

# VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT-RELATED MOBILITY AND MIGRATION

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## ABSTRACT

### **Vocational Education and Training, Employment-related Mobility and Migration**

This article is the result of the analysis of literature on Vocational Education and Training (hereinafter VET) and employment-related mobility and migration in Slovenia. Books and research papers published in Slovenia from 2004 to 2010, and with a special focus on those written by Slovenian researchers, were the primary area of interest. The topic of VET and employment-related mobility and migration is under-researched in Slovenia. The results of the literature review indicate that, due to the ageing population, Slovenia needs migrants. However, they are usually employed in low-esteem and low-paid jobs. The results also showed that mobility in Slovenia is still very low. However, in order to achieve development, geographical and occupational mobility should be encouraged in contemporary societies, including Slovenia. It will be argued in the article that because Slovenia is a multicultural society, VET should be developed as multicultural education.

KEY WORDS: VET, mobility, migration, multicultural education

## IZVLEČEK

### **Poklicno izobraževanje in mobilnost, povezana z zaposlovanjem ter migracijami**

Članek je rezultat analize literature o poklicnem izobraževanju in mobilnosti, povezani z zaposlovanjem in migracijami v Sloveniji. Analizirana je bila literatura, ki je izšla med letoma 2004 in 2010, s posebnim poudarkom na slovenskih avtorjih. V Sloveniji tema poklicnega izobraževanja in mobilnosti, povezane z zaposlovanjem in migracijami, ni raziskana. Rezultati raziskav pa kažejo na to, da Slovenija zaradi staranja prebivalstva potrebuje migrante. Slednji se v Sloveniji v glavnem zaposlujejo na manj cenjenih in slabo plačanih delovnih mestih. Rezultati raziskave kažejo na to, da je za Slovenijo značilna nizka mobilnost. Da bi dosegli razvoj, moramo v sodobnih družbah, tako tudi v Sloveniji, spodbujati geografsko in poklicno mobilnost. V članku izhajamo iz trditve, da se mora, ker je Slovenija multikulturna družba, poklicno izobraževanje razvijati kot večkulturno izobraževanje.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: poklicno izobraževanje, mobilnost, migracije, večkulturno izobraževanje

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## INTRODUCTION<sup>2</sup>

Mobility and migration are as old as mankind. They are characteristic of all historical periods, as people have always migrated and experienced various types of mobility. In the period of globalisation, mobility and migration have become even more intense, as demographic changes are characteristic for Slovenia, as well as for other parts of the EU. The active population is decreasing while the number of elderly people is rising. Migration can partly resolve the issue of low fertility. Due to the falling fertility rate, migration becomes an increasingly important factor of demographic development. Today, Slovenia depends on migration; this is a fact that will become even more evident over the next 30 years (Jakoš 2009). According to the same author, demographic issues represent one of the most important factors for the future development of Slovenia.

Therefore, it is a challenge for education systems including VET to respond to these contemporary societal challenges of migration and mobility. This article deals with VET and employment-related mobility and migration. Special attention is paid to occupational mobility. However, geographical and daily forms of mobility, which are linked to occupational mobility and migration, are also dealt with. In this article we will try to answer the following research questions: What are the current national topics regarding VET and employment-related mobility and migration? In what way should vocational education and training develop in order to efficiently respond to the challenge of multicultural society? Is the current state of employment-related mobility in Slovenia sufficient?

Let us first define what is meant by migration and mobility. Some authors use the terms interchangeably, yet there have been attempts to differentiate between the two terms. For example, Bole uses the following definition: the term “mobility” is used in connection with overcoming distances in space by an individual whose permanent residence does not change, while “migration” or “population movement” denotes the change of residence of individuals or groups of people (Bole 2004: 28). Moreover, “social mobility” is defined by the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development (hereinafter IMAD) as a change in the status of an individual or group in the system of social relations (IMAD 2008: 115).

## METHODOLOGY

This article is based on the analysis of the literature on current key issues and outcomes related to VET and employment-related mobility and migration. The main focus

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is on current national research topics from the period 2004 to 2010, and on literature published in Slovenia.

A search for books and articles in COBISS (Cooperative Online Bibliographic System and Service) on the aforementioned topic produced no results. COBISS is a virtual Slovenian library that contains all publications issued in Slovenia, including all foreign publications catalogued in all Slovenian libraries. That means that not only is there no national publication on the research topic, there are also no related foreign publications available in Slovenian libraries. However, in the publications listed as references the research topic was at least (briefly) mentioned. It was interesting that even statistical data concerning Slovenia are very frequently available only for the primary school, upper secondary school and university levels. Therefore, too often data are lacking for vocational schools, and for post-secondary non-university education and higher vocational education. Thus, this article succinctly drives home the fact that additional research is required in Slovenia on the topic of VET and employment-related mobility and migration. Moreover, it was determined that the overall topic of VET is under-researched in Slovenia and also requires more attention.

## **GEOGRAPHICAL AND DAILY MOBILITY IN SLOVENIA**

### **Geographical mobility in Slovenia**

This subchapter refers to internal migration within Slovenia. Statistical data shows that in the EU, most people migrate within their own country, while migration between Member States represents only a small proportion of total migration (Medved 2006). The same holds true for Slovenes, who prefer to migrate to another city or town in Slovenia rather than move to other EU/EEA countries. This data has been confirmed by research conducted by the Public Opinion and Mass Communication Research Centre (Medved 2006).

According to the 2002 population census, only 45% of all inhabitants of Slovenia lived in the town where they were born and 1,076,023<sup>3</sup> inhabitants were migrants (IMAD 2008). After the Second World War, deagrarisation, industrialisation and urbanisation occurred in Slovenia. These processes caused people to begin migrating from villages to cities and towns. After independence in 1991, internal migration became an economic necessity. However, IMAD (2008) presents the results of a questionnaire among the unemployed carried out by Aleksander Jakoš, which revealed that only half of those people (53%) were prepared to move. Thus, IMAD (2008) concludes that Slovenes are not prone to moving. Today, Slovenia faces a situation in which people are moving from cities and towns, usually to the outskirts, to solve their housing problems, as flats and houses outside of cities and towns are cheaper. IMAD (2008) finds that the number of regional internal

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<sup>3</sup> Slovenia has a population of 2 million.

migrants in Slovenia totalled nearly 100,000 between independence in 1991 and 2006. In Slovenia, housing is on par with the workplace as a motivating factor in people's decisions to move to another town. Nevertheless, regional migration in Slovenia is not very significant, as an average of just 6,243 people move to another region annually (IMAD 2008). In the period from 1997 to 2004, the proportion of internal migrants was just 1.53% annually (Grčar 2006).

According to IMAD (2008), human capital is an important factor for regional development, in addition to natural resources, infrastructure, etc. The same institution estimates that regions with inhabitants with higher education levels and longer periods of formal education generate higher GDP. Individuals with higher education levels receive higher incomes, while these regions enjoy other advantages (i.e. a better healthcare system, etc.). According to the 2002 population census, inhabitants with the longest period of formal education live in the central region of Slovenia (including the capital, Ljubljana), which has the smallest proportion of the population with only primary school education. Therefore, this region has the highest GDP in Slovenia. The opposite is true in the Prekmurje region, where people have the lowest level of education, while this region has the lowest GDP and many unemployed people.

This mismatch on the labour market between the supply and demand of workers with a specific education level (i.e. lower, upper secondary and university education) could be a reason for interregional migrations (IMAD 2008). Lower education levels have a negative impact on a region in terms of immigration, and a positive impact in terms of emigration. Conversely, higher education levels have a positive impact on a region in terms of immigration, and a negative impact in terms of emigration (Pekkala, Knaggashar and Grčar, in IMAD 2008). People with post-secondary non-university education and higher education tend to move to the central region of Slovenia and the Gorenjska region, while the Zasavje region lost more than 10% of people with post-secondary non-university education and higher education (IMAD 2008). In Slovenia in recent years, the number of higher education institutions in other regions, apart from the two biggest cities of Ljubljana and Maribor, has risen, meaning that more people will be able to complete their studies in their own region. However, "in order for an individual to stay in his or her own region after their studies, the range of higher education offered needs to be adapted to the existing and future needs of the regional economy" (ibid.: 100).

According to Medved (2006), geographical mobility can improve professional opportunities. The creative labour force (i.e. engineers, doctors, teachers, researchers, artists, etc.) does not move strictly in accordance with the principle that people follow jobs (not only to find employment), but also in accordance with the principle that jobs follow people (they move where the most creative conditions for employment can be found) (IMAD 2008). In Slovenia, this is the central region, where people with higher education levels tend to move. Robert Drobnič (2006) writes that Slovenia intends to solve the problems of structural mismatches on the labour market (i.e. regional, vocational and educational mismatches) through geographical and occupational mobility.

## **Daily mobility in Slovenia**

Daily mobility is a kind of spatial (horizontal) mobility, where people travel to another city or town on a daily basis or several times a week. They do not, however, change their permanent residence (cf. Bole 2004; IMAD 2008). The main reason for daily mobility is a lack of jobs in the local area (Bole 2004).

The origins of daily mobility can be traced to the early industrialisation period, when workplaces were no longer linked to permanent residences (i.e. the workplaces of farmers). In this period, the workplace became linked to the cities and towns where industrial activities could be found (IMAD 2008; Bole 2004).

The birth of large employment centres and the overpopulation of the rural countryside on the one hand, and the development of the transportation infrastructure on the other, resulted in daily streams of workers from their place of residence to their place of employment. The first widely used means of transporting commuters was the train, followed by buses and later by the automobile. (Bole 2004)

After the Second World War, daily mobility increased in Slovenia due to the fact that cars became more available, which slowed down the processes of migration (IMAD 2008). Daily mobility from surrounding municipalities to Ljubljana is widespread. This is particularly true of people in the aforementioned creative professions, who tend to commute to Ljubljana every day (ibid.). According to this institution, daily labour mobility in Slovenia is actually a substitution for permanent migration. As previously mentioned, Slovenes are generally not prone to moving. The results of a questionnaire (Jakoš and IMAD 2008) showed that 80% of those interviewed were prepared to commute to work every day. Other results indicate that Slovenes are very attached to their hometowns and enjoy commuting to the workplace every day. The 2002 population census showed that there were 658,911 commuters in Slovenia, workers (440,299) accounting for two thirds and students (218,612) enrolled in primary, secondary, higher education accounting for one third. Those enrolled in education institutions use public transport more frequently (53%) than workers who commute (less than 10%) (IMAD 2008). “The average Slovene commuter has a secondary school education, lives between 15 and 30 minutes from the place of employment and drives to work alone in an automobile. The use of an automobile increases with increasing levels of education” (Bole 2004: 38).

According to the 2002 population census, Slovenia had only 4,500 external daily commuters, who travelled to work in another country and returned home every day (IMAD 2008). Since Slovenia joined the EU in 2004, it has seen an increase in external daily labour mobility, as more Slovenes go to work in Austria and Italy on a daily basis than before Slovenia’s accession to the EU (Medved 2006). The regions that border neighbouring countries, such as the Goriška region, the Štajerska region and the Prekmurje region, account for the majority of external daily commuters (IMAD 2008). The main push factors include an inadequate number and the structure of hometown jobs, the desire to earn

more for the same work, the desire to work abroad, the desire for additional earnings and the availability of education (Zupančič, in IMAD 2008). The reasons for external daily labour mobility differ from region to region. In the coastal region, many younger female pensioners who work as cleaning ladies, maids or baby sitters to earn extra money, can be found among the commuters to Trieste. In the Goriška region, young women working in the service sector (i.e. tourism and personal services) also commute. Men from the Gorenjska region employed in the wood industry tend to commute (Zupančič, in IMAD 2008). Men from the Koroška region, employed in, for example, forestry, also tend to commute. Low-educated people from the Štajerska and Prekmurje regions, seeking work on farms and in forestry, can be found among commuters. Seasonal mobility linked to farm work is also present (IMAD 2008).

IMAD (2008) also emphasises the need for sustainable mobility: among the principles of sustainably organised transport, there is a need to reduce travelling requirements, as traffic pollutes the environment. According to Plevnik et al. (in IMAD 2008), sustainable mobility should be environmentally friendly and economically efficient, and should encourage the use of bicycles, public transport etc.

## **OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY IN SLOVENIA**

Despite the fact that occupational mobility is the major topic of this article, there was not a significant amount of literature on this topic, as related literature in the period from 2004 to 2009 is practically non-existent.

Hiršl (2008) writes that in Slovenia, the term occupational mobility includes two forms of mobility that can occur simultaneously: job mobility (job-to-job mobility) and occupational mobility in a more narrow sense. The transfer of an individual from one employer to another is characteristic of job mobility, while occupational mobility in a more narrow sense means a change of profession. According to Hiršl (2009), in Slovenian legislation, the basis for occupational mobility is laid down in Article 49 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No 33/1991). The Constitution provides for the freedom of work, the right to free choice of employment and equal access to every job under equal conditions.

Rapid changes are characteristic of contemporary times. Therefore, the capacity of workers to gain professional knowledge and experience is more important than ever before (Drobnič R. 2006). Thus, special attention should be given to the importance of occupational mobility in Slovenia, as mobility enhances employment and education opportunities. The improvement of geographical and occupational mobility is thus one of the key challenges of contemporary society as a whole. This holds true for every EU Member State (Drobnič J. 2006). Janez Drobnič<sup>4</sup> (2006) stated that our economy and development

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<sup>4</sup> Janez Drobnič is the former Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs.

as well as the realisation of the Lisbon objectives depend on how successfully we overcome the obstacles concerning mobility.

As previously stated, in Slovenia, the government intends to resolve structural mismatches on the labour market, such as regional, professional and educational mismatches, through occupational and geographical mobility (Drobnič R. 2006). The goal is to reduce structural mismatches on the labour market through professional standards, which are the basis for the preparation of educational programmes in lower secondary education, vocational professional education and post-secondary non-university education, and the catalogue of standards of professional knowledge and skills (Drobnič R. 2006). The National Institute for Vocational Education and Training is striving for a single qualification framework linked to the professional standards of the European Qualification Framework (EQF). The EQF is a common European reference framework that links countries' qualification systems, and acts as a translation device to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe. It has two principal aims: to promote citizens' mobility between countries and to facilitate their lifelong learning (Etf 2009). The goal of EQF is also to stimulate national systems. National qualification frameworks should be developed by 2011. Their goal is not only to achieve more transparency, but also to facilitate a path to qualifications and employment (Zevnik 2007). The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (the ECVET system), which facilitates dialogue and exchange between VET and qualifications systems, is also important for achieving greater mobility. It encourages the recognition in the home country of training periods spent in other European countries. This holds true not only for knowledge gained in formal education, but also in non-formal and informal education. In 2006 and 2007, lower and upper secondary vocational and professional education programmes were revived with funds from the European Social Fund, as the tendency was that increasingly fewer people were interested in these programmes. However, it is expected that the revival of these programmes will result in an increasing number of student enrolments, thus reducing the professional mismatch on the labour market (Drobnič R. 2006). In Drobnič's opinion, social partners and local communities play an important role in encouraging mobility.

Although 2006, the European Year of Workers' Mobility, triggered several important events in the EU and Slovenia, such as awareness-raising campaigns on the importance of mobility, attempts to eliminate obstacles to mobility, efforts for the free movement of EU workers and attempts to eliminate the transitional period for the employment of people from new Member States, low mobility on the Slovenian labour market remains one of the reasons for the difficulties encountered in the employment of certain categories of unemployed people in Slovenia (Drobnič J. 2006). Janez Drobnič (ibid.) finds that important factors influencing workers' attitudes to mobility include social policies, employment policies and the relation between flexibility and security. The concept of "flexicurity" facilitates employee's flexibility and security. Mobility contributes to the security of employment, as it enables employees to develop and realise their capacities (ibid.). According to Drobnič (ibid.), mobility must begin in the education process itself,

with study visits and work practice done abroad. In Slovenia, the exchange of VET students and professors is carried out in the scope of lifelong learning programmes, such as Leonardo da Vinci, Comenius and Erasmus. Students with foreign-exchange experience find employment more easily in Slovenia than other students (*ibid.*). In the scope of VET, there is also mobility at the level of competitions abroad. Worthy of particular note in this regard are Worldskills and Euroskills. The latter is a biennial competition of participants who already have some professional experience from a specific workplace. The focus is on applied professional knowledge. Euroskills began in 2008, and is intended for young people aged 18 to 25 years. In addition to Euroskills, VET students in Slovenia attend other competitions abroad, such as competitions for florists, farmers, cooks, foresters, waiters, roofers, tinsmiths, etc.<sup>5</sup>

Eurobarometer research showed that Slovenes change their jobs very rarely (less than three times during a career, which is lower than the European average) (Medved 2006; Hiršl 2008).<sup>6</sup> It is characteristic of active employment policies in Slovenia to focus on programmes for the training of the unemployed, particularly during their transition to professional status or occupational mobility (Drobnič. R 2006). National professional qualifications also represent an important part of active employment policies. National professional qualifications are important elements of occupational mobility in Slovenia, which have been in force in Slovenia since 2000 through the National Professional Qualifications Act. National professional qualifications enable adults to gain a certificate of professional qualification for the knowledge, skills and competences acquired informally on the basis of a national professional standard. "A professional standard is a document that determines the content of professional qualifications at a certain level of work complexity, and that defines knowledge, skills and professional competences" (Zgonc 2006: 748). "Professional standards represent a link between the labour market and education, as they comprise the knowledge, skills and competences that a certain occupation requires" (Drobnič R. 2006: 10).

The aim of the certificate system is to facilitate occupational mobility, and to enhance employability at home and abroad (Može 2004). National professional qualifications represent an important part of the active employment policies implemented by the Employment Service of Slovenia, particularly for those fields, activities and professions for which there is a demand on the labour market. The certificate system is also linked to the school system, i.e. national professional qualifications are a part of educational qualifications, and are especially suitable for early school leavers, the unemployed and low-educated people, so that these groups are able to gain basic professional qualifications or retrain (Grm, Zevnik 2008).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Lovšin (2009) and personal communication with the author on 29 September 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Hiršl (2008) writes that an average EU employee changes jobs four times, while an average American changes jobs six times during his or her lifetime.

<sup>7</sup> Marjana Komprej emphasised that national professional qualifications also enable easier passage to formal education, if the modules accomplished in national professional qualification are recognised,



## **IMMIGRATION TO SLOVENIA**

The problems of an ageing population in the European Union, including Slovenia, could in part be solved through migration. As previously stated in the introduction, today Slovenia depends on migration, a fact that will become even more evident over the next 30 years (Jakoš 2009). Also, the Development Strategy of Slovenia (2005) emphasises that Slovenia requires a positive net migration flow. In order to successfully include them into our society, we need integration or multicultural policies. Mojca Vah and Marina Lukšič-Hacin found in their research that “...there is no consistent relationship between the adoption of multicultural policies and the erosion of the welfare state” (2008: 16). Therefore migrants do not represent a threat to the society, but should be approached as social, cultural, human and economic capital.

Since Slovene independence in 1991, much more has been said about immigrants in Slovenia. However, they had been present in our state already in the previous decades of the twentieth century. After the Second World War Slovenia was increasingly closing its state borders. Before the war and immediately after it there were weak migration flows from other ex-Yugoslav republics to Slovenia. Mostly people who served in the Yugoslav National Army migrated to Slovenia from other ex-Yugoslav republics (Dolenc 2007). The late fifties saw the beginning of 30 years of economic migration flows to Slovenia, and at the same time the inclusion of Bosnians into migration flows. Dolenc writes that “the year 1970 is a turning point, because it is the beginning of the three-decade-long period of positive migration increase in Slovenia, which was increasingly becoming the key element of demographic development” (Dolenc 2007: 79). The same author writes that in the period from 1971 to 1980 there was a migration boom to Slovenia from Bosnia and Herzegovina, amounting to 40% of all migrations. However, the author does not indicate the educational structure of those immigrants. In the period from 1981–1990 migration flows to Slovenia slowed down, those who wanted to cross the ex-Yugoslav border had to pay a so-called “deposit”. The end of this period saw major political changes, ethnic homogenisation in ex-Yugoslav republics and the increase of nationalisms and the inter-ethnic conflict in Kosovo (Dolenc 2007). The same article states that the three-decade-long economic migration to Slovenia ended after 1988, and many immigrants returned to ex-Yugoslav republics. In the eighties women started to migrate in larger numbers; in previous decades most of the migrants had been men. Women became employed as an unqualified labour force, in the catering and healthcare sectors (Pak 1993, in Dolenc 2007).

After Slovene independence in 1991 the situation was similar to the present. Most migrants in Slovenia come from the ex-Yugoslav republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro. Those from the new EU Member States come mainly from Slovakia, Poland and Hungary, and primarily work in construction, the metal

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they can therefore be considered as a step toward formal education (Marjana Komprej, personal communication, 26 August 2009, Institute of the RS for Vocational Education and Training (CPI).

products industry and international transport, while migrants from older EU countries mainly occupy managerial positions in international corporations (Vrečer et al. 2008).

The number of work permits issued in Slovenia has increased in recent years (60,664 in 2007, a 36% increase over 2006, when 44,654 work permits were issued to foreigners) (Vrečer et al. 2008). Due to the current economic crisis, which began in the autumn of 2008, the number of work permits for foreigners has fallen by one-quarter. The increase in work permits in 2008 was largely due to demand for workers in so-called occupations in excess demand (i.e. construction, metallurgy, transport and catering) (Vrečer et al. 2008). In June 2010 the number of work permits granted by Slovenia was 75,267. 30,869 of those migrants had not completed primary school, and 24,366 had completed vocational upper secondary school (see the table below).<sup>8</sup>

Table: Valid work permits by level of education (June 2010)

<b>Educational level</b>	<b>Number of work permits</b>
Unfinished Primary School	30,869
Primary School	8,552
Lower Vocational School	394
Vocational Upper Secondary School	24,366
Upper Secondary School (including Gymnasium)	5,900
Post-Secondary Non-University Education	771
Higher Vocational Education, University Education, Masters' Degree	2,059
PhD	67
Bologna Programme	69
Unknown	2,220
<b>Total</b>	<b>75,267</b>

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia, personal communication, July 2010

Bešter (2007) found that migrants and their descendants in Slovenia have similar education levels to Slovenes. She also researched the occupational structure of migrants in Slovenia. She found that, according to the 2002 population census, migrants and their descendants are found in above-average numbers in unskilled labour professions, in professions included in the category machine and device operators and industrial producers and in non-industrial professions. She concludes that the population of migrants and their descendants are found in above-average numbers in low-esteem and typically low-paid professions. It seems that migrants in Slovenia do not enjoy equal employment opportunities in more reputable jobs as compared with Slovenes (Bešter 2007). Her findings are confirmed by the statistical data, according to which in June 2010 there were 15,675 workers without professions among immigrants with valid work permits in Slovenia,

Moreover, migrants in Slovenia share a situation of downward mobility with other

<sup>8</sup> Statistics from the Employment Service of Slovenia, personal communication, July 2010.

migrants around the world. However, it was emphasised in the Strategy of Economic Migrations (2008) that migrants in Slovenia are more entrepreneurial than Slovenes. Here the importance of ethnic entrepreneurship should be noted, as ethnic social networks are of significant assistance to migrants in starting businesses in Slovenia.

Vrečer et al. (2008) found in their research on the educational needs of migrants in Slovenia that the inclusion of migrants in vocational education and training programmes in Slovenia requires improvement.

## **EMIGRATION OF SLOVENES TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES**

After the Second World War the emigration of Slovenes overseas and to the countries of Western Europe decreased (Dolenc 2007). However, political emigration from Slovenia was characteristic of the period immediately after the Second World War. In 1963 Slovenia opened its closed borders to a certain extent and people started to seek work abroad, and the term “worker temporarily working abroad” was introduced. More than 46,000 Slovenes emigrated abroad after 1961. 42% of those who were employed before their emigration had completed vocational school (Dolenc 2007). In the seventies the Western European countries began to limit immigration (Mesić 1991, in Dolenc 2007).

After 2000 the migration increase of immigrants in Slovenia is constantly positive, and the migration increase of Slovene citizens to foreign countries is negative, “the number of immigrants and emigrants is constantly increasing, therefore the negative migration increase is increasing” (IMAD 2008: 85). According to the 2002 population census, 1.4% of respondents were living abroad (28,000) (mostly for more than one year). Most of them were working abroad (in Bevc et al. 2004). However, only residents of Slovenia who had permanent residence in our country were included in the census as emigrants.

Among the emigrants from Slovenia the age group from 20 to 50 years is the largest (60%), while the share of emigrants who are older than 65 years is very low (6%) (IMAD 2008). IMAD (2008) assumes that it is most likely that families with children which do not seek work abroad but have a definite working place abroad are prevalent among emigrants. Although the reason for emigration is mostly economic, Slovene emigrants do not seek any kind of work, but they seek a higher standard of living. Most probably they will not return to Slovenia (IMAD 2008). These findings are confirmed by Drnovšek’s (2010) research, who found that contrary to some expectations, after Slovene independence in 1991 emigrants from Slovenia did not decide to return to their home country in large numbers.

Economic migrations from the ten new Member States that joined EU in 2004 are low, as people from new Member States represent just 0.2% of the inhabitants of the 15 older Member States (Medved 2006). In the EU, there is a larger proportion of migrants who seek seasonal and short-term employment. Furthermore, migrants from third countries are more common in the EU than mobility within the EU itself (Medved 2006). Thus, the fear during negotiations on EU expansion from 15 to 25 Member States of mass migrations of workers from new Member States to old Member States was politically and economically

motivated. Driven by this fear, the EU-15 reserved the right to fully facilitate the free movement of people within the EU only after seven years have passed from the ascension of new Member States in 2004. This also applies to Slovenian workers, although it was obvious from the time of negotiations onward that not many Slovenes would opt to work in the EU-15 (Malačič 2006).

The Public Opinion and Mass Communication Research Centre (2006) confirmed in its research that the culture of mobility in Slovenia is very low, as previously mentioned. It researched the opinions of Slovenes on the mobility of Slovenian workers in the search for employment in the EU and EEA. The respondents to the telephone questionnaire ranged from 18 to 45 years of age. As previously mentioned, Slovenes prefer to migrate to another city or town in Slovenia than to move to other EU/EEA countries. When Slovenes decide to migrate abroad, personal factors (partner and family) are more important than systemic factors such as official procedures, obtaining permits or the lack of knowledge of a foreign language. A gender analysis showed that females give more importance to systemic as well as personal factors than males. At the same time, respondents with a lower level of education (i.e. completed primary school or vocational school) give more importance to personal obstacles than individuals with post-secondary non-university education and higher education. The research also confirmed the aforementioned that young people are more prone to migrate to the EU than older people. People who were more prone to moving were men, younger people, those less attached to their partners, those from bigger cities and those with a higher education level. The data analysis showed that people who are dissatisfied with their present employment are more prone to think about working abroad (Kovačič and Vovk 2006).

According to IMAD (2008) the aforementioned negative migration increase does not threaten the demographic condition of Slovenia, nevertheless this organisation assumes that if this trend continues for several years, some demographic problems will appear.

## **VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AS MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION**

One very important aspect of mobility in recent times is learning to tolerate and accept other cultures (cf. Drobnič J. 2006). It is important, therefore, that vocational education and training in Slovenia become multicultural. Slovenia does not have a tradition of multicultural education, but without it, education would not be able to address contemporary social issues such as mobility and migration. The fact is that all European societies are multicultural, and this holds true for Slovenia as well. “Multicultural education incorporates the idea that all students – regardless of their gender and social class and their ethnic, racial, or cultural characteristics – should have an equal opportunity to learn in school” (Banks 2007: 3). At the same time multicultural education is a reform movement, the goal of which is that students from all groups will have equal access to learning.

The origin of multicultural education in Slovenia can be traced to 2007, when the

Ministry of Education and Sport, together with its partners, published the Strategy of the Inclusion of Migrant Children and Students into the Education System in the Republic of Slovenia. This strategy is also relevant for the students of vocational education and training. However, a significant amount of work lies ahead in order to implement this strategy. One of such attempts is a project called Intercultural Learning and Accepting the Differences for Successful Life, which was conducted by the Upper Secondary School of Economics in Ljubljana together with 12 partner schools from Slovenia.<sup>9</sup> The main goal of the project is to increase the awareness of secondary school students regarding intercultural differences and to enhance positive attitudes toward diversity. Another important goal is to introduce and enhance activities whose goal is successful inclusion of migrant students into the school system. Activities for migrant students were carried out within the scope of the project (Sports day for migrant and other students, presentation of traditional cuisines from various countries, literary contest, a meeting for migrant students and their Slovene peers). Furthermore, the Upper Secondary School of Economics tried to increase the level of inclusion of migrant students' parents in schools, and organized workshops for them. The project will be concluded in September 2010. It can be considered a best practice which will hopefully spread to other schools and continue in some other form.<sup>10</sup>

The increased mobility of VET teachers and students in Slovenia is also needed (cf. Lebe and Rok 2006), as mobility would improve the intercultural competences of students and teachers, thus enabling them to deal with the diversity that is characteristic of every multicultural society. In international exchanges, people learn the language, improve their understanding of other cultures, learn to be flexible, open, and tolerant, and they possess an ability to practice dialogue (cf. Lebe and Rok 2006). Ultimately, intercultural competences represent some of the key competences, as defined by the European Commission, required for successful inclusion in contemporary societies. However, in addition to intercultural competences, teachers also need other competences in contemporary society, for example those enumerated by Javrh (2010), such as critical responsibility. It implies a high level of social and political participation by the teacher. A critically responsible teacher is also critical towards the school system (Javrh 2010). Teachers with such competence should encourage students to think critically as well.

The Vocational Education Act of 2006<sup>11</sup> lays down the basis for multicultural vocational education, by emphasising in Article 2 that one of the tasks of vocational and professional education is to educate for the “responsible protection of freedom, for tolerant and peaceful coexistence and the respect of people”. Educators are also tasked “to develop and maintain their own cultural traditions and to become familiar with other cultures and civilisations”.

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<sup>9</sup> The project is financed by the European Social Fund and the Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia.

<sup>10</sup> For evaluations of the project see Lukšič-Hacin Marina and Vrečer Natalija [www.projektmigranti.si](http://www.projektmigranti.si) (4 September 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 79/2006.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the globalisation period, migration and mobility are on the increase and societies are becoming increasingly multicultural. It is a challenge and a necessity for VET to respond to these challenges of contemporary society. In this article we performed an analysis of the literature on VET and employment-related mobility and migration. We researched the current national topics regarded the aforementioned topic and found that it has not been researched at all in Slovenia, because there are no books on this topic. However, as the aforementioned content was briefly mentioned in the scope of some other topics, we mentioned those research results as well. Those topics are: geographical and daily mobility, occupational mobility, immigration to Slovenia and emigration of Slovenes to foreign countries.

The research revealed that mobility in Slovenia is still very low, but nevertheless very important for the future of the country (cf. Drobnič J. 2006; Medved 2006). The fact is that Slovenes are not prone to moving. The improvement of geographical and occupational forms of mobility is one of the key challenges for a contemporary world (Drobnič J. 2006). Therefore, they need to be improved in Slovenia as well (cf. Skuber 2006). In order to enhance occupational mobility, employers must facilitate lifelong learning. They must also increase productivity by investing more in human resources (Hiršl 2008).

In 2006, the European Year of Workers' Mobility, several campaigns and other related events aimed at raising public awareness about the importance of mobility were carried out. In order to meet the challenges of contemporary multicultural society, VET should develop as multicultural education. However, it was found that Slovenian policymakers and researchers should pay more attention to the topic of VET and employment-related mobility and migration, as it is under-researched and not given sufficient attention. Interesting topics for future research include the following: how should VET respond to the fact that migrants represent an important potential for VET? What is the scale of commuting (living in one region or country and working in another), from which professions are people most prone to commuting in Slovenia and what are the implications of these movements of labour? What are the obstacles to mobility and migration in Slovenia? What conditions in Slovenia enhance the brain drain from our country? What is the role of VET in enhancing social mobility (upward mobility)?

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## POVZETEK

### POKLICNO IZOBRAŽEVANJE IN MOBILNOST POVEZANA Z ZAPOSLOVANJEM TER MIGRACIJE

Natalija Vrečer

Članek je rezultat analize literature o poklicnem izobraževanju in mobilnosti, povezani z zaposlovanjem ter migracijami v Sloveniji. Analizirana je bila literatura, ki je izšla med letoma 2004 in 2010, s posebnim poudarkom na slovenskih avtorjih. V Sloveniji tema poklicnega izobraževanja in mobilnosti, povezane z zaposlovanjem in migracijami, ni raziskana, in bi potrebovali tovrstne študije. Rezultati raziskave kažejo na to, da je za Slovenijo značilna nizka mobilnost. Slovenci se raje preseljujemo v drug kraj ali mesto kot pa v druge države. Po osamosvojitvi leta 1991 so notranje migracije postala ekonomska



nujnost, kljub temu pa regionalne migracije v Sloveniji niso zelo številčne, čeprav geografska mobilnost lahko izboljša poklicne možnosti. S pomočjo geografske in poklicne mobilnosti lahko rešimo strukturna neskladja na trgu dela. Glavni razlog za dnevno mobilnost je pomanjkanje služb na določenem območju. Zlasti je številčna dnevna migracija iz sosednjih območij v Ljubljano. Po priključitvi Slovenije k Evropski uniji se je povečalo število zunanjih dnevnih migracij v Sloveniji, več ljudi se vsak dan vozi v drugo državo na delo in nazaj. Prizadevati bi si morali za trajnostno mobilnost, ki je okolju prijazna in spodbuja uporabo koles ter javnih prevoznih sredstev. Izboljšanje geografske in poklicne mobilnosti je izziv za sodobne družbe, vključno s Slovenijo. Pomemben element poklicne mobilnosti so nacionalne poklicne kvalifikacije, ki se v Sloveniji izvajajo od leta 2000. Cilj certifikatnega sistema je spodbuditi poklicno mobilnost in izboljšati zaposljivost. Nacionalne poklicne kvalifikacije so zlasti primerne za osipnike, brezposelne in manj izobražene. Rezultati raziskav kažejo na to, da Slovenija zaradi staranja prebivalstva potrebuje migrante. Slednji se v Sloveniji v glavnem zaposlujejo na manj cenjenih in slabo plačanih delovnih mestih. Ko se Slovenci zaposlujejo v tujini, so zanje zlasti pomembni osebni (partner in družina), v manjši meri pa sistemski dejavniki (kot so uradni postopki, pridobivanje dovoljenj, pomanjkanje znanja tujega jezika). Ker je Slovenija multikulturalna družba, se mora poklicno izobraževanje razvijati kot večkulturno izobraževanje. Spodbujati je treba izmenjave dijakov in študentov s tujino, tako si namreč lahko pridobijo zmožnosti, ki jih potrebujejo za uspešno vključevanje v sodobno medkulturno družbo.