



For the excellence in Vocational Education in Europe

## Deliverable 3.4.2 Analysis of the results of the survey on key competences

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Author: Julia Fellingner, Mariya Dzhengozova



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## 1. Introduction

This report gives an overview of the methodology used to define the key competences relevant for the purpose of this project, i.e. to find a common ground on which the VetUp trainings organised by the Polish partner WSEI should be based on.

In a first step, key competences were defined based on different European, global and national sources. Secondly, for analysing which of the defined key competences the VetUp trainings should finally focus on, a survey was carried out among employers in the countries participating in the future trainings: Bulgaria, Spain and France.

The responses were then analysed using descriptive statistics in order to reach consensus on the four key competences to be used in the VetUP trainings, to complement the project partners' current training portfolios.

## 2. Current training offer by the VetUp project partners

### **Bulgaria:**

The Bulgarian partner DP BGCPD (member of SIPOB), organise training measures for the target group of long-term unemployed people. A recent pilot project focusses on professional orientation and consulting. Topics include communication, teamwork, conflict management as well as knowledge in mathematics or Bulgarian language.

### **France:**

The 'Public Interest Group – Vocational Training and Professional Insertion' (GIP- FCIP) Créteil is the 1st Educational regional district in France. It represents 600 professional development paths, 32 000 adult trainees in around 180 schools per year. Its main purposes include the implementation and development of cooperation at 'academy level' in the areas of adult vocational training and education and professional insertion. The GIP – FCIP acts as an authority and administrative support structure for the GRETA Network in its territory, where GRETA is part of the strategy for continued education for adults and vocational education. The GRETA network is thus a very diverse organisation providing services, education and training in all fields and for all levels. The programs offer training in hard and soft skills. Most of the programs are aimed at job seekers and unqualified or poorly qualified workers and youths.

### **Spain:**

The students seeking vocational training in the Spanish partner organisation IDEA offer a variety of choice in the subjects they approach. A course focused on cookery serves a specific example, which can be generalised: 'students will have acquired the general competence to develop the procedure of pre-processing, preparing, presenting and preserving any kinds of food and decide on gastronomic offers, applying the appropriate cooking techniques, without assistance, and meeting the quality and economic objectives, while respecting safety and health rules and hygienic practices in food handling.

This general competence is divided into individual skill units (UC) such as:

- Act in accordance with health & safety and environmental protection regulations in hospitality services (UC0711\_2).
- Decide on simple gastronomic offers, and manage and monitor food provision (UC0259\_2).
- Pre-process and preserve all kinds of food (UC0260\_2).
- Prepare basic culinary preparations for multiple purposes and basic cuisine (UC0261\_2).

- Prepare and present the most relevant courses of the regional cuisine in Spain and the international cuisine (UC0262\_2).

The professional skills are acquired through the learning outcomes defined within the related (more general) Training Modules (MF), such as, in this case:

- Safety & health and environmental protection in hospitality services (MF0711\_2).
- Basic gastronomic offers and provision systems (MF0259\_2).
- Food pre-processing and preservation (MF0260\_2).
- Culinary techniques (MF0261\_2).
- Culinary products (MF0262\_2).
- Practical training at the workplace in cookery (MP0017).<sup>1</sup>

As a reference, the learning outcomes included in the Practical training at the workplace that complete and reinforce the learning outcomes acquired in the other training modules, are (among others):

- Collaborate on preparing gastronomic offers such as menus, lists or others (galas, banquets, etc.), in accordance with their different natures.
- Differentiate food and beverages characteristics taking in consideration specific gastronomic offers.
- Collaborate on the calculation of material costs to estimate possible prices on gastronomic offers.
- Collaborate on different culinary products preparations and carry out other pre-processing work, so as to further use in recipes or for sale.
- Collaborate on the finishing and application of basic cooking techniques, and, when required, preservation techniques to obtain basic culinary preparations.
- Collaborate on the finishing and regeneration techniques required by culinary preparations for their use or further consumption.
- Cooperate in the analysis and application of rules and hygienic and sanitary conditions referring to production units or food and beverages services, to prevent food poisoning risks or environmental pollution.
- Collaborate on the design and preparation of decorative elements of all kinds of culinary preparations, applying appropriate graphic and decorative techniques.
- Take part in the company's working processes, following the rules and instructions established at the workplace.

As can be derived from this list, there is a lack of soft skill training; the curriculum is based on the guidelines presented by the government for vocational training modules. The main focus for VET in IDEA as well as other organisations within the network is the theoretical and practical skills of the subject of the training, with little to no focus on soft skills (empathy, behaviour, communication).

### 3. Selection of Key Competences

The list of key competences selected for this survey, was based on Cedefop's 'Skills in online vacancies'<sup>2</sup>, outcomes of the Erasmus+ project 'Key4' (2015-17), which analysed the importance of key competences for internships in selected enterprises, and the 'Future Work Skills' report by the University of Phoenix<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> legal basis for all learning outcomes information acquired by the holder of the Certificate in each MF

<sup>2</sup> Cedefop (2019)

<sup>3</sup> Davies A., Fidler D., Gorbis M. (2011)

According to research conducted by Cedefop, through the analysis of online job advertisements, the competences most sought by EU companies in 2019, were:

- Adapt to change / adapt to changing situations
- Work as a team / in teams
- Teamwork principles
- Assist customers / Customer service
- Create solutions to problems
- Communication
- Think proactively
- Show responsibility
- Project management
- Work independently
- Develop strategies to solve problems
- Adjust priorities / prioritize tasks
- Tolerate stress
- Team building
- Think creatively
- Manage time
- Analyse problems for opportunities
- Demonstrate enthusiasm
- Lead a team

The following key competences were also mentioned as relevant in some countries, but were not further pursued for this study. They would not be suitable as subjects for training, as they are either too specific or too general:

- Use a computer
- English
- Use Microsoft office / Office software / Office systems
- Foreign languages for international careers
- Quality standards

The stakeholders of the Erasmus+ project KEY4 ranked the following key competences as most important:

1. Verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organisation
2. Work in a team structure
3. Make decisions and solve problems
4. Plan, organise and prioritise work

These four competences can easily be embedded into the previous list, therefore a combination of the two rankings, was presented to the partner countries.

Additionally, the competences reported in the 'Future Work Skills' report by the University of Phoenix<sup>4</sup> were, which are based on six drivers including extreme longevity, rise of smart machines and systems, computational world, new media ecology, super-structured organisations, and a globally connected world, were also taken into account for the final list presented to the companies:

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<sup>4</sup> Davies A., Fidler D., Gorbis M. (2011)

1. Sense-making (the ability to determine the deeper meaning or significance of what is being expressed)
2. Social Intelligence (ability to connect to others in a deep and direct way, to sense and stimulate reactions and desired interactions)
3. Cross-cultural competency (ability to operate in different cultural settings)
4. Virtual collaboration (the ability to effectively collaborate with a team in a virtual environment)
5. New-media literacy (the ability to use new media offered by the market)
6. Novel and adaptive thinking (the ability to think outside of the box. Adaptation to rapidly changing conditions and supplementing knowledge with new information)
7. Cognitive load management (the ability to prioritize information in terms of relevance)
8. Design mindset (skillful modeling of processes and tasks in such a way as to achieve the set goal)
9. Trans-disciplinarity (global thinking that goes beyond the scope of a given field)
10. Computational thinking (skillful use of data and the ability to think based on collected information and using it in the most effective way)

These competences were merged and added to the previously established ones, concluding in the following list of 20 competences to rank:

- Adapt to changes
- Work as a team
- Make decisions and solve problems
- Communication skills
- Think proactively
- Show responsibility
- Project management
- Work independently
- Plan, organise and prioritise work
- Stress management
- Creative thinking
- Analyse problems for opportunities
- Empathy
- Lead a team
- Computational thinking
- Transdisciplinarity
- Social Intelligence
- Cross-cultural competency
- Virtual Collaboration
- New-Media literacy

## 4. Company surveys

In order to establish which of the above-mentioned key competences the VetUp trainings should focus on, company surveys were carried out among the project partners. As the partners in Poland are responsible for organizing, but not participating in the VetUp trainings, only enterprises in Bulgaria, France and Spain were included in the research.

The surveys were carried out between March and May 2020, thus during the first wave of the Covid19-pandemic in Europe, which made reaching stakeholders more difficult than envisaged.

Nevertheless, the consortium managed to get responses from 15 Bulgarian, 18 French and 21 Spanish enterprises. They ranked the 20 proposed key competences according to their perceived importance from 1 to 20, 1 being considered most important and 20 least important.

#### **Bulgaria:**

The Bulgarian project partners consulted small and medium-sized companies employing up to 80 employees, active in various sectors of the economy, including education, real estate, construction, tourism or manufacturing. Bulgarian enterprises ranked the suggested key competences as follows (n=15):

1. Work as a team
2. Work independently
3. Communication skills
4. Show responsibility
5. Plan, organise and prioritise work
6. Take decisions & solve problems
7. Computational thinking
8. Think proactively
9. Analyse problems for opportunities
10. Adapt to changes
11. Creative thinking
12. Lead a team
13. Stress management
14. Virtual Collaboration
15. Project management
16. Empathy
17. Transdisciplinarity
18. Social intelligence
19. Cross-cultural competency
20. New-media Literacy

#### **France:**

The GRETA organisation deals with almost all professional fields (HR, Digital, Tertiary industry, Industry, Social Services, Construction, tourism and restauration, transport and logistics, etc), and has therefore asked a large panel of companies to respond to the questionnaire. Companies which have participated in this survey ranged from multinational to small business and small associations. The target group for the survey was therefore large, and tried to represent the network's diversity as much as possible. Surveys were returned from entities including airports (Aéroport de Paris), ENEDIS (French public sector energy distribution company), film companies (such as METISFILMS), SUEZ (a large multinational company in the construction and energy sector), FM logistics (a logistics company), Public organisations such as "Etablissement Public Territorial Plaine Commune" a sort of entity/representation of local/regional government, and companies working in the social field.

French companies (n=18) ranked the competences in the following order:

1. Plan, organise and prioritise work
2. Take decisions & solve problems
3. Communication skills
4. Think proactively
5. Work as a team
6. Analyse problems for opportunities
7. Lead a team
8. Work independently
9. Virtual Collaboration

10. Computational thinking
11. Adapt to changes
12. Show responsibility
13. Empathy
14. Social intelligence
15. Creative thinking
16. Project management
17. Transdisciplinarity
18. New-media Literacy
19. Stress management
20. Cross-cultural competency

### **Spain:**

IDEA included companies of different sizes, needs and logistics, from big enterprises with hundreds of employees, to SMEs, including family-owned companies with only 3 employees. The added value of surveying this variety of companies was to connect with them so they could integrate their trainees in their structures in the future. Given that IDEA mainly offers courses in 'Social and healthcare for people at home'; 'Health and social care for dependent people in social institutions'; 'Cookery'; 'Community Mediation'; 'Mechanical Manufacturing'; 'Basic Operations in Restaurants and Bar Services', the companies surveyed are rooted in these fields.

The Spanish employers surveyed (n=23) delivered the following ranking:

1. Work as a team
2. Show responsibility
3. Take decisions & solve problems
4. Adapt to changes
5. Plan, organise and prioritise work
6. Communication skills
7. Think proactively
8. Empathy
9. Social intelligence
10. Analyse problems for opportunities
11. Transdisciplinarity
12. Creative thinking
13. Stress management
14. Work independently
15. Project management
16. Computational thinking
17. New-media Literacy
18. Lead a team
19. Cross-cultural competency
20. Virtual Collaboration

## **5. Analysing the results**

We compared average and median results of the individual companies' rankings in each country, and then proceeded to a general ranking per country. Whenever the 'first' ranking numbers were not entirely conclusive, we looked further at how many companies ranked the competence second, third or fourth. In a second step we created weighted averages from the country results, according to the

number of respondents from each country (BG 15, FR 18, ES 23), in order to reach a balanced result. According to this analysis, the following competences were the highest ranked:

1. Work as a team
2. Take decisions & solve problems
3. Plan, organise and prioritise work
4. Communication skills
5. Show responsibility

These were followed by (in descending order of importance):

6. Think proactively
7. Adapt to changes
8. Analyse problems for opportunities
9. Work independently
10. Computational thinking
11. Empathy
12. Lead a team
13. Creative thinking
14. Social intelligence
15. Transdisciplinarity
Virtual Collaboration
16. Stress management
17. Project management
18. New-media Literacy
19. Cross-cultural competency

## 6. Conclusion

VetUp consortium partners have discussed the results of the survey focusing on the selection of competences to include in the upcoming training sessions (organised by WSEI). Based on the training needs of their VET networks, partners decided to slightly change the ranking from the survey i.e., giving priority to the following competences (see table below).

Ranking of competences covered in the upcoming training (as discussed and agreed by consortium partners)	Ranking of competences according to the overall results of the companies' surveys carried out in Bulgaria, France and Spain
1. Plan, organise and prioritise work	1. Work as a team
2. Communication skills	2. Take decisions & solve problems
3. Work as a team	3. Plan, organise and prioritise work
4. Adapt to changes	4. Communication skills
	7. Adapt to changes

The table shows that the most important competence to include in the VetUP training is 'to be able to plan, organise and prioritise work' (ranked as third important by the surveys). This competence is followed by the ability to communicate and to work as a team (ranked respectively as fourth and first important by the surveys). The 'adapt to changes' competence was not among the top five

competences, according to the survey results, but partners deemed it more important as compared to the ability to take decisions & solve problems, which will not be included in the upcoming training sessions.

Focusing on the selected competences is expected to increase the overall value of the VET offer of VETup partners / their networks as it will make it more accurate, realistic, responsive to the needs of the labour market and thus, will provide VET learners with better employment opportunities.<sup>5</sup>

## 8. Sources

Cedefop (2019): Skills Panorama – skills in online job advertisements, online:

<https://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/dashboard/skills-online-job-advertisements?country=EU&occupation=#3> [accessed Jan. 2020]

Davies, Anna / Fidler, Devin / Gorbis, Marina (2011): Future of Work Skills 2020. Institute for the Future for the University of Phoenix Research Institute Available online:

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<sup>5</sup> The VetUP training is conceptualised as train-the-trainer i.e., it targets teachers and trainers, school headteachers, training managers (of the VETup network of VET providers) who will then transfer the competences acquired to the VET learners.

## 9. Annex: List of companies surveyed

### Bulgaria

1. Tropicana
2. Arco
3. Knauf
4. меридиан 22
5. Амперел
6. Морски хоризонти
7. Бош-отдел автомобилно оборудване
8. "Хамбургер България" ЕООД
9. Транспрес
10. Админсофт
11. БГСервиз
12. Датикум
13. Крез
14. Елит монтаж
15. Промет сейф

### France

1. GHU
2. ADP
3. Agence Rousseau
4. EPT
5. you industrie
6. tveac
7. travail entraide
8. suiez
9. slip
10. paris batiment
11. pampa
12. metisfilms
13. elior
14. greta gmti
15. FM logistics
16. enedis
17. terideal
18. DOTT

### Spain

1. MAXFRUIT, SL
2. SERCOVAL
3. MARTÍNEZ CANO GESTIÓN, SL
4. ESCOLA DE CUINA CREMADES
5. COCINA CON AMOR
6. AMCOR FLEXIBLES

7. VIALTERRA MEDIO AMBIENTE
8. RESIDENCIA MUNICIPAL
9. OCASO SEGUROS SA (ALZIRA)
10. CLEAR PET SL
11. DUEN SL
12. JOSE ALAPONT
13. PLANTIPLUS
14. GUINEA PUB
15. TOP MOTOS
16. GREFUSA
17. HOSPITAL AGUAS VIVAS
18. CADERSA
19. SUMINISTROS ALZIRA
20. PSIQUES
21. INDUSTRIAS SALES-PIMLAC
22. COOPCARLET
23. LUIMARMÍ