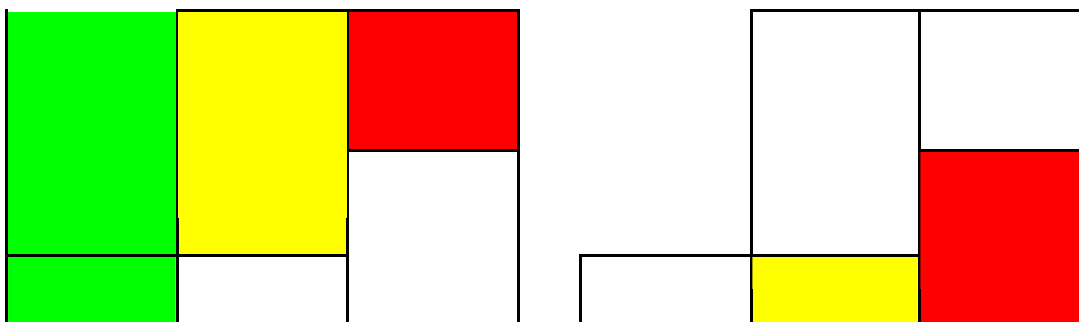


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

	make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istitopolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

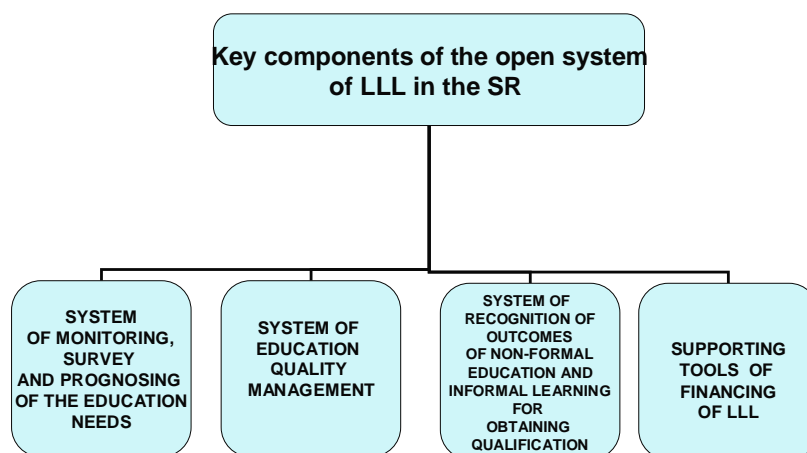
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

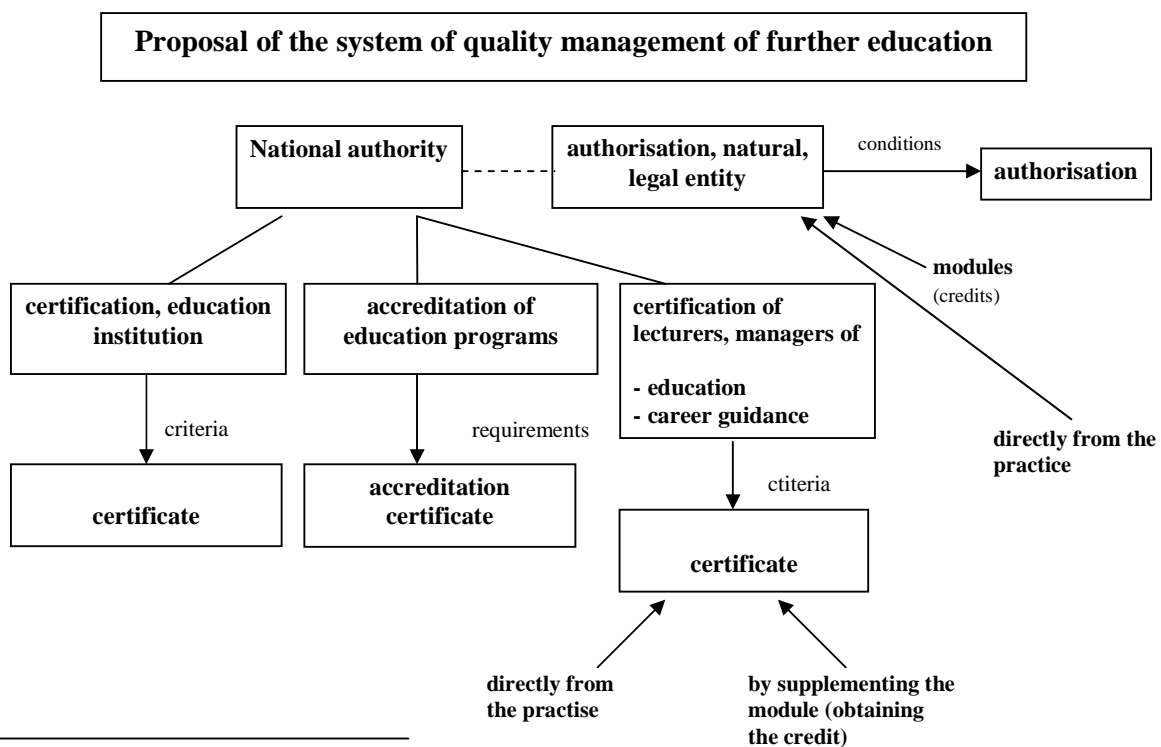
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

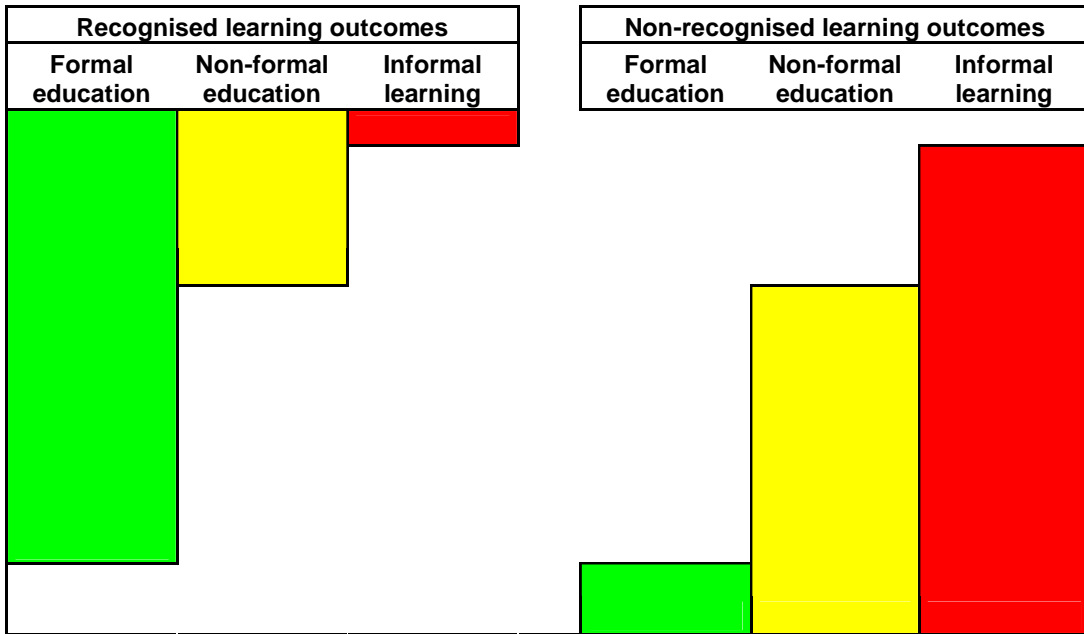
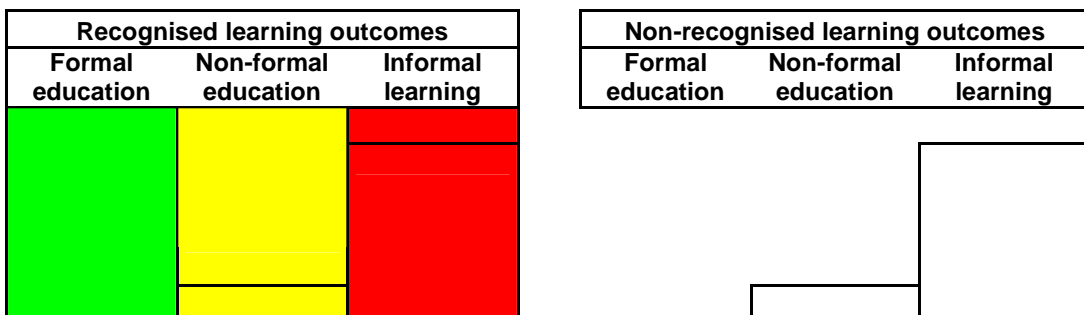
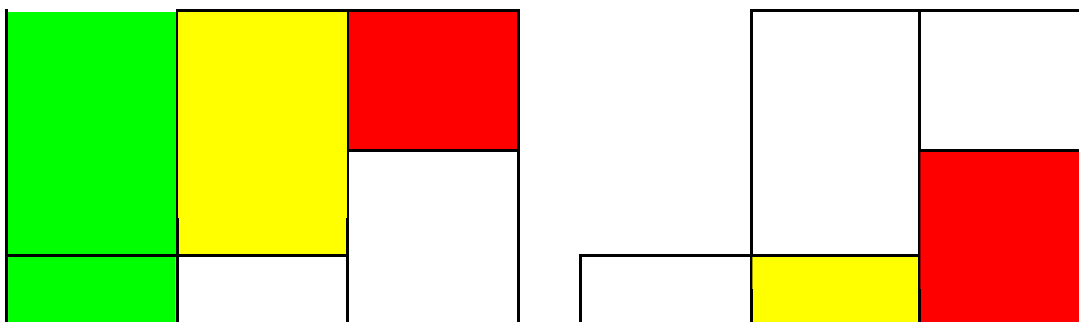


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istropolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

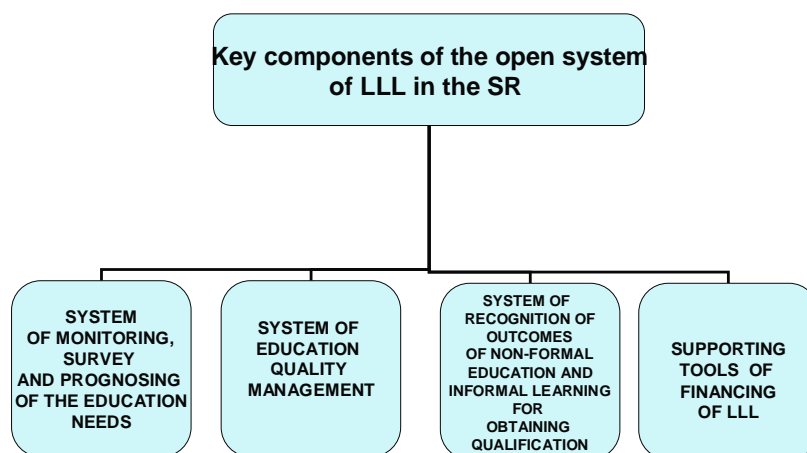
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

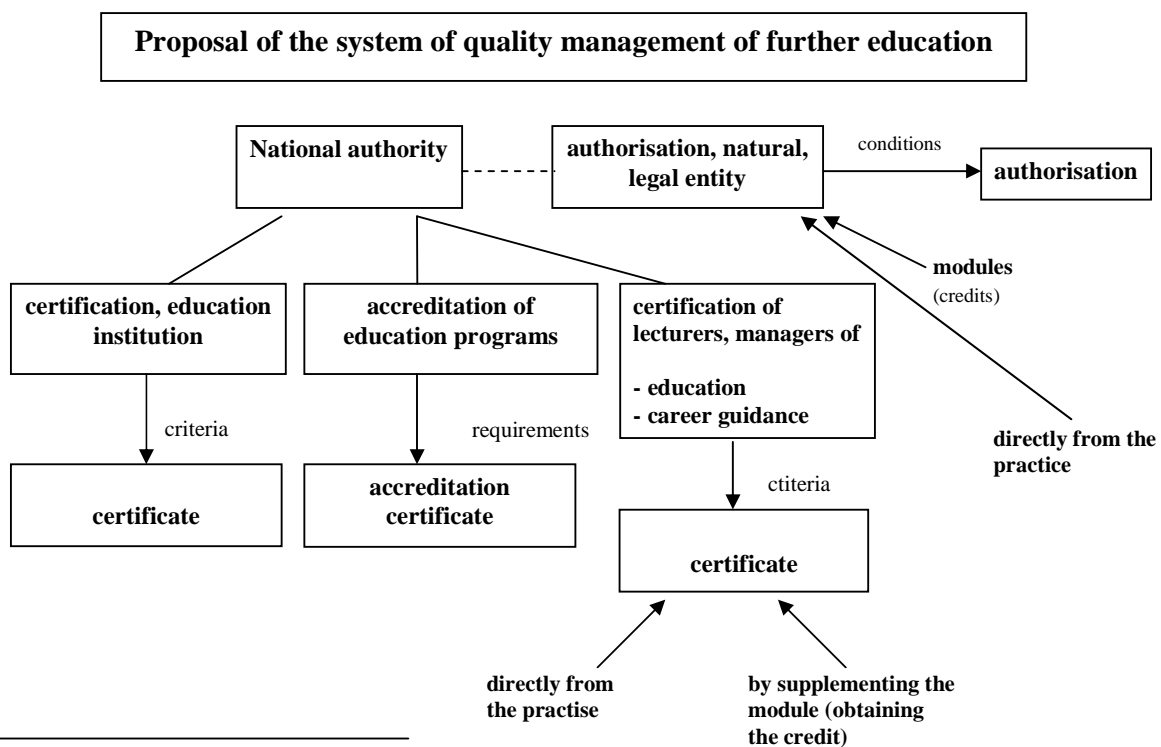
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

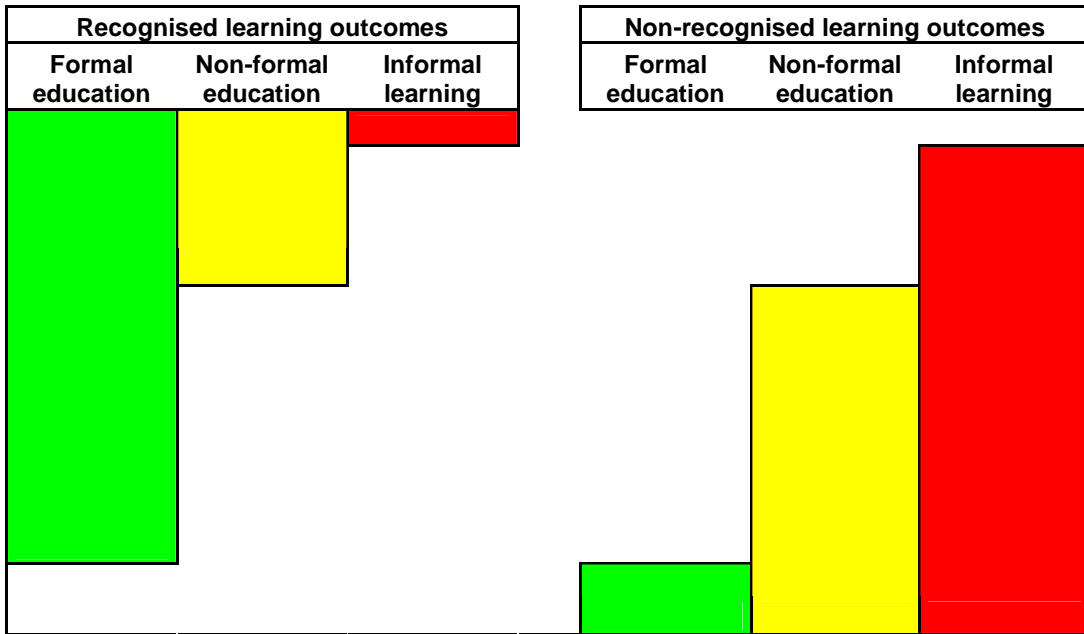
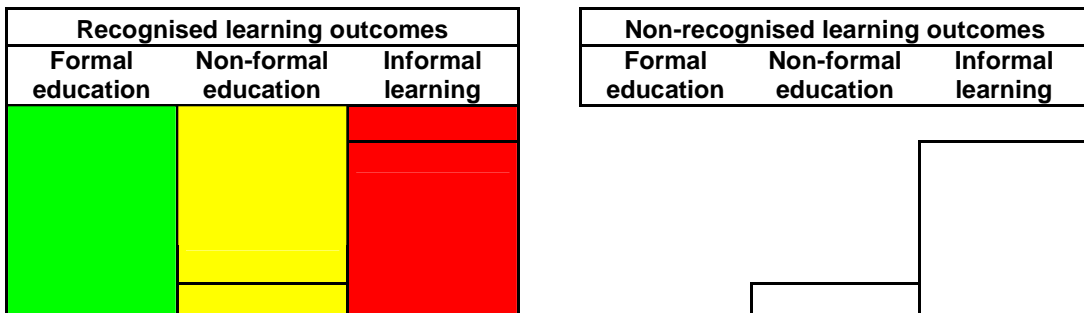
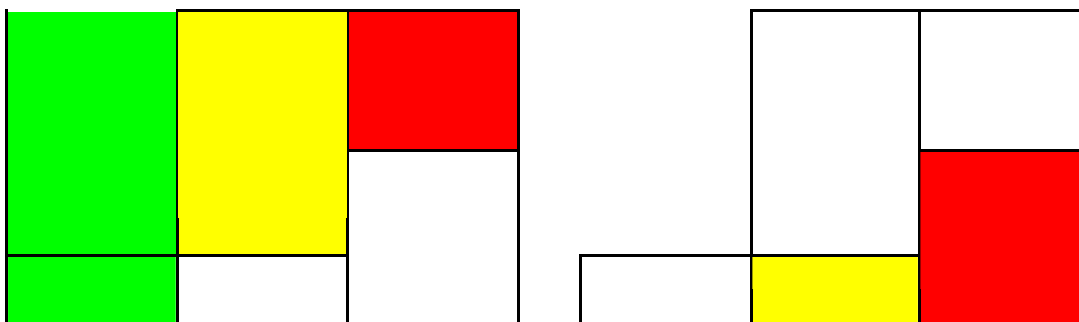


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

	make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istropolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

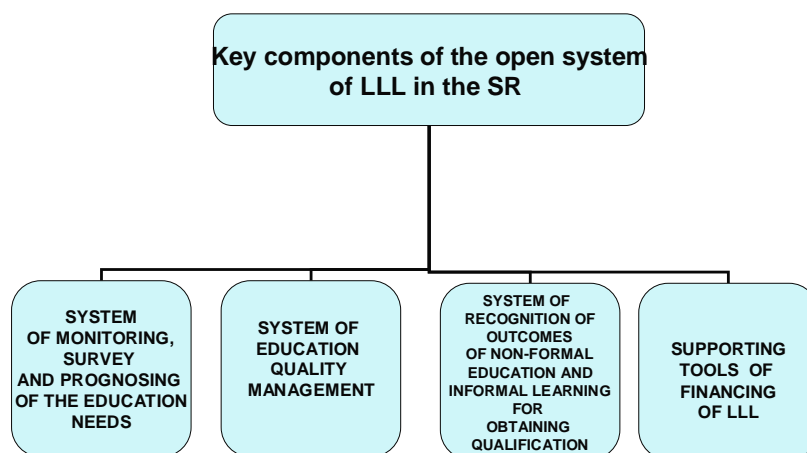
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

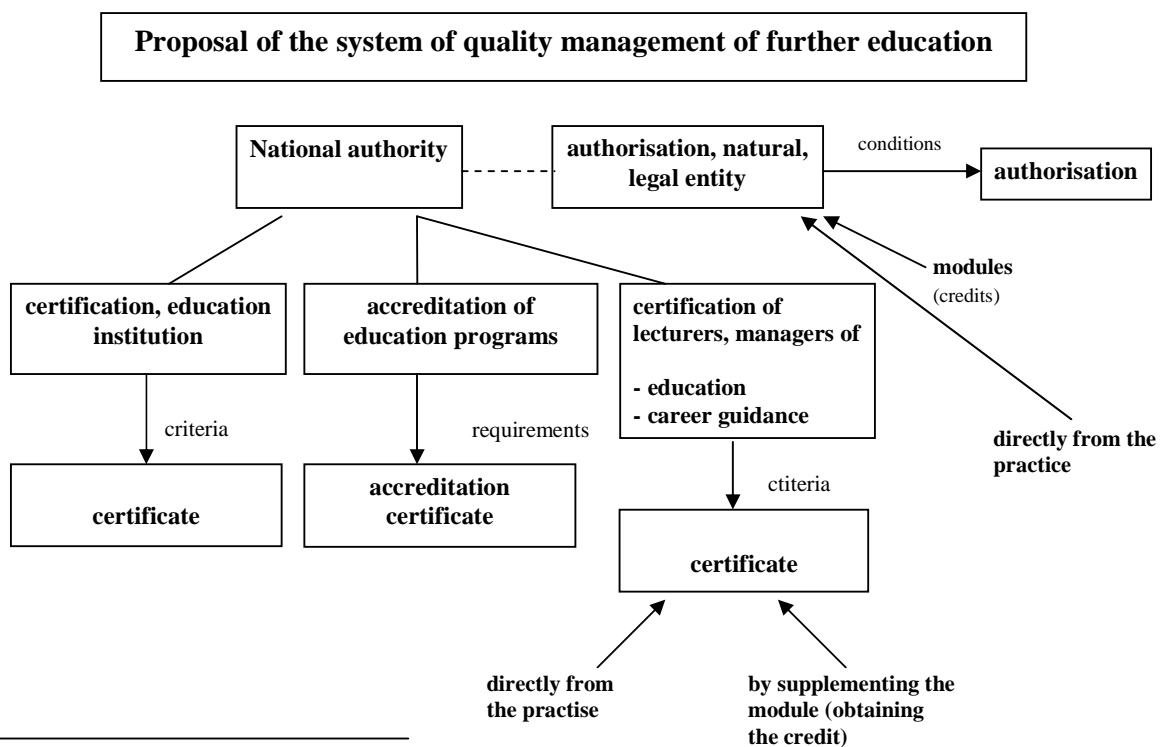
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

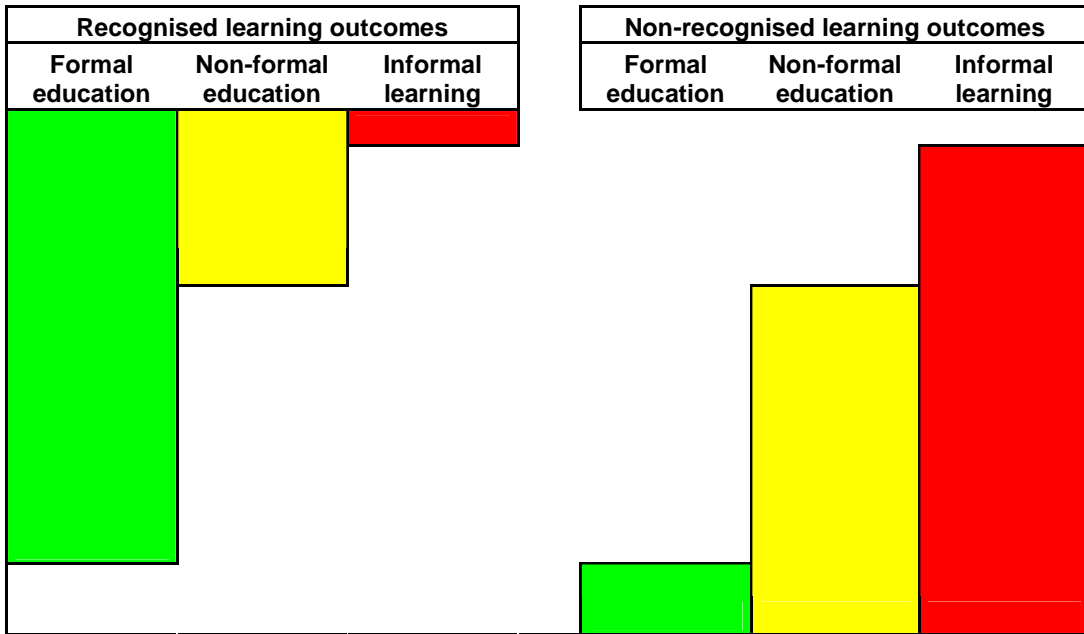
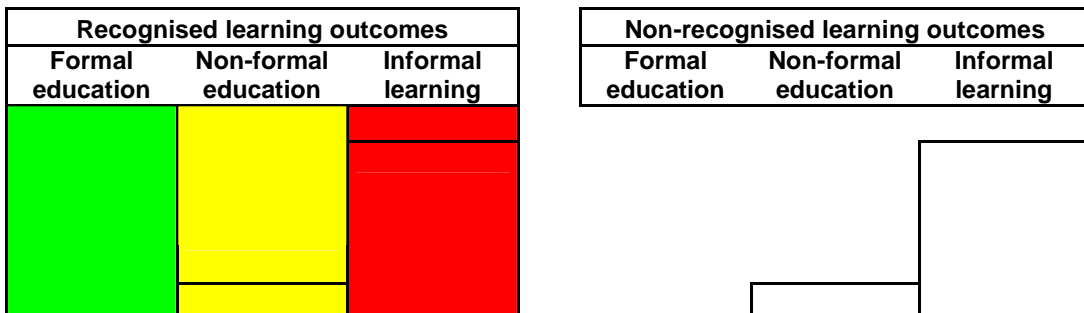
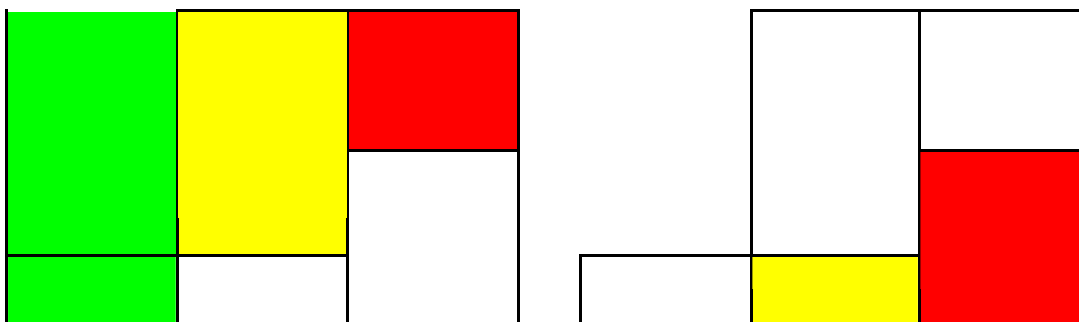


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

	make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istropolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

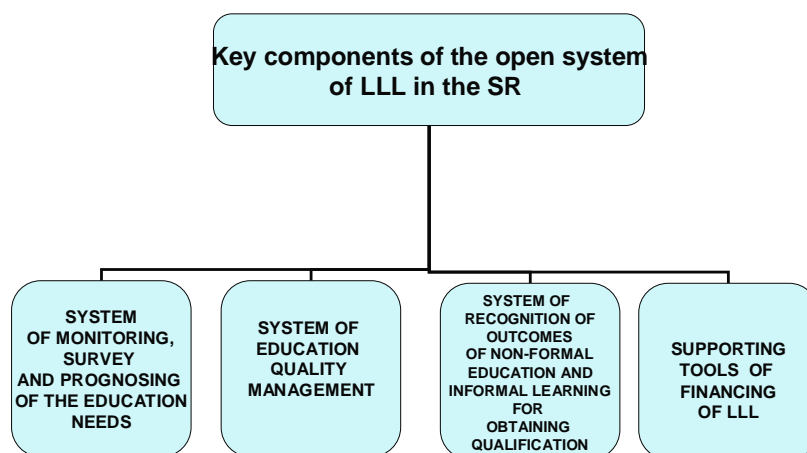
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

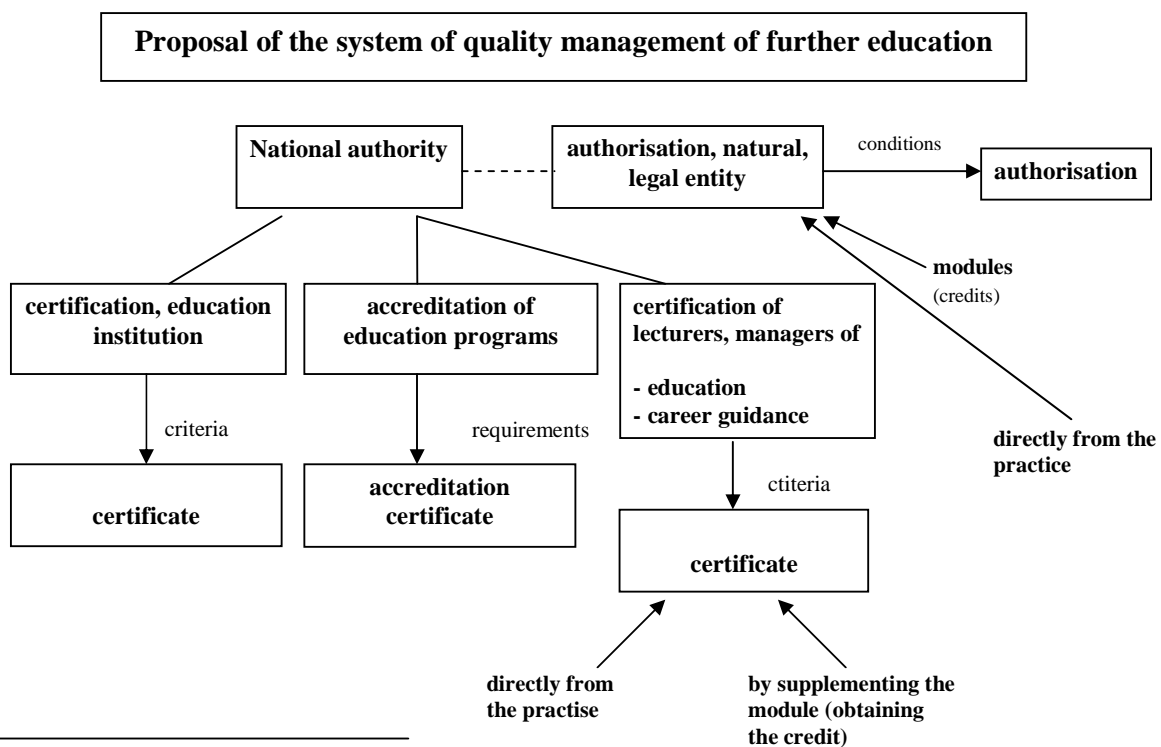
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

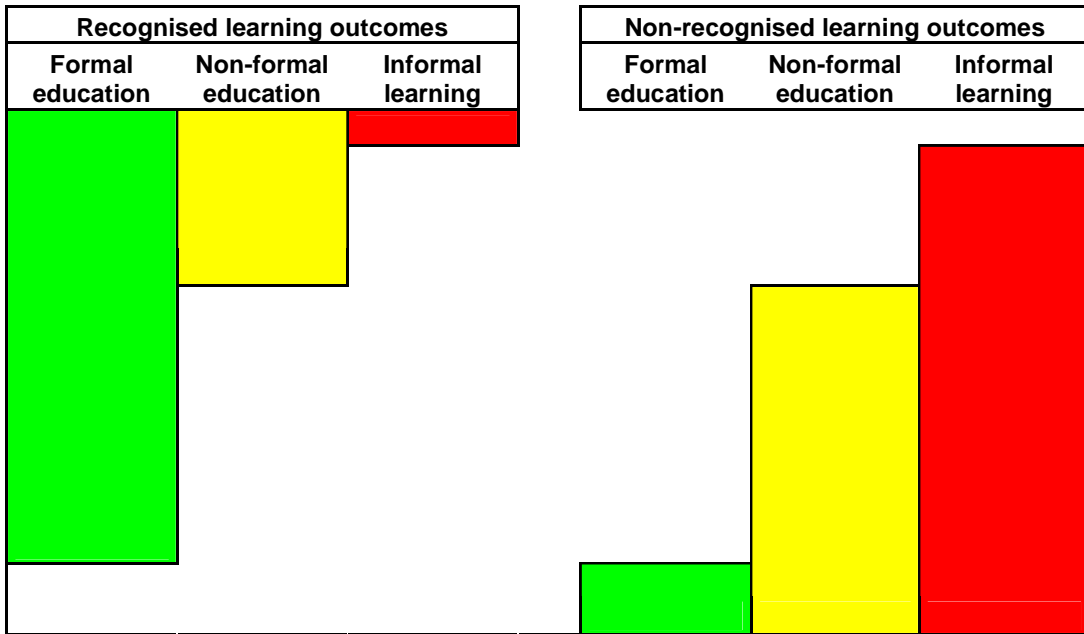
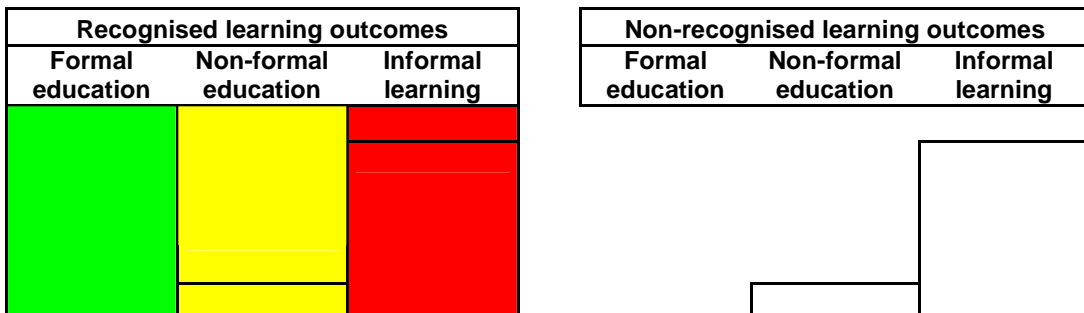
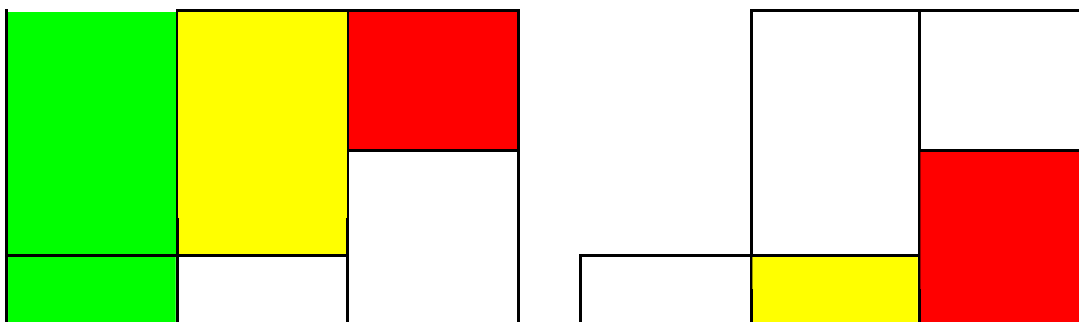


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istropolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

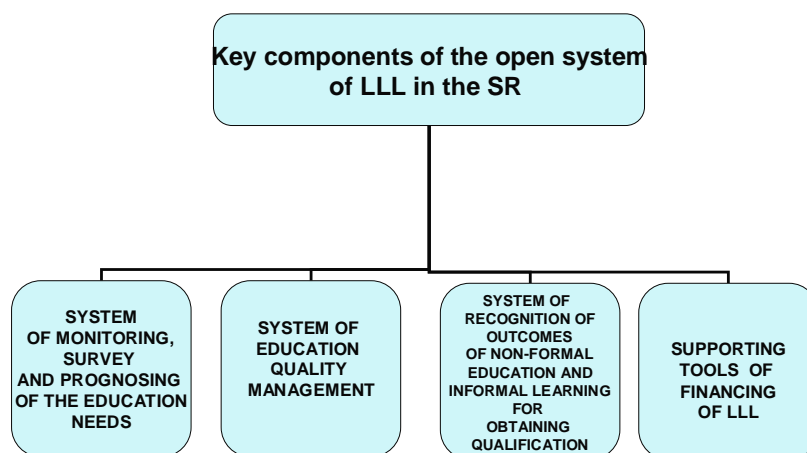
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

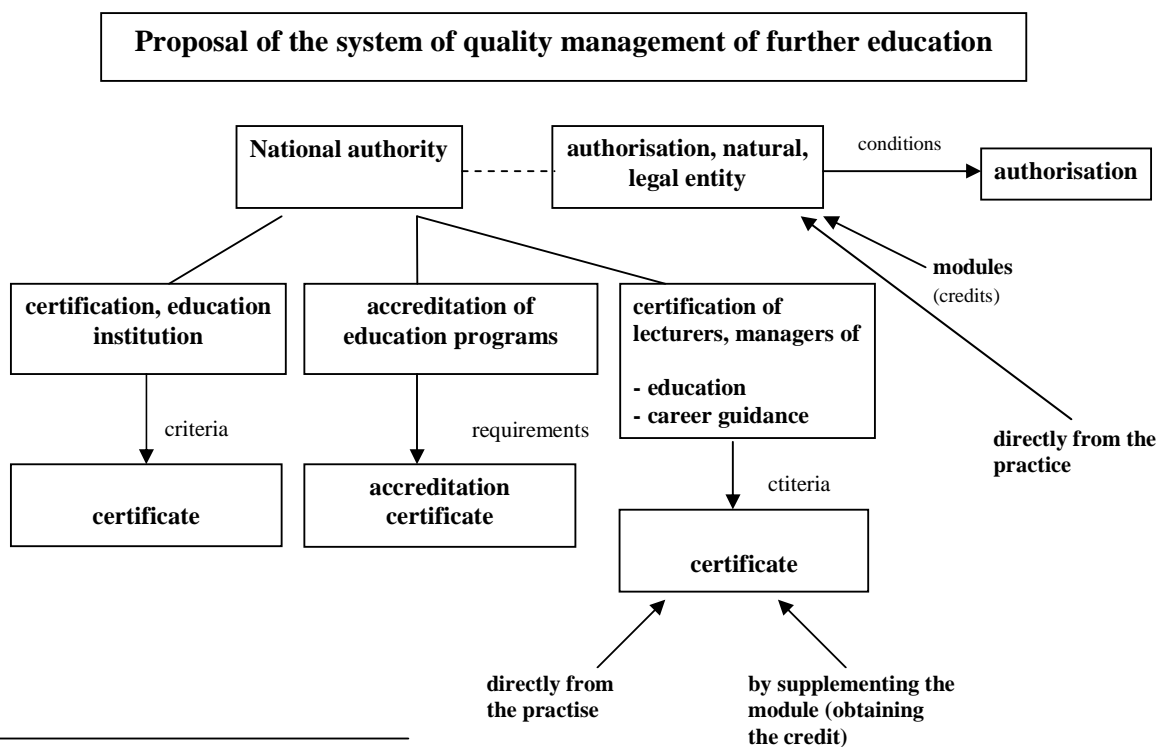
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Documents expected to be processed: NSP, NSK, qualification standards, evaluation standards

Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

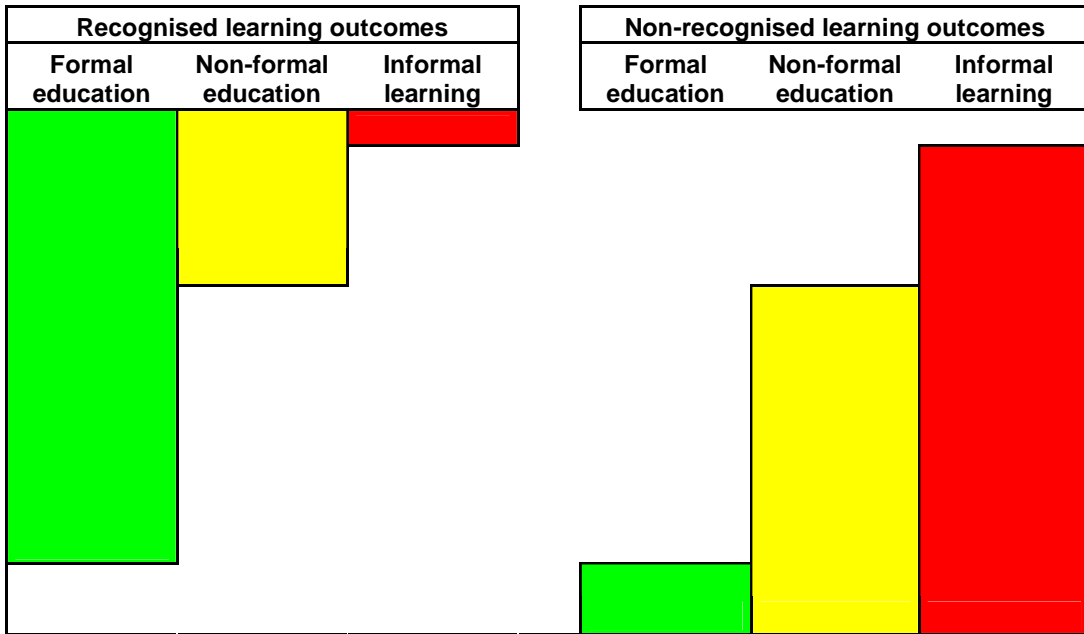
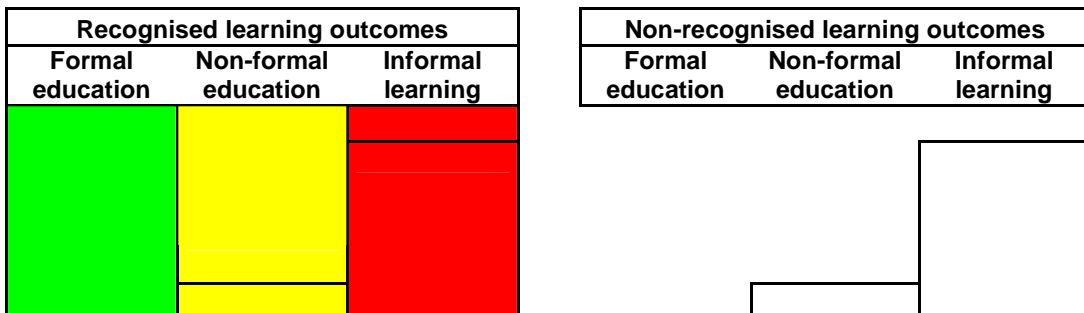
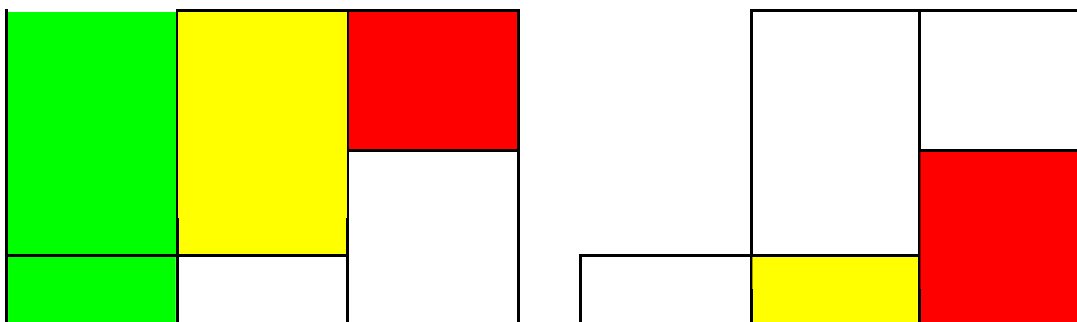


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

	make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istitopolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

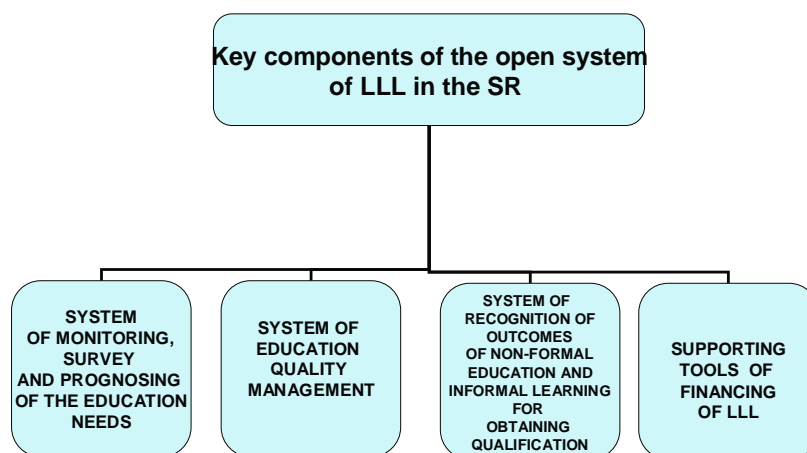
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

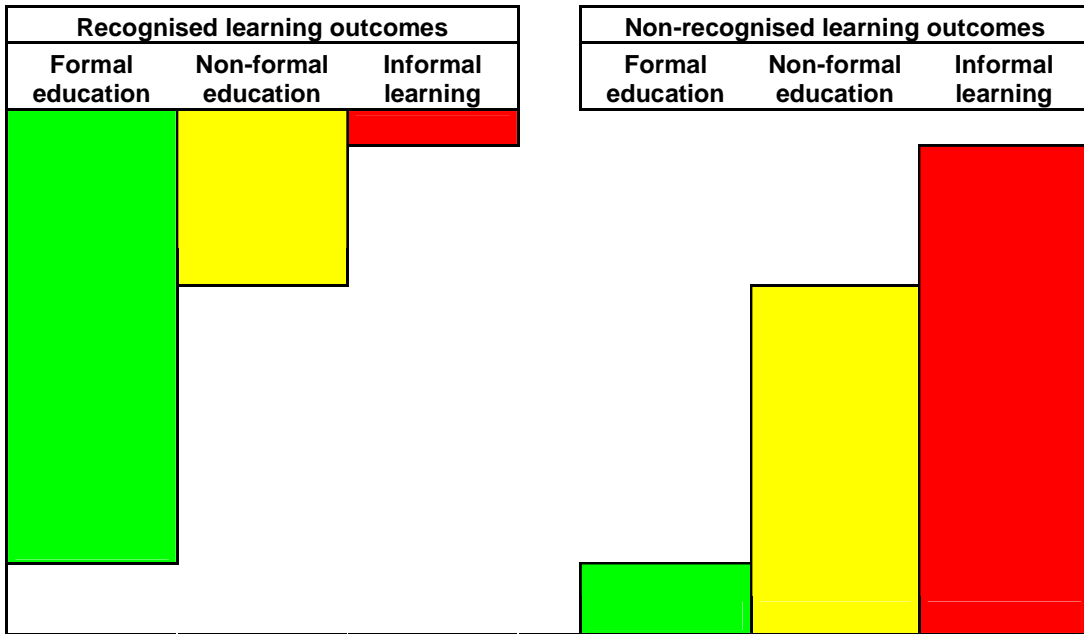
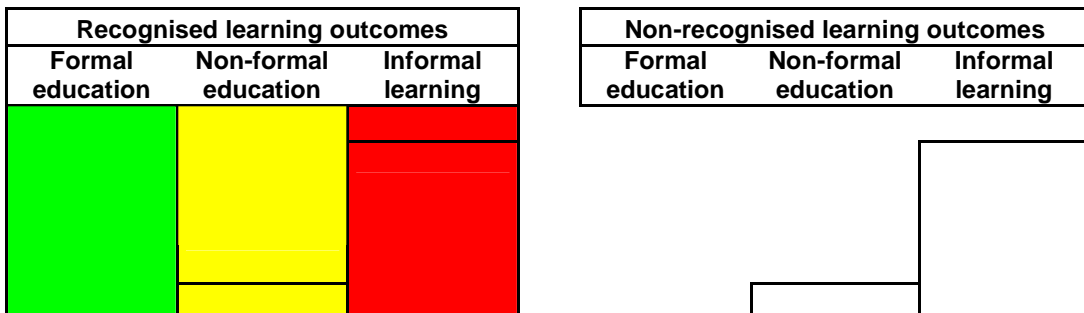
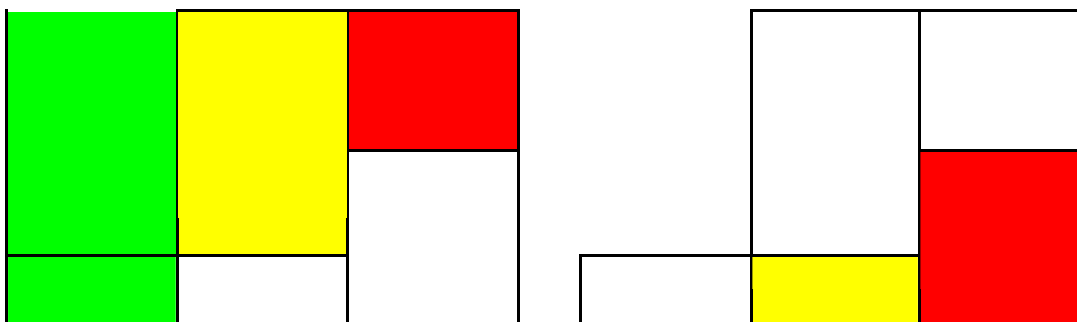


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups
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Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istropolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

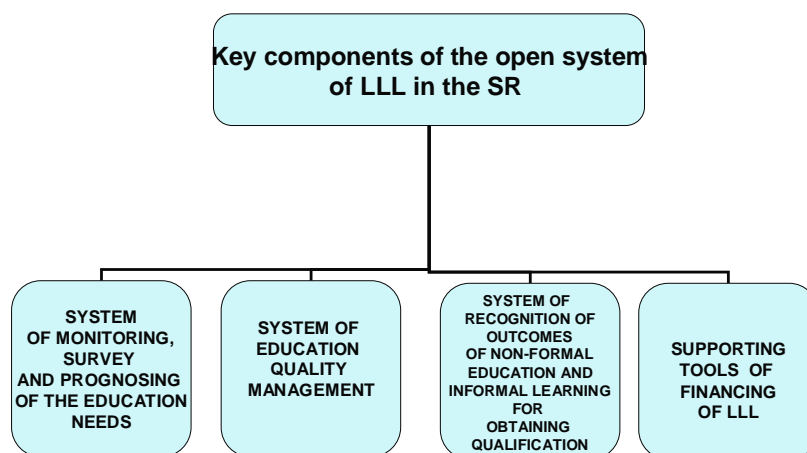
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

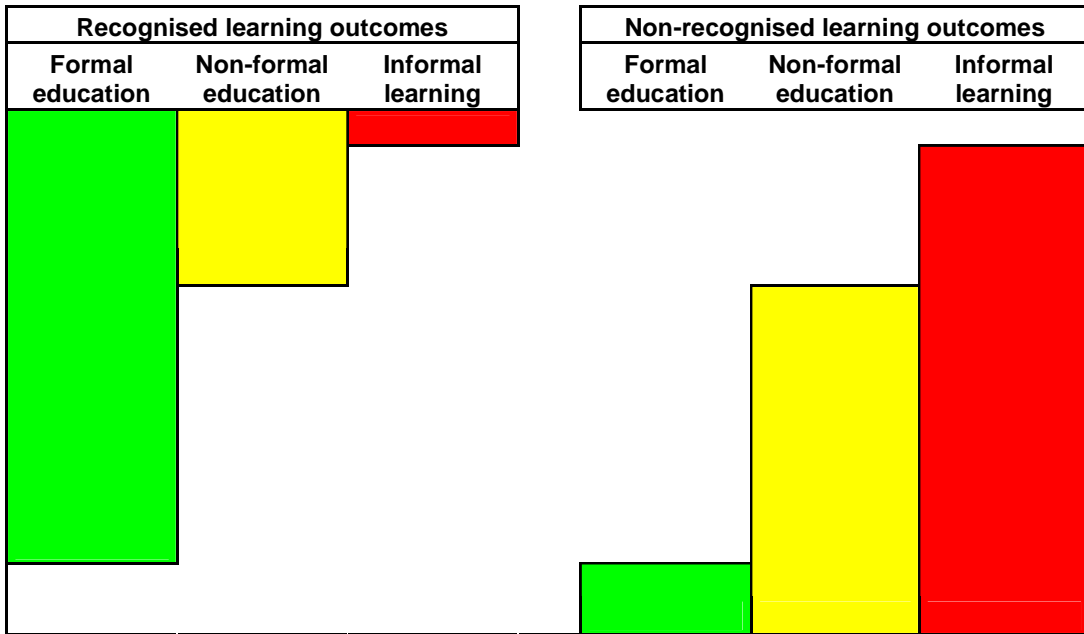
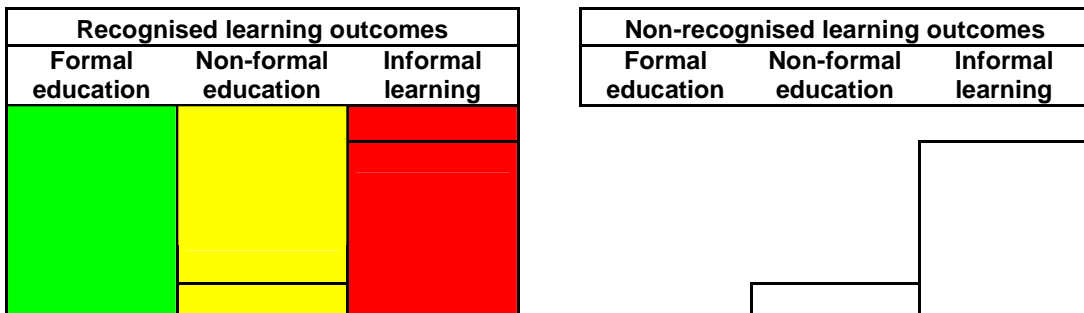
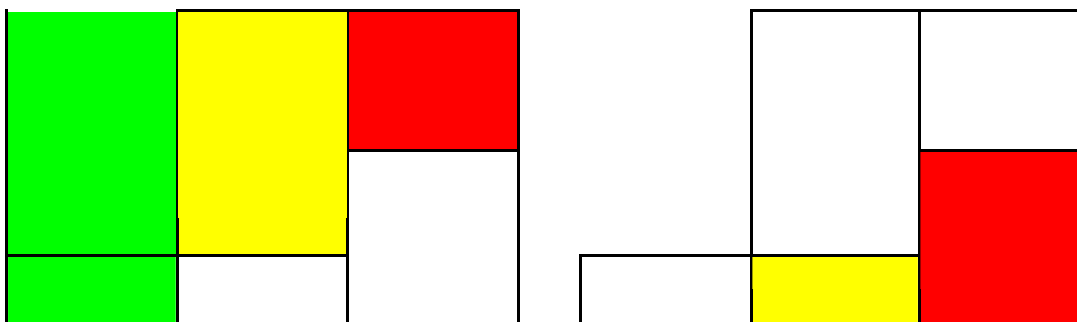


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istropolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

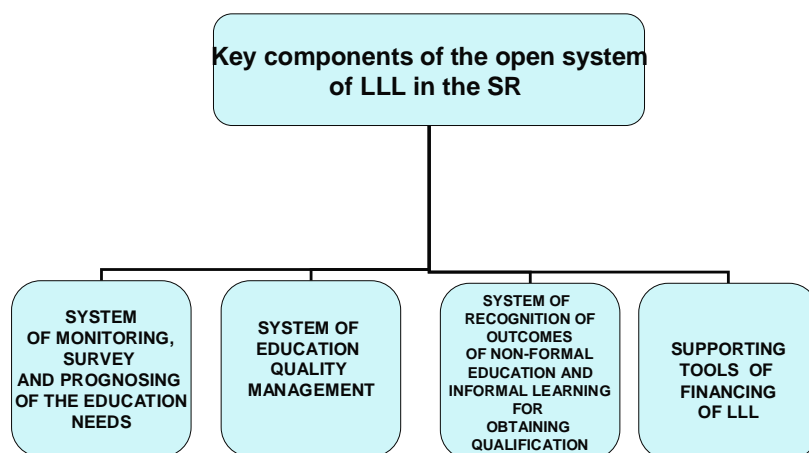
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

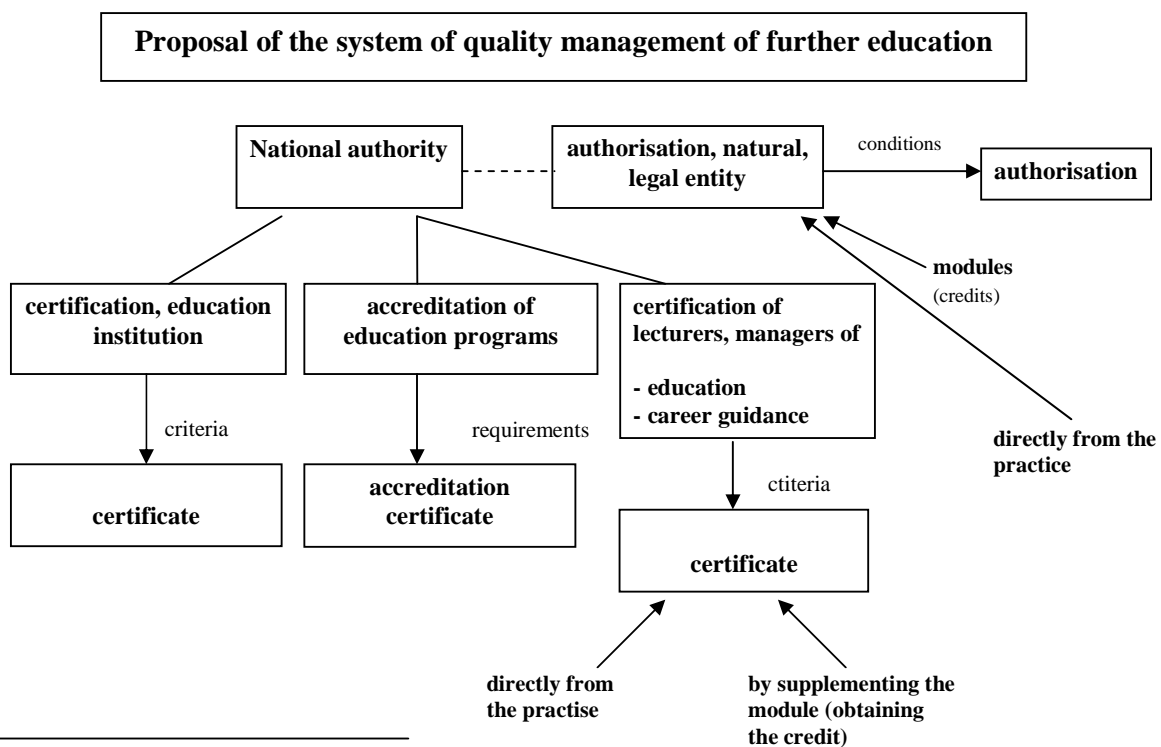
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Documents expected to be processed: NSP, NSK, qualification standards, evaluation standards

Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

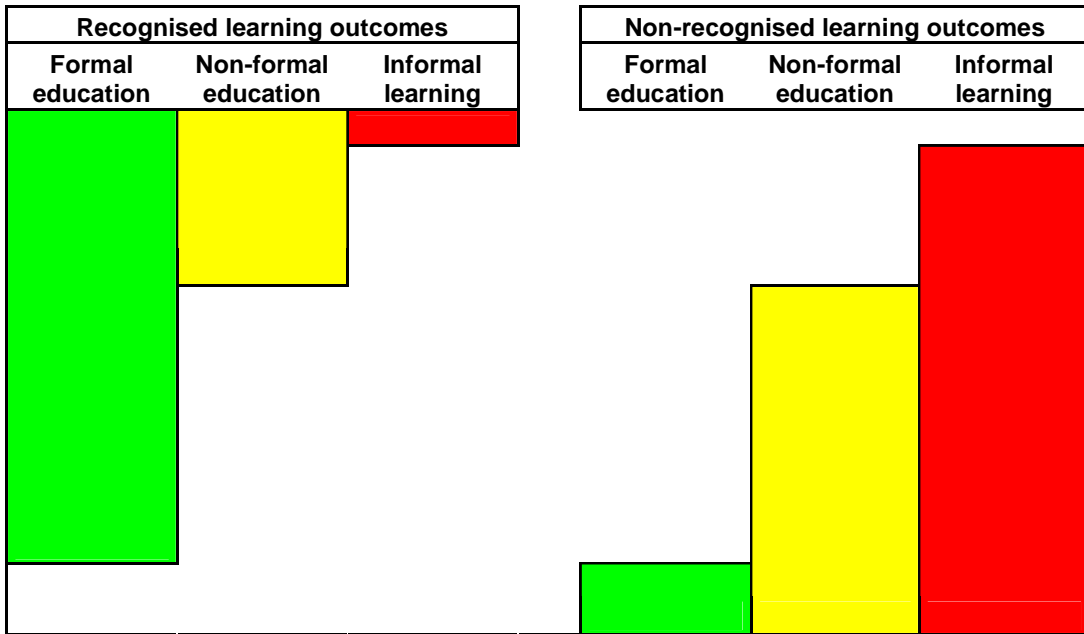
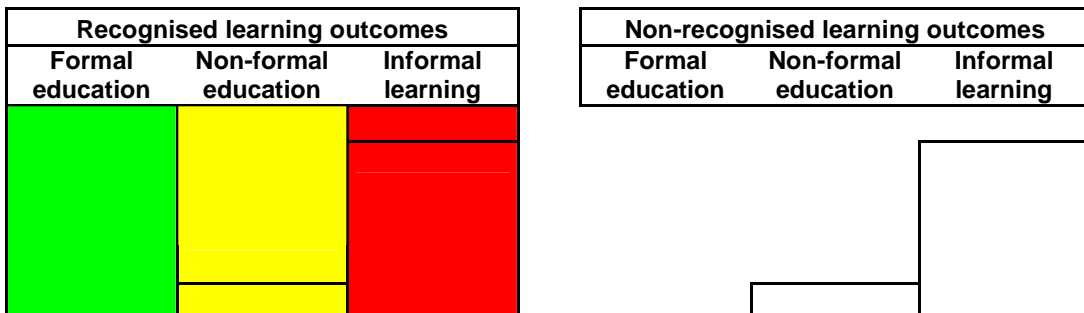
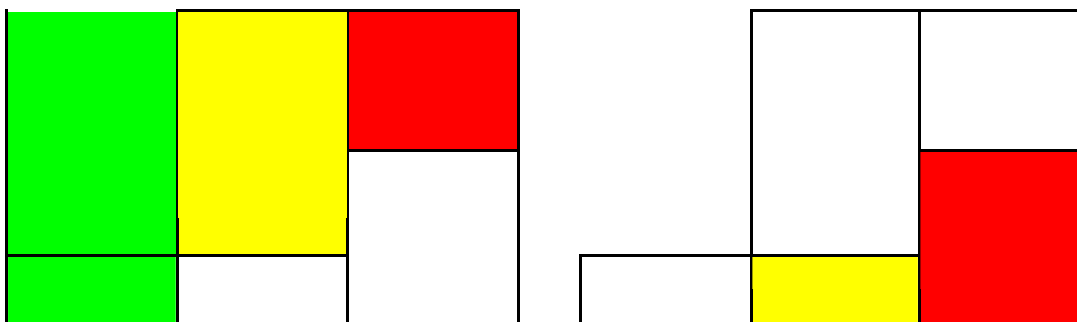


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in coordinated 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

	make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istropolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

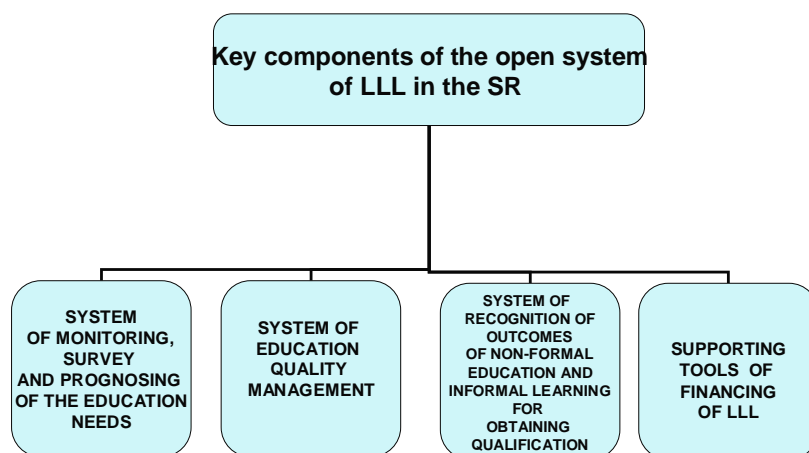
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

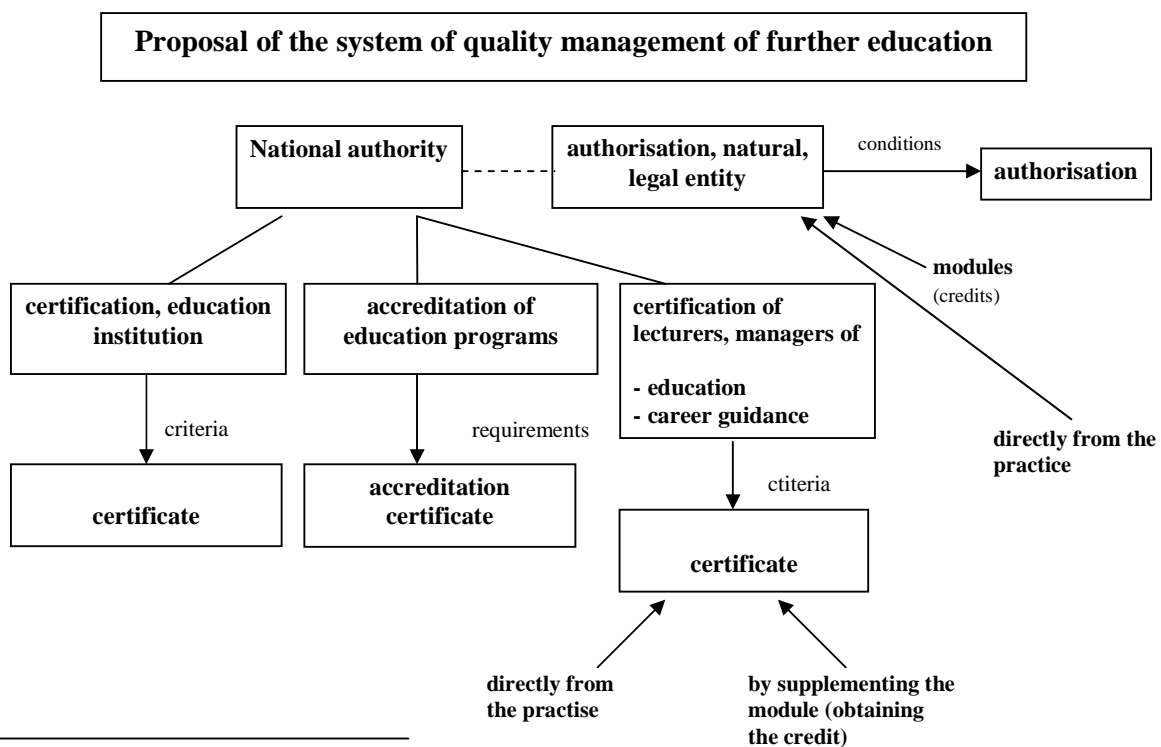
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Documents expected to be processed: NSP, NSK, qualification standards, evaluation standards

Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

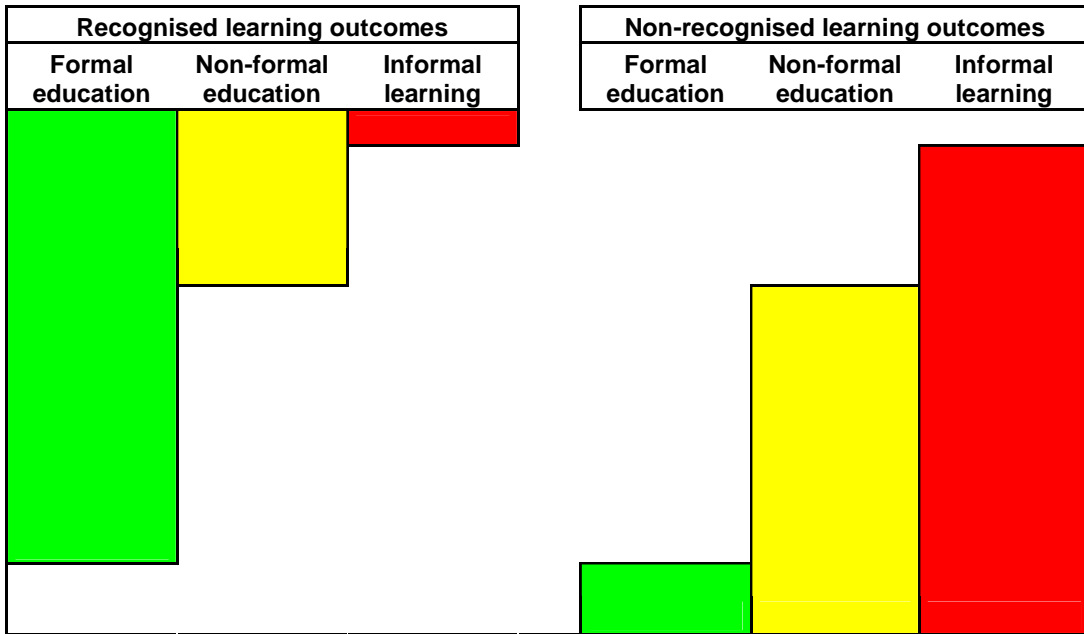
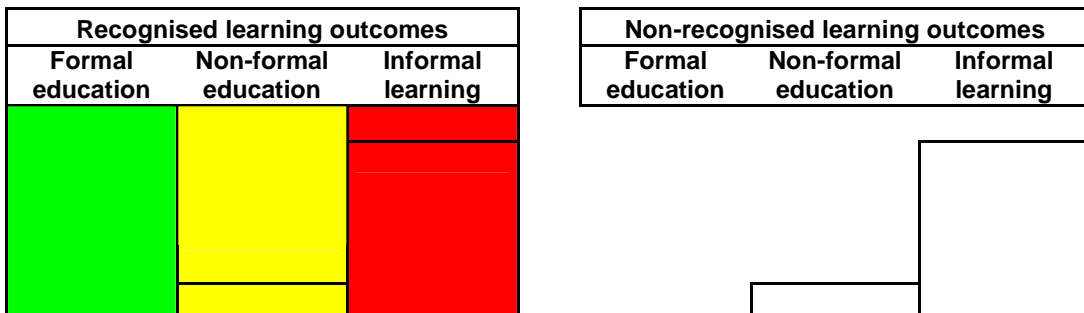
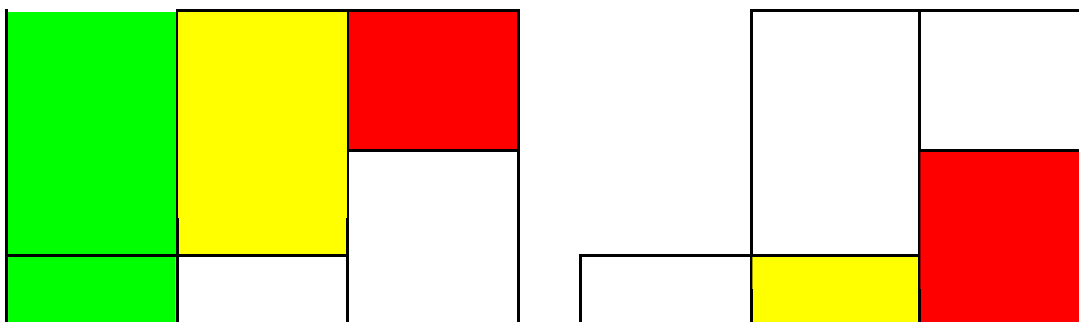


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

	make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istropolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

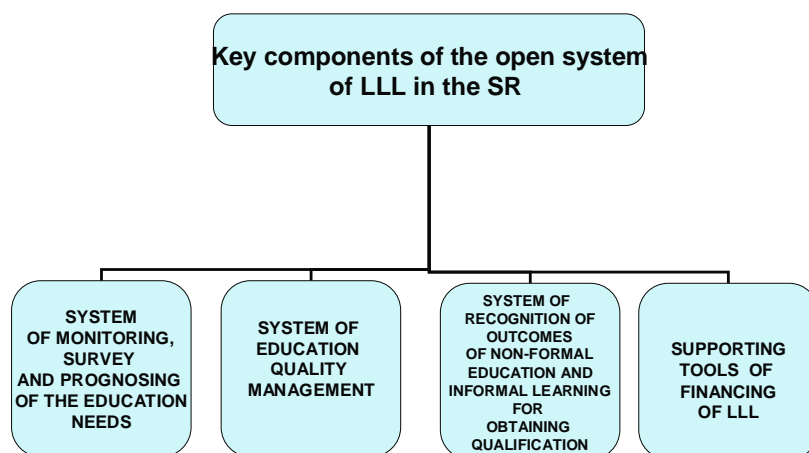
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

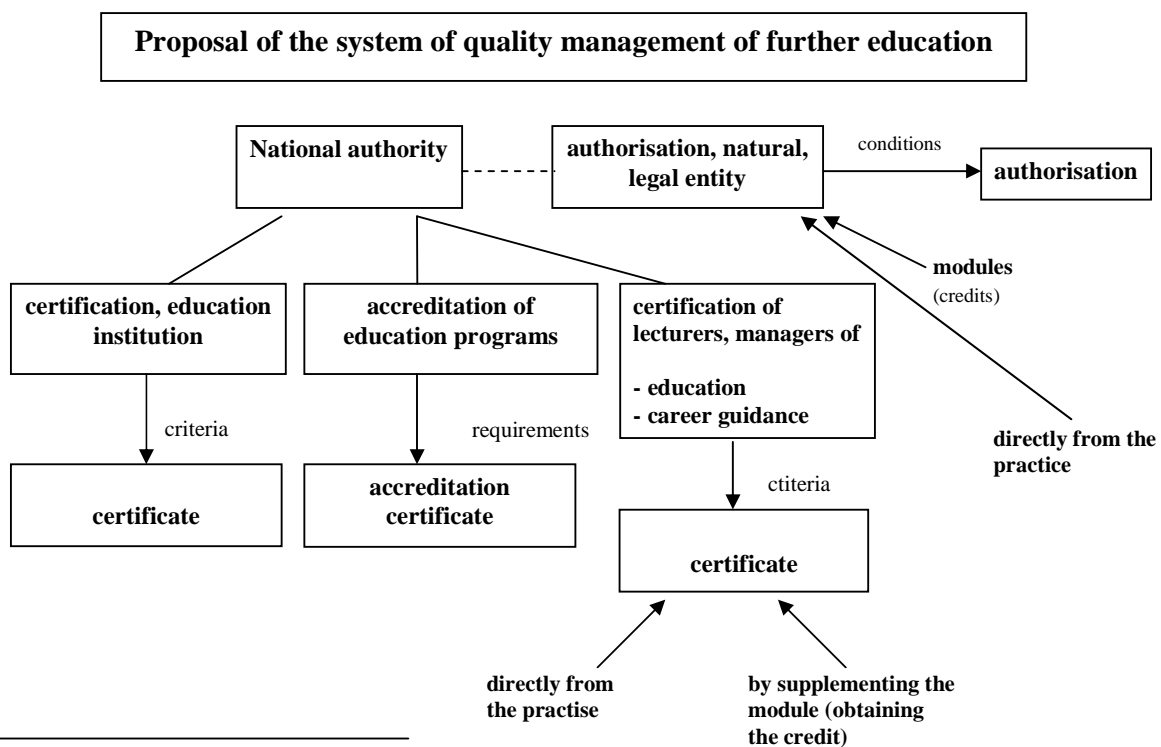
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Documents expected to be processed: NSP, NSK, qualification standards, evaluation standards

Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

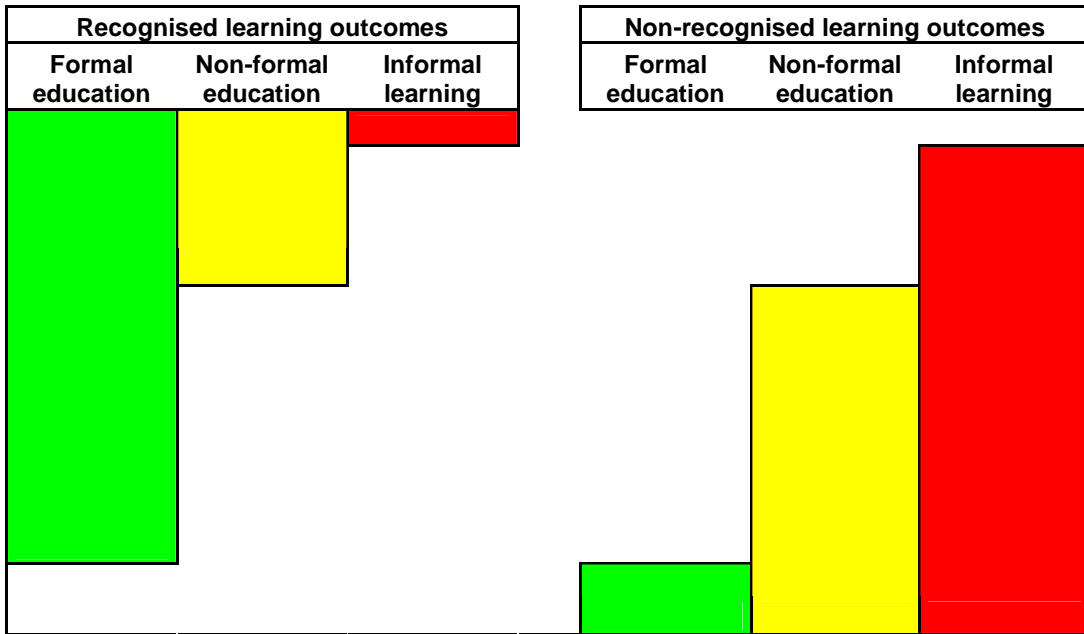
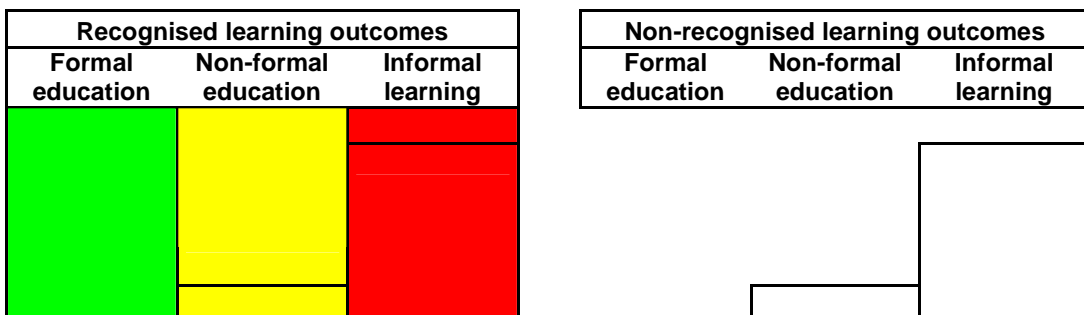
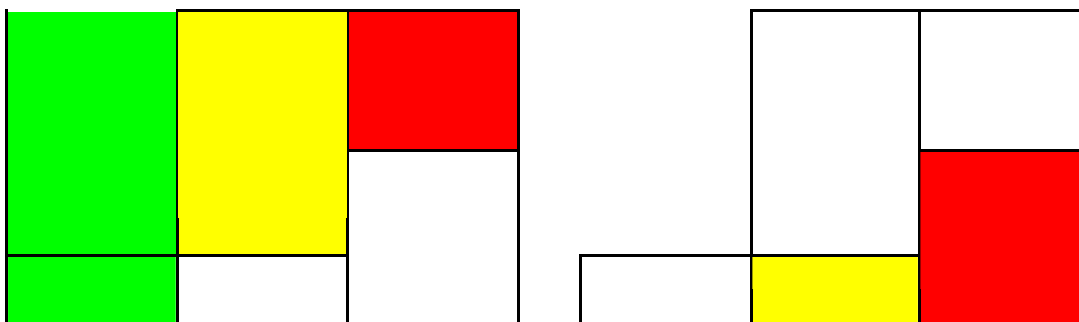


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istropolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

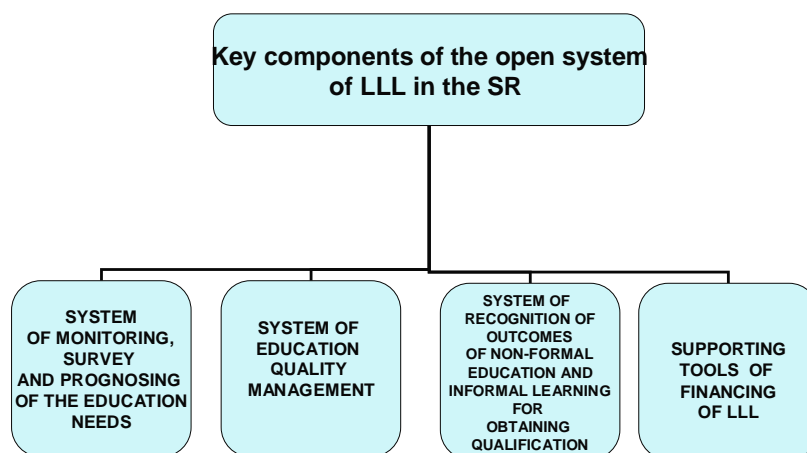
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

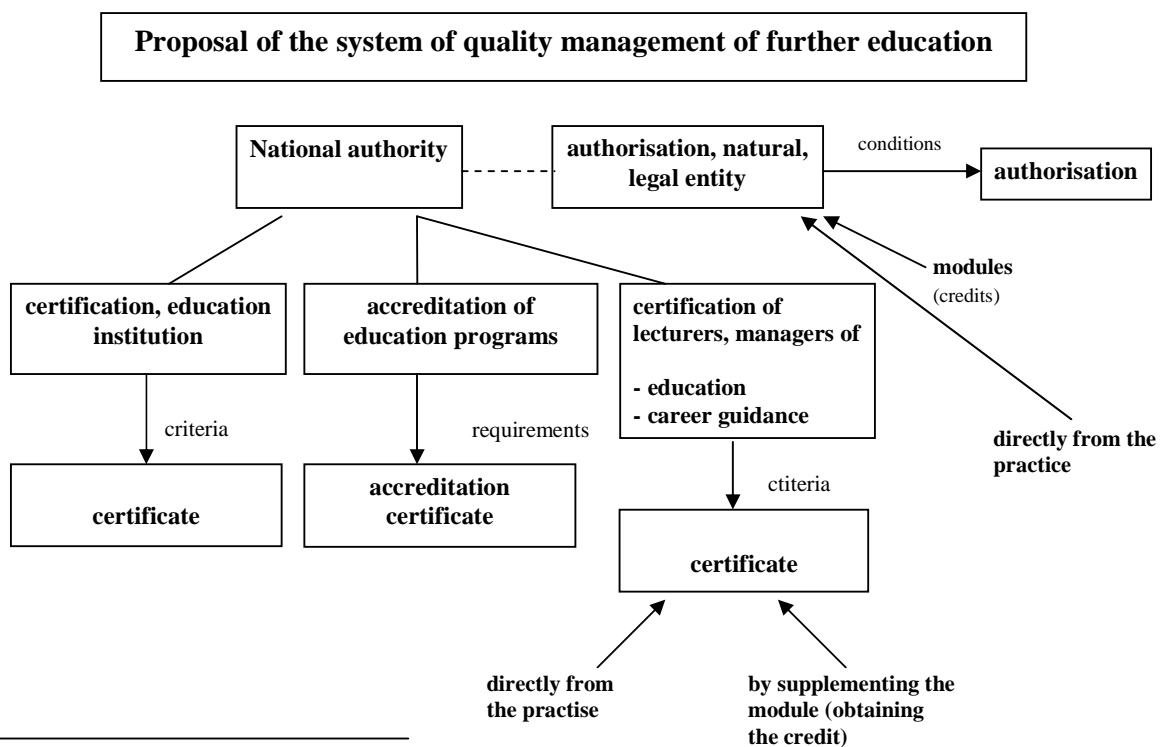
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Documents expected to be processed: NSP, NSK, qualification standards, evaluation standards

Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

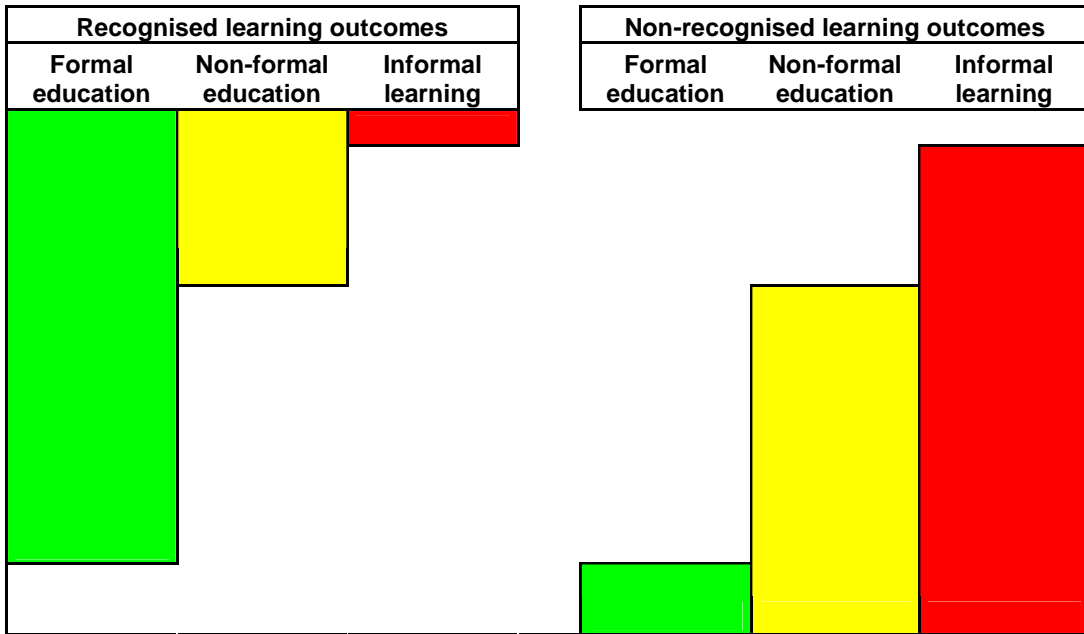
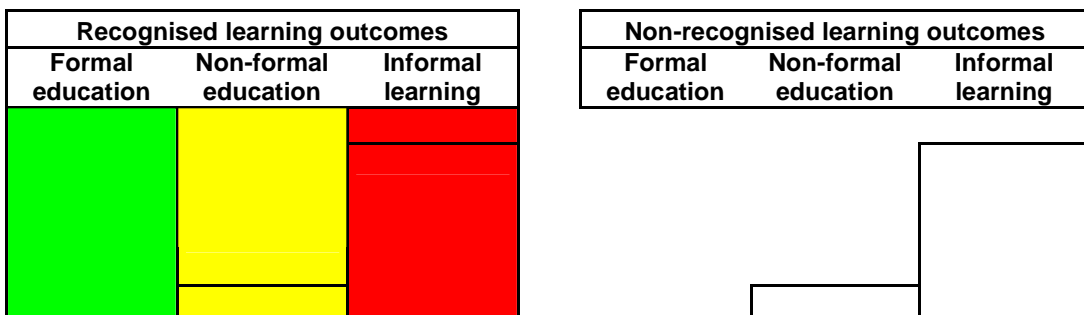
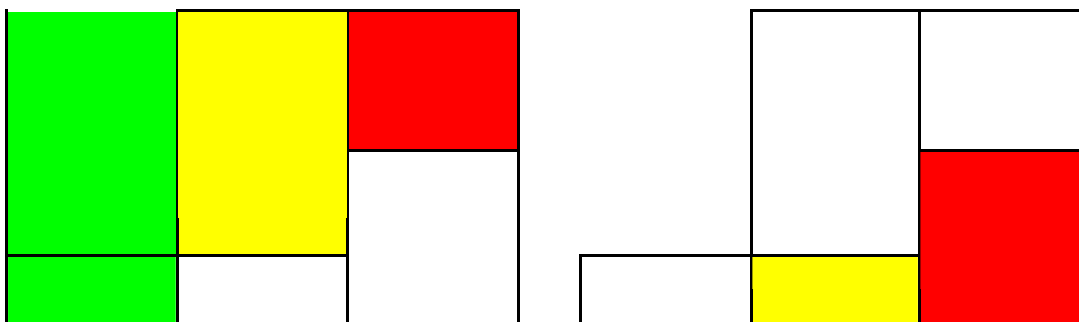


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

	make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h3>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h3>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istropolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

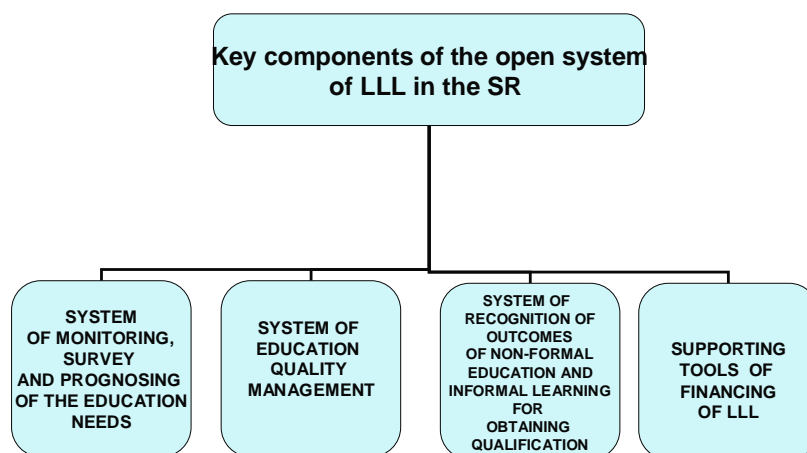
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

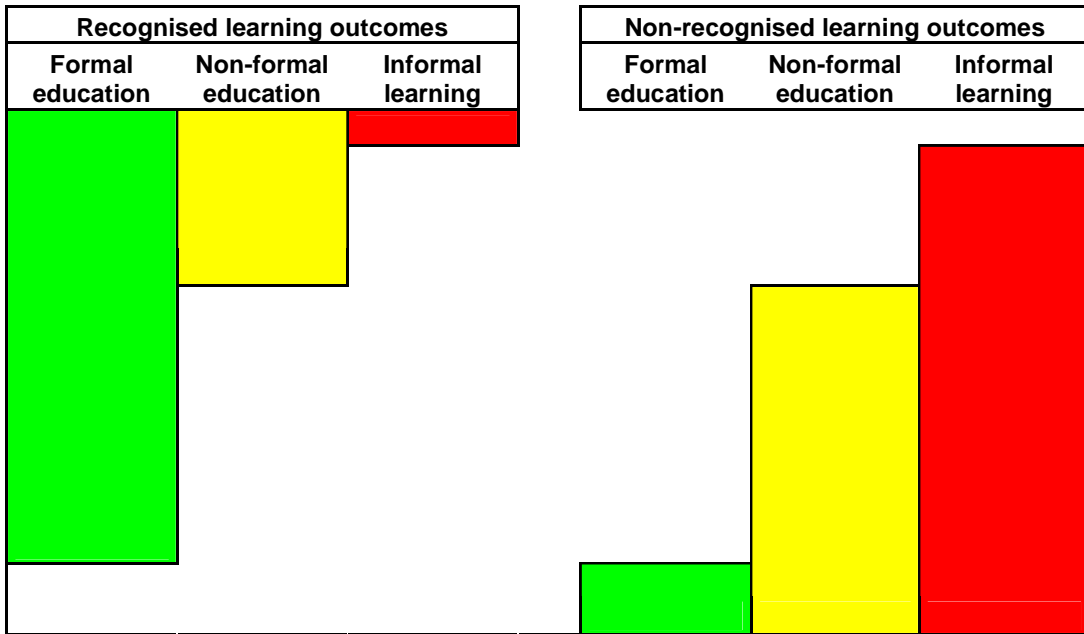
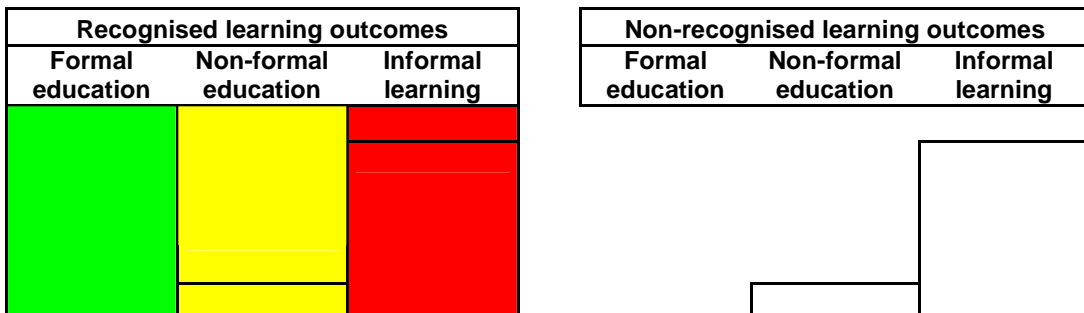
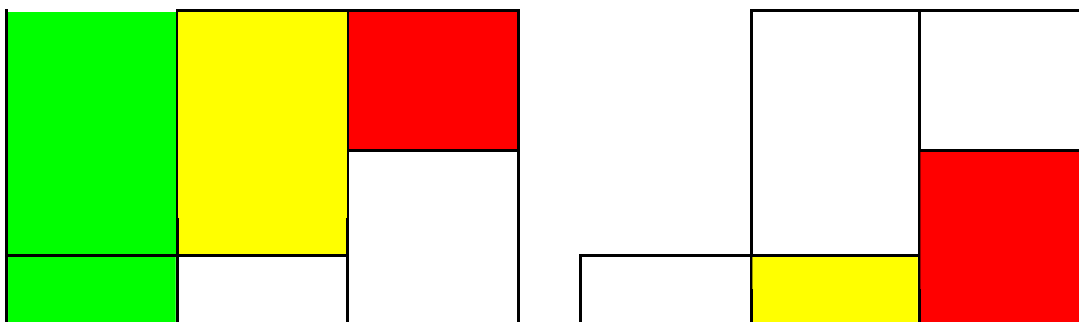


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

**Strategy of Lifelong Learning and
Lifelong Guidance**

Bratislava, April 2007

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Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy until 2015

1. Introduction

The growth of the gross domestic product in the Slovak Republic in 2006 amounted to 8.2% and the prognosis for 2007 is 8%. Our economic growth must be based upon the ability to produce goods with high added value, which requires from the Slovak people to work with constantly new information, to produce new knowledge and to utilise it in practical life. The quality and accessibility of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance for citizens who need to change their qualification several times during their active life and employers, who through their production and services as well as implementation of innovations create new jobs, for which they need newly qualified workforce, must therefore be appropriate in order to sustain these unique results in Europe. However, as the statistical survey from 2005 showed that only 5% of citizens of the Slovak Republic between 25 – 64 years of age participated in lifelong learning.¹⁾

The natural social and economic development of the recent time generated a whole society need of adopting a of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance strategy (LLL and LLG Strategy) being the tool 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, 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...“*²⁾

2. Reasons for creating the strategy

So far there is neither LLL and LLG strategy in the Slovak Republic nor has it an operating functional system of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance in order to resolve and respond to the needs of the citizens and the society. This situation does not correspond with legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public administration on all its levels as well as the education institutions, hence the four most important stakeholders in the area of development of human resources and employment.

The current subsystems of lifelong learning 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.

The most important reason of establishment of the LLL and LLG strategy is the need to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education, to open them mutually

¹⁾ The EU average represents 10.8%. The EU set the goal to achieve the participation of the adult population in LLL to 12.5% until 2010; source: EUROSTAT

²⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

and interconnect into functioning relations, supported by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, to make the access to education easier as well as to make access to the new qualification and employment easier during the entire active life of citizens.

3. Basic terms

- **Lifelong learning**

The term lifelong learning (LLL) was already defined in the Memorandum of the European Commission on Lifelong learning as a targeted constant education activity, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. In the latest Communication to the European Council on implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission views the LLL as a concept roofing all systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal as well as *all levels of education, pre-school education, primary school, secondary school, and higher education as well as further education.*

See: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1720/2006/EC.

- **Formal education**

It is an intentional activity and takes place as organised and structured activity, depending upon the place, goals, time and means. It applies to institutions, assigned for education and training. **It leads to achieving qualification** and receiving officially recognised documents.

- **Non-formal education**

It takes place aside the main ways of education and vocational training and usually **it is not concluded by issue of official document on achieving a qualification.** It can be organised at schools apart of their main activity, in organisations, which were created for supplementing the programs of education in the formal system, at workplaces, at interest organisations, etc.

- **Informal learning**

It is a natural part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, it does not have to be intentional and conscious. The learning person does not even have to recognise how this learning contributes to his/her knowledge and skills.

- **Lifelong guidance**

It is a complex of counselling and guidance services, provided with focus on various disciplines. In the closest relationship to the LLL strategy and building the knowledge economy, the lifelong career guidance is being perceived, from the spectrum of these equal value services as „the assistance to individuals of any age during the decision making in issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives“.

- **Learning region**

Regional network of stakeholders in the area of education and employment, creating tailor made services and projects for providing of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

- **Education activity**

Any organised activity of individuals in a complex program-content and organisation form, with defined content, goals and expected outcomes for the participants. For the purpose of accreditation of education activities in non-formal education, which lead to obtaining of partial or full qualification, a program with time span of 40 and more hours of education is considered to be an education activity.

- **Forms of education**

The summary of organisation measures and structuring of teaching (education) during realisation of particular education process with defined goals of education, differentiated according to time structuring, according to premises and technical teaching environment, according to organisation structure of students, according to interaction between the lecturer and the student and according to the goals of the education activity.

- **Methods of education**

Set of planned working procedures for achieving the goal of education, the way of intentional structuring of activities and measures for execution of the education process and its effectiveness towards the educated subject in order to achieve the goal in the most effective way. The choice of methods of education is subordinated to the goals and principles of education, the content, the time and material conditions, personality of the lecturer and the student. The most frequent division of methods of education is based upon the way of interaction into frontal, group and individual methods whereby in various situations a combination of methods is used, which are the most motivating for the participants in education.

4. Goals of the LLL and LLG strategy

4.1 Main goal

The main goal is the completion of the system of lifelong learning and the system of lifelong guidance in such a way that the system would make the access to repeated and flexible obtaining of new qualifications for the citizens easier through good-quality education obtained apart from formal also in non-formal system of education and in the system of informal learning with the assistance of complex counselling and guidance services during the entire life of the man and hence to help people to sustain highest possible employment level as well as to increase the participation of the population in lifelong learning to 15%, complying with the principle of equality of opportunities.

In order to fulfil the main goal it is necessary to provide for the following priorities:

- 1. Monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of education needs of citizens and employers**
- 2. Providing for the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 3. Recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning**
- 4. Effective investing in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance**
- 5. Development of key competences for lifelong learning**

6. Providing complex information services for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance and development of learning regions

7. Effective planning and using structural funds for completion and development of systems of LLL and LLG

4.2 Specific goals of the LLL and LLG strategy:

4.2.1 Specific goals of LLL:

- to systematically roof the existing subsystems of education (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), to open them mutually and link into flexible functioning relations, supplemented by lifelong guidance in such a way that they would answer the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, complying with equality of opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, the co-ordination of the state administration bodies, social partners as well as the representatives of the local self-governments is necessary;
- to implement the quality management system in non-formal education through certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education and through accreditation of programs of non-formal education in a module pattern with assigned number of credits for non-formal education;
- to implement recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for obtaining qualification in two ways: verification of knowledge and skills, obtained in programs of non-formal education and in informal learning as well as recognition of credits obtained in the programs of non-formal education (permeability and equality of both formal and non-formal education), with respect to European tools, such as EUROPASS, ECTS;
- to implement supporting tools for motivation towards participation of stakeholders in non-formal education;
- to implement a system of on-going monitoring and elaboration of prognoses of development of educational needs, enabling to respond to the changing needs of the labour market through utilisation of the principle of learning regions;
- to implement information services for lifelong learning and to create conditions for application of innovations into education also with the utilisation of principle of learning regions;
- to create and implement a national system of qualifications and a national qualifications framework;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of citizens in the option guaranteed by the state to repeatedly acquire access to obtaining a new qualification, respectively to their potential and current circumstances during their active life as well as the possibility to develop their key competences for LLL and hence to actively increase their employability. Special attention is to be paid to creation of conditions for handicapped citizens;
- to create legislative and other conditions in order to fulfil the legitimate interest of employers to have a possibility, guaranteed by the state, to hire adequately qualified or/and ready to re-qualify workforce that will provide for the fulfilment of tasks of the employer at a required level through an act on lifelong learning;

- to provide for conditions for statistical evaluation of participation of population segments in LLL;
- to support the development of all modern forms of education, which make the access of citizens to education easier and shorten the time, required for extension and obtaining of qualification whereby special attention should be paid to utilisation of new technical and technological options in education of handicapped citizens.

4.2.2 Specific goals of LLG:

- Based on the existing situation to provide for the completion of building of the system of lifelong guidance with the aim to make it accessible to everybody who needs these services or show an interest in them – to pupils of secondary schools, their parents, students of higher education institutions, those studying in further and lifelong both formal and non-formal education, handicapped people, education institutions providing both formal and non-formal education, citizens looking for a possibility of finding a job on the labour market, including those who are unemployed, returning to the labour market or those for whom finding a job or remaining on the labour market is a integral part of their active aging.
- To build and then support the capacities for creation and sustaining of database information required for the services of lifelong guidance; to create these databases in co-operation and co-ordination of the key ministries (education and labour, respectively services for employment, health), to provide for the information being complementary, up-to-date, true, transparent and complete already during their development.
- To increase investment to the entire system of lifelong guidance provided both in the framework of the ministry of education as well as services for employment, to create conditions also for the operation of non-governmental providers of the services of lifelong guidance. To direct the investment into all areas – equipping with technical and device equipment including ICT, special tools and techniques, including the development of diagnostic and guidance instruments, information, primary specialised education of counsellors, monitoring and tools for quality improvement, etc.
- To provide for elaboration of quality standards for providers of the services of lifelong guidance, to apply the quality standards also to creation, processing and subsequent distribution of information.
- To increase the expertise of the services of lifelong guidance through increased quality of the specialised training of the counsellors.
- To build the system of lifelong guidance upon the principle of the dialogue among the stakeholders (state administration, local self-governments, employers), feedback from the needs of the key partners and clients and the principle of subsidiarity during the lifelong guidance up to the level of local partnerships and also through utilisation of the principle of a learning region.

<h2>5. Analysis of the current state of LLL and GTL</h2>

5.1 Starting points

5.1.1 Political starting points

- **Lisbon strategy**

There was a new strategic goal set for the European Union for the forthcoming decade in Lisbon in March 2000 – to build the most competitive and most dynamically developing economy based on knowledge with greater social coherence and higher employment level. The main goals in the area of education are focused on increased quality of human potential and are closely linked with goals in the area of employment and social cohesion. According to the surveys of the European Union, the member states have a record of 70 million citizens with low or no qualification;

- **National Lisbon strategy and National reform program**

The Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until 2010 (National Lisbon strategy) is the most important complex document, in which the effort is declared to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and to increase the potential of human resources for the needs of knowledge economy. The **Action plans** of National Lisbon strategy and **National reform program** are focusing on those development plans of Slovakia, which will mostly contribute towards increase of the innovation potential of the Slovak economy, the development of knowledge economy and employment of citizens;

- **Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 - 2010**

The Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2006 – 2010 sees its task in more effective and better quality fulfilment of the National Lisbon Strategy (MINERVA), especially in areas – investment into human resources, education and employment, innovations, science and research, information society and entrepreneurial environment. The government considers the principle of lifelong learning to be an important area of increased quality of knowledge potential.

„The development of education and training in the spirit of modern European and world trends must be based on the support of knowledge-based economy, which creates the social environment, rules, models as well as real opportunities for economic realisation of an individual;“³⁾

- **National strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic for years 2007 - 2013**

The program period between 2007 to 2013 is for the Slovak Republic the first program period, during which it will have the possibility to utilise the resources from the EU funds during the entire time span of this period, based on the document National strategic reference framework (NSRF). This document defines the national priorities and provides for the fact that the assistance from the funds will be utilised in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. It also defines the link between the priorities of the Community and the National Reform Program. The strategic part of NSRF is based upon the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia, formulated as the „Overall convergence of the economy of the Slovak Republic to the EU 15 average in a way of sustainable development“;

- **Conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on March 25 – 26, 2004 (9048/04)**

The Spring summit of the European Council discussed the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which are in a part More and better jobs dedicated to the employment strategy and in particular the investment in human capital, which is decisive for further growths and productivity in the EU. The document states that lifelong learning has a positive impact on

³⁾ Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic, August 2006

a workforce supply and therefore the EU member states were **addressed to adopt their national strategies and to implement them until 2006;**

- **Resolution of the Council of the European Union on strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance** (9286/04/EDUC 109 SOC 234) is a political document unifying the development of lifelong guidance, providing a formal framework for its development and strengthening in the member countries. It lists the basic development trends and tasks for the national managing authorities;

...

are the most important documents, through which the effort is declared on a government level to increase the competitiveness of the Slovak economy as well as the increase of human resources potential for the needs of knowledge economy.

5.1.2 Professional starting points

- Millennium – the National program of education and training in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 1193 from December 19, 2001, created a philosophical and conceptual framework for identification and declaration of political and social goals, interests and priorities in the area of education. It is the starting point for creation of the most important conceptual document in education, for planning of the process of reforms and creation of their concepts and the development of the strategic documents and plans in the area of education.
- The Framework strategy of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 157 from February 25, 2004 – the first document with conceptual character in the Slovak Republic, defining priorities and interests in the area of lifelong learning as well as the management of processes of their implementation with a particular time schedule.
- The national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“, co-financed by the ESF, implemented by Academia Istropolitana, an education institution, ministerial agency in the area of lifelong learning since 2004. The project created a design of an open system of lifelong learning for the needs of the labour market, roofing and interconnecting the areas of monitoring and survey of education needs; quality management in non-formal education; recognition of learning outcome of non-formal education for the purpose of obtaining qualification and financing of lifelong learning. Apart from the conceptual outcomes, the project will be concluded by a draft of the act on lifelong learning.

5.2 Trends in the EU countries

5.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The current trends in lifelong learning (LLL), which are mostly completely identified in the strategies of individual EU member states, are mentioning the following main components:

- **Complexity and flexibility of the LLL system.** The strategies mention both formal and non-formal system of education on all its level from pre-school education up to the adult education. This way the LLL system enables the learning person to permeability between the formal and non-formal system and hence provides him or her with an option to choose a flexible education paths. At the same time the system allows to recognise his or her achieved education at any point of time of his or her lifelong learning. The lifelong guidance is providing for orientation within this system.
- **Qualifications framework and qualifications systems in LLL.** Some EU countries have their national qualifications frameworks elaborated and they do have a description of various qualifications in their national qualifications systems. These tools are important primarily for the purpose of orientation of all stakeholders involved in education (the learning individual, the education institution, the employer, the state), which is required from them by the labour market. It is because the qualification standards are describing knowledge and skills, which are necessary for holding of a particular working position. To know the requirements of the labour market means to adjust the education with regard to a particular goal in a form of achieved qualification.
- **System of modules and credits in LLL.** Another function of the system of qualifications is to provide a framework for division of education programs leading to obtaining a qualification (full or partial) to shorter units (modules), which are awarded credits pursuant to their importance. The purpose of the modules lies with the fact that the learning person can adjust the speed of his or her proceeding during education (he or she does not have to pass the entire education program at once) and on the other hand it does enable the learning person to have some of his or her modules (credits), achieved beforehand in the framework of education achieved in another education institution.
- **Open access to LLL.** There are several dimensions of understanding this component. The first is the proximity of the actual education facility in a form of local education centres or the accessible e-learning education programs. Another one is the accessibility of education options in the sense of financial and material requirements on education. The access to LLL can finally be also perceived through the form, in which the education is provided as various age and social and economic groups of citizens have various requirements for the pedagogic and didactic realisation of education. It is also necessary to prepare the teachers and lecturers to the new demands in education.
- **Organisation of LLL.** In the EU great emphasis is put on effective allocation of investments in lifelong learning, realised predominantly through the local stakeholders, participating in the lifelong learning (local self-government, education institutions, employers, trade unions and non-government organisation and a citizen). Having on mind the success of lifelong learning, regional partnerships of such involved stakeholders are preferred, which are able to best identify both the current as well as the future needs of the regional labour market and they have the capability to mobilise the entire education potential for this purpose. The last important part of organisation of LLL is permanent and targeted promotion.

5.2.2 Lifelong Guidance

The moving force behind the creation of European trends apart from the central institutions (European Commission, CEDEFOP, ETF, OECD) are also the professional networks, such as for example IAEVG, FEDORA and the competition among the member countries. Among the current trends there are mainly those listed below:

- **Complexity and variety.** The guidance in the EU member states is provided through various structures, guidance systems and procedures in the course of education, vocational training, employment, unemployment, in the private and in the public sector. This variety provides a rich basis for co-operation and partnership learning. The primary responsibility to provide free of charge guidance services of adequate quality and extent remains with the member states.
- **Effectiveness.** Providing effective guidance has a key importance in support of social inclusion, social equality, gender equality and active citizenship through supporting participation of individuals in education and training and their choice of a realistic and meaningful career.
- **Flexibility and innovation.** The services must reflect the changing conditions and needs. Implementation of new technologies shall contribute to better accessibility, quality and effectiveness.
- **Transparency and accessibility.** Special attention is being paid to accessibility of guidance services for target groups at the point of career change or the need of it.
- **Dialogue and subsidiarity.** All stakeholders are involved when creating concepts by authors client centred guidance systems. Successful implementation of such systems is based upon the principle of partnership and consistent subsidiarity.
- **European dimension.** Guidance contributes to full utilisation of the potential arising from our membership in the European Union. Lifelong guidance also contributes through supranational networks (e.g. EURES) to achievement of goals relating to the economic development, effectiveness of the labour market and workforce and geographical mobility.

5.3 Description of the education systems

5.3.1 Formal education:

The formal system of education shows high level of closeness and relatively low ability to constructively utilise complementary functions of non-formal systems of education in order to shorten the time necessary for obtaining a new qualification or extension of the original one. *It issues*, up to a few exemptions (e.g. fire protection technician, tourist guide) *officially recognised qualification certificates*.

The most significant system deficit is the low ability of the formal system of education to respond flexibly to newly created professions and to the implementation of new technologies and innovations into practical life through creation of new learning and study programs. The length of the process of creation and implementation of new learning and study program is often too long, which does not correspond with the needs and demands of the employers and practice.

5.3.2 Non-formal education:

The non-formal system of education is extraordinary for its ability to *instantly respond to new education needs, to 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.

5.3.3 Informal learning:

At present the least utilised subsystem of education based on natural abilities of man to know and to learn and 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).

5.3.4 Lifelong guidance:

The services of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic are provided primarily under the auspices of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. The current system of guidance insufficiently covers certain groups of citizens: employed population, craftsmen and self-employed, unemployed out of evidence, population in the post-productive age and marginal groups.

5.4 Characteristics of the shortages of current education system and guidance:

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 lifelong learning for the labour market,
2. insufficient ability of the formal system of education to flexibly respond to arised 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 lifelong learning,
10. lasting gender stereotypes.

Short SWOT analysis of the education system

strengths	weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well organised formal system of education ▪ wide supply and relatively high demand for education in the non-formal system of education ▪ informal learning is a natural way of obtaining knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low flexibility of the formal system of education ▪ unresolved system components in non-formal education: <i>1. guarantee of quality; 2. financing; 3. recognition of education achievements</i> ▪ high level of non-organisation in informal learning
opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of results of non-formal system of education with the formal system ▪ utilisation of outcomes of the national project of Academia Istropolitana also to support of non-formal education: <i>1. certification of education institutions, certification of lecturers, accreditation of education programs; 2. national qualifications authority;</i> ▪ 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 „<i>learning outcome principle</i>“), which is also suitable for recognition of outcomes of informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ resistance from the side of employers and the formal system to recognise education obtained in the non-formal system ▪ 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 ▪ possible devaluation of both formal and non-formal education

6. System of lifelong learning – components, tools and internal relations

The intention to create and implement an open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic was an outcome of development of the ongoing communication between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic –European Integration Section and Academia Istropolitana – an education institution, ministerial agency in the area for lifelong learning in

2003, when in connection with the preparation of the Slovak Republic for being a part of the EU, this governmental institution was addressed to create a working draft of a national project/projects for the area of lifelong learning.

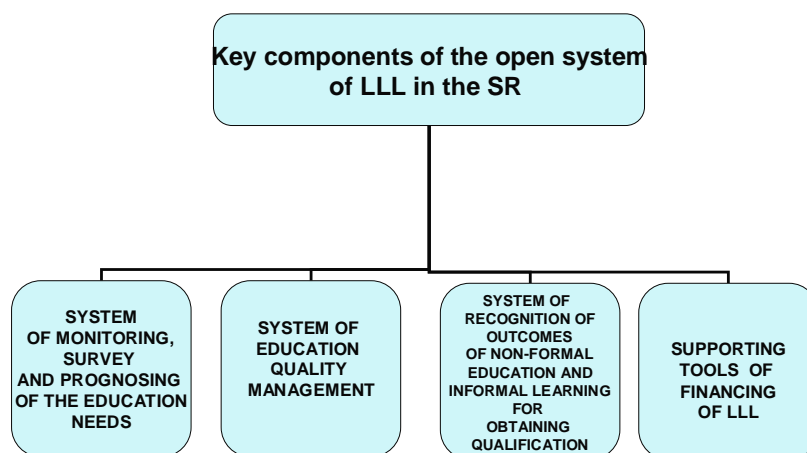
Upon the analysis of situation in this area the authors *decided to principally resolve the area of LLL in Slovakia by creation and implementation of the open system of LLL in Slovakia for the needs of the labour market.*

The description of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market is elaborated in the concepts for particular subsystems of lifelong learning, covering all components of the system of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. These mutually interlinked concepts were elaborated by the education institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Academia Istropolitana, in the framework of the national ESF project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“. Activities of experts on the project began in 2004 and were concluded in March 2007.

Components of the open system of LLL:

- **System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL**
- **System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning**
- **System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification - permeability**
- **Supporting tools of financing of LLL**

Chart of key components of the open system of LLL



6.1 Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses

Monitoring, survey and elaboration of prognoses of the education needs is a subsystem, which upon its implementation by a legislative measure fulfils an important role of being a particular tool with the purpose of creation of conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions, responding to the changing needs of the labour market by education.

There is a *generally applicable model of survey* of education needs for all age groups *created* for this purpose – for the citizen, the employer, public administration and the education institution. The generally applicable model of survey of education needs can be applied by its users in the extent according to their individual need. It provides a manual – the particular mutually linked procedures of collection of empiric data, their evaluation, identification of education needs and their planning.

6.1.1 Basic structure of the model of survey of education needs:

- *identification of target groups for analysis of education needs*
- *identification of the sources of development of education needs of selected target groups and formulation of required competences*
- *planning of the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of the analysis of education needs*
- *preparation of recommendations resulting from the analysis of education needs*
- *realisation of recommendations*
- *elaboration of prognosis of the future development of education needs*

In case of utilisation of generally applicable model of survey of education needs standardisation of the survey of education needs will be achieved, which will provide for elaboration of more precise prognoses of their development.

The services of information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance will be an effective tool of the free access of citizens, employers, public administration and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be the two ways communication tool of their clients. The draft of the information system for non-formal education, which will adequately complement the already existing information systems in the formal education is elaborated as a concept outcome of the national project „Creation, development and implementation of the open system of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic for the needs of the labour market“.

6.1.2 Basic structure of the information system for LLL:

- *database of certified education institutions*
- *database of certified lecturers and managers of non-formal education*
- *database of accredited education programs in form of modules*
- *database of authorised subjects for validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining qualification.*

There will be two options for the first entry of the applicant for evidence in the system into the information system:

- Electronically
- Combined (electronically + by post).

The users of the information system for LLL will be the following:

- Administrator of the information system (the ministry or an authorised national authority)
- An individual
- Institution – beneficiary of education
- Institution – provider of analyses of education needs
- Institution – provider of education.

Modules of information system on LLL:

- Certification of providers of education
- Accreditation of education programs/activities
- Certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education
- Authorisation of subjects *validation of learning outcomes* of non-formal education for obtaining qualification
- Innovation centre of non-formal education
- Supplementary modules of the information system.

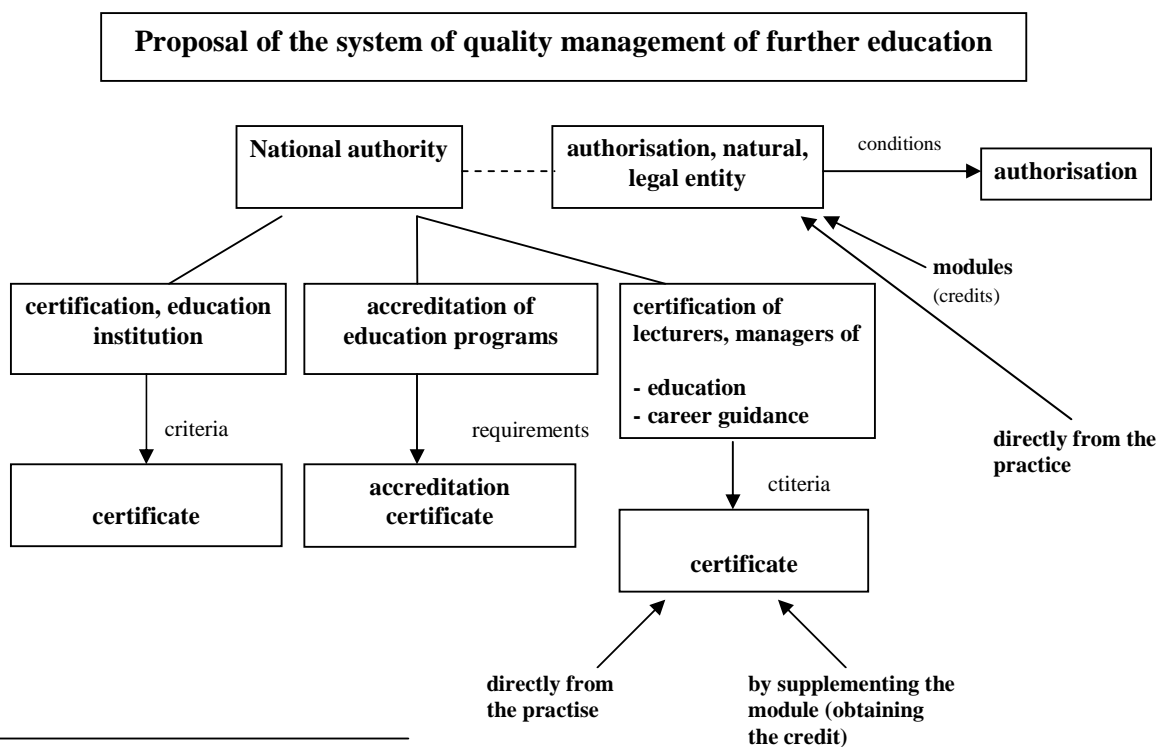
Another functions of the information system for LLL will be the control mechanism, search for education activities and linkage of databases.

6.2 Quality of lifelong learning

The system of quality management of non-formal education is directly anchored in the legal regulations referring to the formal education on all levels.

Quality management in the non-formal system of education will be guaranteed through the national authority, established and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Following the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, the national authority shall fulfil the tasks authorised to certify education institutions to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned credits to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as the counsellors and this way to guarantee the state control over the quality of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance.

Chart of the management quality system and the system of recognition of the learning outcomes is as follows:



Documents expected to be processed: NSP, NSK, qualification standards, evaluation standards

Description of activity:

Based on the competences provided by the lifelong learning act, the *National authority* will have the possibility to

- authorise legal and natural entities, which will comply with the criteria given by the regulation, to validate the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, by granting an authorisation. It is natural that these authorised entities, which will comply with all criteria, will be the schools of the formal education system, which have all conditions for education at their disposal and logically also for validation of learning outcomes of education for given learning or study specialisations;
- manage the certification processes of education institutions of the non-formal system of education, grant or withdraw the documents on certification of institutions, verifying achievement of minimum and higher level of required quality of organisation in non-formal education whereby the certification will not be an obligatory process;
- accredit the education activities in non-formal education in a modules form with assigned respective number of credits whereby the accreditation will not be an obligatory process;
- certify the lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as counsellors.

6.3 Recognition of learning outcomes

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.

6.3.1 Credit system for non-formal education

In the process of accreditation of education activities for the non-formal system of education, which will be subject of the prepared draft of the lifelong learning act, also programs in a modules form will be accredited (it will not be an obligatory process) whereby during the accreditation they will be assigned respective number of credits in a ration 1:3 of the extent of education compared to education in the given study specialisation in the formal system of education whereby the procedure of assigning a number of credits shall be defined by a special regulation.

Citizen who obtains a particular number of credit for graduation of education activities in the non-formal system of education will be able to cumulate credits according to his/her decision and with the support of lifelong guidance he/she will be able model his/her partial or full qualification according to his/her need or the need of the local labour market.

Accreditation of modules of the education programs in non-formal education together with assigning a particular number of credits will provide for vertical permeability and shorter time needed for vocational training. Variety of offered modules will provide a flexible reaction to the changed needs of the labour market as well as required specialisation of the labourforce in case of the need whereby it will also free the formal system of education from the need of preparation of narrow study specialisations.

The national authority can for the purpose of obtaining qualification through the non-formal system of education, pursuant to a special regulation, define the procedures for credits recognition of education programs of institutions of non-formal education, which are not accredited and expressed in a modules form and do not have a number of credits assigned.

The credit system will enable recognition of credits obtained for defined extent and way of graduation from the education program, respectively modules in further education for credits transferred into formal system of education. For example an x number of accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the final exam for obtaining vocational certificate or vocational certificate + x accredited modules of education programs = fulfilled condition for passing the secondary school leaving exam, etc.

In the framework of accreditation of modules it is necessary to transfer priorities from current tasks of further education – from extension of obtained qualification **to the new priority – obtaining a new qualification**. This procedure shall on the one hand provide for adaptability of the labourforce and on the other for the required specialisation in a relatively short time.

6.3.2 Recognition of learning outcomes through the national authority

Assignment of a particular number of credits, e.g. 80% to a certain number of years of the working experience in the given field, e.g. 5 years and the rest of credits – 20% can be obtained by the citizen through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorised legal (LE) or natural (NE) entity.

The national authority awards an applicant who submits the application for obtaining new qualification and extending the original one with it 80% of credits for 5 years of proven working experience in the given field. The following procedure is proposed for obtaining the remaining 20% of credits:

Procedure No. 1: *the applicant needs to pass an exam for validation of special ability and special competences in the given field at an institution (LE or NE), which was authorised for this verification activity by the national authority.*

A graduate of accredited programs of further education expressed in modules with assigned credits can apply with credits obtained this way at authorising LE and NE for recognition of credits for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of qualification.

Procedure No. 2: in case the applicant passed during the period of last 5 years accredited programs of further education, which are elaborated in modules with assigned number of credits and he/she fulfilled the condition of accumulating 100% of credits for recognition of obtaining new qualification or obtaining 100% of credits for increased level of qualification, e.g. from the complete secondary vocational education to the bachelor level of higher education, he/she shall directly ask the authorised LE or NE, with authorisation obtained from the national authority, for the issue of the document on obtaining or improving qualification.

Education programs of institutions, which do not have accredited courses in a modules form with assigned credits, shall be, for the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education, considered working experience in the given field (it will be defined this way directly in the draft on the LLL act).

Example: Lubo, 34 years, graduated forestry production mechanist currently in the framework of his job executes minor electric installation works under the supervision of a specialised and competent employee

In the formal system Lubo studied at the secondary vocational forestry school a study specialisation without the school leaving examination – **forestry production mechanist**. After 7 years of working in the forest he wanted to change his work so chose an employment in at time flourishing business field, in the small advertising agency. Apart from other working activities he was in this company in charge of working activities related to the installation of the light advertisement panels. After 10 years of experience he obtained in this job such level of knowledge and skills, which would enable him to **individually connect electrical installations** if he had a certificate on specialised competence for this activity. Taking into account the business slow-down in small advertising agencies and the significant growth in the construction industry, Lubo decided that he wants to obtain the required qualification and the related certification for the work of a **electrician**.
What can he do?

current system of recognition of qualifications:	proposed system of recognition of qualifications:
The current system of granting qualifications shall not officially recognise such Lubo's qualification because he did not graduate from the secondary vocational school specialised in electricity. The only possible way is to graduate in the formal system from some vocational school specialised in electricity and based	The proposed system counts on the fact that testing in an authorised education institution (it can be the same secondary vocational school, which now offered him the 4-years study) of that knowledge and skills, which Lubo obtained in informal learning and which are required by working activities for the needed qualification of an electrician (this knowledge and skills will be described in the national system of qualifications) can lead to recognition of his partial qualification. In case Lubo's experience obtained so far will not be

<p>on his graduation certificate, respectively a diploma, his qualification would be recognised. However, Lubo is not interested in such a way of obtaining the qualification. It requires a lot of time and if, by chance, he shall not finish the begun study, his effort will all be in vain.</p>	<p>sufficient for granting a qualification, the authorised institution in co-operation with his career counsellor shall plan, based on the result of testing, the list of modules for him, which he has to pass in the non-formal system of education in order to fulfil the conditions for being granted the qualification. To pass these modules Lubo can choose any education institution, offering the accredited modules and divide his time of study in order to make it suitable for his work schedule.</p>
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Chart No. 1: Illustration of the current system of recognition of qualifications

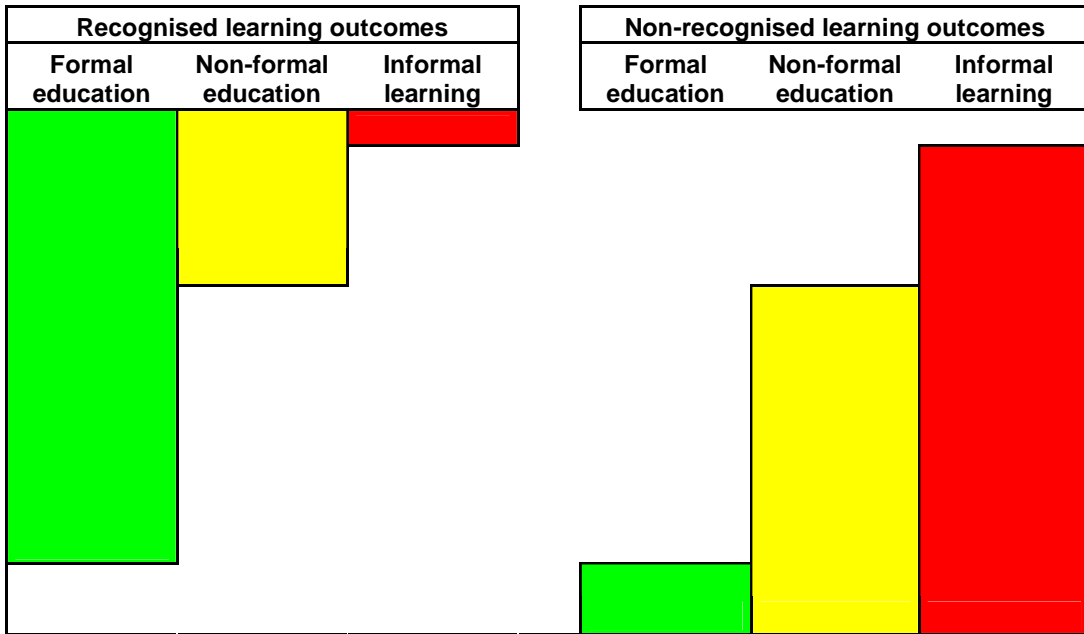
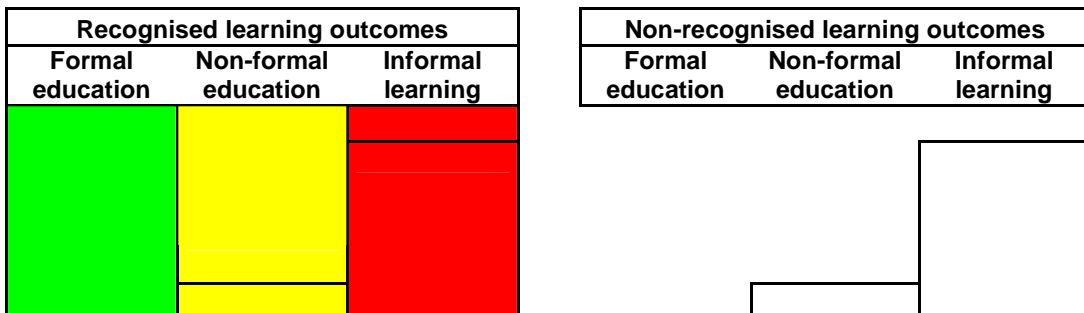
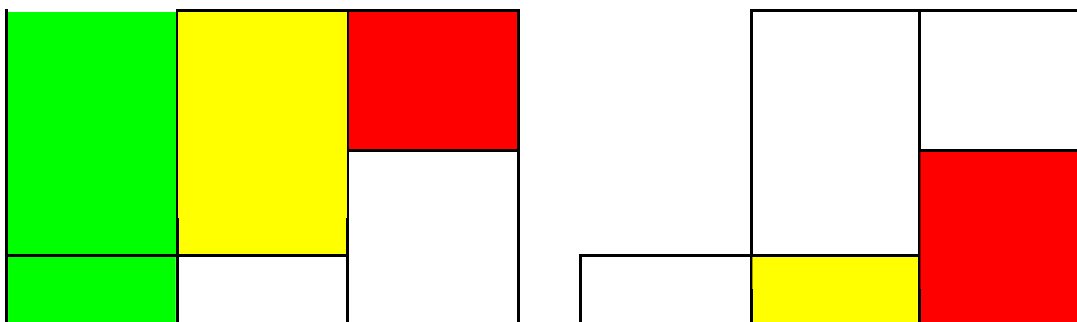


Chart No. 2: Illustration of the proposed system of recognition of qualifications





Note: Illustration charts are showing the difference in recognition of learning outcomes in the current and in the proposed system of LLL. The proposed system presumes a significant increase of recognition of learning outcomes and learning for obtaining qualifications.

6.4 Supporting tools of financing of LLL

The aim is to evaluate the possibilities of financing lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on multi-source financing and to put them into a legal norm. This means that apart from individuals the state should also participate in financing of lifelong learning in a form of national grants. Another participants should be the regional self-government, employers from both public and private sector and the bank sector.

The resources from the structural funds of the EU, primarily the European Social Fund, could also be used for financing of lifelong learning in the framework of the following activities:

- Improvement of quality of lifelong learning
- Development of human resources in further education
- Support of learning regions and creation of networks in lifelong learning
- Support of lifelong learning in particular sectors
- Making the access to lifelong learning easier
- Development of key competencies through lifelong learning
- Improvement of permeability between sectors and levels of formal and non-formal education and informal learning.

In order to provide for supporting tools for motivation of participation of the involved stakeholders in lifelong learning, it will also be necessary to look for possibilities of its effective financing in the framework of the legislative changes proposed in the future.

6.5 National authority for lifelong learning

The tasks of creation and implementation of methodology, quality control and management of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning will be fulfilled by an organisation, competent to develop and implement concepts, methodologies, strategies and policies of the state in the area of lifelong learning and the

competencies of which shall be based on instructions, regulated by directives from the side of the establisher and upon the legislation framework of lifelong learning.

The national authority, in accordance with the prepared legislative draft of the future lifelong learning act, will be a legal entity operating nation-wide. It will fulfil the tasks in the area of management, organisation, facilitate, execution and quality control of provided lifelong learning as well as in the area of management of the system of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education for obtaining partial or full qualification in the extent, defined by the future LLL act. For the purpose of recognition of learning outcomes of education for regulated jobs, which are governed by individual legal regulations, the national authority will co-operate with the ministry and other responsible institutions.

In order to provide for its activity, it will create its bodies in the framework of an organisation structure and advisory bodies for the area of certification of education institutions, accreditation of programs of non-formal education, for authorisation of subjects for execution of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal education, for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification in those areas where the jobs are not regulated by special legal regulations from the reason of protection of public health, healthcare and state security it will co-operate with the respective ministries and other institutions.

6.5.1 Main tasks of the national authority:

- it elaborates drafts of concept and strategic documents focused on non-formal education;
- it evaluates the state of lifelong learning in the Slovak Republic also from the point of view of gender equality, it elaborates respective analyses and prognoses of further development of lifelong learning in co-operation with involved bodies and institutions;
- it defines conditions of certification of education institutions of non-formal education;
- it verifies fulfilment of conditions required for granting a quality certificate of an education institution and decides on its granting, withdrawal or the change of it;
- it defines the criteria of accreditation of education programs and decides on accreditation of education programs in the area of non-formal education;
- it defines conditions of certification of lecturers of non-formal education and managers of non-formal education and acts and decides on certification of lecturers and managers of non-formal education as well as on withdrawal of their certificate granted to them before;
- it acts and decides on authorisation of a natural entity or a legal entity for validation of full or partial qualification of an applicant in the area of non-formal education and informal learning and on withdrawal or change of such authorisation;
- it executes control and inspection activity in certified education institutions, in which non-formal education is provided;
- it elaborates and manages in electronic form publicly accessible central list of certified education institutions in the area of non-formal education, central list of accredited education programs in the area of non-formal education and central list of authorised natural entities and legal entities;
- it manages the central evidence of issued authorisations, central evidence of granted quality certificates of education institutions as well as central evidence of quality certificates granted to lecturers of non-formal education and managers of education;
- provides guidance in the area of lifelong learning;

- prepares and implements marketing strategies in the area of non-formal education;
- provide creation, operation and development of a unified information system in the area of lifelong learning.

During execution of its activities it co-operates with central bodies of the state administration as needed.

7. Proposal of the system of lifelong guidance

There is no system of lifelong guidance created in the Slovak Republic; there are some individual mutually unlinked subsystems of lifelong guidance created and applied. These are, however, not completely built into one functioning system. One of the specific goals of the strategy is to subcontract its elaboration and create conditions for future legislative framework of the system of lifelong guidance.

7.1 Characteristics of an effective system of lifelong guidance

This part stands for description of an optimally working system of services of lifelong guidance, the primary function of which is to assist an individual to develop and use his/her abilities and competencies in a real society characterised by its needs and possibilities. The mentioned characteristics is in accord with goals defined in the Lisbon strategy as well as the European recommendations, summarised in the Resolution of strengthening of policies, systems and activities in the area of lifelong guidance in Europe⁴⁾ and in the Handbook for policy makers in the area of career guidance⁵⁾.

The issues, which the services of lifelong guidance are dealing with, go beyond the framework of particular individual sector, ministry and scientific specialisation. The system of services, which should be an effective response to the needs of their different users and at the same time to the need of the constantly changing society must take into account the multi-ministerial and multidisciplinary issues in each point of the management and creation of the system as well as the constant management of its quality.

Complexity of effective system of guidance can be described more in details as the following:

⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance (9286/04 EDUC 109 SOC 234; *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Lifelong Guidance in Europe. May 2004.*)

⁵⁾ Kariérové poradenstvo – príručka pre tvorcov koncepcií. (*Career Guidance. A Handbook for Policy Makers.* Paris: 2004, ISBN 92-64-01519-1; Slovak translation: SAAIC – Euro-guidance centre for the Slovak issue, 2005)

- **Involvement of all sectors:** Public, private and the third sector have various functions and possibilities. Together they present financial, human and expertise sources specialised in particular target groups. By supporting co-operation among all these sectors on a national level (whereby the legislation will provide for such co-operation) it is possible to get closer to their services covering the biggest possible part of population as well as the demand for wide offer of good-quality services.
- **Multi-ministerial aspect:** lifelong guidance represents a tool for increasing attractiveness and utilisation of possibilities of lifelong learning for the purposes of improvement of employment possibilities and professional success of an individual. Because the core of guidance is to link the issues of education with the issues of employment, it requires constant and ongoing co-operation of the two key ministries: the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family. If the services should be complete as for their content and mutually linked and connected, it also requires co-operation of the remaining involved ministries – primarily the Ministry of health (for citizens with specific health limitations) and the Ministry of justice (for citizens becoming the part of society upon the end of serving their sentence in prison) and it is required to create a structure competent for management of the system of services as a whole). That means that a concept of a complex system of services must be elaborated first on a national level and then, based on it, responsibility must be delegated for various types of services for particular specific target groups onto a particular ministry, institution or a provider. The partial strategies of services provided by particular ministries or institutions should be based on the complex strategy.
- **Delegation of responsibility and competencies to lower level.** The national system of guidance services should comply with **the so-called principle of subsidiarity:** the management of services provided by particular subjects should be carried out on the lowest possible level, which is necessary for achieving and sustaining of their high quality. That means that on the national level only that should be managed what goes beyond the possibilities of the regional level, local level or the level of the actual provider. Application of the principle has to provide for utilisation of experience and hands on knowledge of the issue whereby it does not threaten the complexity and coherence of the entire system.
- **Covering target groups of every age and status.** This means accessibility of good-quality services for children, youth as well as adults participating in the system of formal education as well as outside of it, and also means services for both unemployed and employed, for various type groups disadvantaged on the labour market but also for those interested who belong to the majority of the society.
- **Providing various types of services** for all mentioned target groups. Existence of information, guidance and therapeutic services for each type of target group makes effective utilisation of financial and human (expert) sources possible. In case the system is complex and provides for various services according to the needs of clients, it is easier to clearly defined competencies of the particular providers in it and to elaborate a reference framework defining whom the client can address for the given type of assistance. The specialisation of a counsellor for a particular type of service or

eventually also a target group enables adequate utilisation of his/her education, direction of further education and increase of quality of his/her services.

- **Participation of particular groups**, involved in the lifelong guidance **in the process of creation and development of services**. The aim is to create services, which will on the one hand respond to the needs of their user and on the other also to the needs of the society. Knowledge of these needs, which are constantly changing, is possible through participation of clients, respectively the target groups, providers of services, employers as well as the authors of national strategies and concepts in the continual process of creation of the system and development of its quality. This attitude is directly linked with support of the research, theory and creation of methodologies for the area of lifelong guidance.
- **Providing for supporting systems**. The service provider should have at his/her disposal a good-quality database of actual information, which he/she can use during providing of the services. In most cases, however, he/she has neither possibility nor the competence to create and sustain such database on his/her own and this task is therefore within the responsibility of the national structures. Among the supporting systems there is also technical equipment and accessibility of options of the relevant basic and further education. Last but not least it is creation of the national legislation, which shall govern this area.

Achievement of the above mentioned qualities is only possible under condition that the lifelong guidance as such is perceived on the national level as an important and useful tool worth to be pay attention and to invest finances in because it has a potential to significantly contribute the politics of the knowledge society.

It is possible to create the system of lifelong guidance in Slovakia by unify of its individually functioning components, roofed 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 time focused in 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.

Elaboration of such system of lifelong guidance for the Slovak Republic requires significant organisation, management, time, intellectual and financial sources on the one hand and on the other 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 is only a low number of experts in Slovakia, which are specifically dedicating their work to the area of concept and strategic activities for lifelong guidance or at least to its particular components.

In case the decision making sphere puts emphasis on a way of precise identification and concentration of such experts for systematic work, it is possible in a relatively short time to

build such teams of required experts who have the potential for creation of a system of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic.

Ideally, these demands of elaboration of the system of lifelong guidance will be resolved based on the organisation and administration order in a form of **a national project** co-financed from the European Social Fund.

8. Measures for realisation of the strategy of LLL and LLG

8.1 Elaboration and adoption of a concept of utilisation of financial resources from the structural funds for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: July 2007

8.2 Elaboration of a lifelong learning act.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2007

8.3 Elaboration and adoption of a plan for implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG, which will define procedures of fulfilment of the main goal, priorities and specific goals, divide responsibilities, identify sources and determine deadlines.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: October 2007

8.4 Creation and adoption of an organisation and administrative framework of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG by assigning a respective institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic with specialised guarantee for the execution of implementation of the strategy of LLL and LLG.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Deadline: January 2008

8.5 Assignment of an institution responsible for providing for implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance pursuant to the definition. It will be responsible for effective division of tasks into particular ministries and involved subjects.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.6 Creation of a national groups of experts/authors of policies, which will be an advisory committee of the institution responsible for providing the implementation and management of the complex and unified system of lifelong guidance. It will propose the general standards of quality and continuously co-ordinate the policies of ministries

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: July 2008

8.7 Implementation of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning by establishing a national authority, which will authorise natural and legal entities for validation of **learning outcomes** of non-formal education and informal learning for the purpose of obtaining partial or full qualification and direct recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education through accredited programs of non-formal education in a modules form with assigned number of credits.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.8 Implementation of the system of quality management of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance through functions of the national authority entitling to certify education institutions, to accredit programs of non-formal education in a modules form with number of credits assigned to particular modules, to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career counsellors.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society

Deadline: September 2008

8.9 Implementation of a system of ongoing monitoring and system of prognoses of education needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and education institutions and to respond to the changing needs of the labour market.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments

Deadline: January 2009

8.10 Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance, which will be an effective tool of free access of citizens and institutions to education and guidance and at the same time it will be a two way communication tool of its clients.

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: January 2009

8.11 Creation of a national system of qualification and a national qualification framework

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
Deadline for handing over of the first stage of the system of qualifications: July 2009

8.12 Elaboration and implementation of a system of lifelong guidance based on the principle of subsidiarity to the practical life of local self-government units and local partnerships as well as that of the alternative providers of guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: September 2009

8.13 Elaboration and implementation of supporting systems for lifelong guidance through creation of conditions for obtaining of the second level of higher education in the study program „lifelong guidance“; measurement of performance, evaluation of quality, investigation about satisfaction of the client and creation of sources of feedback to creation of policies in lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: September 2009

8.14 Creation of legislative conditions for the system of lifelong guidance

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
Deadline: March 2011

8.15 Implementation of supporting financial tools for development of lifelong learning; creation and implementation of an effective system of financing of lifelong guidance in the Slovak Republic

Responsible: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, social partners and representatives of self-governments
Deadline: continuously

9. Impact of the strategy of LLL and LLG on the target groups

Citizen	<p>LLL: It will enable the citizen in the system of LLL to have his/her previously achieved education and working experience recognised and to continue his/her career life through education any time his/her situation on the labour market requires completion, extension or change of qualification; it will help him/her to find orientation in the quality of education programs on offer; it will provide for his/her more effective and more targeted investment of finances into his/her personal and career growth.</p> <p>LLG: It will enable the citizen to manage and plan his/her education and career in accordance with his/her aims of life, to link his/her abilities and interests with education, vocational training, opportunities on the labour market and self-employment and this way to contribute to personal satisfaction and good career.</p>
Employer	<p>LLL: It will enable the employer to more precisely define his/her requirements on the profile of his/her future employees through entering the creation and permanent change of qualification standards in the system of qualifications; it will make the process of obtaining labourforce for new, innovated, respectively trendy work position easier, it will decrease his/her costs for further education of his/her employees.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the employer to employ motivated, usable and adjustable employees who are able to find their access to education options both in the framework of the working place as well as outside of it and benefit from them.</p>
Public administration	<p>LLL: It will enable the public administration to more flexibly fulfil its obligations against the labour market on the local, regional, national and European level; it will enable the regional and local self-governments to organise and plan their development of human resources through regional partnerships; it will help to decrease structural unemployment and it will make the regions more attractive for investment; it will strengthen the principle of subsidiarity in responsibility for development of human resources and make the allocation of financial sources more effective; it will make evaluation of impact of particular measures for authors and executors of strategies and policies of development of human resources in Slovakia more objective.</p> <p>LLG: It will be helpful for development of the society, in which the citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and long-term sustainable development; it will provide the authors of policies important tools for achievement of wide scale of state policy goals.</p>
Education institution	<p>LLL: It will enable the education institutions to flexibly respond to the developing needs of the labour market and to adjust their education programs to qualification standards described in the system of qualifications; it will make achievements of education from accredited education programs in the non-formal system equal with the formal system; it will organise and implement system to the sector of education institutions of the non-formal education system; it will increase the demand for further education.</p> <p>LLG: It will help the education institutions to motivate pupils, students and apprentices to accept the responsibility for their own education and to</p>

make them define their own goals they want to achieve.
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