

2024 Conference on “Micro-credentials: What, Why, Who and How?”

Process of Implementation of Microcredentials into Cretan Adult Education System

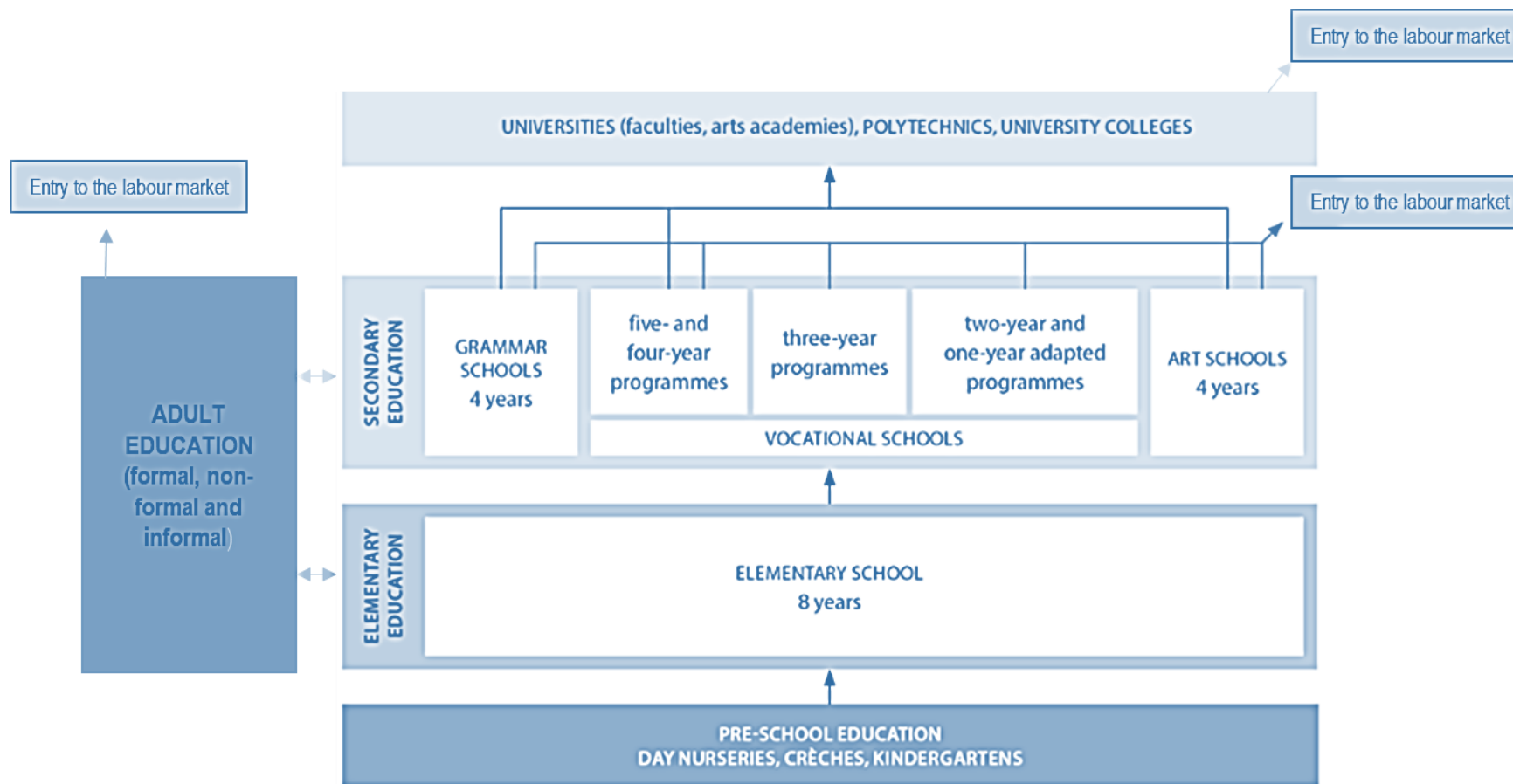
Ivana Krešić Klaucke



13-14 November 2024,
Radisson Blue Hotel Larnaca, Cyprus



Education system in Croatia



Adult education

Adult education in Croatia

is intended for students/participants who are at least 14 years old and **who do not attend another form of formal education, want to retrain or finish education - on levels 1-5 NQF (non-tertiary)!**

Primary and secondary education (pre-tertiary), as well as all forms of non-formal and informal education, are conducted within **adult education system**.

AE is carried out by **adult education institutions** (mostly private) and other bodies registered for carrying out adult education programs (universities, polytechnics, high schools, primary schools...)

Governance

The Croatian education system is centrally managed by the Ministry of Science and Education.



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Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i mladih
Ministry of Science, Education and Youth

Besides the Ministry, other national public bodies involved in the regulation, development and quality control of the educational sector in Croatia are:

Education and Teacher Training Agency (ETTA),

Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE),

Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE)

Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes (AMPEU),

National Center for External Evaluation of Education (NCEEE)

and Croatian academic and research network (CARNET).

Legislative framework of AE

Aligning AE with the national qualification framework CROQF

Adult education in Croatia is regulated by the new Adult Education Act which entered into force in January 2022.

With the entry into force of the Adult Education Act adult education system is fully aligned with **the Act on Croatian Qualification Framework from 2013**

The Croatian Qualification Framework (CROQF) is an instrument that defines standards of educational programmes and follows the concept of European Qualification framework - EQF) which has the task of connecting national frameworks and make them mutually recognizable and reliable

CROQF is based on two main documents: Occupational Standard and Standard of Qualification.
Adult educational programmes are developed on the basis of OS and SQ.

The Occupational Standard – a document with a list of **key jobs** that an individual performs in a certain occupation and a list of competencies required for their successful performance.

The Standard of Qualification is based on the learning outcomes that are grouped into logical units - sets of learning outcomes.

The link between occupational standards and qualification standards - "**translation**" of the **competencies** required to perform the job into the outcomes of the educational process

Legislative framework

Aligning AE with the national qualification framework CROQF

Qualifications are, according to the Act on CROQF, classified according to **classes and levels**.

Classes of qualifications are **full** and **partial** qualifications

*partial qualification is a qualification that alone doesn't meet the conditions to enter the labour market, but only with an appropriate full qualification or another partial

Levels of qualifications are 1-8

For each qualification (and set of learning outcome) a **volume** is determined

The volume is expressed in:

- ECTS credits in higher education = presents 25-30 hours of student workload
- CSVET (Croatian Credit System for VET) for vocational education = 15-25 hours
- HROO (Croatian Credit System for General education) for general education = 15-25 hours

Introduction of micro-credentials into legislative framework

Acts regulating education in Croatia, including the Act on CROQF, do not contain nor define the term microcredential

The only legislative act in the Republic of Croatia that introduces and regulates the term microcredential or **micro-qualification** is the Adult Education Act (Official Gazette 144/2021)



Definition of micro-qualification

- The glossary of the Adult Education Act defines the term micro-qualification as: **education for the acquisition of sets of learning outcomes (micro-qualifications)**



Further in the text of the Act the term micro-qualification is mentioned any more.

INSTEAD

educational programs for acquiring sets of learning
NEXT to

programs for acquiring partial qualifications
and programs for acquiring full qualifications

Introduction of micro-credentials into legislative framework

Additionally, the Act on Adult Education prescribes that:

- the educational programs must be aligned with the standards of qualifications or set(s) of learning outcomes from the CROQF Register on levels 1-5 CROQF
- the competencies acquired through formal programmes are proven by a **public document (!)**
- **“The Methodology for creating the educational programmes will be adopted by the Agency for VET and AE within the six months upon entry into force of this Act”**

**Sitauation in Croatia in
January 2022**



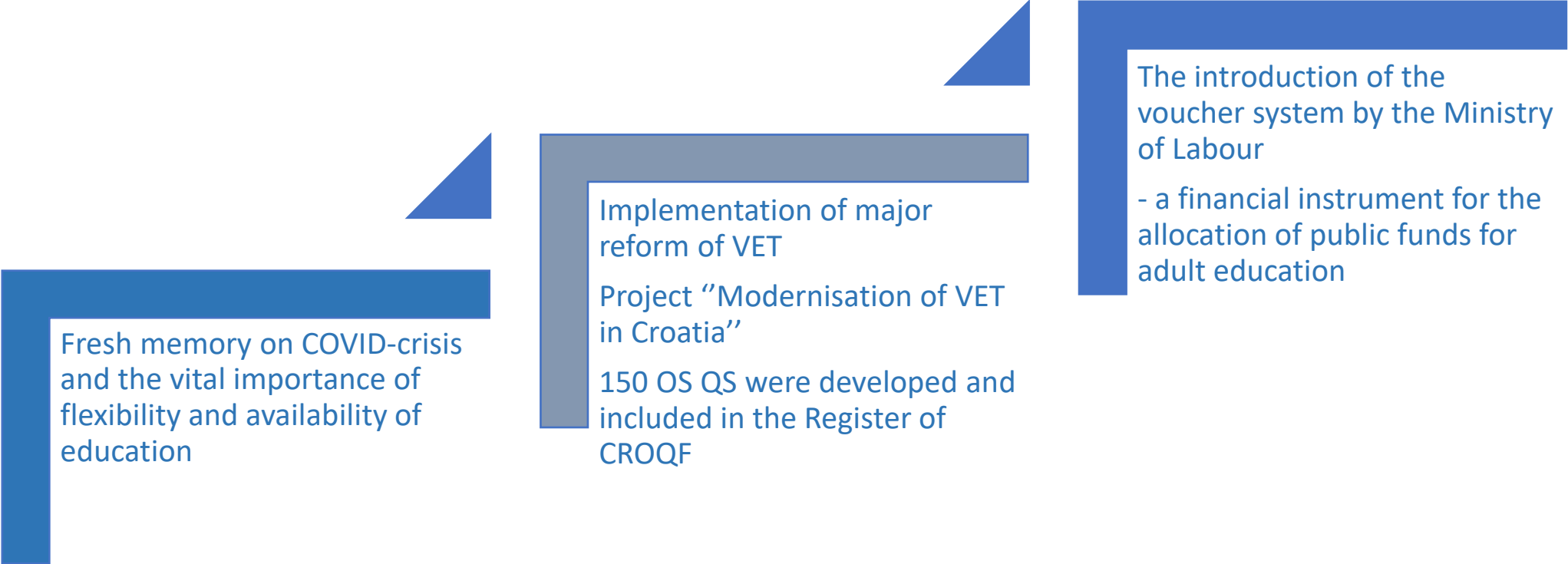
WHAT?

WHY?

WHO?

HOW?

Three important momentums in Croatia that directed the development of the Methodology



Fresh memory on COVID-crisis
and the vital importance of
flexibility and availability of
education

Implementation of major
reform of VET
Project "Modernisation of VET
in Croatia"
150 OS QS were developed and
included in the Register of
CROQF

The introduction of the
voucher system by the Ministry
of Labour
- a financial instrument for the
allocation of public funds for
adult education



Programmes for acquiring sets of learning outcomes (micro-qualifications)

AVETAE FORMED A WORKING GROUP

The working group was researching the situation with microcredentials over Europe, european documents and within the national context

We had:

ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The term micro-qualification from THE ACT ON ADULT EDUCATION prescribed that these programmes **should consist of set(s) of learning outcomes from the CROQF on levels 1-5**

ON EU LEVEL

Council recommendation to support building trust in microcredentials across Europe INTRODUCED **micro-credentials an innovative instrument that “can facilitate flexible learning pathways and support workers on their job or during professional or life transitions”**

Common definition, standards and key principles for the design were still an ongoing process..

FINAL REPORT A European Approach to Micro-credentials

OUTPUT OF THE MICRO-CREDENTIALS HIGHER EDUCATION CONSULTATION GROUP,

European Commision, December 2020

Box 2: Definition

A micro-credential is a proof of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a short learning experience. These learning outcomes have been assessed against transparent standards.

The proof is contained in a certified document that lists the name of the holder, the achieved learning outcomes, the assessment method, the awarding body and, where applicable, the qualifications framework level and the credits gained. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared, are portable and may be combined into larger credentials or qualifications. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards.



MICROCREDENTIALS WERE DEFINED MORE IN DETAIL AS:

- proof of learning outcomes that were acquired through short learning experience
- they need to be assessed against transparent standards
- the proof should contain the learning outcomes, assessment method, awarding body, qualification framework level and credits
- they should be portable, and may be combined into larger credentials or qualifications

Planning the programmes

THE FIRST EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAMS were created from sets of learning outcomes that were parts of the existing standards from the CROQF Register

Starting point:

PROGRAMMES CAN CONTAIN ONE OR MORE SETS OF LEARNING OUTCOMES THAT CAN BE COMBINED INTO MODULES

- CROQF ensures quality
- SLO from the CROQF can be combined into larger parts or qualification
- easily portable and recognized on the labour market

Question prompted:

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PARTIAL QUALIFICATION AND MICRO-QUALIFICATION?

- Partial qualification must be based on SQ

HOW MANY SETS OF LEARNING OUTCOMES CAN BE COMBINED AND WHAT IS THEIR MINIMAL AND MAXIMAL VOLUME?

- 2 – 9 CSVET – recommended, but the maximal volume is not limited



Planning the programmes

▪CAN THE SETS OF LEARNING OUTCOMES BE COMBINED FROM DIFFERENT STANDARDS?

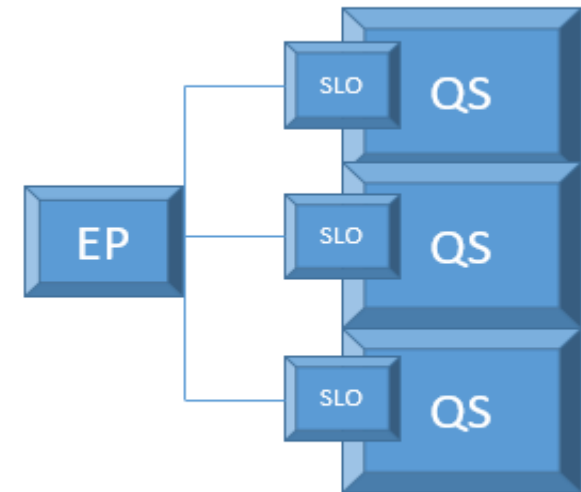
Yes, to answer the demand for flexibility, and if certain standards do not contain skills needed and recognized on the labour market

e.g. managing a family farm (1. QS agromeliorator 2. QS – flower gardener 3. SQ – agroturistic technician)

(!) it is recommended not to exceed three different QS

▪CAN THE SETS OF LEARNING OUTCOMES WITH DIFFERENT LEVELS BE COMBINED?

YES, but it is recommended not to combine more then one level above or below



Planning the programmes

- **HOW TO NAME THESE PROGRAMMES?**

not possible to prescribe because of many possible combinations of sets of learning outcomes

unless they consist of one SLO, where they take over the name of the SLO from CROQF

the names of programs for acquiring micro-qualifications CAN NOT be the same as the names of qualifications from which they are taken over(!)

The name should contain concise information from which it is possible to read which competencies candidates acquire with the completion of the programme

e.g. Educational programme for acquiring microqualification Internet marketing and branding

Methodology for creating adult education programmes for acquiring microqualifications

THE METHODOLOGY

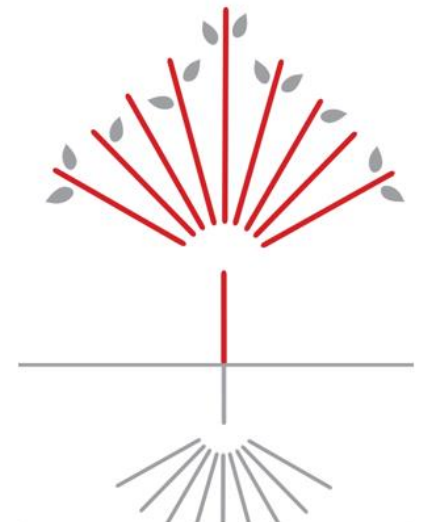
focused on further elaboration and

placement of microqualifications in the Croatian context of adult education system

THE METHODOLOGY CONTAINS:

- recommendations for planning, creating and designing the programmes
- interpretation of definitions prescribed by the CROQF Act

AND defines and prescribes elements of the programmes



A SET OF LEARNING OUTCOME IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF EVERY QUALIFICATION STANDARD.

EACH SET OF LEARNING OUTCOMES, according to the CROQF Act, already consist:

- the name of the set of learning outcome(LO);
- list of LO;
- level of SLO;
- volume;
- conditions for enrollment into SLO;
- material and personnel conditions necessary for performing of SLO;
- procedure and examples of assessment of LO
(...)



Elements of the programmes

ALL THESE DESCRIPTORS ALREADY PRESENT THE REGULAR ELEMENTS OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

they are an integral parts of the new programmes and must be taken over from the Register (!)

ADDITIONALLY the programmes need to contain:

- link to documents on the basis of which programme was created (OS, SQ)
- distribution of teaching hours (theoretical, practical and self-learning activities)
- ways of acquiring learning outcomes
- methods and forms of work
- examples of assessment
- list of literature (...)



Agencija za
strukovno obrazovanje
i obrazovanje odraslih

SIJEČANJ 2022.

METODOLOGIJA

za izradu programa obrazovanja odraslih
za stjecanje mikrokvalifikacija,
djelomičnih kvalifikacija i cjelovitih
kvalifikacija financiranih putem vaučera i
drugih izvora financiranja





What if a set of learning outcome is not part of the qualification standard?

the providers **can develop sets of learning outcomes**

based on sets of competencies or key jobs from the
OCCUPATIONAL STANDARD registered in CROQF

Register

or create independent **sets of competencies, and sets of learning outcomes**

(in the

according to the Methodology for development of OS
competence of Ministry of Labour)

METODOLOGIJA ZA IZRADU STANDARDA ZANIMANJA I SKUPOVA KOMPETENCIJA



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sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike

After the Methodology was ready...

...NUMEROUS CONSULTATIONS AND COORDINATION ACTIVITIES BETWEEN MAIN STAKEHOLDERS FOLLOWED

- **Ministry of Labour and Croatian Employment Service**
 - consultations and promotion of the voucher system
 - financing the programmes
- **Agency for VET and Adult Education**
 - developing new programmes
 - organising workshops for the institutions and helping them to develop their own programmes
- **Ministry of Science and Education**
 - coordinating the process and issuing decisions for the implementation of programmes

Numbers today

- **SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE VOUCHER SYSTEM:**

173 educational institutions are currently registered for the award of vouchers

There are 243 different educational programs

(88 for the acquisition of digital and 48 for the acquisition of green skills and 107 for the acquisition of general skills).

a total of 19,026 REQUESTS FOR VOUCHERS have been received

14,788 requests were approved

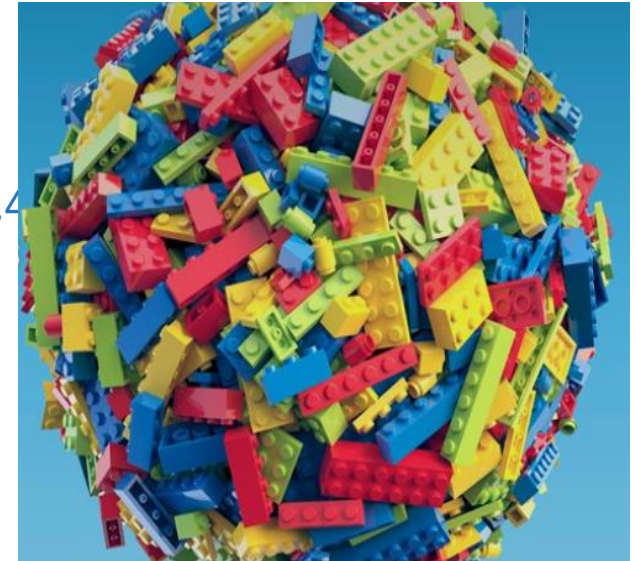
2,897 USERS are included in the education programme in the moment

10,466 USERS COMPLETED THE EDUCATION AND WERE ISSUED A CERTIFICATE/CERTIFICATE OF ACQUIRED COMPETENCES/MICRO-QUALIFICATIONS

The succes of implementation of micro-qualification

- Adult learning participation in Croatia was traditionally low.
- Measured over a 4-week period, only 4.4% of adults participated in adult learning in 2022 compared to 10.8% on average in the EU, and time constraints are among the major barriers to participation.
- By shortening the duration of training programmes, implementation of micriocredentials has been identified as a likely way to improve adult learning participation.

- ACCORDING TO THE LATEST EUROSTAT RESULTS FOR 2023 - CROATIA IS AT 6.4



Some of the programmes from different sectors and different enrollment conditions

- **Programme for acquiring micro-qualification diagnostics and servicing electric vehicles**
 - enrollment conditions: full qualification at level 4.1 – auto mechatronics technician, auto mechanic or auto electrician
- **Programme for acquiring micro-qualification basic development of web pages**
 - enrollment conditions: full qualification at level 4.2 in the field of electrical engineering and computing
- **Programme for acquiring micro-qualification advanced web page development**
- **Programme for acquiring micro-qualification pig breeding**
 - enrollment conditions: full qualification at level 1
- **Programme for acquiring micro-qualification operating an excavator**
 - enrollment conditions: full qualification at level 1, min. age 18 years, medical certificate form medicine of work, driver's licence of the appropriate category
- **Programme for acquiring micro-qualification washing, disinfecting and maintaining laundry in hotels and hospitals**
 - enrollment conditions: full qualification at level 1, medical certificate form medicine of work

Recognition of informal and non-formal learning

- The introduction of programmes for acquiring microcredentials enabled the introduction of recognition of prior learning
- The Act on Adult Education defined recognition of prior learning as validation programmes
 - after validation procedure, the candidates are rewarded the public document with the same value as the one rewarded upon completing formal education
- Validation programmes are based on a structure of microcredentials, the skills and knowledge are measured against the same standards as in educational programmes
- The methods of validation are adjusted to the individuals and the assessment should take place on a work, in simulated situations and practicums
- The Rulebook on conducting validation of prior learning came into force in June 2024.
- The Methodology for the development of validation programmes was developed in september 2024.
- The AVETAE is in the process of educating practitioners on validation procedures and assessment methods...
- We are expecting the first validation programmes by June 2025

Thank you for the attention!

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