

PROMOTING SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP IN EMPLOYEE TRAINING

PORTUGAL COUNTRY REPORT



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Abstract

In European comparison, the Portuguese population has a relatively low education level. Portugal's economy is characterised by a high share of micro and small enterprises. There is a huge need for an upskilling of the working and non-working population. However, due to the low average educational level of the population and an only slowly recovering economic situation, adult basic education as well as professional training for unemployed is more in the focus of public attention than employee training. A particular challenge in expanding CVET activities is the fact that many entrepreneurs themselves have low educational levels and are not sensitive for the value of training – neither on the individual level nor as an instrument to improve the company's competitiveness. A big practical question in the provision of employee training is who replaces workers in small companies during training. Portugal has undergone big financial cuts after the crisis. Now, ESF funding plays a big role in the provision of training.

- **Anticipation and identification of skills needs:** The training offer in Portugal depends, to be co-financed, on the National Catalogue of Competences (*CNQ*) which is regularly updated. The social partners can contribute actively to the development and update of the Catalogue. The social partners get their information about sectoral training needs, among others, by their sectoral organizations and the protocalar training centres under their management. The social partners see room for a better adjustment of the training offer to the labour market demands.
- **Mobilising resources:** In Portugal, most training providers receive public financial support – either by the government or by ESF funds. Portuguese employers perceive the tax burden and social security contributions as very high and, therefore, the willingness to invest more in employee training is limited. At the moment, tax proposals are discussed which would make the costs of training better deductible.
- **Information support and guidance:** Information about training possibilities is mainly disseminated by training providers. The social partners have the most direct impact on information, support and guidance via the protocalar training centres and their sectoral organisations. In particular, low skilled entrepreneurs need more guidance.
- **Contribution to quality, transparency and efficiency:** The most important instrument to improve the transparency of CVET is the *CNQ*. However, this instrument is mainly used by training providers – not by employers or employees themselves. Most training providers evaluate their training measures individually, e.g. by surveys among graduates and companies. Training providers are certified by a public institution (*DGERT*).
- **Recognition and validation of competences and qualifications:** In 2007, the system for the recognition, validation and certification of competences (*RVCC*) has been implemented. *RVCC* is a system to recognise informally and non-formally acquired general and professional competences. For a few years, there was a huge boom in this system. Then the system suffered under quality problems. At the moment, the *RVCC* is to be re-established under the new name *Qualifica*.
- **Provision of learning:** The 23 protocalar training centres managed by the social partners are very important for employee training. Their key of success is their close connection to the labour market via the sectoral employees' and employers' organizations.

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1 Introduction

In European comparison, Portugal has a relatively low education level. This is a key challenge for Portugal's economic competitiveness and the living standards of its population. In 2015, only 43 percent of the working age population aged 25 to 64 had completed secondary education – far below the OECD average of 76 percent (OECD, 2017). According to expert interviews with social partner representatives, around 60 percent of entrepreneurs do not have the level of compulsory education. After the Carnation Revolution, since the mid-1970s there has been an impressive educational expansion. The efforts need, however, to be kept up. Portugal's economy is characterised by a high share of micro and small enterprises: 99.6 percent of all companies are micro, small and medium sized enterprises below 250 employees, 82.2 percent of all companies have less than 10 employees (OECD, 2014). The sensibility of employers to provide employees with training is lower if the managers themselves don't have experience with training. This is a question of mentality. Another big barrier in the provision of employee training is the very practical question of who replaces workers in small companies during training.

The financial crisis of 2007/2008 led to a deep recession with high unemployment in Portugal. With 10.5 percent Portugal's unemployment rate is one of the highest in the OECD (OECD, 2017). In the course of a three-year adjustment programme, which started in 2011, cuts were made in many economic areas. European Social Fund (ESF) funding plays an important role in the financing of training in Portugal. In 2014, the European Commission adopted a seven-year Partnership Agreement with Portugal covering 7.5 billion Euro (European Commission, 2014). One of the top priorities is the investment in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning. Given the low level of formal education for adult persons already in the labour market, employee training is an important instrument to keep up the employability. At the moment, many measures are primarily directed towards the unemployed.

Social dialogue does not have a long tradition in Portugal. And while the role of the social partners in the regulation of employee training on national level is often a more advisory one, they have an important role in the provision of training. However, experts still see more room for (sectoral) social partners to create a training offer that is more oriented to the labour market needs.

2 Facts and figures on employee training

In the following, central facts and figures on employee training are presented. For the sake of comparability, cross-national statistics are used.

2.1 Participation in employee training

The Adult Education Survey (AES) informs about adult learning. Learning activities are divided into formal education, non-formal education and informal education. Formal education and training is defined as education provided by the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal educational institutions that normally constitutes a continuous 'ladder' of full-time education. Non-formal education and training is defined as any organised and sustained learning activities that do not correspond exactly to the above definition of formal education. Non-formal education may therefore take place both within and outside educational institutions (courses, workshops or seminars, guided-on-the-job training – such as planned periods of education, instruction or training directly at the workplace, organised by the em-

ployer with the aid of an instructor – and lessons). Informal learning is defined as intentional learning which is less organised and less structured than the previous types. The participation rate in education and training covers participation in both formal and non-formal education and training. Employer-sponsored learning activities are defined as all activities paid at least partially by the employer and/or done during paid working hours.

Table 2-1: Employed persons' participation rate in job-related non-formal education and training

In percent

	2007			2011		
	All	Employer-sponsored	Non employer-sponsored	All	Employer-sponsored	Non employer-sponsored
All	25.3	23.8	1.4	45.7	41.4	4.3
Men	24.9	23.6	1.4 ^u	44.4	41.1	3.4
Women	25.7	24.2	1.5 ^u	47.1	41.9	5.2
Age groups						
25-34	30.5	28.3	2.2 ^u	53.2	47.5	5.8
55-64	16.5	16.3	: ^u	31.1	28.8	2.3 ^u
Educational attainment level ¹⁾						
ED 0-2	15.6	14.9	0.7 ^u	34.4	32.5	1.9
ED 3-4	37.1	35.9	: ^u	53.4	49.6	3.8 ^u
ED 5-6	55.3	50.3	5 ^u	70.5	59.1	11.4

Source: AES 2007, 2011; special evaluation of Eurostat

1) ISCED97

u low reliability, : not available

The employed persons' participation rate in job-related non-formal education and training in Portugal experienced a tremendous increase between 2007 and 2011 from 25 percent up to 46 percent while the rate increased by only seven percentage points on EU average. Therefore the Portuguese rate lay above the EU average in 2011 whereas it was below-average in 2007. This increase can be explained by a change in the legislation in 2009. The Labour Code (*Código de Trabalho*) introduced a right to training for each employee of 35 hours per year (see Chapter 3.2). But while this – as the statistics show – increased the coverage of training, the duration of individual training measures, however, decreased.

Non employer-sponsored education and training does only play a subordinate role but is still more common than on the EU average, especially for higher educated individuals (ISCED97=5-6). Women tend to participate more often than men which is in accordance with what can be observed for the EU. Younger people are more likely to participate in training than the elderly. This does also hold for the EU average but the gap is much greater in Portugal (18 vs. 5 percentage points). The effect can be explained by the much lower education level of the elderly generation as compared to the younger generation in Portugal: As for other European countries there is a positive correlation between the educational at-

tainment level and training participation. Higher educated individuals (ISCED=5-6) are twice as likely to participate in training as are individuals with lower educational attainment levels (ISCED=0-2). This corresponds to the EU average.

Table 2-2: Companies' participation rate

In percent

	2005			2010		
	All forms of CVET	Courses	Other forms of learning	All forms of CVET	Courses	Other forms of learning
Average	44	32	36	65	44	55
Small	39	27	32	61	39	51
Medium	70	63	56	86	74	74
Big	91	88	71	97	92	91

Source: CVTS 2005, 2010

The Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) informs about enterprise activities. Continuous vocational education and training (CVET) is divided into courses and other forms of learning. CVET courses are usually separated from the active workplace (learning takes place in locations specially assigned for learning, like a class room or training centre). They show a high degree of organisation (time, space and content) by a trainer or a training institution. Other forms of CVET are typically connected to the active work and the active workplace, but they can also include participation (instruction) in conferences, trade fairs, etc. for the purpose of learning. The following types of other forms of CVET are identified: planned training through guided-on-the-job training; through job rotation, exchanges, secondments or study visits; through participation (instruction received) in conferences, workshops, trade fairs and lectures; through participation in learning or quality circles; and through self-directed learning/e-learning.

As seen for the individual participation rates, there was also a considerable increase in companies' training participation rates in Portugal. In 2005 only 44 percent of the companies offered CVET, until 2010 the share had risen up to 65 percent which is quite close to the EU average (66 percent). The increase was mainly driven by small companies, but participation rates also went up for medium and big companies. There still is a strong positive correlation between a company's size and its likelihood to provide CVET, but the gap between small and big companies dropped from 52 percentage points to 36 percentage points and seems to be approaching the EU average (30 percentage points in 2010). Portuguese companies are less likely to offer courses than other forms of learning. This is driven by the small companies and not in accordance with the EU average, where courses are more common. In 2010, the most active sectors in the provision of training were the financial and insurance enterprises (92.4 percent), electricity, gas, water supply, sewage and waste management (79.4 percent) and information and communication activities (78.4 percent). The least active sectors were accommodation and food services (51.1 percent), manufacturing industries (62.1 percent) and construction (67 percent) (Cedefop, 2014, p. 36).

2.2 Motives and barriers for employee training

Table 2-3: Main barriers for employee training

In percent

Individuals	2011	Companies (non-training)	2010
Other personal reasons	24	The existing skills and competences of the persons employed corresponded to the current needs of the enterprise	74
Training takes place at a too distant place	6	People recruited with the skills needed	59
Cost too high	6	Too expensive	54

Source: AES 2011, CVTS 2010; multiple answers possible for companies

When asked for obstacles to participation in (more) training, one quarter of the individuals stated “Other personal reasons”. “Cost too high” and “Training taking place at a too distant place” were named by six percent each. This is fairly different from what can be observed on EU average, where individuals state no need for (further) training (50 percent), family responsibilities (21 percent) and time conflicts (18 percent) most commonly. No need for (further) training is only stated by three percent of the individuals in Portugal, which is a very small value – in part again this can be explained by the low average educational level and a reduced sensitivity for the necessity and value of training. Three quarters of the non-training companies state no need for training as a reason for not offering training because the employees’ skills and competences correspond to their current needs. This ranks also first on the EU average and the shares are fairly close, too (74 percent vs. 77 percent on EU average). Non-training companies in Portugal do often recruit people with the skills needed (59 percent) and regard training as too expensive (54 percent) and, therefore, do not provide employee training. This is a common phenomenon in Portugal: firms dismissing and hiring employees at the same time. According to the social partners, companies often prefer to hire new employees on the external labour market rather than strategically developing their own personnel. On EU average, only 31 percent of the non-training companies state too high costs as an obstacle.

3 Legal framework and institutional setting

3.1 Embedment of CVET in general education system

In 2009, compulsory education has been extended from nine to 12 years of schooling (Cedefop, 2014, p.18). However, early school-leaving and low educational attainments are still among the main challenges in Portuguese education policy. The Portuguese education system has traditionally a strong focus on general and academic education whereas VET has a certain stigma and was considered as a “second choice” (Blöchle et al., 2015). However, there have been strong efforts to expand the VET offer and to increase its attractiveness among the population. In particular, as graduates of VET courses often have better employment prospects than university graduates (OECD, 2017, p. 121).

Challenge: Low general educational level – also among employers

The educational level of the Portuguese population is relatively low compared to the European average. Around 14 percent of youth between 18 and 24 leave school without secondary education (OECD, 2017, p. 112). This means that many adult people who have left the formal education system and have entered the labour market have a lack of basic skills, which also concerns many entrepreneurs themselves. This is a main challenge as entrepreneurs should play a major role in motivating their employees to participate in training.

As part of this development, in 2007, the National System of Qualifications (*Sistema Nacional de Qualificações – SNQ*) was introduced. The objective of the *SNQ* is to boost transparency and comparability across the education system by creating a consistent institutional framework for the different educational paths – general education, VET within the educational system and VET in the labour market. It establishes common objectives and instruments (Cedefop, 2014, p. 25). The introduction of the *SNQ* was based on an agreement between the government and the social partners on vocational training reforms (*Acordo para a Reforma da Formação Profissional*).

An important instrument within the *SNQ* is the National Catalogue of Competences (*Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações – CNQ*) which lists all qualifications available in the Portuguese education system. The content of the *CNQ* is organised in modules of 25 to 50 hours. On average, VET training paths comprise on average 1,200 hours organised in modules. The training modules can be used in IVET as well as in CVET – the boundaries are fluent. In consequence, many training providers offer IVET as well as CVET.

In the course of the Lisbon Strategy, two important measures in adult education have been introduced:

- Education and Training Courses for Adults (*Cursos de Educação e Formação para Adultos – EFA*)
- System for the recognition, validation and certification of competences (*Sistema de reconhecimento, validação, certificação de competências – RVCC*)

EFA courses have been provided since 2000 and were introduced as a main instrument to compensate for the low qualification levels of adults. They are directed at people over the age of 18 who have not attained the level of upper secondary education. They have become more and more diversified and now offer a range of courses to complete primary or secondary education and/or obtain an occupational qualification (level 2-4). In addition, certified VET modular courses (*Formações modulares certificadas – FMC*) were introduced in 2008 (Cedefop, 2014, p. 27). *EFA* and *FMC* offers are part of the *CNQ*. *RVCC* processes were introduced in 2007 and they can lead to either a basic or a secondary level education certificate at EQF level 2-4 or to an occupational certificate at level 2-4. After a start-up phase, this instrument was intensively used. However, due to quality issues, there is now a re-start of the recognition procedure (see Chapter 4.5). In 2012, one million persons participated in training measures: The largest number in *FMC*, then *RVCC* and last *EFA*. *EFA* participants are on average 33 years old and have a professional experience of 12 years, *FMC* participants are on average 39 years old and have 16 years of experience and *RVCC* participants are on average 38 years old (Cedefop, 2014, p. 30). In the past, most *RVCC* certificates were issued in the field of basic and general qualifications, less in the field of vocational qualifications. Another big topic in Portugal are courses providing basic skills which are, however, primarily directed at the still large number of unemployed persons.

3.2 Regulatory level of CVET

Education policy is organised in a very centralised way in Portugal. The Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security (*Ministério da Solidariedade, Emprego e Segurança – MSESS*) and particularly the Institute for Employment and Training (*Instituto para o Emprego e Formação Profissional – IEFP*) are responsible for training as well as active labour market policies. Together with the Ministry of Education (*Ministério da Educação e Ciência – MEC*), the two ministries are responsible for the National Agency for Qualification and VET (*Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional – ANQEP*) (Cedefop, 2014, p. 16). One important task of the *ANQEP* is the management of the National Catalogue of Competences (*Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações – CNQ*). Recently, a new skills programme (*Programa Qualifica*) has been introduced which aims to increase the number of centres specialised for adult education and training. Due to overlapping goals and different philosophies, the cooperation between the two ministries is not always easy. The *MEC* has the responsibility for mainly school-based VET at secondary education level in which the majority of VET students participate. The *MSESS* is responsible for the apprenticeship training (*aprendizagem*), in which 40 percent of the training is completed in-company. There is no systematic evaluation in how far the VET offers meet the labour market demand (OECD, 2017).

When analysing the regulatory level of CVET, the general labour market conditions have to be taken into account. The Portuguese labour market is very rigid. The labour market is highly segmented. While permanent workers in Portugal still benefit from a high level of protection against individual dismissal, in particular for young persons the likelihood of receiving a permanent contract is relatively low. Furthermore, the official share of self-employed is very high (OECD, 2017). Also earnings are relatively low in international comparison, which, however, corresponds to the Portuguese productivity which is below European average. However, according to employers' representatives, there are changing trends. For example the majority of new jobs is based on permanent contracts. Furthermore, in 2015 the Centre for Studies for Social Intervention (CESIS) conducted a Working Conditions Survey at the request of the Portuguese labour inspectorate, the Authority for Working Conditions (ACT) (ACT, 2016; Eurofound, 2017a). This study shows that the vast majority (90 percent) of workers, both women and men, were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their working conditions. 73 percent even stated that they felt "at home" when they were at work.

There is a number of advisory bodies, including the social partners, delivering technical views and recommendations in the field of CVET. The social partners have, for example, seats in the board of the *IEFP* as well as in *ANQEP*. Other important institutions are the Economic and Social Council (*Conselho Económico e Social – CES*), the National Education Council (*Conselho Nacional de Educação*), the Schools Council (*Conselho das Escolas*) and the Coordinating Council for Higher Education (*Conselho Coordenador do Ensino Superiores*) (Cedefop, 2014, p. 16).

Collective bargaining agreements are not very influential in the field of CVET. According to the Green Book of Labour Relations, 90 percent of collective agreements in 2006 contained stipulations regarding VET, most with specific regulations regarding CVET (Eurofound, 2009). However, only few agreements go beyond the obligatory training regulations.

In general, there is no demand for more regulation among the social partners. However, there is a demand for more evaluation of existing regulations as well as a better dissemination of good practices.

3.3 Public financing/funds and tax incentives

In Portugal, government and ESF funding are central in the provision of CVET. While this relaxes financial constraints due to strong financial cuts in many economic areas after the crisis to some degree, it also means a certain bureaucratic burden for training providers. While budgets have to be organised one year in advance, the refund of expenses is often delayed which challenges in particular small private training providers. Some providers already disappeared from the market.

The readiness of companies and individuals to invest in employee training is limited. In August 2015, Portugal introduced a training subsidy for unemployed as well as for employed (*Cheque Formação*). This subsidy covers training for employees up to 50 hours with an amount of 175 EUR. This subsidy has been mainly taken up by firms (95 percent) (OECD, 2017, p. 106). There has been no evaluation of this instrument so far.

3.4 Regulations on training leave

The right to training for employees is regulated in the Labour Code which came into force in 2003. It stipulates that each employee has the right to a minimum of 35 hours per year for training (Eurofound, 2009). Training may be provided by the employer, a certified training organisation or a state VET provider. Training must be certified and registered in the individual competences portfolio (*Caderneta Individual de Competências*) in accordance with the National Qualification System (SNQ) (Cedefop, 2014, p. 54).

In practice, only few companies reach the target of 35 hours of training per employee per year. There are no sentences if this target is not achieved. The regulation is seen more as an incentive rather than an actual target. Nevertheless, neither employers' nor employees' representatives see a need for more regulation or more pressure on the enforcement of this target. More regulation is perceived as reducing employers' scope to find flexible solutions.

3.5 Training providers

In Portugal, there are 30 public training institutions managed by the *IEFP (Centros de Emprego e Formação Profissional – CEF)*. Many offers of the *IEFP* are, however, primarily directed to unemployed. The most important private providers are the 23 so-called protocolar training centres (*Centros de Formação Profissional de Gestão Participada*). These training centres are managed by social partners – most of them by employers' associations (IEFP, 2017). Apart from that, most trade unions have their own training institutions and there are around 170 external accredited entities. Most training providers offer IVET and CVET at the same time.

Almost half of all companies say that they organise training completely by themselves – starting from the design to the management. All other courses are provided by private providers (61.2 percent), trade unions (2.6 percent) and public organisations (9.3 percent) (Cedefop, 2014, pp. 36f.). Accreditation is mandatory for VET providers that receive public funding. Any public or private entity can apply for an accreditation to develop training activities. Responsible for accreditation is the Directorate-General for Employment and Labour Relations (*Direção Geral do Emprego e das Relações do Trabalho – DGERT*).

Under the coordination of *ANQEP*, a network of centres for Qualification and VET (*Centros para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional – CQEP*) was created in 2013 (Cedefop, 2014, p. 44). One task is the iden-

tification of opportunities of work-based learning. Recently the *CQEP* have been renamed to *Centros Qualifica (CQ)*.

4 The role of the social partners

Social dialogue does not have a strong tradition in Portugal and industrial relations are rather conflictual (Eurofound, 2009). In the last years, there have been, however, several successful co-operations which resulted in bilateral and tripartite agreements like for example the 2007 agreement on VET. The umbrella organisation of Portugal's employers' associations is the Confederation of Portuguese Business (*Confederação Empresarial de Portugal – CIP*). The two largest trade unions are the General Union of Workers (*União Geral de Trabalhadores – UGT*) and the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers (*Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores Portugueses Intersindical – CGTP*). Union density is relatively stable around 18 percent and it is particularly high in public administration and in large state-owned companies, and it is above the average in transport and manufacturing (Eurofound, 2017b). The social partners are represented at *IEFP*'s central, regional and local consultative bodies as well as in the board of *ANQEP*.

The influence of the social partners on employee training is most present on sectoral level and the promotion of lifelong learning is a central concern of the social partners besides discussions on wages and working hours as well as discussions on training of basic skills for adults and training for the unemployed.

4.1 Anticipation and identification of skills needs

The training offer in Portugal depends on the National Catalogue of Competences (*CNQ*) of *ANQEP*. To meet the skills needs of the labour market, the *CNQ* has to be regularly updated. The social partners can contribute to this process by their active participation in different skills anticipation working groups within *ANQEP*.

In theory, every institution can approach *ANQEP* and give an impulse to update existing training modules. In practice, however, mainly training providers work with the *CNQ* and give impulses for new training contents. The *CNQ* is very comprehensive and, therefore, difficult to handle for companies or individual employees.

Best practice: National Catalogue of Competences (*Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações – CNQ*)

The National Catalogue of Competences (*Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações – CNQ*) has been introduced in 2007 and is an important transparency tool. It lists all qualifications in the general and vocational education and training system.

Social partners get their information about sectoral training needs primarily by the protocolar training centres under their management. These centres are in close contact with the members of the responsible employers' association or trade union. Often training contents are developed together with companies. Most training centres conduct their own market research (e.g., surveys among graduates and companies). On company level, the most important instruments for the identification of skills needs are in-

ternal surveys and career appraisal interviews. However, many SMEs cannot organise employee training in a strategic way in a medium- and long-term perspective and could need more support.

Many social partner representatives criticise that the Portuguese education system is very reactive and that too few pro-active impulses are set. Furthermore, a regular criticism of the Portuguese VET system is that it is very much offer-oriented – it depends on what is there and not on what is needed. Most training offers are centrally organised and do not react to changes in demand. Despite the importance of protocalar training centres there are still concerns that sectoral demands are not sufficiently considered. Another challenge which make it difficult react to changing skills needs in the short run is that ESF funding often demands the planning of the training offer at least one year in advance.

In 2014, the National System of Anticipation of Qualification Needs (*Sistema de Antecipação de Necessidades de Qualificações – SANQ*) was introduced (SANQ, 2017). The task of SANQ is to conduct research on national level to derive recommendations regarding the training offer. The analysis shall take into account regional particularities. The social partners are – together with ANQEP and IEFP – part of the coordination council. The results of the work of SANQ are, for example, important when deciding about which training projects are subsidised by ESF funding. SANQ is a relatively new tool. Therefore, the success cannot yet be evaluated.

A general challenge of training is that training demands of the large number of small and medium-sized companies are very individual. It is difficult for training providers to find 15 and more employees who all want the same training contents. Furthermore, even if the forecasts get better there is too few investment in training.

4.2 Mobilising resources

In Portugal, most training providers receive public financial support – either by the government or by ESF funds. Furthermore, most employees who participate in training also in the costs. According to CEN-FIM, one of Portugal's largest protocalar training centres, much more than half of all participants in CVET measures pay for training themselves. Companies' readiness to invest in training is limited. First, many employers have themselves a relatively low educational level and are, therefore, not really sensitive for the value of training. It is not recognized as a means to increase the competitiveness of a company. Second, Portuguese employers perceive the tax burden and social security contributions as very high. Therefore, many employers have the feeling that they already invest indirectly in training. For each employee, the employers' contribution to social security is 23.75 percent of the wage (Segurança Social, 2017) – of which part goes to the IEFP. It has, however, to be considered that the IEFP is not only responsible for employee training but in particular also for training of the unemployed as well as for employment services.

Many private training providers like the protocalar training centres make use of ESF funding. In the last years, the financial support was often received with delay so that smaller CVET providers had to close. Furthermore, even though after the crisis it was tried to reduce captivations in the field of education, there have been financial cuts and freezes (*cativações*) which meant for some public and private CVET providers to offer more with the same budget.

The protocalar training centres have different pricing schemes to make training for certain groups more attractive and to motivate employers and employees to make use of training. Members of the responsi-

ble employers' association or trade union receive a reduction. Often daytime courses are offered for free to reduce the threshold for employers to send their employees to training. The training providers are compensated for these services by ESF funding. In contrast, evening courses have to be paid. On the political level, there is currently a proposal for a tax reform (supported by *CIP*) which would allow employers a more generous deduction of training costs (150 percent). This still has to be decided.

Best practice: Variable pricing schemes

Some training providers have variable pricing schemes. While daytime courses are for free, evening courses have to be paid. This shall motivate employers and employees to create space for training in the daily work-routine.

Often, however, a lack of resources is not perceived as the main obstacle for training in Portugal. The main challenge is a more practical one, i.e. who replaces workers in the workplace during training. In the majority of micro and small enterprises the absence of individual workers often has severe consequences for the regular workflows.

4.3 Information, support and guidance

Information about training possibilities is mainly disseminated by training providers. The social partners have the most direct impact on information, support and guidance via the protocalar training centres and their sectoral organisations. The training centres have own websites and get directly in contact with companies. As most training providers offer IVET and CVET at the same time, IVET sometimes works as a door-opener to get in contact with companies and sensitise them for CVET. Often employers need to be convinced of the added value of training. The public *IEFP* training providers also spread information about their course offer via their website. However, many *IEFP* training measures are directed to unemployed and are disseminated in a different way (e.g., direct phone calls). The activities of the social partner umbrella organisations are more focused on the political level and highlight the importance of life-long learning in general.

Best practice: Knowledge Management at Infraestruturas de Portugal

Infraestruturas de Portugal is a public company which resulted from the merger of Rede Ferroviária Nacional and Estradas de Portugal, i.e., the railways and roads companies. In the past, people were trained (IVET) within the company for one profession which they followed for the rest of their working lives. Now, many professions have changed and IVET programmes for adult persons had to be implemented. Another big challenge resulted from the fact that in the last 15 years more than 5,000 people left the company – and together with them a lot of knowledge has been lost. Nothing was invested to keep the knowledge within the company. The Knowledge Management department then started to establish measures to disseminate knowledge within the company. It started with small, informal seminars in which employees from different departments met and exchanged. This approach was extended and implemented in a more and more strategical way. A White Book was prepared and discussed among all stakeholders. Furthermore, the company now organises its 3rd Knowledge Management Week already.

As in other European countries the participation rates in training differ by different target groups. Younger persons can more easily be convinced of training measures than older people. A particular chal-

challenge in Portugal is the relatively low general education level. Due to the financial crisis, the focus of public attention during the last year has been on training for the unemployed and their re-integration into the labour market. However, much more support would be needed to support low-qualified employees. There are, for example, claims to introduce social transfers to motivate employers to send their low-skilled employees to training.

Most activities to provide information, support and guidance are addressed towards the needs of companies. In Portugal, there is not yet a focus on (employed) individuals and their professional and personal training needs. Often employees do not really have a choice as the government pays training providers directly.

4.4 Contribution to quality, transparency and efficiency

The most important instrument to improve the transparency of CVET is the *CNQ*. However, this instrument is mainly used by operators – not by employers or employees themselves. If companies want to offer training, they can be accredited as a certified training provider by *DGERT*. Trainers must have at least a Master's degree to secure the quality of training. However, this does not hold for many short-time duration courses which gain more and more importance.

In general, Portugal does not have a long tradition in policy evaluation (OECD, 2017). In order to document the efficiency of training measures, public and private training providers advertise for their training offer, for example, by publishing employability rates. The measurement of employability rates after having participated in training is based on graduate surveys which the individual training providers conduct. The *IEFP* generates success measures by crossing participation information with social security data. This has, however, limited explanatory power for measuring CVET measures of persons already employed. As many training offers are supported by ESF funding, training providers have to comply with ESF rules which demand from operations to publish reports with certain key indicators. Nevertheless, there is still scope to standardise efficiency measures among different providers and to generate a comparability of the results.

4.5 Recognition and validation of competences and qualifications

In 2007, the system for the recognition, validation and certification of competences (*Sistema de reconhecimento, validação, certificação de competências – RVCC*) has been implemented. *RVCC* was a system to recognise general and professional competences. For a few years, there was a huge boom in this system (mainly with respect to the recognition of basic school certificates). The system was a political showcase project and under big pressure to succeed. According to the social partners, the process was more oriented towards certification instead of recognition. As a consequence, the quality of the process suffered and it almost stopped.

At the moment, the *RVCC* is to be re-established under the new name *Qualifica*. Recognition is offered by qualification centres (*Centros Qualifica*, see also Chapter 3.2) which are partly the old *RVCC* institutions. In addition, a new passport – comparable to the Europass – has been introduced. The *Pasaporta Qualifica* allows the documentation of qualifications and competencies which employees have acquired during their working lives. These passports replace the former *Caderneta Individual de Competências (CIC)*.

4.6 Provision of learning

The 23 protocular training centres managed by the social partners are very important for employee training. Their key of success is their close connection to the labour market. The training centres also offer in-company trainings, developed for the individual needs of the company. This is, however, not a very viable option for the majority of micro and small enterprises as this demands a certain critical mass. Companies can also address the *IEFP* to get support in the organisation of training. While in the past the support options of the *IEFP* have been perceived as very inflexible and not always helpful in addressing the individual company needs, lately, more companies appreciate the support options and observe more responsiveness of the *IEFP*. Besides VET training centers, also universities become a more important partner in the provision of training. Up to now, there is not much cooperation between companies in the organisation of employee training. The Portuguese internal market is very competitive and the willingness to cooperate is very low as employers don't want to share company knowledge. More openness of the companies to cooperate bears, however, a lot of potential to generate economies of scale.

Best practice: Trade Union Cooperation with Open University and unYLeYa

The Portuguese National Federation of Education (*Federação Nacional da Educação – FNE*), the *Open University*, a Portuguese public university institution, and *unYLeYa*, one of the largest publishing groups in Portuguese language with a focus on activities, multimedia and education in the educational sector, signed in 2016 a cooperation protocol that aims to promote and support the continuous training of teaching and non-teaching staff in basic and secondary education institutions. Training courses and actions are offered on a face-to-face basis, for distance learning through the internet (E-learning) or in a dual or mixed mode (blended learning). The Open University is responsible for the scientific validation of training courses and actions, validation of tutors in support of distance learning actions and promotion of the certification of courses and training actions with the competent entities. FNE, the Open University and unYLeYa recognize that the use of new IC technologies is a great opportunity for expansion to Portuguese scientific, cultural and educational institutions. Up to date, a 52 hour e-learning training course on "Conflict Management in School Context" has been implemented which has been attended by teachers and non-teachers affiliated in the FNE's unions. The price of this training for non-members is € 240, while for affiliates in the FNE unions it is € 50. The municipality of Vieira do Minho offered this even free of charge to all teachers of its schools.

(Joaquim Santos, FNE)

Best practice: Office of Training and Research in Education (OTRE)

The support of the professional development, implementation of better working conditions and the provision of professional training for the teaching profession are among the main goals of Portugal's National Federation of Teaching Unions (*FNE*) and its ten member unions. In 2015, the Office of Training and Research in Education (OTRE) was created in this line. OTRE has two functions: provide training to non-teaching workers and develop studies on issues affecting the career of all educational professionals (teachers and non-teachers). As a training entity OTRE provides training in the two areas "Law" and "Personal and Social Development". As a research unit, OTRE aims at providing empirical support for school managers to better assess the needs of their teachers and non-teacher workers as well as to support the professionals directly. In 2016, the research project "Creativity, motivation and well-being in teachers and non-teachers" was started. FNE seeks among other things to understand to what extent different practices stimulate creativity and motivation among students. This project is realised in partnership with schools and research centres, namely the universities of Madeira and Minho, and in cooperation with researchers from Brazil. A second project deals with psychosocial stressors and coping strategies of non-teaching workers. It is sought to validate and construct evaluation instruments for the study of this professionals.

(Joaquim Santos, FNE)

Training providers observe a rising demand for more short-time courses. Furthermore, E-Learning offers are introduced in more and more fields. Considering the training offer in general, there is a perception that there is not too much, however, a too similar offer which could still be better adapted to (sectoral) labour market demands.

5 Conclusion

In Portugal, the need for an upskilling of the working and non-working population is enormous. However, due to the low average educational level of the population and an only slowly recovering economic situation, adult basic education as well as professional training for unemployed is much more in the focus than employee training. A particular challenge in expanding CVET activities is the fact that many entrepreneurs themselves have low educational levels and, therefore, are not sensitive for training needs as well as the potential of training to boost the competitiveness of the company. Portugal benefits from ESF funding where investment in skills is one of the top priorities. While this relaxes budget constraints, it also imposes bureaucratic burdens on many training providers. The social partners have contributed to several significant tripartite agreements in the field of VET. In the regulation of training on government level, the social partners have, however, a more advisory role. In the responsibility of the social partners are the so-called protocolar training centres which provide IVET as well as CVET. These training centres are managed by sectoral social partner organisations – in the majority by employers' associations. Their main advantage is their close connection to the labour market. Still, there are many voices arguing that sectoral demands should be better taken into account and that VET should be more demand- than offer-oriented.

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