

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
OF VET SYSTEMS OF
ESTONIA, LATVIA AND LITHUANIA**

Prepared by
Reet Neudorf, Gunars Krusts and Vincentas Dienys

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INTRODUCTION

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are three small neighbouring countries at the Baltic Sea. They have similar climate and similar structure of economy. Their recent history also has much in common: 22 years of independence after the First World War, occupation by soviets in 1940, occupation by Germany in 1941, repeated occupation by Russians in 1944 and reestablishment of independence in 1990. Therefore VET systems of Baltic Countries in 1990 were rather similar.

In the beginning of independent development every country started its development independently. This was caused by the desire to absorb European experience in education and training as quickly as possible. However with the time it became clear that our countries can benefit a lot from the co-operation. Moreover, co-operation in VET is indispensable in order to ensure mobility of work force and students. Therefore in 1998 the Governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania signed the "Agreement on the creation of a common educational space in general upper secondary education and vocational (up to higher education level) education within the Baltic States". In the Agreement, for example, it is stated:

- The Contracting Parties shall give students, citizens and permanent residents of their countries, access to each others' general upper secondary education programmes and vocational education programmes (up to higher education level).
- Students, who have acquired partial general upper secondary education or vocational education with at least satisfactory results in the country of one of the Contracting Parties, shall have the right to pursue their studies in an educational institution of their own country, pursuant to a document issued by the educational institution of one of the Contracting Parties country, certifying partial general upper secondary education or vocational education.

In 1999 the next step was taken after the discussions in Cesis and the Cesis Agreement was signed. It was agreed in it:

- Parties agree that a school-leaving certificate or other form of certification documenting that the student has completed a general upper secondary education programme or a vocational education programme, is recognised in other Baltic States and provides the same rights for the continuation of education and the same access to the labour market as in the country, in which it is issued, according to the relevant national legislative acts of the states of the Parties.
- Parties continue co-ordination of general upper secondary education and vocational education programmes of their states as well as developing the co-operation of the Parties in the designing of the register of general upper secondary education programmes and of a register of the vocational education programmes, and provide mutual accessibility to the registers, when they are established.

To implement the statements quoted above VET systems of the Contracting Parties are to meet specific requirements both in state regulation of occupations and VET curricula and in the implementation of education and training at schools. Therefore National Observatories of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have agreed to make a comparative analysis of VET systems of Baltic Countries. This idea was supported by the European Training Foundation.

At first every country has prepared a description of its VET system according to the agreed plan. To make the comparison easier and more visual the information on different issues is put together for all three countries in this report.

1. COMPARISON OF SYSTEMS OF EDUCATION

Diagrams of education systems are given in Annexes 1, 2 and 3 for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania correspondingly. To compare the education systems in more details the following sectors of education and training are introduced:

- general education;
- basic vocational education;
- secondary vocational education;
- post-secondary vocational education;
- higher education;
- continuing education and training.

All sectors are compared and a short description of this comparison is given below.

1.1. General education

Schematic comparison of systems of general education is shown below. Solid lines fix years of schooling when graduates are awarded certificates of primary, basic and upper secondary (maturity) education. Dotted lines mark schooling years when a specific centre is finished.

Grade			
12	Upper secondary school	Upper secondary School	Upper secondary School
11			
10	Basic school	Basic school	
9			
8			Basic school
7	Primary school	Primary School	
6			
5			
4			Primary School
3			Primary School
2			
1			
	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania

Conclusions:

- Age of enrolment is in Estonia 7 years, in Latvia 7 years and in Lithuania 6/7 years.
- Compulsory age of schooling is in Estonia 16 years, in Latvia 18 years and in Lithuania 16 years.
- Basic (compulsory) education lasts in Estonia and Latvia 9 years, when in Lithuania starting from the academic year 1998/99 it lasts for 10 years.
- Duration of upper secondary education in Estonia and Latvia lasts 3 years, while in Lithuania starting from the academic year 1998/99 it lasts 2 years.
- To be awarded a certificate of maturity in all Baltic Countries it is necessary to spend 12 years in general education school.

- To complete the upper secondary school:
 - in Estonia students have to pass five school-leaving examinations. Three of them have to be external national examinations. One, the mother tongue, is compulsory. Two others are to be chosen by students from a list of subjects. Two optional exams can be internal.
 - in Latvia to be awarded a certificate of general secondary education (*atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību*) one has to complete the courses prescribed by the chosen programme, and to pass five final examinations, including two examinations in compulsory subjects (Latvian language and literature and another examination which is set nationally each year) and three examinations to be chosen by the student. One of these five examinations must be chosen at the advanced level of the respective subject. Knowledge of the seven non-examination subjects is assessed at the end of 12th grade prior to the session of final examinations. Since recent years, centralised uniform State examinations are being introduced in order to ensure a uniform assessment throughout the country. Holders of general secondary education certificates, whose marks in at least twelve subjects are not lower than 4, have access to higher education.
 - In Lithuania a system of assessment is under the reform. In a year 2000 students will have to take 5 examinations. State language (Lithuanian) is compulsory. Two exams a student is to choose from a list, and other 2 exams he/she can choose from the rest of subjects taught at school. A special value for the enrolment into higher education institutions shall have marks of the centrally controlled national examinations. In 2000, such exams will be organized in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and history.

1.2. Basic vocational education (ISCED97 Level 2)

In Latvia and Lithuania there are programmes for drop-outs from basic general education school. Duration of the studies in Latvia is 1-2 years (1 level of professional qualification), and in Lithuania is 2-3 years (2 level of professional qualification).

In Estonia programmes of this type do not exist.

Minimum age of enrolment in that type of programmes, in Latvia is 15 years and in Lithuania is 14 years.

1.3. Secondary vocational education (ISCED97 Level 3)

Entrance requirement is completed basic education. Minimum age of enrolment in Estonia is 15/16 years, in Latvia is 15 years and in Lithuania is 14 years.

In Estonia according to the Law on Vocational Education Institutions (1998) there is only one type of such programmes:

- Secondary vocational education programmes. At least 3 years vocational upper secondary education in a single cycle. Admission is based on successful completion of → *Põhikool*. At the end of the curriculum, students have to pass school-leaving examinations including national vocational examinations. Successful students receive the secondary vocational education certificate *lõputunnistus põhihariduse baasil kutsekeskhariduse omandamise kohta*, which gives access to the labour market and vocational higher education

(*kutsekõrgharidus*). Students can also pass national general examinations and receive *riigieksamitunnistus* certificate, which gives access to higher education.

In Latvia to this category can be attached 3 types of programmes:

- Vocational programmes. They ensure the acquisition of the 2 level of professional qualification. Duration of studies is 2-3 years.
- Professional secondary programmes (1st type). They ensure the acquisition of the 3 level of professional qualification and guarantee the access to higher education. Duration of studies is 3-4 years.
- Professional secondary programmes (2nd type). Access to those programmes is successful completion of corresponding vocational programme. Programmes ensure the acquisition of the 3 level of professional qualification and maturity certificate.

In Lithuania there are 2 types of such programmes:

- Stage II programmes. Professional qualification of the level 3 is granted. Duration of studies starting from the academic year 2000/01 will be 2 years.
- Stage III programmes. Professional qualification of the level 3 and maturity certificate are granted. Duration of programmes starting from the academic year 2000/01 will be 3 years.

1.4. Post secondary vocational education

Estonia has (*by the new law The Law on Vocational Education Institutions (Kutseõppeasutuse seadus*) of June 1998) **one** type of programmes of this type:

- For students aged 19 to 20/21 it offers 1 to 2 years vocational post-secondary education in a single cycle. Admission is based on successful completion of → *Gümnaasium* (*upper secondary general education*). At the end of the curriculum, pupils have to pass school-leaving examinations including national vocational examinations. Successful pupils receive the post-secondary vocational education certificate *lõputunnistus keskhariduse baasil kutsekeskhariduse omandamise kohta*, which gives access to the labour market and vocational higher education (*kutsekõrgharidus*).

In Latvia there are such programmes :

- Post-secondary vocational programmes. Professional qualification of the 3 level is granted. Duration of studies is 1-2 years.

In Lithuania there are two types of such programmes:

- Stage 4 vocational programmes. Professional qualification of the 3 level is granted. Duration of studies is 1-2 years.
- College level programmes. They grant professional qualification of the 4 level and education intermediate between secondary and higher education. Duration of studies is 2-4 years.

1.5. Higher education

In Estonia and Latvia there are two types of higher education establishments: those offering university level academic and professional programmes (universities and other university-level institutions) and those offering non-university professional (applied) programmes.

The Law on professional education (1999) in Latvia provides higher professional programmes of two levels: college programmes leading to Level IV professional qualifications and

professional higher education programmes leading to Level V professional qualifications. In a number of professional fields it is possible to establish college programmes as the first cycle of professional higher education.

In Lithuania is recognized only university level higher education. A Law on Higher Education is drafted and now is discussed in the Seimas which should legitimate non-university higher education. It is planned to start the first non-university higher education programmes in the academic year 2000/01.

1.6. Continuing vocational training

The adult education system is difficult to structure, since it represents a mixture of different training levels, forms and types. Furthermore, in adult education the informal training, which relates to the need to constantly upgrade the professional qualification, is as much important as the formal training. The adult education shall be divided in three groups:

- Formal general education, when a person strives to acquire basic or secondary general education by obtaining a relevant certificate.
- Formal vocational education, when a person strives to acquire a state recognised profession.
- Non-formal adult education and training.

In Estonia Adult education and continuing training is provided by the following:

- firms themselves;
- public universities;
- state-owned and municipal education institutions (adult gymnasiums and vocational education institutions where training takes the form of evening or extramural classes, or correspondence courses);
- private and voluntary organisations such as trade unions;
- private universities, training companies and VET institutions;
- adult education institutions (mostly working as day folk high schools).

In spite of difficulties, most public universities and institutions for applied higher and vocational education provide work-related adult education. Training is conducted in the form of evening or open university/correspondence-type courses. In the case of correspondence courses, adult students enrol for a full Diploma, Bachelor's, Master's or Doctor's course and receive the corresponding certification on graduation. In the Open University, they can take full courses or a part of any subject that interests them. Within a certain period – usually longer than in the case of full-time students – they may be awarded a diploma or degree, provided they have met all the normal graduation requirements. Short-term professional training courses are also offered.

Different sources indicate that there are currently over 900 private and voluntary associations in the adult education sector (excluding in-service training facilities within firms or state institutions).

In Latvia the CVT services generally are decentralised, therefore the information regarding CVT providers can be somewhat fragmented and incomplete. The main organisers/providers of CVT in Latvia are:

- Line ministries and organisations subordinated to or co-operating with those,
- Employers and employers' organisations
- Trade unions,

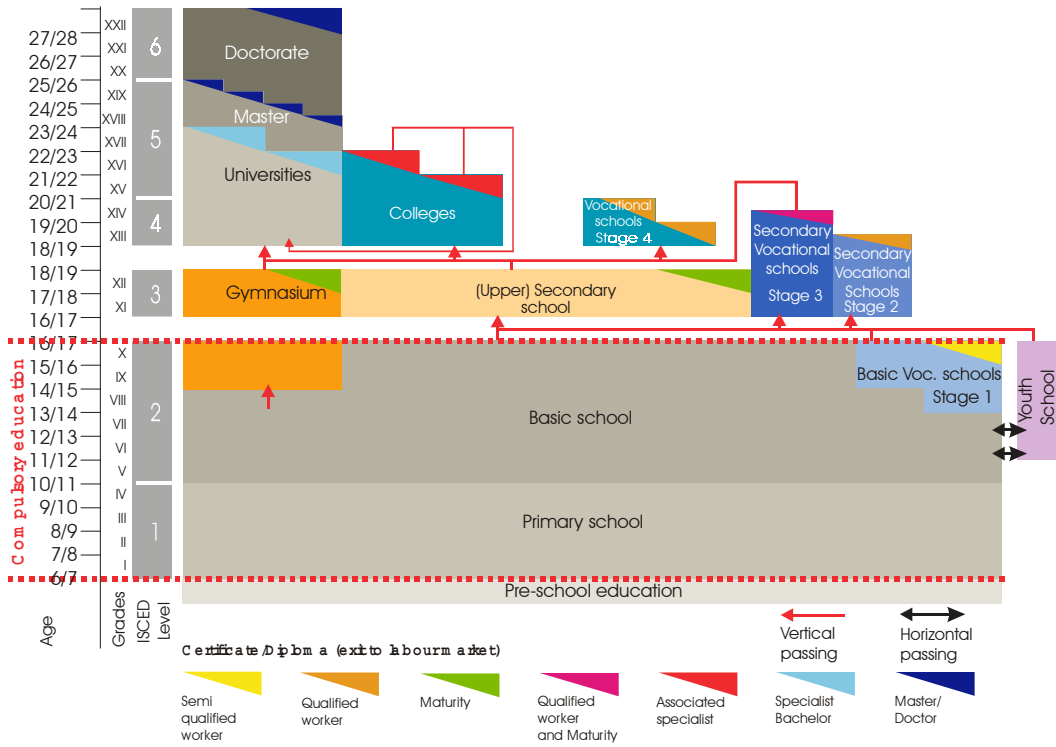
- Continuing education departments and distance education centres of the universities,
- State Administration School,
- Municipal training centres,
- Chamber of craft,
- Continuing training centres,
- Education institutions, organisations, associations,
- State Employment Service.

In Lithuania adult education is carried out both at the youth education institutions listed above, through organising evening, part-time studies or relevant courses, and there are also institutions established especially for adult education and training. The later institutions may be grouped as follows:

- Adult general education schools. There are 22 schools of this type.
- Labour market training centres established in 1992 for vocational training of the unemployed (13 centres in total).
- Training centres established by the state authorities (ministries, departments, etc.) for qualification upgrading of specialists of a relevant area (such as teachers, health care providers, customs officers, etc.).
- Non-governmental institutions established at the initiative of private persons or legal persons of the private sector.

According to official statistics there were 487 institutions of the 3rd and 4th types in 1999.

DIAGRAM OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF LITHUANIA



Annex 3

The Education System in Estonia and the ISCED 97 levels.

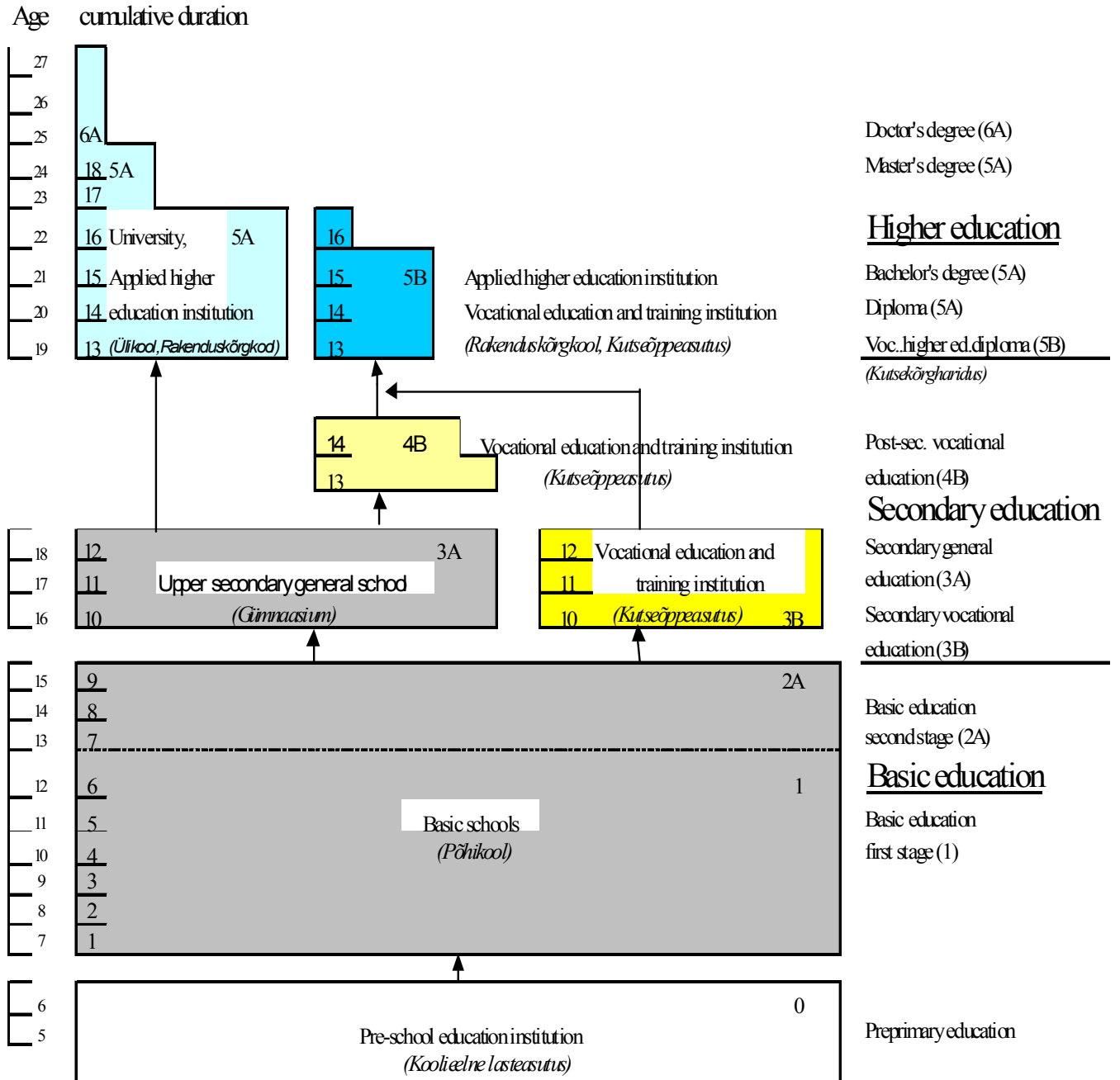
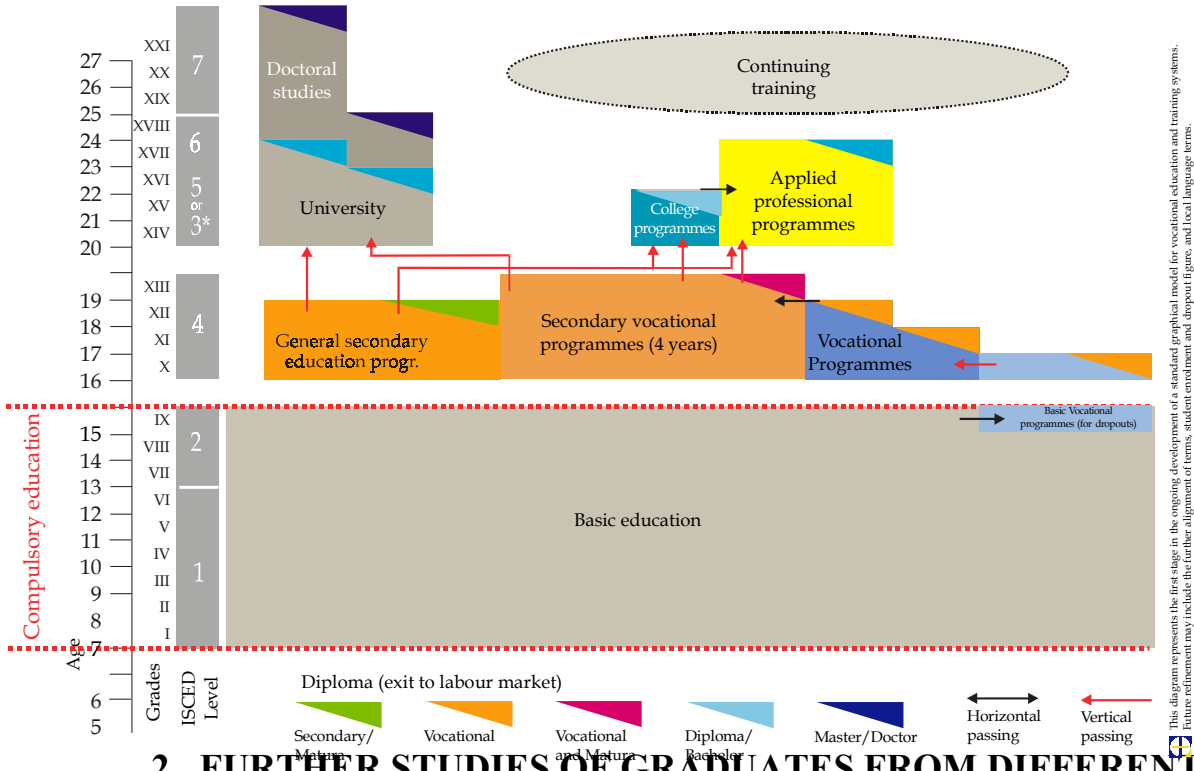


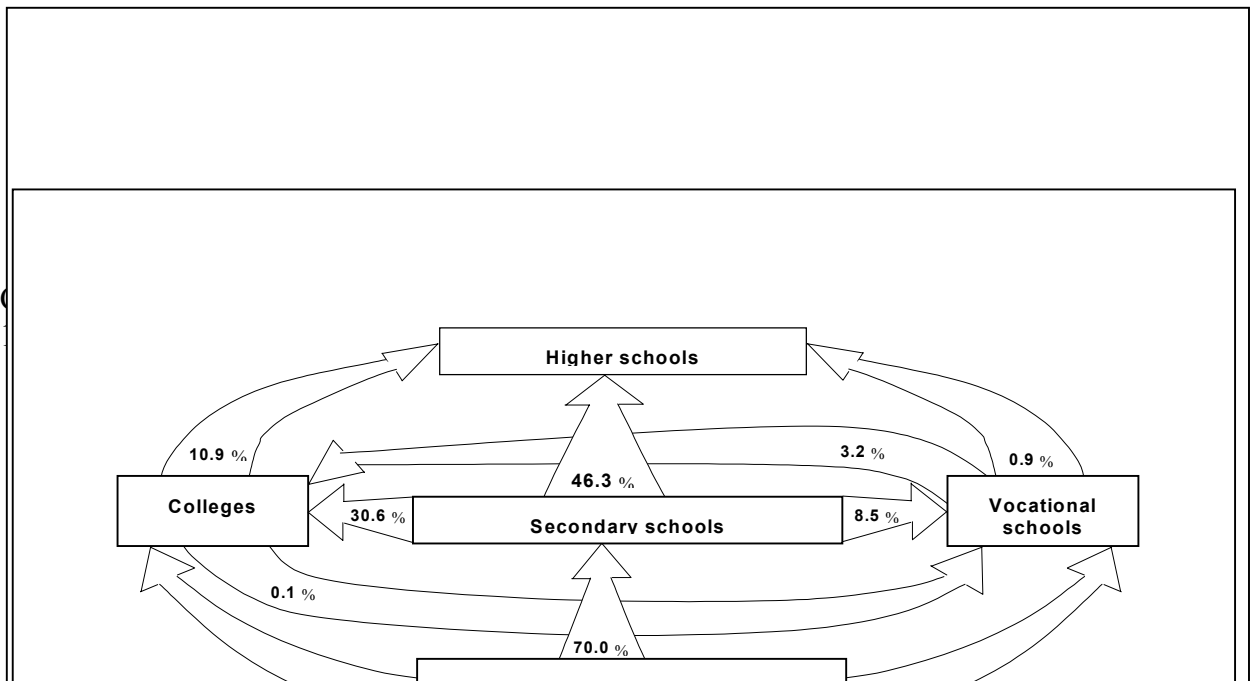
Diagram of the vocational education and training system in Latvia



This diagram represents the first stage in the ongoing development of a standard graphical model for vocational education and training systems. Future refinement may include the further alignment of terms, student enrolment and dropout figure, and local language terms.

2. FURTHER STUDIES OF GRADUATES FROM DIFFERENT TYPES OF SCHOOLS

The choice for students is starting after basic school when there is a possibility to choose between general education and vocational education and training. A much bigger variety of possibilities is observed for students in post-secondary education. Transition of students from one type of school to the other one for all three Baltic Countries is shown in figures given below.



2. After graduation of upper secondary general education school majority of students are entering higher schools, colleges or post secondary VET schools.
3. After graduation from vocation school absolute majority of students are entering labour market and only a small part is entering post-secondary institutions.

3. LEGISLATION

Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
<p>Law on education (1992) is a framework law, the main aim of which is to lay down the general principles of the Estonian education system.</p> <p>Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools (1993) sets out the conditions for establishing, running and closing state and municipal primary schools, basic schools and gymnasiums, as well as the principles governing basic and secondary general education schools.</p> <p>Law on Adult Education (1993) lays down the legal conditions for education and training adults, along with legal guarantees for life-long learning in accordance with the wishes of persons concerned.</p> <p>Law on Universities (1995) sets out the conditions for establishing, running and closing public universities, along with the principles governing higher education in accordance with the curricula of diploma and bachelor studies, and master and doctoral studies.</p> <p>Law on Private Schools (1998) sets out the conditions for establishing such schools as the property of private individuals or legal entities, together with the principles for running these institutions, and the requirements of education given in them.</p> <p>Law on Vocational Education Institutions (1998) lays down the conditions for establishing, running and closing state and municipal vocational education institutions, along with the principles governing vocational secondary and higher education, in accordance with vocational higher education curricula.</p>	<p>Law on Craftsmanship (1993) determines the ways and means of craftsman's education.</p> <p>Law on Higher Education Establishments (1995) determines the main principles of autonomy and organization structure of higher education establishments (universities).</p> <p>Law on Education (1998) regulates the education system as a whole, determines rights and duties of the state, municipal governments, public organizations, professional corporations, private persons, educational institutions, parents, pupils, students as well as determines the types and levels of education and educational institutions.</p> <p>Law on General Education (1999) determines tasks, responsibilities and relations between the state, local government, teachers, students and parents as well as the organization of the content of general education.</p> <p>Law on Vocational Education and Training (1999) determines: (1) principles of VET organization, provision and qualification awards; (2) tasks, responsibilities and relations between the state, employers, employees, teachers and students; (3) ways and means of acquiring vocational education; (4) organization of the content of vocational education; (5) principles of VET financing.</p>	<p>Law on Support of Unemployed (1990) regulates vocational training of the dismissed or notified of dismissal employees and sets forth the structure and functions of the Labour Exchange.</p> <p>Law on Science and Studies (1991) defines autonomy of higher schools (universities), the general principles for organization of studies at higher schools.</p> <p>Law on Education (1991) regulates education as a priority development area supported by the state, sets forth the fundamentals for structure of education system, activity and management of the educational institutions (except higher schools), regulates the compulsory and secondary general education acquired at the vocational education and training institutions. This law also defines the key regulations of the education reform.</p> <p>Law on Vocational Education and Training (1997) sets forth the structure and management of the VET system in Lithuania, which is based on co-operation between state authorities and social partners. The law also regulates organization of VET and controls the formal VET. This law regulates both initial VET and labour market training.</p> <p>Law on Non-Formal Adult Education (1998) regulates the system of non-formal adult education, defines the fundamentals of its structure, activity and management. The purpose of the law is to confer social guarantees to the participants and providers of non-formal adult education, as well as social partners thereof, and to assist in the implementation of the natural human</p>

<p>This Law is applicable to the private vocational institutions as far as the Law on Private Schools does not stipulate otherwise.</p> <p>Law on Applied Higher Education Institutions (1998) lays down the conditions on establishing, running and closing state applied higher education institutions, as well as the principles governing higher education in accordance with the curricula of vocational higher education and diploma studies.</p> <p>Law on Pre-School Childcare Institutions (1999) sets out the conditions for establishing, running and closing pre-school institutions in municipalities, as well as principles governing the pre-school education system.</p>		<p>right for life-long development of the personality.</p> <p>Law on Higher Education (draft) defines the structure of higher education, fundamentals for organization of studies, state regulation and accountability, as well as the principles of the state funding. The draft law provides for legitimization of the binary higher education system, which enables existing of non-university higher schools alongside with the higher schools offering university level education.</p>
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Preliminary analysis of the legal systems of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania allows to formulate the following conclusions:

1. All three Baltic Countries have already created fundamental legal documents for regulation of education and training systems.
2. Legal systems of different countries are developed using different approaches:
 - Estonia is concentrating on different types of institutions;
 - Lithuania is regulating different sectors of education and training system;
 - both are present in the case of Latvia.

3. LICENSING OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
<p>An education license is a public document that gives a municipal school the right to perform teaching according to the vocational curriculum as indicated on the said license. The order of issuing and cancellation of education licenses, as well as the form of education license is established by the Minister of Education by a decree.</p> <p>An education license shall be issued for the specified term. The license shall be issued for the term of the nominal teaching period determined by the curriculum.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education institution shall have the right to enroll students only after receiving of a license for implementation of an education program. Licensing of education program is granting a right to an educational institution to implement an appropriate education program. 2. Each education program shall be accredited within two years from a date of starting of its implementation and no less than once in 6 years in accordance with a procedure set by the Cabinet of Ministers. Accreditation of education program is providing an educational institution with a right to issue a certificate of education recognized by the state. During accreditation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. VET institutions and enterprises, and also other educational institutions and enterprises, implementing initial VET or labour market training must have a vocational training license issued by the Ministry of Education and Science. 2. The procedure of issuance of licenses shall be established by the Government upon the recommendation of the Ministry of Education and Science. 3. The Ministry of Education and Science shall register VET licenses. 4. Enterprises engaged solely in practical training of students of VET institutions, must have a license for vocational training, issued by the Chambers or another competent institution.

	<p>evaluation of implementation quality of the particular education program takes place.</p> <p>3. Education institutions, except for those which implement programs of interest education and education for adults, are accredited according to a procedure set by the Cabinet of Ministers. Accreditation shall be carried out within 5 years from the day of starting of operation of an education institution. Accreditation is granting to the educational institution to lay claim to organize centralized qualification examinations and to implement further professional education programs financed by the state budget.</p>	<p>5. The initial VET and labour market training recognized by the state, will be undertaken on the basis of the Register of Studies and Training Programmes. This Register is planned and managed according to the procedure established by the Government.</p> <p>6. The Register shall be kept at the Ministry of Education and Science.</p> <p>7. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour shall perform expert examination and submit conclusions to the Ministry of Education and Science concerning the inclusion of labour market vocational training programmes into the Register.</p> <p>(Excerpts from The Law on VET)</p>
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5. REGULATION OF CURRICULUM BY THE STATE

ESTONIA

It is intended that school programmes in upper-secondary education (both its general and VET branches) should be based on the national programme. While the curriculum for general education has been completed, the one for VET is still in hand. The school programmes, which are designed to conform to the national ones, set out the specifics in greater detail.

State/national curricula of vocational education

The state curricula of vocational education establish the tasks of the vocational education, general requirements and requirements regarding the level, commencement of education and graduation, the list of mandatory courses and the total extent of education.

The general rules for VET programme stipulate (The Decree of the Government): the training objectives of vocations, specialities and occupations, the general and level requirements for starting the studies, the list of compulsory subjects, the total volume of training, the list and volume in study weeks of the general education subjects of the vocational secondary education on the basis of the basic education and the rules for graduating from the vocational education institution. Taking into account the general rules, the Ministry of Education in co-operation with the vocational councils develops the national programmes for vocations, specialities and occupations – VET programmes, on the basis of which the vocational education institutions develop their own programmes.

The general rules for the national VET programme state that there are several such programmes. Each must ensure that, in the course of learning, students develop initiative and responsibility, as well as general skills like teamwork, problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking and communication. Where general subjects are studied, they must be those that best complement and offer appropriate support to vocational training in the area selected by the trainee.

Thus the national VET programme for young people who have completed basic school aims to encourage development of the knowledge, skills, experience and attitudes required to perform independent skilled work, on the assumption that trainees have enough general education and ability to apply this know-how in both large and small firms after they have qualified. The minimum period of study entailed is 120 weeks, during which the vocational or occupation-related dimension must account for at least 50%. 50 weeks have to be for general subjects, of which 32 weeks are compulsory and common to all pupils.

Compulsory general subjects in upper secondary education:

Subject group	Subject	Common compulsory study weeks in secondary vocational education	Common compulsory weeks in secondary general education
I	Mother tongue	5	12
	Foreign language	6	6+6
II	Mathematics	4	9
	Physics	3	6
	Chemistry	2	4
III	Biology	2	4
	Geography	1	2
IV	History	3	8
	Civic	2	4
	Philosophy		1
V	Arts	1	3
	Music	1	3
	Physical education	2	6
	Total common compulsory	32	74
	Elective compulsory subjects	18 (from compulsory general subjects)	31
	TOTAL	50	105

Curriculum of the school

The curriculum of the school is the basic document of the studies related to the appropriate vocation, speciality and occupation, that specifies the list of courses indicating the general nature of their volume and content, the possibilities of and conditions for selection of courses, as well as requirements set to commencement of studies, and graduation from the school, including graduation work.

The school shall draw a curriculum for every vocation, speciality and occupation that a student can obtain in the said school.

The curriculum of the school and any amendment there shall be approved by the school director.

The curriculum of the school as well as any amendment and addendum thereto shall be registered with the Ministry of Education according to the procedure stipulated by the decree of the Minister of Education.

LATVIA

26 The basic documents specifying the contents of vocational education shall be:

- 1) national vocational education standards;
- 2) occupational standards;
- 3) vocational education curriculum.

Levels of professional qualifications

National classification of professions is elaborated on the basis of ISCO 1988.

In accordance with the structure of levels of professional qualifications established in EU system for the evaluation of professional qualification, five levels of professional qualification have been determined in the Latvian educational system:

- 1) 1.level of qualification – theoretical and practical training which enables to perform simple tasks in a definite sphere of practical activity;
- 2) 2.level of qualification – theoretical and practical training which enables to perform independently a qualified work of a trade specialist – performer;
- 3) 3.level of qualification – an increased theoretical training that enables to fulfil the duties of a definite trade specialist – performer – which include also the planing and organisation of the performing of work;
- 4) 4.level of qualification – theoretical and practical training which enables to perform the complicated work of a trade specialist – performer – as well as organise and manage the work of other specialists;
- 5) 5.level of qualification – the highest qualification of a specialist in a particular industry that enables to undertake also scientific work.

National vocational education standards

Pursuant to the law the national vocational education standards, namely, national vocational education standard, national vocational secondary education standard and the national first level professional higher education standard in accordance with the level of education shall specify:

- 1) the strategic objectives of the educational programmes;
- 2) the mandatory contents of education;
- 3) the basic principles and the procedure of assessing the education completed.

The national vocational education standards shall be developed by the Ministry of Education and Science and shall be approved by the Cabinet of Ministers.

Occupational standard

Occupational standard shall specify the basic requirements for vocational qualification, as well as specific requirements needed for performing the main operations in the profession concerned.

Occupational standards shall be established by special laws or regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers. Occupational standards may also be established by authorised institutions, if so stipulated by the law or regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers.

Vocational education programmes

Vocational education programme shall be a document of vocational education that pursuant to the national standards of vocational education of the appropriate level of education shall specify:

- 1) objectives of the vocational education programme;
- 2) contents of the vocational education programme;
- 3) plan of implementation of the vocational education programme;
- 4) requirements with regard to previous education;
- 5) personnel, finance, and material resources required for the implementation of the programme.

Vocational education programme shall be developed by the relevant school and shall be co-ordinated with the founder of the school.

Structure of programmes

Ratio of theory and practice

Level of qualification	Theory	Practice
4	70 %	30 %
3	50 %	50 %
2	35 %	65 %

Compulsory subjects (secondary education)

Communication sciences	Mathematics and natural sciences	Economics and social sciences
Latvian language Foreign language Communication	Mathematics Informatics	Business Environment education

LITHUANIA

Classification of Occupations was approved in summer 1999, it is elaborated on the basis of ISCO-88. A structure of occupational standard has not been legitimised yet; no one occupational standard has been created.

By the order of the Minister of Education 5 vocational education levels are introduced in Lithuania.

Levels of vocational education in Lithuania

Level of vocational education	Description of the level of vocational education	Level of general education	Duration of programme
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Level 1	Ability to carry out simple, routine work operations not requiring autonomous decisions	No special requirements	Up to 1 year
Level 2	Ability to perform specialized work not requiring important autonomous decisions	Primary/ basic	1 to 2 years
Level 3	Ability to perform fairly complicated work in areas requiring responsible and independent decisions	Basic/secondary	2 to 4 years
Level 4	Ability to perform complicated work requiring personal responsibility in specific areas of activity. Leads to ability to carry out planning, organizational, administrative, and control functions independently	Advanced VET school	3 years
Level 5	Ability to perform complicated creative work in broad, new areas of activity; ability to engage in autonomous vocational activity based on thorough knowledge. Leads to ability to plan and assess the work of others and to assume managerial functions	Non-university higher	4 to 5 years

The structure of the VET standard is as follows: the title page, the general description, professional qualifications, objectives of teaching, final assessment. The achievements in the development of VET standards :

- 8 standards are approved;
- 4 standards are undergoing a process of approval;

The contents of the initial VET includes general education, general culture and vocational subjects, which are further divided into theoretical and practical training. The Table provides information on the shares of subjects taught in the curriculum:

Ratio of Subjects Taught at Vocational Schools (%)

Duration of training	VET subjects (%)	General education subjects (%)	General culture subjects (%)	Auxiliary education (%)
Stage I: 2 years	80.4		15	5
Stage I: 3 years	62	18.4	15	5
Stage II: 3 years	70.4		22.7	6.9
Stage III: 4 years	46	36.6	8.1	9.3
Stage IV: 1 year	80.7		15	4.2
Stage IV: 1,5 years	84.2		11.6	4.2
Stage IV: 2 years	85.4		10.4	4.2

The General Requirements of the initial VET specify, that practical training at vocational schools must make 70% of all time allocated to vocational subjects.

The State Register of Initial VET Programmes has been established and approved by the Order of the Minister of Education and Science in July 1996. The Register lists the

programmes by fields of activity; every programme has its state code, as well as specified minimal education (qualification), length of education, and professional qualification conferred. Moreover, qualification definitions of the programmes briefly describe the skills and knowledge to be acquired by a person after completing a particular programme.

In November 1996 the General Requirements for Programmes for Initial Vocational Training have been approved by the Order of the Minister of Education and Science. The said document ensures transparency and equivalency of qualifications. The design of training programme is the responsibility of each school. The training programmes are assessed by VET Central Expert Commission of the Ministry of Education and Science, and by external experts. Activity of the Expert Commission is organised by the MES Division of vocational schools. The proposed training programmes are approved by the Director of the Specialist Training Department of MES on the basis of the expert conclusions.

The *college type study programmes* consist of the following groups of subjects:

- General subjects (philosophy, foreign languages, etc.);
- Special subjects, further divided into
 - general studies,
 - speciality,
 - specialisation.
- Auxiliary education.

The emphasis is laid on practical and applicable nature of the knowledge conferred. At least 30 % of the total study time is allocated for practical training of students.

Transparency and equivalency of programmes are guaranteed by the State Register of college type study programmes approved by the Order of the Minister of Education and Science in June 1996, as well as by the Requirements for College Type Study Programmes, approved in November 1996.

The list of general subjects and the scope thereof at college type schools is determined by the MES. The subjects below are compulsory (minimum number of academic hours is indicated on the right side):

List of general subjects:

Subject	Minimum number of contact hours
Philosophy or sociology	60
Foreign languages	180
Culture of state language and terminology	60
Mathematics (for arts and music programmes is not compulsory)	100
Physics, chemistry (in technical and technology programmes)	70
Information technology	60
Business economy	80
Law	60
Labour safety and civil security	30

The list of compulsory special subjects and minimum scope thereof is defined by the General Requirements of different study fields, or, if the Requirements are not available, by the school according to the ministerial regulatory legislation and through co-ordination with organisations representing the employers.

Specialisation subjects are selected by an individual school, which does so considering its possibilities and the needs of the local labour market at a particular point of time.

The schools themselves design training programmes, and they also have much freedom in developing the contents of teaching. Thus, the study programmes designed for the same purpose by two different schools are rather different, too. When developing the plan of studies, a school defines the specific composition of general subjects and actual number of academic hours, the list and number of hours to be allocated to special subjects, and has 10-15% of the programme time which it can use for free selection of specialisation's. Moreover, the schools demonstrate their innovation when selecting the teaching methods.

College type schools or founders thereof, including private schools, propose the programmes to MES, where they are assessed by the Central Expert Commission and invited experts. Activity of the Expert Commission is organised by the Department of College Type Studies of MES. The programmes prepared by the schools run by MES are approved by the Director of the Specialists Training Department based on conclusions of the Central Expert Commission. The study programmes of schools run by other bodies (not MES) are approved by the founder of the school upon co-ordination thereof with the Director of the Specialist Training Department.

Concluding remarks:

1. In all three countries there is a tendency to simultaneously provide both general education and vocational training.
2. In all three countries state is regulating objectives of training, and schools have a considerable freedom when developing curriculum. Therefore a teaching plan can differ from school to school.
3. Types of programmes differ considerably from country to country.

6. ACCESS TO TRAINING

ESTONIA

The Decree of the Minister of Education "On approval of the procedures for student enrolment" – the enrolment of the students to the vocational education institutions are ratified in the law on the Vocational Education Institutions, the procedures include the list of the documents, which must be presented to the enrolment committee and the time when the student is informed of enrolment.

Admission to upper secondary general or vocational schools is based on the compulsory education certificate. Pupils can apply for admission to the kind of school they prefer. In some sectors, satisfactory completion of general upper secondary education is the prerequisite for entry to vocational education. Admission to these post-secondary vocational schools is based on the upper secondary school leaving certificate.

LATVIA

Every Latvian citizen and a person who is entitled to the alien's passport issued by the Republic of Latvia, a person who has received a permanent residence permit, as well as citizens of European Union countries who have received temporary residence permits as well

as their children shall be equally entitled to acquire education irrespective of his/her social or financial status, race, nationality, sex, membership in religious and political organizations, status of health, occupation and the place of residence.

Enrolment of students in vocational education programmes regulated by the Law on VET

- 1) A person shall be enrolled in a vocational basic education and vocational (industrial) education programme without any limitations with regard to previous education not earlier than in the calendar year, when the said person reaches the age of 15.
- 2) A person shall be enrolled in vocational secondary education programmes after having completed general basic education or vocational basic education.
- 3) A person shall be enrolled in the first level professional higher education programmes after having completed general secondary education or vocational secondary education.
- 4) Enrolment in vocational further education programmes shall not be specified.
- 5) The ways how the staff (practitioners) acquire the vocational education programmes shall be specified by this law, the law "On craftsmanship" and other normative acts.

LITHUANIA

Access to vocational schools and to labour market vocational training is regulated by the **Law on VET**:

Article 25. Admittance to Initial VET Institutions

1. Persons no younger than 14 years of age shall be admitted to initial VET institutions who:

- 1) have no vocation;
- 2) desire to acquire another vocation as a qualified worker.

2. The founder shall establish the conditions and procedure of student admission.

Article 28. The Stages of Initial VET

1. The VET system (*description of stages is given in the section "Comparison of systems of education"*) shall include the following stages:

- 1) stage I ... Only persons not having a basic education shall be admitted;
- 2) stage II ... Persons having basic education shall be admitted;
- 3) stage III ... Persons having basic education shall be admitted;
- 4) stage IV ... Persons having a general secondary education shall be admitted.

Article 34. Admittance at Labour Market Vocational Training Institutions

1. Labour market training institutions shall admit persons:

- 1) who are employed at enterprises, who in the face of unemployment:
 - a) must enhance their qualification;
 - b) must change or acquire a new vocation;
- 1) the unemployed or persons in search for employment, who:
 - a) must enhance their qualification;
 - b) must change or acquire a new vocation;
- 1) who are starting their own business.

1. Persons over 18 years of age shall study at labour market training institutions, while those younger shall be included only if they have already acquired initial vocational education. Exceptions shall be granted according to the

procedure established by the Ministries of Education and Science and Social Security and Labour.

More detailed regulation of the conditions of admittance is specified in the corresponding decree of the Minister of Education and Science for the initial VET and in the decree of the Minister of Social security and Labour for the continuing training.

7. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS ACHIEVEMENTS

ESTONIA

Assessment of students at VET institutions is on a five-point scale, where 5 is “very good”, 4, “good”, 3, “satisfactory”, 2, “unsatisfactory” and 1, “poor”.

Students who complete courses at VET institutions receive a certificate. At present, however, these certificates do not represent a formal qualification as such. By the Law a student shall be deemed graduated from the school after completion of the applicable curriculum, including passing of the vocational state final examinations and school examinations, as well as the graduation work according to the stipulations set by the decree of the Minister of Education. The number and field of examinations is determined by the school curriculum.

This may change in the future, with implementation of an employee qualification system and more thorough assessment of qualifications.

The graduation certificate issued by the school shall serve as the evidence of graduation, the form and procedure of issuing of the said certificate is established by the Government of the Republic. The graduation certificates shall be filed with the register of graduation documents as stipulated by the decree of the Minister of Education.

LATVIA

Final examinations of the vocational education programmes

- 1) Qualification examinations and other final examinations specified by the national vocational education standards shall be held upon completion of vocational education programmes. The Minister of Education and Science shall see the procedure of holding national exams
- 2) A student enrolling in a vocational education programme without having completed the basic education shall be ensured the necessary adjustment and upon passing the final examinations the student additionally shall be issued a document certifying the completion of general basic education.
- 3) The Cabinet of Ministers shall confirm the list of vocational qualifications requiring to pass the final examinations.
- 4) The accredited vocational schools, where the final examinations are held, shall be specified by the Minister of Education and Science, co-ordinating it with the founder of the school and the Co-operation Board. Structural units – study and examination centres shall be established in the said schools, which in co-operation with the vocational

education support organisations, the branch ministries and professional organisations and schools in accordance with the requirements of the vocational education standards, shall organise the state administered vocational qualification examinations.

LITHUANIA

General regulations of assessment of qualifications acquired in initial VET and labour market training courses are defined in the **Law on VET**:

Article 21. General Provisions of Qualification Examinations

1. Upon the coordination with the Council (*Council is a tripartite national body*), a competent institution shall establish the organizing procedure and supervision of qualification examinations.

2. The following types of examinations shall be offered for qualifications recognized by the State:

- 1) qualification examinations;
- 2) qualified worker's examination.
3. An examination shall be comprised of theoretical and practical examinations.

4. Examinations shall be organized by examining commissions that have been formed according to established procedure.

Article 22. Examining commissions

1. One commission for qualification examination shall be formed for the theoretical and practical examination. This commission shall assign problems for those being examined and shall assess their performance.

2. The commission shall equally represent employers, trade unions and vocational teachers.

Article 23. Certificates

1. State recognized qualification certificates include: a certificate of qualification and a diploma of qualified worker.

2. The content, form and procedure of issuance of certificates shall be established by the following, taking into consideration the proposals of the Council:

- 1) for initial VET, by the Ministry of Education and Science;
- 2) for labour market vocational training, by the Ministry of social security and Labour.

3. Certificates shall be registered at the Ministry of Education and Science.

For initial VET additional regulations are as follows:

Article 31. Qualification Examinations in Initial VET

Within the vocational training system shall be given the following:

- 1) qualification examinations;
- 2) qualified worker examinations.

Article 32. Certificates of Initial VET Qualification and the Diploma of Qualified Worker

1. A certificate of qualification shall be issued to students upon completion of the VET programme of Stage I.
2. A qualified worker diploma shall be issued to students upon completion of the VET programmes of Stages II, III and IV.

Not all regulations of the Law for initial VET are met in practice. First, though there is an intention to delegate the responsibility for organization of final examinations to Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Crafts and the experiment is started, it covers only two counties of Lithuania until now. Second, commissions are composed of the representatives of employers and teachers, trade unions being not ready to participate.

For the labour market vocational training the Law defines:

Article 38. Qualification Examinations in Labour Market Vocational Training

Qualification examinations will be taken following the conclusion of training according to the programme which is included in the Register of Studies and Training Programmes.

Article 39. Certificate to Perform Certain Work or Certain Function and the Certificate of Qualification

The completion of study according to the programme included in the labour market vocational training Register of Studies and Training Programmes, shall result in the issuance of:

- 1) a certificate attesting to the preparedness to perform a job or duties in keeping with the acquired vocational education;
- 2) certificate of qualification.

8. SOCIAL DIALOG

ESTONIA

The social partners (the representatives of employers, the employees' associations and the representatives of the Government of the Republic) in vocational education and training are involved in education via the Vocational Councils, - at the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The vocational councils have been established according to the Law on Vocational Education Institutions and in the frames of the creation of the National Employee Qualification System. They develop qualification requirements and vocational standards, and through that are involved in the preparatory stage of programme development for the courses at the educational institutions.

According to the law, vocational education institutions have to have a school council. It consists of the: representatives of founders of the vocational education institution (administrating ministry), professional/vocational and occupational experts on the fields taught in the school, employers connected to the educational fields, local municipalities, public and cultural people in the region where the school is located and the student body. The council approves the school development plans; confirms the report about following the budget; confirms enterprises for practical experience.

LATVIA

Consultative representation of the social partners is at 5 levels:

- legislative power (the Saeima);
- executive power (the Cabinet of Ministers);
- related issues (labour safety, social security, professional training);
- professional and sectoral level;
- company level.

The Tripartite Council of Professional education (established in 1999) is an advisory council which develops suggestions for state policy and strategy in the area of professional education. The involvement of employers in VET was not legally regulated and it was mainly carried out through personal contacts. The new Professional Education Law envisages competencies of employers in VET as well as their involvement in the Tripartite Vocational Education Council.

LITHUANIA

Interaction between the VET system and the production sector is manifested on four levels:

- national level;
- industrial branch (e.g. agriculture, construction, transport) level;
- regional level;
- institutional level.

On the national level, the VET Council was established in 1998 according to the rules defined in the Law on VET:

Article 7. The Vocational Education and Training Council of Lithuania

1. The Vocational Education and Training Council of Lithuania is the consultative body in deciding strategic questions in VET.
2. The council shall be comprised equally, of members of state administrative institutions, and of organisations representing the interests of employers and employees.
3. The Government shall approve the Statute of the Council and its structure.

To advise the Ministries of Education and Science and Social Security and Labour on the issues of VET policy development in a relevant branch of economy, 14 Industrial Lead Bodies have been established in 1999. Following the principle of the tripartite partnership, the Lead Bodies equally represent the education system, employers and trade unions. One of the most important fields of activity of Lead Bodies is the development of VET standards.

At a county level the Regional VET Councils were set up in 1998. Their duty is to support administration of counties in the development of regional VET policy.

On the institutional level, the interaction between the labour market and the VET system is realised through a direct contact of schools with enterprises; i.e., the practical training of students is conducted at specific enterprises, on one hand, and the employers participate in management of schools (through the School Council), on the other hand. The Examination Commission approved by an institution representing the employers (e.g., Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Crafts, Chamber of Agriculture, etc.) assesses the knowledge of

students. A decision is made to fully delegate a function of final qualification assessment to Chambers. A corresponding experiment is already made in 2 counties.

Concluding remarks:

1. Tripartite national advisory bodies are set up in Latvia (The Tripartite Council of Professional Education) and in Lithuania (The Vocational Education and Training Council).
2. In Estonia and Lithuania the main actors in social dialog from the side of employers are the Chambers: the Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Estonia;; the Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Crafts and the Chambers of Agriculture in Lithuania. In Latvia social partnership is dominated by the Latvian Employers Confederation.
3. Estonian Chambers of Commerce and Industry are directly responsible for the issue. In Lithuania social partners are involved in VET standards development as experts, the Industrial Lead Bodies being the responsible structures.
4. At the institutional level social partners are involved into VET via practical training of students, participation in school management and in final assessment of qualification of graduates.
5. Participation of trade unions in social dialog is rather limited.

9. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

ESTONIA

The Role of the Government of the Republic

The Government of the Republic have the authority to :

- adopt state education development plans and ensure their implementation;
- determine procedures for the establishment, reorganization and closure of public educational institutions;
- open, reorganize and close state universities and applied higher education institutions; approve the statutes of applied higher education institutions;
- determine procedures for tuition fees and payments, and payment procedures in public educational and learning institutions and state universities;
- determine state concessions to schoolchildren, students and educators, including credit benefits;
- determine remuneration principles for the staff of public educational institutions and state universities.

The Ministry of Education:

The Ministry of Education shall:

1. determine procedures for state supervision of educational institutions and state educational standards; control compliance with the legislative acts concerning education and the observance of state educational standards;
2. compile and implement the state education classification standard;
3. coordinate and manage local governments and other ministries of the Republic in the organization of education; coordinate with them proposals for the establishment, reorganization and closure of public educational institutions, according to the procedures determined in legal acts;

4. establish, reorganize and close state educational institutions, except universities and applied higher education institutions;
5. direct and organize the preparation of curricula, study programs, textbooks, teaching and study aids for public educational institutions (except universities); ensure their publication, and issue recommendations for the use of educational literature;
6. guarantee a system for the service for public educational institutions and for educator methodology;
7. determine procedures, on which basis study programs shall be recognized, the requirements presented therein shall be fulfilled, and documents proving education shall be issued;
8. determine procedures for teacher certification and upgrading of professional qualifications; organize training and in-service courses for educators;
9. contribute to the implementation of state research policies and commission research on education;
10. participate in forecasting the requirement for specialists and skilled workers, as well as commission their training;
11. coordinate training of specialists and skilled workers in applied higher education institutions and in vocational schools; coordinate in-service training and retraining for specialists and skilled workers;
12. commission universities;
13. cooperate with educational and research institutions from other countries and from international organizations;
14. develop the standards for state funding of education;
15. issue and revoke education licenses (operating licenses) for private educational institutions and other legal entities involved in teaching;
16. appoint and dismiss heads of state educational institutions (except universities);

The role of the Local governments :

The local governments prepare and implement education development plans for their administrative region and organize vocational guidance and counseling of children and adolescents.

Management at school level (The Law on Vocational Education Institutions)

The director

1. The school shall be managed by the director whose responsibility is to secure efficient work of the school.
2. The director shall be, within the scope of his or her competence, responsible for statutory operation of the school, its overall state and development as well as legitimate use of the financial assets of the school.
3. The director shall be answerable to the school council as well as the body that has appointed him/her.
4. The director:
 - represents the school and acts in the name of the school, performs the tasks that are required for compliance with his/her tasks as stipulated herein;
 - presides at the council of teachers meetings of the school;
 - secures compliance with the resolution of the school council and the council of teachers of the school;
 - determines the order of substitution of the director;

- serves as the employer of the staff members, and approves their job descriptions by his/her order;
- approves by his/her order the domestic rules and the rules for conducting the school's business;
- secures drafting of the school budget, as well as budget performance;
- secures completion and submission of reports required by the laws;
- resolves any other issues delegated to him/her.
- The director shall issue orders.

To fill the office of the school director an open competition is organised.

Such competition shall be carried out by the school council as stipulated by the decree of the Minister of Education.

Based on the results of the above competition the director shall be appointed to the office for the term as announced at the said competition, however the said term shall not exceed five years. The employment contract with the director of a state school shall be concluded, amended and terminated by the Minister heading the ministry under which administrative jurisdiction the state school falls, the employment contract with the director of a municipal school shall be concluded, amended and terminated by the head of the township administration or the town mayor according to the recommendation of the township or town administration.

The teachers' board

The board includes teachers and other members of teaching staff (incl. the director of the school). The task of the teachers board is to resolve matters pertaining to educational activities of the school. The work regulations of the board is stipulated in the school statutes.

The school council

The school council is a body, comprising from five to nine members, appointed by the head of the school's overhead institution, the purpose of which is to direct the operations of the school, as well as to resolve issues pertaining to the development of the school, its assets and budget.

The council of a state school includes the representatives of the ministry under which administrative jurisdiction the school falls, the council of a municipal school shall include the representatives of the appropriate township or town administration, experts in the field of the vocations, specialities and occupations that are taught at the school, the representatives registered associations of the employers and employees (clerical workers) as well as vocational associations and of the students organisations, and it is formed for the term of three years.

The council 1)approves the development plan of the school, 2)submits an application for budgetary financing of the school to the overhead organisation of the school, 3)approves by its resolution the report on school's budget performance,4)considers the reports of the school director and his/her deputies, and, based on the said reports, takes appropriate resolutions, 5)approves by its resolution the public and municipal establishments, legal entities under the public and private laws, as well as sole proprietors where the practical training of the students takes place.

LATVIA

Cabinet of Ministers shall:

establish forms of graduation certificates recognized by the state and the procedure and criteria for issuing them;

1. establish the procedure for recognition of education certificates issued by a foreign country in accordance with the standards of the education certificates issued by the Republic of Latvia;
2. establish a procedure according to which the state or a municipality may finance private institutions;
3. establish the procedure of taking loans for the higher educational studies and re-paying them.
4. establish, re-organize and close state educational institutions at the proposal of the Minister of Education and Science or other Minister;
5. confirm statute of colleges;
6. establish the procedure for registering and accreditation of educational institutions;
7. establish procedure for certification of heads of secondary educational institutions founded by the state or a municipality;
8. establish regulations and procedure for accreditation of institutions of education;
9. establish procedure for licensing and accrediting of educational programs implemented by an educational institution;
10. confirm a list of pedagogical professions and positions.
11. confirm requirements for necessary education and professional qualification of teachers corresponding with pedagogical professions;
12. establish a procedure for certification of pedagogues;
13. establish a procedure according to which the state finances supply, approbation and purchase of teaching materials;
14. establish amount of salaries and the procedure of payment;
15. once in four years prepare and submit to the Saeima for approval education development program for next four years;
16. establish state standards in education;
17. establish a minimum of financing and material provision for education institution;
18. establish pedagogue's work load.

Ministry of Education and Science shall:

1. implement the unified State policy in education and the strategy for development of education;
2. draft normative acts in education;
3. create and update registers of educational institutions and educational programs as well as the register of pedagogues;
4. carry out licensing of educational institutions;
5. carry out accreditation of education programs and higher education institutions according to procedure set by the Cabinet of Ministers;
6. organize educational and professional improvement of pedagogical work, co-ordinate research-methodological work;
7. prepare state standards of education;
8. draft proposals and submit a request for the financing of education, science, sports and the youth affairs by the state budget in accordance with the set procedure;

9. control legal utilization of finances allotted for education from the state budget in education institutions under its supervision;
10. co-operation of state education institutions in education with foreign countries and international institutions;
11. prepare samples of educational programs, subject or course programs in accordance with the requirements of the state standards of education;
12. organize the preparation of standard statutes for educational institutions, institutions of educational support;
13. organize the state order for writing and publishing of readers and teaching materials corresponding with basic educational programs;
14. establish and co-ordinate the procedure for acquiring of pedagogical education and professional improvement;
15. organise the ordinate state's evaluation of professional qualification of teachers and directors of educational institutions;
16. establish the procedure for state examinations of the accredited educational programs;
17. organise work on the content of text books corresponding with the educational standards;
18. control the results of the study process of state financed educational institutions, prepare and implement the undertakings for improvement of the study process quality;
19. establish, maintain, and supervise state institutions of educational support;
20. confirm the samples of educational programs corresponding with the requirements of the state standards in education;
21. confirm the classification of registers of educational institutions, educational programs and the register of pedagogues;
22. submit to the Cabinet of Ministers the proposals concerning the establishment, re-organization and liquidation of education institutions and state institutions of educational support by co-ordinating it with the corresponding municipalities;
23. confirm the statutes of education institutions and institutions of education support founded by the state;
24. employ and dismiss directors of education institutions which are under supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science;
25. propose dismissal of a directors of municipal education institutions;
26. monitor the financial and economic management of the educational institutions under it supervision.

Other ministries [ministries of other branches] shall:

1. after co-ordination with the Ministry of Education and Science, submit to the Cabinet of Ministers proposals concerning the establishment, re-organization and liquidation of an educational institution;
2. set the content of specialized subjects, prepare the programs and standards of a specialized subjects or courses;
3. prepare and confirm the standard of the programs for the vocational education, and control their implementation in the educational institutions under their supervision;
4. ensure the work of the educational institutions under their supervision;
5. monitor the financial and economic management of the educational institutions under their supervision;
6. in agreement with the Ministry of Education and Science establish the procedure of state examinations for the accredited educational programs.

Municipality of a region shall:

1. in agreement with the Ministry of Education and Science establish, re-organize and close institutions of vocational education. Educational institutions founded by the regional municipality shall be under the supervision of that particular municipality.
2. employ and dismiss the heads of the educational institutions which are under its supervision, after co-ordination with the Ministry of Education and Science;
3. finance the educational institutions which are under its supervision to the extent no less than set by the Cabinet of Ministers, and supervise management of the financial resources;
4. guarantee the transferring of financial means allotted for the pedagogues' salaries from the State budget into the accounts of the educational institutions and the institutions of educational support under its supervision;
5. provide students with prophylactic medical care, first medical aid at the educational institutions under its supervision according to the procedure and in amount set by the Cabinet of Ministers;
6. provide students with the professional guidance;
7. organize the education for adults;
8. organizationally assist the educational institutions located on its administrative territory with the provision of teaching and methodological literature, and other teaching materials;
9. organize the improvement of professional qualifications of pedagogues and co-ordinate and provide the methodological work;
10. establish and maintain the data base (information base)
11. state the number of students of higher education.

LITHUANIA

The Competence of the Ministry of Education and Science in the VET Area (Article 8, Law on VET)

The Ministry of Education and Science shall:

1. found, reorganise and liquidate VET institutions subordinate to it, according to the procedure established by the Government;
2. approve the foundation and reorganisation of non-subordinated to it state, municipal and non-state VET institutions, submit proposals to founders regarding liquidation of non-state VET institutions, when their activity proves to be contrary to laws;
3. issue licenses for VET according to the procedure established by the Government;
4. establish the extent of cultural subjects within the education and training programmes;
5. establish the general qualification requirements of vocational teachers at VET institutions and organise certification thereof;
6. organise in-service training and requalification of instructors of vocational training institutions subordinate to it;
7. establish the general requirements of the statutes of VET institutions;
8. organise preparation of national curriculum and the teaching and publication thereof;
9. administer the Register of Studies and Training Programmes;
10. ensure vocational guidance at general education and vocational schools;
11. establish together with the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the procedure of supervision of VET institutions.

The Competence of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour in the Vocational Training Area (Article 9, Law on VET).

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour shall:

1. establish, reorganise and liquidate state vocational training institutions subordinated to it, in accordance with the procedure established by the Government;
2. co-ordinate the foundation and reorganisation of non-subordinated to it, state and non-state vocational training institutions within the area of labour market vocational training;
3. perform expert examination and submit conclusions regarding the issuance of licences for labour market vocational training;
4. supervise the activity of licensed labour market vocational training institutions;
5. establish the procedure of labour market vocational training;
6. organise extra-curricular vocational guidance of labour market and youth;
7. perform expert examination and submit conclusions to the Ministry of Education and Science concerning the inclusion of labour market vocational training programmes into the Register of Studies and Training Programmes;
8. establish additional qualification requirements for labour market vocational training teachers;
9. organise in-service training and retraining of teachers of vocational training institutions subordinate to it.

The Competence of Ministries, Departments, County Governors and Municipalities in the Vocational Training Area (Article 10, Law on VET)

1. Other ministries, departments, county governors and municipalities:
 1. may found, reorganise and liquidate the institutions of VET subordinate to them, in accordance with the procedure established by the Government;
 2. organise preparation of training programmes and instruction materials, as well as publication for vocational training institutions subordinate to them;
 3. organise in-service training and requalification of teachers in vocational training institutions;
 4. conduct an expert examination and provide conclusions concerning the issuance of licenses for vocational training in their activity spheres according to the applications of the Ministries of Education and Science or Social Security and Labour
 5. submit proposals to the Education and Science and Social Security and Labour Ministries in reference to the Register of Studies and Training Programmes.
2. The county governor's administration shall:
 1. carry out state supervision of VET institutions according to the procedure established by the Ministry of Education and Science;
 2. submit proposals to founders regarding the scope of enrolment at vocational training at county state institutions and enterprises.

Internal management of schools

General Regulations of the initial VET institutions (Order No 467 of the Minister of Education and Science, 20.03.1998) legitimate management and self-government of the initial VET institution.

Vocational schools are subordinate to the founders. According to the established procedure the founder appoints and dismisses a Principal who leads a vocational school. The Principal of vocational school is responsible for:

- the institutional activity and its results; its representation;
- the implementation of legal base;
- financial management and funding utilization, care of material capacity, its functioning and up-grading.
- control of the curriculum implementation, teachers' work, encouragement staff for the improvement of the qualification;
- staff management- appointment, dismissal, penalty, inducement;

Institutional Council is the highest competence body of the VET institutional self-governance. It represents the interests of the institution staff, students and their parents, and social partners. Delegated persons from Teachers' and Students' Council, and by the Parents' general meeting make up the Institutional Council. Composition of the Institutional council is approved through the general meeting of teachers, students, their parents and representatives of social partners.

Institutional Council carries out the following functions:

- defines strategy of the training process and trends for its improvement;
- plans and controls funding and expenditure; allotment of non-budget co-funding; plan students scholarships and grants;
- plans and solves problems related to the establishment of new, termination and re-organization of the institutional sub-divisions,
- deals with the arrangements of students' practical training in enterprises and their future employment,
- initiates the cooperation between VET institution and social partners.

General Regulations of the College type school activity (Order No 1324 of the Minister of Education and Science, 05.12.1996)

Concluding remarks:

1. In all three countries main responsibility for initial vocational education and training at the national level is delegated to the Ministry of Education.
2. The main founders of public VET schools in Latvia and Lithuania are Ministries of Education and Agriculture. In Estonia all public VET schools are under the Ministry of Education.
3. In Estonia the Ministry of Education is responsible for the management of the continuing training system too. In Lithuania this responsibility is delegated to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. In Latvia case the responsibility is split between several ministries.
4. Function of administration of VET school is delegated to the principal of it. The principal is appointed by the founder of the school.
5. In Estonia and Lithuania the School Council is established to direct activities of the school. In Estonia this council is appointed by the founder of the school, and in the case of public school the Ministry of Education is delegating its representative. In Lithuania the School Council is appointed by the principal of the school.

10. REQUIREMENTS FOR TEACHERS QUALIFICATION

ESTONIA

The educational requirements of the pedagogues working in the vocational education institutions (incl. the headmasters of the vocational education institutions) are stipulated by the decree of the Minister of Education “On approval of the qualification requirements for the pedagogues of the vocational education institutions”. In general, the pedagogue in a vocational education institution must have acquired higher education on the subject or speciality he or she is teaching or higher education on other field, the headmaster must have acquired higher education and at least 3-year leadership experience or must have covered or must be covering the 240-hour leadership course.

LATVIA

The right to work as a teacher in a vocational school shall be entitled to a person having an appropriate vocational education (qualification) and pedagogical education in accordance with the requirements approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. The professional qualification of a vocational school teacher shall be certified by nationally recognized documents about the relevant vocational education (qualification) and pedagogical education. (from the VET Law)

Restrictions on Working as a Pedagogue (from the Law on Education)

A person shall not be permitted to work as a pedagogue:

- 1) who has been convicted for an intentional crime and has not been rehabilitated;
- 2) whose capability to act is limited by *normative acts*;
- 3) at state or municipal educational institutions - who does not possess a certificate about the command of the state language on the highest level, except for the academic staff of higher educational institutions and citizens of other states or stateless persons who participate in implementation of education programs on grounds of an international agreement, as well as pedagogues working at an education institution or a branch founded by a foreign country,
- 4) who by court decree has been deprived parental rights.

Traditionally there are no programmes for initial training of VET teachers in Latvia – there are only programmes for training of general subject teachers, primary school teachers, music or arts teachers, teachers of physical education. The teaching staff of VET schools usually has received training in one of the following two ways:

- in the appropriate vocational field (higher or secondary vocational education)
- pedagogics (higher education)

LITHUANIA

According to the Law on VET the Ministry of Education and Science is defining qualification requirements for teachers of initial VET. However no specific requirements for VET teachers are issued. Most of the teachers have university level higher education and have no work experience according to the profession they are training for. Only a small part of teachers have had extensive pedagogical training, though majority of teachers have attended corresponding courses of in-service training.

A vision of qualification requirements for VET teachers is formulated in the White Paper on VET, 1998. At present work on the implementation of this vision is started.

Concluding remarks

1. In all Baltic Countries VET teacher training is not considered as a priority, the main attention being paid to the training of teachers for general education schools.
2. In Estonia and Lithuania most VET teachers are university graduates, while in Latvia the teaching staff of VET schools usually has received training in one of the following two ways -in the appropriate vocational field (higher or secondary vocational education) or pedagogics (higher education).

11. STUDENTS RIGHTS

ESTONIA

The student shall have the right (The Law on Vocational Education Institutions):

- 1) to choose a school matching his/her interests and abilities;
- 2) to learn about the curriculum, statutes as well as domestic rules and organization of instruction and education prior to beginning his/her studies at the school;
- 3) select the courses from the selective and optional subjects;
- 4) participate in formation of the students' representative body and its activities;
- 5) through the representatives of the students' representative body participate in the activities of the school council;
- 6) use without charge the school premises, library, training, sports, technical and other facilities for extracurricular activities as determined by the school;
- 7) receive material aid or preferential services as determined by the Government of the Republic and local municipal council;
- 8) receive student loan on terms and according to the procedures stipulated by the law and legal acts passed thereunder;
- 9) exercise other rights stipulated by the law and the school statutes.

The school shall guarantee the student health protection measures during the period of his/her stay at school. The township or town government of the business location of the school shall establish the procedures for medical servicing of the students.

LATVIA

A person to be educated shall be entitled:

- 1) to receive pre-school, primary and secondary education funded by the state or a municipality;
- 2) to freely express and defend his/her own thoughts and views during the study and education process;
- 3) to use study rooms, libraries and other depositories of information, reading-rooms, and teaching materials during study process;
- 4) to receive stipends, loans, allowances, and other type of financial assistance as determined by the Cabinet of Ministers;
- 5) to receive the state and municipality paid prophylactic health and dentist care and first aid at an education institution;
- 6) to propose establishment of a self-government at an education institution and to participate in its work in accordance with statutes or a constitution of an education institution and statutes of self-government;
- 7) to participate in public activities;
- 8) to receive information about all issues related with education;

- 9) to have private belongings be protected at an education institution.

LITHUANIA

The Law on Education

Article 11. Health Care

In all educational institutions facilities intended to help pupils and students to protect their health and stay healthy shall be provided. Ministries and other agencies of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, county governors, the local government institutions, organizations and citizens in charge of educational institutions shall ensure that adequate conditions for studying, nutrition, physical education and sports, medical and psychological aid shall be provided at these schools, in accordance with the requirements set forth in statutory acts.

Article 11. Pupils' Rights

Pupils shall have the right:

- 1) to enroll in any educational institution of their choice provided their education and other requirements (health, command of the language of instruction) are in conformity with the terms of admission;
- 2) from the age of 15 to take an independent decision on whether they are going to take religious instruction;
- 3) to join children and youth organizations, to promote their activities, and to take part in educational and arts societies;
- 4) to participate in the self-governance of the educational institution in the manner established by the regulations of the institution;
- 5) to take externally and yearly (course) examinations of a secondary or vocational school at the final school examinations.

The Law on VET

Article 26. Student Rights at the Initial VET Institutions

The student shall have a right:

- 1) transfer from one stage of initial VET to another, provided his general education and vocational readiness meet the stipulated requirements;
- 2) receive compensation for work at an enterprise in the course of practical training;
- 3) receive a stipend, according to established procedure, with the acquisition of a vocation for the first time;
- 4) receive at least an 8-week holiday over the course of the school year;
- 5) cancel the training contract according to established procedure.

Concluding remarks

Though definitions of the rights of students differ from country to country, there are no principal obstacles for free student movement between countries.

12. TRAINING OF TARGET GROUPS

ESTONIA

In 1998/99, special education was provided for 10.9% of students at basic school level. Every attempt is made to place children with special educational needs into mainstream schools, reserving special schools for those with more serious problems. 2.9% of basic school pupils attended special schools and classes. At several vocational schools, it is possible for students with special needs to get vocational education and training.

The disabled persons are admitted to the vocational education institution on the basis of the rehabilitation plan, issued by the doctor or a similar document, a personal assistant is appointed when necessary, in general, the disabled persons in the vocational education institutions are studying in regular study groups, but if there are 6 – 8 disabled students in one speciality, a special group can be formed, an individual programme is developed for the disabled student, which takes into account the special needs and the rehabilitation plan.¹

Training of unemployed is carried out in VET institutions in parallel with the initial VET.

Training of persons in prison is carried out too by organising courses in prisons.

¹ The Decree of the Minister of Education “On establishment of the conditions and the procedures pertaining to education of disabled persons at the vocational education institutions”

LATVIA

Professional Education programs for different target groups are as follows:

1. Education Programs of Pedagogical and Social Correction

There is a need to establish remedial education classes at vocational schools for those students who for some reason have not acquired a primary education. In these programmes students could acquire a qualification and a certificate of basic education concurrently.

In 1997 the Vocational Education Development Department of the Ministry of Education and Science allowed pilot classes for remedial education and socialisation to be opened at two vocational schools for metalworking, cookery, mechanics and arc welding students.

Vocational schools are developing training programmes to allow students to complete their basic education and acquire a profession in three years. Schools are also developing experimental general education programmes according to guidelines set for evening school basic education courses.

Vocational schools of the Ministry of Agriculture also provide remedial education classes

2. Vocational schools within prisons

Since the Soviet era there have been vocational schools in Latvian prisons. Convicts have (and always have had) serious difficulties in finding employment after having completed their sentence.

So the number of inmates of the age at which one should be pursuing one's initial education is 40.3% of the total. There are currently vocational schools in only 2 prisons. The schools offer 1-year technical programmes – lighting electrician, turner, stoker of plant boilers, arc welder, electronics assembler, plumber, gas welder.

¹ The Decree of the Minister of Education “On establishment of the conditions and the procedures pertaining to education of disabled persons at the vocational education institutions”

3. *Vocational education for the disabled*

State Rehabilitation Centre offers programmes for physically disabled persons with basic and second education – business orientated programmes and computer orientated programmes.

(approximately 300 per year)

The school offers full time and distance learning and also provides 2-week courses on suitability on profession.

The State Employment Service also provides training for disabled people, but the number of them is relatively small. May be it is lack of information among physically disabled.

4. *Unemployed..*

The State Employment Service under supervision of Ministry of Welfare provides training for unemployed (regulated by Law on employment 1992)

LITHUANIA

Specific training is organized for three target groups:

1. *People with special needs.*

Vocational training of mentally disabled is carried out in some vocational schools (e.g. Lithuanian rehabilitation VET centre, Kaunas rehabilitation centre). Vocational training centres for physically disabled are in Vilnius and Panevzys. Integration of disabled into regular groups is not widely practiced.

2. *Unemployed*

Training of unemployed is organized according to especially developed labour market training programmes. Lithuanian Labour Market training Authority is responsible for the development of these programmes. Programmes are registered in the Register of Studies and Training Programmes.

3. *People in prison*

Vocational education and training is organized in some prisons. If after training a qualification is awarded, training programmes are to be registered in the Register too.

13. LANGUAGE OF TRAINING

ESTONIA

By the Law on Vocational Education Institutions the language of instruction at the school shall be Estonian. Use of other languages as instruction languages shall be determined by the Minister of Education.

Vocational education institutions will be transferring gradually to instruction mainly in Estonian. While the linguistic proficiency level of basic school graduates, whose mother tongue is other than Estonian, is insufficient for continuing education in Estonian, a situation should be reached where knowledge and skills are acquired partly in Estonian, with the graduate from the vocational education institution having the language competence required in the given profession and sufficient knowledge of Estonian history and culture.

If in VET school the language of instruction is other than Estonian then Estonian language is compulsory, as determined in the national VET programmes. Then the graduate from VET school will have the language competence required in the given profession.

The programme in these VET schools will be genuinely linked, by means of suitable methods, with the job-related language proficiency level stipulated by Decree of the Government of the Republic. In these study groups, the specialty language and also some of the subjects are taught in Estonian. In the first years of instruction, the volume of instruction of Estonian will be increased – so will the share of culture and history of Estonia. In the subsequent years, specialty instruction in Estonian will be gradually extended. The duration of study is prolonged compared with the study groups where the language of instruction is Estonian.

Pupils and students by language of instruction, 1998/99

Type of institution	Language of instruction, %		
	Estonian	Russian	English
General education schools	70,6%	29,4%	
Vocational education institutions	68,8%	31,2%	
Applied higher education institutions	72,1%	27,9%	
Universities	90,7%	5,3%	4,0%

LATVIA

At state and municipal education institutions education shall be acquired in the state language.

(1) Education may be acquired in another language:

- 1) at private education institutions;
- 2) at state or municipal education institutions which implement education programs of national minorities. The Ministry of Education and Science shall determine the subjects of these programs which have to be taught in the state language;
- 3) at education institutions prescribed by special laws.

(2) Every person to be educated, in order to acquire primary or secondary education, shall master the state language and take examinations of the state language to the extent and in accordance with a procedure set by the Ministry of Education and Science.

(3) Examinations for professional qualification shall be taken in the state language.

(4) Raising of professional qualification and changing of a profession financed from the state or a municipal budget, shall be in the state language.

Recently adopted Law on Education foresees that vocational education institutions governed by state and municipalities will begin to provide programmes for first year students only in Latvian starting from September 1, 2004. Programmes of vocational education with language of instruction other than Latvian will be available in private education institutions.

Law on Education foresees that also the programmes for improving of skills and retraining financed by the state and municipal budgets should be carried out in Latvian.

Today VET teaching is carried out in the Latvian (68%) and Russian (32%) languages.

The proportion of students studying in Russian is decreasing slowly (95/96 - 35% ⇒ 97/99 – 32%). Of the total number of students with Russian as instruction language 46% are studying in Riga and 40% in the Latgale region.

LITHUANIA

Language of instruction is not defined in the Law on VET. It is suggested that language of training in vocation schools should be regulated by the **Law on Education**, where one can find:

Article 10. Language of Instruction

The language of instruction at Lithuanian schools of the Republic of Lithuania shall be Lithuanian.

Populous and compact communities of ethnic minorities in the Republic of Lithuania shall be provided facilities for having public or maintained pre-school institutions, schools of general education and lessons in the mother tongue. Parents (guardians, foster parents) shall choose for the children a pre-school institution or a school of general education with instruction in an appropriate language.

For small and non-compact ethnic communities, classes or optional courses as well as Sunday schools may be set up at public schools of general education for the purpose of learning or acquiring a better knowledge of the mother tongue.

In non-Lithuanian educational institutions, Lithuanian language and literature shall be taught in Lithuanian. If the parents of children so desire, facilities shall be provided for studying other subjects in the Lithuanian language as well.

All secondary schools of general education must ensure a command of Lithuanian language in accordance with the standards established by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Facilities shall be provided throughout the territory of the Republic of Lithuania to have instruction in the Lithuanian language.

Usage of language is also defined in the Draft **Law on Higher Education**:

Article 10. Language of Teaching

The language of teaching in higher schools is Lithuanian. Teaching in other language may be offered when:

1. a content of the study programme is linked with other language;
2. lectures are given by visiting lecturers from foreign countries;
3. it is required by the international students exchange programs.

Composition of the population in Lithuania by nationality in 1997 was as follows:

- Lithuanians - 81,6%;
- Russians - 8,2%;
- Poles - 6,9%;
- Others - 3,3%.

Data on the organization of teaching in different languages in Lithuania are given in a table below.

Pupils and students by language of instruction, 1998/99

Type of institution	Language of instruction, %			
	Lithuanian	Russian	Polish	Others
General education schools	87,9	8,3	3,8	-
Vocational schools	91,6	7,7	0,7	-
Colleges	98,7	0,4	0,9	-
Higher schools	97,6	1,0	0,2	1,2

14. FINANCING

ESTONIA

Financing the school (The Law on Vocational Education Institutions)

The school is financed from the state and local municipality budget, donations from foundations, from resources derived by the schools by means of rendering paid services, as well as other resources.

The salaries of the teachers of the school, costs related to procurement of teaching aids shall be paid by the Ministry of Education or the ministry under which administrative jurisdiction the school falls, proceeding from the cost of teaching the speciality, as well as the number of students at the school. For the purpose of budgeting the Minister of Education by his/her decree shall set the book costs per one student as well as coefficients related to difference in cost of various specialities and forms of education offered. All other expenses shall be borne by the owner of the school.

The residents of foreign countries shall bear their education and training cost themselves or such costs are covered according to appropriate treaties. The education and training costs shall be equal to the book costs per student determined by the decree of the Minister of Education as stipulated by item 2 hereof.

The salaries of the teachers of the school shall be established according to the procedures stipulated by the decree of the Government of the Republic.

The school has its own budget.

The Decree of the Minister of Education “On approval of the procedures for accounting expenditure on one student in vocational education institution, and the coefficients, which are derived from the cost of teaching the specialities and the study form” – stipulates the financing principles of vocational education institutions.

In private vocational schools the salaries for the teaching staff of vocational secondary education based on basic education and an expenditure for obtaining teaching aids shall be covered from the state budget within the scope of study programmes pursuant to state curricula on the bases and pursuant to procedure established for state or municipal schools.

LATVIA

Financing vocational education programmes and schools

- 1) The procedure of funding vocational schools shall be established by this law, Law on Education, other normative acts, and the regulations of the relevant vocational education.
- 2) The Ministry of Education and Science and the branch ministries shall establish the number of state financed students in a vocational education programme.
- 3) The state administered vocational qualification final examination costs and other costs related to granting of professional qualification are covered by financial resources of the schools, where the student has acquired the relevant vocational education programme.

- 4) Vocational education and vocational qualification costs shall be covered by the state budget, as prescribed by the Cabinet of Ministers to:
 - persons with specific needs provided they attend special education, or social and correction training centres;
 - criminals in custody.
- 5) At private vocational schools the tuition charges for obtaining vocational education and granting of vocational qualification shall be established by their founders.
- 6) In the field practices the compulsory insurance payments for students are financed by the school, where the students acquire the relevant vocational education programme.

Crediting of vocational education

Students of accredited first level professional higher education programmes may receive a loan from the state. The procedure of extinguishing a repayment of the loan (credit) shall be specified by the Cabinet of Ministers.

LITHUANIA

The Law on Education

Article 13. Tuition Fee

Instruction at public schools of general education, vocational schools and colleges of the Republic of Lithuania shall be free. Tuition at private educational institutions shall be payable subject to an agreement.

Article 14. Financial assistance for Pupils and Students

The state shall grant allowances for pupils and students in need of financial assistance and shall allocate funds for grants and credits.

The Law on VET

Article 40. Sources of Funding

1. Initial education and training shall be funded from:
 - 1) the state budget;
 - 2) municipal budgets;
 - 3) Vocational Training Fund;
 - 4) Other sources.
2. Labour market vocational training shall be funded from:
 - 1) Employment Fund;
 - 2) Vocational Training Fund;
 - 3) Other sources.
3. Initial vocational education and training and labour market vocational training shall be funded in accordance with the procedure established by the Government based upon approved estimates of revenues and expenditures.

Article 41. The Vocational Training Fund

1. The Vocational Training Fund shall be an inter-departmental funding institution of vocational training the funds whereof shall be utilized for practical vocational training, enhancement of workers' qualification and funding of practical vocational training development.
2. This fund shall function according to Government-approved regulations.

In practice funding of initial VET institutions is organized by the founder of the institution, i.e. by the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Agriculture etc. The main source of financing is the state budget. Some funding comes from the paid activities organized by the institution. Municipalities in fact are not supporting VET. The Vocational Training Fund is not established yet.

Concluding remarks

Within Baltic republics the initial vocational education is financed mainly by the state and local authorities. The order of funding is regulated by law.

Table

Financing of VET by state (percentage from GDP)

	1996	1997	1998
Estonia	0,6	0,56	0,625*
Latvia	0,76	0,71	0,6
Lithuania (secondary VET schools and colleges)	0,65	0,69	0,69

* PRELIMINARY CALCULATION