European Commission

Education and Training Monitor 2013

Slovenia

Education and Training

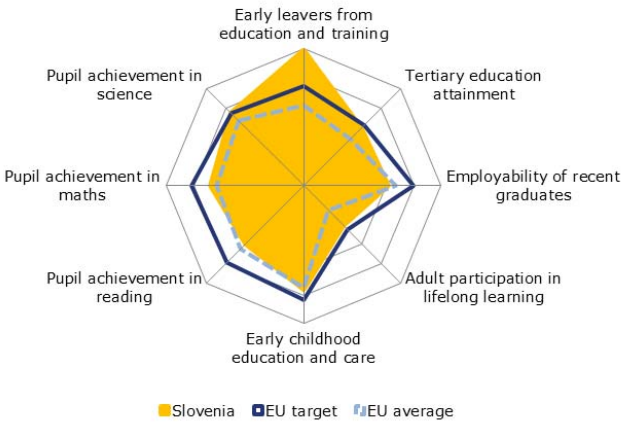
1. Key indicators and benchmarks

Europe 2020 headline targets			Slovenia 2009	Slovenia 2012	EU average 2009	EU average 2012	Europe 2020 target / Benchmark
1. Early leavers from education and training (age 18-24)			5.3%	4.4%	14.2% EU28	12.7% EU28	**EU target: 10%** National target: 5%
2. Tertiary educational attainment (age 30-34)			31.6%	39.2%	32.1% EU28	35.7% EU28	**EU target: 40%** National target: 40%
ET 2020 Benchmarks							
3. Early childhood education and care (4 years old - year before start of compulsory primary)			87.7%	89.8% 11	91.7%	93.2% 11	**95%**
4. Basic skills Low achievers (15 year-olds; Level 1 or lower in PISA study)	Reading		21.2%	:	19.6%	:	**15%**
	Mathematics		20.3%	:	22.2%	:	**15%**
	Science		14.8%	:	17.7%	:	**15%**
5. Learning mobility	Initial vocational training (IVET)	**a.** Students participating in Leonardo da Vinci programs as a share of vocational students at ISCED 3	1.0%	0.8% 11	0.6%	0.7% 11	
	Higher Education	**b.** Erasmus inbound students as % of student population in host country		1.3% 11		1.1% 11	
		c. Inbound degree mobile students as % of student population in the host country		1.8% 11		7.0% 11	
6. Employment rate of graduates (age 20-34) having left education 1-3 years before reference year			82.3%	73.2%	78.3%	75.7%	**82%**
7. Adult participation in lifelong learning (age 25-64)			14.6%	13.8%	9.3%	9.0%	**15%**
Proposed ET 2020 benchmark							
8. Foreign languages skills	**a.** ISCED 2 students at proficiency level B1 or higher in first foreign language[1]		:	54.0% 11	:	43.5% 11	
	b. ISCED 2 students learning two or more foreign languages		39.6%	50.4% 11	58.6%	60.8% 10	
Other ET 2020 Indicators							
9. Investment in education and training	**a.** General government expenditure on education (% of GDP)		6.5%	6.7% 11	5.5%	5.3% 11	
	b. Annual expenditure on public and private educational institutions per pupil/student in € PPS	ISCED 1-2	€ 7,134 08	€ 6,971 10	€ 5,732 08	€ 6,021 10	
		ISCED 3-4	€ 5,498 08	€ 5,670 10	€ 6,964 08	€ 7,123 10	
		ISCED 5-6	€ 6,398 08	€ 7,296 10	€ 9,309 08	€ 9,168 10	
10. Digital competences	**a.** Pupils in grade 4 (ISCED 1) using computers at school		33.3% 07	45.3% 11	60.7% 07	64.7% 11	
	b. Individuals aged 16-74 with high computer skills[2]		28.0%	31.0%	25.0%	26.0%	
11. Entrepreneurial competences	Individuals aged 18-64 who believe to have the required skills and knowledge to start a business		52.0%	51.0%	42.3% a	42.0% a	
12. Vocational education and training	Share of vocational students at ISCED 3		64.3%	65.4% 11	49.6%	50.3% 11	
13. Skills for future labour markets Projected change in employment 2010-2020 in %	High qualification		:	22.8%	:	19.1% EU28	
	Medium qualification		:	-6.6%	:	4.6% EU28	
	Low qualification		:	-17.9%	:	-20.2% EU28	
14. Low-skilled adults	Literacy		:	:	:	19.9% EU17	
	Numeracy		:	:	:	23.6% EU17	
	Problem solving in technology rich environments[3]		:	:	:	26.9% EU13	

Source: Cedefop: 13 / EAC: 10a,b / European Survey on Language Competences (ESLC): 8a / Eurostat (Government finance statistics): 9a / Eurostat (LFS): 1, 2, 6, 7 / Eurostat (ISS): 10b / Eurostat (UOE): 3, 8b, 9b, 10c, 12 / IEA TIMSS: 10a / Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: 11 / OECD (PIAAC): 14 / OECD (PISA): 4

Notes: 07 =2007, 08 =2008, 09 =2009, 10 =2010, 11 =2011, e= estimate, a= unweighted average b= break, p= provisional
Number of countries included in EU average: PISA=25, Entrepreneurship=18, Language skills=13, ICT/Computers at school=13, others: EU27
[1]= average of skills tested in reading, listening, writing, [2]= having carried out 5-6 specific computer related activities, [3]= Results cover people with scores below level 1 as well as people who have no computer experience or failed the ICT test

Figure 1. Position in relation to highest (outer ring) and lowest performers (centre)



Source: DG EAC calculations on the basis of data from Eurostat (LFS 2012 and UOE 2011) and OECD (PISA 2009). *Note:* all scores are set between a maximum (the highest performers visualised by the outer ring) and a minimum (the lowest performers visualised by the centre of the chart).

2. Main challenges

Overall, Slovenia performs relatively well in education and training. Room for improvement could be identified in the following areas: Skills mismatch is a challenge both for the low-skilled but also for the high-skilled tertiary graduates. Although Slovenia recognises the importance of a national forecast of future skills needs on the labour market, a comprehensive system to identify current and projected labour market needs is yet to be developed.

In addition, the performance of 15-year olds', as measured by international tests[1], has failed to improve and has even deteriorated. In order to reverse this trend and to remedy apparent weaknesses, like in literacy, reform efforts need to be continued and eventually intensified. A national quality framework referenced to the European one will be enacted in 2013. Furthermore, special attention will have to be devoted to more efficient inclusion of vulnerable groups.

The current context of consolidation of public expenditure in Slovenia might have a negative impact on the quality of education the near future. In the context of growth-friendly fiscal consolidation there is a need for preserving expenditure in education and training while increasing its efficiency. Therefore CSR 1 2013 asked to "safeguard growth-friendly spending".

CSR 3 2013 asked in particular to "address the skills mismatch by improving the attractiveness of the relevant vocational education and training programmes and by further developing cooperation with the relevant stakeholders in assessing labour market needs " and to regulate for student work and for further tailor-made active labour market policy measures while improving their effectiveness.

3. Investing in skills and qualifications

Investing in education and training in a context of economic crisis

In 2011 Slovenia invested 6.7 % of GDP in education. This is an increase of 0.1% in comparison to 2010 and higher than 2011 EU average (5.3%). Since 2006 education spending has been consistently above EU average and education spending remained stable despite the recession. However there has been a tendency to shift resources from primary to secondary education[2]. Budgetary constraints induce searching for improved efficiency and Slovenia aims to rationalise its sprawling school network.

Skills and qualifications

PIRLS 2011 showed that performance of fourth graders in reading is above the scale centre point. TIMSS 2011 results showed that both fourth graders and eight graders scored above the scale centre point in mathematics and science in a context of continuous improvement compared to previous results. PISA tests show more mixed results. In reading and mathematics results are below the EU average but in science they are above.

In 2009 21.2% of pupils were low achievers in reading, which is higher than the EU average (19.6%) and represents an increase in comparison to the 2006 test (16.5%). Gender differences are important with boys

[1] OECD: PISA, TIIMS, PIRLS

[2] Eurydice Expenditure and Budgets for Education (2013) observes a relative increase of actual 2011 expenditure in secondary (113.2%) and tertiary education (114%) compared to 2008 and a decrease in primary education to 96.5 of the 2008 spending level.

being three times more likely to be underachievers than girls. In mathematics, there are 20.3% of underachievers which is higher than the EU average (22.2%[3]) and the percentage increased since 2006 (17.7%) with no major gender differences (20.9% for boys and 19.7% for girls).

With 14.8 %, Slovenia has a lower than EU average proportion of low achievers in science (EU average is 17.7%). The rate did not increase significantly since 2006 testing (13.9% in Slovenia in 2009). Boys (17.8%) are more likely to be low achievers than girls (11.6%).

With regards to transversal skills students in grade 9 and 10 have better command of a first foreign language than the EU average (EU 13 average is 43.5 % and for English language it is 45.2%) with 54 % reaching b1 level or higher.

In 2007 in Slovenia 33.3% of fourth graders used computers at schools. This is lower than the 60% EU average. Among the 16-74 year olds, 31% had high computer skills in 2012. This is higher than the EU average (26% in 2012).
Cedefop skills forecast shows that there will be a greater need for jobs that require higher education attainment. The increase in Slovenia is estimated to be 22.8%. Contrary to that, jobs that require medium and low qualification level will decrease by 6.6% and 17.9%, respectively.[4]

With regards to entrepreneurship 51% of 18-64 year olds believed in 2012 that they have required skills and knowledge to start a business. This is a decrease in comparison to 56% in 2010.

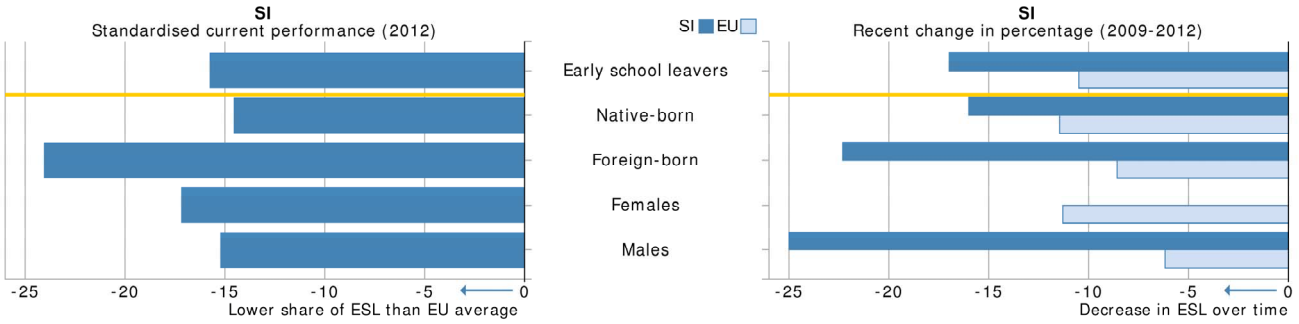
Slovenia started to develop a Slovenian Qualifications framework in 2005. In 2006 Slovenia adopted the classification system KLASIUS which is used for the classification of education and training (activities and results) informal administrative databases and for statistical analysis. KLASIUS is a mandatory national standard. SQF was developed with stakeholder involvement and in April 2013 a referencing report to the EQF was presented. It is foreseen to adopt a legal basis in late 2013.

4. Tackling early school leaving and raising the bar in school education

Slovenia strongly outperforms the EU average in terms of early school leaving (ESL) (4.4% compared to the EU average of 12.8% in 2012) and it has already outperformed its Europe 2020 national target of 5%. Even so the contribution to ESL of foreign born children could be reduced from 13% in 2009 to 10.1% in 2012 it remains significantly higher than the 4.2% share of native ESL.

In 2012, employment disadvantage remained below the EU average but it has grown at a higher rate than the EU average related to the economic situation.

Figure 2. Early school leavers of specific population sub-groups

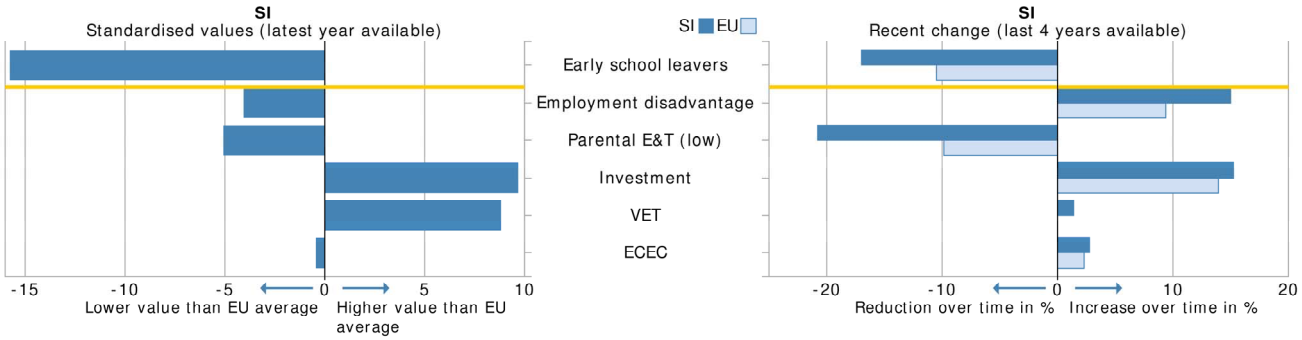


Source: JRC-CRELL. *Note:* ESL = early school leaving. See Annex 2 for further information.

As regards the other ET 2020 benchmarks, participation in early childhood education is close to the EU average (92.9 % in 2011). The percentage of three year olds who participate in 2012 in ECEC was 81% and percentage of four year-olds in both early childhood education and primary education was 87%.[5] Both rates exceeded OECD average. Slovenia has made considerable efforts to make early childhood education more affordable with the amendment of the Pre-School Institutions Act (2008) however saving in the context of the economic crisis had a mitigating effect. For instance fees for the second child in ECEC are only covered up to 30%.

3 The goal is to lower the percentage of underachievers to 15%.
4 CEDEFP, 2012 forecast.
5 Source: OECD Education at a Glance 2012

Figure 3. Early school leavers and sub-indicators



Source: JRC-CRELL. *Note:* see Annex 2 for an explanation of the sub-indicators.

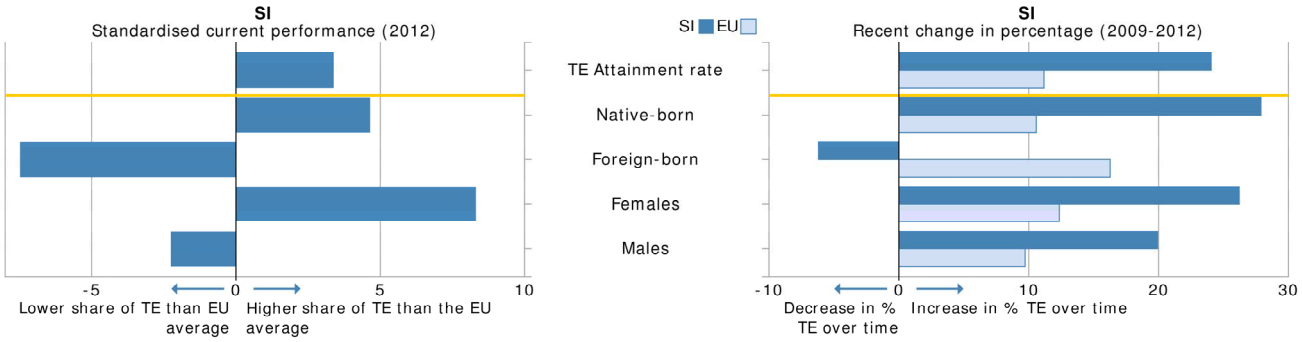
Slovenia has a favourable ratio of student and teaching staff with 9.4 for pre-primary education, 16.2 for primary and 11 for secondary education. This created a positive pre-crisis classroom environment[6] before the rationalisation of the school network has been started.

When it comes to professional development, a high number of teachers participate in some form of professional development[7] although the average number of days of development taken was 8.3, well below the TALIS average of 15.3 days[8]. Fewer teachers than the TALIS average report needing more professional development[9]. Overall, most teachers receive feedback or appraisal of their performance as well as an evaluation[10]. This is high in comparison to other countries. Slovenia has an ageing teacher population that therefore shows an above average length of experience. High rates of absenteeism[11] are registered as well as a clear need for more professional training for teaching pupils with special needs.[12] In order to further reduce the already very low ESL rate in EU comparison particular attention to youth with special needs is required.

5. Encouraging participation in tertiary education and modernising higher education

Slovenia is approaching the 40% national and Europe 2020 target for tertiary attainment with 39.2% in 2012. More students (19%) opted for tertiary vocational programmes than the OECD average (17%). In addition 77 % of students opted for general tertiary programmes as opposed to 62 % OECD average. With only 29 % of the students expected to complete university education the dropout rate remains well above the OECD average of 39%.

Figure 4. Tertiary educational attainment of specific population sub-groups



Source: JRC-CRELL. *Note:* TE = tertiary education. See Annex 2 for further information.

6 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) in 2008 showed that lower-secondary education teachers score above average on self-efficacy and job satisfaction and view quality of classroom environment positively. For more see: OECD, TALIS 2008. For country specific notes see: http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/43072770.pdf

7 Almost 97% of teachers participate in professional development activities in the survey period compared to the TALIS average of 89%.

8 Average number of days of development taken was 8.3 days, well below the TALIS average of 15.3 days [Table 3.1].

9 Unsatisfied demand for more development is well below the average for Slovenia: 35% teachers wanted more development than they received (TALIS average= 55%) [Table 3.3].

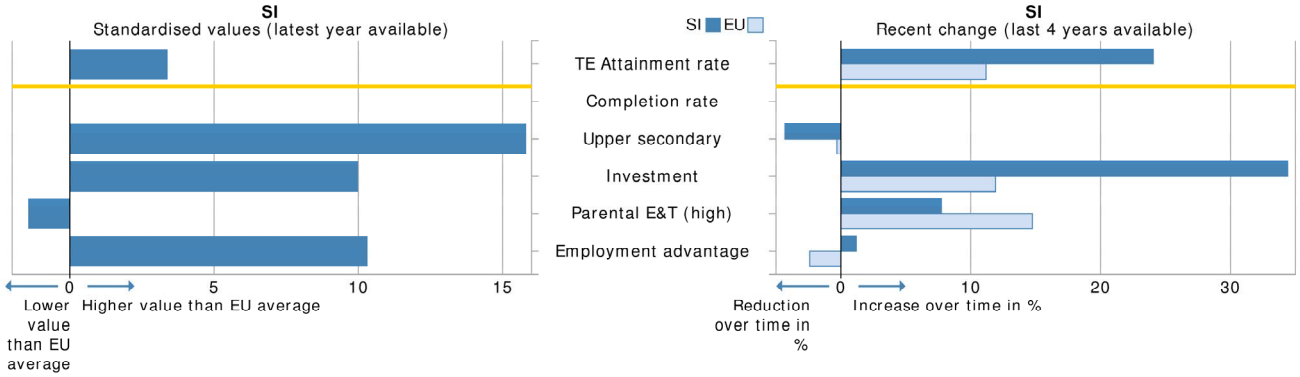
10 Only 7% of teachers in Slovenia had not received feedback or appraisal in their school (7th lowest of the 23 countries see more TALIS, the TALIS average (37%). Only 9% of teachers believe that a teacher would be dismissed for poor performance in their school (TALIS average= 28%), the lowest rate amongst the 23 countries that participated in the survey.

11 39% of teachers are in schools where the principal reports this hindering instruction a lot or to some extent (TALIS average 26%).

12 The areas of greatest development need for teachers in Slovenia, as in almost all other countries was teaching students with special learning needs (40% of teachers report this; TALIS average=31%) and student discipline and behaviour problems (32% compared with TALIS average of 21%) [Table 3.4].

Foreign-born have not participated in the steady increase in tertiary attainment[13] with a clearly below the EU dynamics. Progress in female tertiary attainment is more pronounced than in male. This translates in a clear employment advantage whose dynamics has slowed distinctively[14] in the recent difficult economic climate. However the upper secondary prevalence appears strong in comparison and this is combined with important investment in education that sustains this improvement.

Figure 5. Tertiary educational attainment and sub-indicators



Source: JRC-CRELL. *Note:* see Annex 2 for an explanation of the sub-indicators.

According to 2010 figures new entry students preferred with 33% studies in the field of social sciences, business and law (EU21 average: 32%) over sciences with 8 %. This is below the EU 21 average (10%). A very important recent reform restricted the length of the specific status of a student, which grants different social rights, to the normal length of study plus one year.

In 2010 1.8% of all tertiary education students were enrolled in a university in another country for the purpose of obtaining a degree. This is below the EU average (2.4 %). However, for bachelor and master degrees the rate (2.2%) is close to the EU average (2.3%) and for Doctorate level education the rate is (4.9%).

One of the biggest challenges for inbound mobility is the language barrier. Other impediments are legal issues such as obtaining a visa, a lack of information as identified in the National Report regarding the Bologna Process implementation for 2009-2012 period. In the same report, recognition, funding and organisation of study and curriculum are identified as the biggest hurdles for outgoing mobility of students.

6. Facilitating the transition from education to work

Employment rate of graduates (22-34 old) with upper secondary and tertiary education level attainment in 2012 was 73.2%. This is below the EU average (75.7%). It also represents a decrease from 83.4% in 2008.

The unemployment rate of 25-64 year olds with below upper secondary education was 11.2% in 2012, as opposed to a 6.9% unemployment rate of people with upper secondary and post-secondary (non-tertiary) education.[15]

The number of 15-29 year olds who were not in employment, education or training (NEETs) was 8.8% which is lower than the OECD average (15.8%) and lower than in 2005 (10.1%).[16] However it is expected that the effects of the current difficult economic climate will start to show. The employment rate of graduates (73.2% in 2012) is below the EU average of 75.7%.

Introducing more work-based components and increasing the attractiveness of dual VET is one of the key challenges in Slovenia. It is important to intensify the involvement of employers both in defining curricula and providing apprenticeship places. The NRP 2013 announced amendments to the Vocational Education and General Secondary Education Act and the Slovenian Qualifications Framework Act. These should be made on the basis of discussions how to create closer links to enterprises that will start in the second half of 2013.

Besides increasing the enrolment in vocational upper secondary programmes it remains very important to increase the attractiveness of vocational education and training as a whole. Efforts are under way on raising the profile of VET, career counselling and modernising courses.

13 From 28.1% in 2006.

14 In fact, young tertiary graduates have been identified recently as one of the vulnerable groups, since the growth of the unemployment rate of young people and people with higher education was the most pronounced.

15 OECD education at glance 2010 Slovenia.

16 See OECD Education at a glance 2012: Slovenia Key facts.

7. Upgrading skills through lifelong learning

In Slovenia in 2012 participation of adults in lifelong learning was 13.8%. This is well above the EU average (9 %). However, it represents a decrease in comparison to the previous year (15.9%) and 2010 (16.2%) and is in line with the overall declining trend in the EU countries.

In 2012 participation rate in adult education was higher for the native population (14.6%) than for foreign-born (5.9%). Since 2009 it declined more for foreign-born population[17]. Compared to the EU average the native population rate is higher in Slovenia than in the rest of the EU (8.9%), but the participation rate of foreign-born population is significantly lower than the EU average (10.6%).

When it comes to gender differences the rates of participation in Slovenia in 2012 exceeded the EU average for both male (11.5% as opposed to EU average 8.3%) and female (16.1% as opposed to EU average 9.7%) participants.

In sum, Slovenia met the Europe 2020 target for lifelong learning of 15% already in 2010 and in 2011. However, certain groups felt the negative impact of the economic crisis, such as the foreign-born at a time when re- and up-skilling becomes even more important. In the future Slovenia will have to focus both on those with lower educational achievement and the older age-groups, whose participation in lifelong learning remained more limited.

On basis of the Labour Market Regulation Act measures are taken with respect to education and training in to ensure life-long career orientation. Counselling and information services are currently provided for unemployed persons and school-age youth through the Employment Service of Slovenia and concessionaires. For the adult population in general a network of adult education guidance centres (IGAE – Information and Guidance in Adult Education) performs this function. The goal is to engage regional career centres more intensively in career orientation for unemployed persons combined with enhanced involvement of social partners in the development and in the implementation of lifelong career orientation.

[17] Since 2009 the decrease for foreign born was 2 percentage points and for native population 0.7 percentage points See: Eurostat (LFS).