Rationale of the strategy
The 2011-strategy was published as an innovation of the 2007 ‘Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance’ of the Slovak Republic. The purpose of the innovation was to focus more on developing key competencies, as well as on the competencies that enable individuals to develop qualifications and personal growth. The strategy aims to strengthen individuals’ awareness of the need for permanent education, which provides them with skills and competencies for sustainable employability, for success in society and for development of their personal interests. The main stakeholders of the lifelong learning system are all citizens, employers, schools, educational institutions (incl. further education), guidance and counselling centres, crafts and trade associations, local/regional governments, recruitment agencies and nongovernmental organizations.

Concept of lifelong learning
Lifelong learning is a summary of all the activities that take place during the life-span of an individual in order to improve knowledge, skills and abilities. It is essentially a systemic approach towards education from early childhood until active life in the senior age, which encompasses the area of active interaction and integration of the individual in the society and his or her internal fulfilment of personal interests. Lifelong learning is focused on a learning individual who has access to school education and further education. Lifelong learning maintains the principles of quality and equality of all ages, regardless of prior educational attainment.

Main challenges
- Low participation of adults in lifelong learning (except university graduates)
- Inconsistency of graduates’ skills and labour market demand
- Lack of internal resources and external support for career guidance and counselling
- Funding for further education is insufficient

Main targets and measures
- Creating a network of institutions authorized to recognize further education learning outcomes
- Creating a sustainable communication system between educational institutions and employers
- Enabling information exchange about knowledge and skills needed in the labour market
- Building a sustainable network of career guidance and counselling centres for adults to enable direct consultation with professionals
- Creating a financial tool to support further education

Particular feature of the strategy
The implementation of the Slovak lifelong learning strategy involves the establishment of four system tools. One of these tools is a ‘communication platform for educational institutions and employers’, which aims to link education and employment. To bring these two sectors together, it is necessary to create unified concepts for schools, universities and further education providers, to transform curricula into a consistent format in terms of learning outcomes, and to link them to qualification standards. The validation and recognition of learning outcomes is also considered. The communication platform will enable employers to evaluate the extent to which graduates of particular schools meet the requirements for individual work positions under existing employment standards. The benefit for schools lies primarily in the feedback for their further improvement. A standardised description of graduates’ profiles will clearly show which key competencies an individual is able to obtain within the school system and how they can be advanced in further education.
References to other relevant documents:

- Slovakia. Ministry of Education. 2007. *Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance Strategy*
- Slovakia. 2009. *Act no. 568/2009 on Lifelong Learning*

Stakeholders involved in the development of the strategy:

- Representatives of employers, personal and guidance and counselling institutions, experts on formal and further education, as well as experts from the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport.

Stakeholders responsible for implementation of the strategy:

- Educational institutions, guidance and counselling centres, employers, professional and trade associations, recruitment agencies, non-governmental associations and representatives, local governments

Further readings and web links:

- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic: [https://www.minedu.sk](https://www.minedu.sk)

Keywords: capacity building; empowerment; information society; education and employment; prior learning evaluation; educational cooperation