



Implementation Scenarios Quality Standards Professional Driver Training

Austria

Deliverable:	No 16	Version:	1
WP:	4	Last update:	October 2012
Prepared by:	Simone Kunz, Tanja Bacher (3srl, AT)		
With contributions from:	./.		

Standard 1: Embedding directive 2003/59/EC into national VET systems

The implementation of directive 2003/59/EC is interconnected with and embedded into the national vocational education and training systems of the participating countries.

The initial qualification for professional drivers is partly embedded into the Austrian VET system: Drivers who participated in the three year apprenticeship training to become a professional driver gain the initial qualification together with their final apprenticeship examination. Although there is apprenticeship training for professional drivers in Austria since 1987 just a marginal part of drivers have followed apprenticeship training in Austria, most of the drivers still perform their job on the basis of the driving license. Considering the data on apprenticeships there were app. 111 apprentices in professional driving (both cargo and passenger transport) between 2001 and 2011, compared with app. 140.000 drivers working in passenger and cargo transport this number is very low. The periodic training as defined in directive 2003/59 is not embedded in the Austrian VET system and is thus a more statutory measure. In order to have a legal basis for the implementation of directive 2003/59 aspects of road safety and cost effectiveness were focused in Austria. This has led to the fact that the responsibility for directive 2003/59 is in the Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology and not with the Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture. Hence, the implementation of directive 2003/59 did not follow the usual approach when implementing new VET schemes, since this would usually be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (with exception of apprenticeship training where responsibilities are shared between the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and the Ministry for Economy, Family and Youth). In summary there are interfaces between the apprenticeship training for professional drivers and the initial qualification for CPC, but there is no such interface between the apprenticeship training and the periodic training according to the CPC. Austria has not yet launched the Austrian Qualifications Framework (AQF) (currently there is still a draft circulating), thus there are not yet any qualifications referenced to the AQF including the CPC. With the implementation of directive 2003/59, drivers have to hold a 'certificate of professional competence' (CPC) besides their driving license. The initial qualification applies to all new drivers (driving licence issued after 9 September 2009) and the 5-yearly periodic training applies to all professional drivers. The periodic training courses have, as mentioned above, so far no interrelation with the formal Austrian initial vocational education and training system and there are no certificates issued (just a confirmation of participation). It is not possible in Austria to enter with the CPC into closely related occupations. There is the possibility to change between cargo and passenger transportation as specified in the Bundesgesetzblatt II Nr. 139/2008. Those who want doing so, do not have to answer those questions which are the same for both tracks (namely issues 1a to 1c, 2a and 3a to 3f specified in annex I of the Bundesgesetzblatt II Nr. 139/2008). Since in Austria there are merely further education pathways available for professional drivers (most of them are

company-based trainings), the CPC is not required for entering further education. In fact, before directive 2003/59 was legally anchored it was easier for related professions (construction technician, motor-vehicle electrician, motor-vehicle technician, agricultural-engines technician or forwarding merchant) to enter the profession of professional drivers, since – after completing an apprenticeship in the mentioned professions and a C driving licence – it was possible to participate in the final apprenticeship examination to become a professional driver. Now with directive 2003/59 implemented it is not yet sure, if there have to be completed two tests (initial qualification and apprenticeship examination) for doing so.

Since the structure of the Austrian Qualifications Framework is still not yet decided it is difficult to perceive on which level professional driving will be placed once the framework is established. Most likely just the three-year apprenticeship will be referenced, since the CPC is officially not perceived as a qualification in Austria. For referencing the CPC different measures would be needed: Firstly, the responsibility for the CPC should be shifted from the Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology to the Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture or at least responsibilities should be shared between both ministries, because so far the directive has a more administrative and not an educational character. Another important impediment for referencing the CPC is that it does not follow a learning outcomes based approach, thus for referencing the CPC to any NQF or finally the EQF it would be necessary to apply a learning outcomes based description of the CPC. In order to raise the quality of the initial qualification most of the interviewed experts in Austria advocated for a compulsory training for the initial qualification instead of just another test. This could also lead to more acceptance or validation of the CPC as a qualification and a different educational path to become a professional driver, besides the apprenticeship training for professional driving. As the situation is now it is difficult to communicate that the initial qualification invented by directive 2003/59 leads to better qualified drivers with more extensive knowledge, skills and competences. Considering periodic training the situation is more or less the same, most experts perceive periodic training as measure that does not lead to the expected outcomes since drivers are just marking time in order to achieve the 35 hours of periodic training. A way to improve periodic training could be that the modules are structured more flexible (what regards content of the modules etc.) as well as the recognition of informal and non-formal acquired skills of drivers. Such measures are not yet in place in Austria, but a kind of self-assessment tool for drivers to assess their knowledge, skills and competence in a specific field (e.g. eco-driving) could be invented in order to find out what knowledge, skills and competence the driver has already in this issue. This could build the basis for deciding whether a driver already has acquired the required knowledge, skills and competence in a specific module or if it is necessary to participate in the module.

Standard 2: Entry requirements

Professional driving is perceived as an occupation that requires certain life abilities and affinities before entering into initial training for professional drivers and therefore before entering into the profession as such. It is therefore considered as an occupation that cannot be performed by anybody.

So far, professional driving in Austria is generally not yet perceived as an occupation that requires certain life abilities and affinities, it is still assumed that anybody holding the C/C1 license is able to drive a truck. This perception has not really changed by implementing directive 2003/59 both from the side of society and drivers themselves. Since Austria has chosen the test-only option and periodic training seems to be rather marking time than real learning, drivers widely perceive the new rules as an additional burden. Yet the recognition of informally / nonformally acquired skills is not very common in Austria for any occupation since there is not yet a system in place to recognise such skills. So far it is not possible to participate in the initial qualification test without possessing a driving licence, since this is a prerequisite when applying for the initial qualification test. There is a trend that those who want to become a professional driver and have not yet a valid driving license do the initial qualification test at once with their driving licence test.

Although there is not yet the perception in Austria that professional driving is an occupation requiring specific life abilities and/or affinities, the experts interviewed in Austria highlighted that personal skills will become more important in the coming years. Asked about qualification requirements for professional drivers the experts interviewed mentioned that a driver should have a technical understanding and a sense for traffic in general. They shouldn't have any potential for aggression and should be able to remain calm in stressful situations. A sense of responsibility is particularly important. To be flexible in terms of time is also a relevant factor. Further logistics and the transport geography should be understood as well as the responsibility and the awareness that one can be dangerous with the vehicle is very relevant for drivers. According to the interviewed experts it seems that professional driving is more and more understood as an occupation that requires certain abilities in the transport sector, but this not yet applies to society in general. For improving the general perception of professional drivers in Austria more positive marketing and communication strategies would be needed. Until now most news regarding professional driving is news on accidents or traffic loads because of cargo transports going through Austria. Another factor for improving the perception that not everybody can become a professional driver and that certain requirements have to be met by professionals working in this field would be that drivers themselves show an attitude that they are willing to learn. Most interviewed trainers stated that it is very difficult to teach somebody that does not want to learn. As mentioned before, skills acquired in another occupation or in the workplace in the field of professional driving are not yet recognised in Austria, since there are not yet any measures in place to do so. One way of starting such a process could be to invent self-assessment tools, that drivers could use in order to get an overview on what they are already able to do and what has to be improved. Further such a self-assessment could be used for job beginners to assess whether they are qualified to work as professional driver.

Standard 3: Training design and choice of methods within initial qualification and periodic training

Choice of training design and methods within professional driver training reflect all kind of learning outcomes related to the training, the specific needs of the target group and the needs of heterogeneous groups. They incorporate a high level of practical relevance and reflect the state of the art of training possibilities for professional drivers.

Since the directive is not learning outcomes oriented also the training methods in Austria do not reflect the knowledge, skills and competence that should be achieved through training. In general there is no obligatory training to achieve the initial qualification; just a test has to be passed. Thus, training methods just apply for periodic training, since app. 60% of all drivers who have to do the periodic training have not yet participated in periodic training not much can be said about how the trainings are conducted and which methods are used. Furthermore there are no regulations in place indicating how periodic training should be conducted, which means that each provider decides how to do it. Further the directive does not point out whether the periodic training should be taught in pure theory lessons or whether practical parts should be integrated. In the opinion of the experts load safety, for example, can only be done practically and not theoretical. Most experts believe that providers will conduct the training mainly theoretical in order to be as cost-efficient as possible. The interviewed expert of the Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology mentioned that they are constantly confronted with applications of training providers that do not even have a truck, which is not very reasonable in the opinion of the Ministry. So most of the interviewed experts criticise that it is not explicitly mentioned in the directive and the Bundesgesetzblatt II Nr. 139/2008 regulating the directive in Austria, how this should be handled. They feel that certain topics should be taught practically and that this should be thoroughly made clear in the Directive and its Austrian counterpart.

However, generally, as much practice as possible is necessary in the opinion of the experts: Drivers should have tutorials directly on the vehicle. There are positive results available concerning the impact of practical exercises on processing what was learnt. Another aspect, regarding an interviewed expert, is that it is very hard to find a truck driver who can concentrate more than seven hours consistently with just theory input. The application of rules and health theory is taught theoretically; and just partly lighten up with practical aspects.

Training methods are very important, since besides the trainer it depends very much on the methods used how issues taught are understood by the drivers: One can recite the issues or cover the topics interactively. If practice-based parts are included, then people are more likely able to process the learning content. In order to guarantee that the trainer / training institute chooses the right training methods this should not just be the responsibility of the training provider authorized to conduct CPC training. A nation-wide regulation that in order to conduct trainings theoretical as well as practical modules/parts should be included should be issued; this would improve the quality of periodic training. It cannot just be the market that decides, because then most providers will go for the cheapest way, which is to conduct trainings mainly theoretical. Studies show that the learning curve is usually much higher, when practice-based elements are taught. Since such training methods usually are more cost-intense, small and medium sized companies should receive subsidies for providing practical training.

Standard 4: Requirements on trainers

Training for professional drivers is implemented by well qualified and accredited trainers that possess the necessary professional abilities in terms of expert knowledge, skills and competences within the subject they teach and the necessary pedagogical knowledge, skills and competences in order to implement high quality training for professional drivers.

The Directive just states that for approved training institutes there must be regular staff training and adequate learning facilities. However, in terms of the professional abilities of the training staff no concrete guidelines are formulated in the directive. In the Austrian Bundesgesetzblatt regulating the implementation of directive 2003/59 certain occupations with a certain background are defined as adequate, this is a rather unsatisfactory solution because there is a lack of fixed guidelines which occupations can do so. Experts criticise that there is not even a hint in the policy how to cope with this topic. The requirements set in the Directive are seen as difficult to apply: It states that one should be at least a driving instructor or bring special experience; however, a trained driving instructor must not necessarily know everything relevant for load safety. Nevertheless, they can make the training. It is considered counterproductive that one has not to bring a special qualification. Within Austria there is not even for all provinces clear, if experience must be proven, it is handled quite different in the provinces ("Länder"). For example, in one province one can be approved and authorized to carry out the training, and in another province the same person would not be approved. Thus, there should be a nationally standardised procedure which requirements have to be met, so one can be approved and authorized to conduct trainings, according to the experts.

Asked about qualification requirements for trainers in Austria, experts stated that a clear curriculum indicating educational steps for trainers is missing. Usual conditions such as the minimum age for conducting training are not pointed out clearly. Moreover, there are no guidelines on teaching issues such as ethical topics (e.g. issues like racism). But in order to be able to teach, experts felt that, one needs to be authentic and should have driven a truck at least once in his/her life. When applying to become an authorised training institute information on the number, the qualification and the field of activity of the trainers including information on the necessary skills for trainers and the description of their didactical and pedagogical knowledge has to be submitted. In Austria the following trainers are allowed to conduct CPC trainings: a) Lecturers educating the apprenticeship "professional driver", b) Driving school instructors for C and D licenses; c) Persons that can prove sufficient knowledge of regulations in annex 1 of the Austrian Bundesgesetzblatt regulating the implementation of the directive in Austria, but they are not tested / regularly monitored, if they are able to conduct trainings for professional drivers.

Standard 5: Assessment & validation in initial qualification and periodic training

Assessment & validation of initial qualification and periodic training are oriented on learning outcomes, and allow the assessment of learning outcomes achieved within initial training / qualification or elsewhere.

Since Austria has chosen the test-only option for initial qualification there are no real assessment and validation procedures available besides, if the multiple choice questions were answered correctly or incorrectly. What regards periodic training there is no assessment and validation criteria used, since there is no certificate issued (just a certificate of attendance), thus being there the whole 7 hours will be enough to receive the certificate of attendance. It might occur that some training providers ask participants for an evaluation after the course, but this has nothing to do with identifying which effect the training had on the actual abilities of drivers.

This could be changed by inventing a learning outcomes based description of what should be learned in the specific training modules. Then it would be possible to develop assessment and validation criteria to proof, if the expected learning outcomes have been achieved by the driver in the training. Further a self-assessment tool as mentioned before could be developed so drivers could assess what knowledge, skills and competence they already possess and what is still needed in order to decide which kind of training is needed. This could be combined with a skills portfolio, which on the one hand could be used as a proof of the knowledge, skills and competence that a driver already possesses and on the other hand this could facilitate the recognition of training (initial / periodic training) conducted in another Member State. Also formative assessment procedures could be used in periodic training to better show the learning progress and to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment. To implement these measures in Austria it would be necessary to better define requirements for periodic training on national level, so far each province and training provider is implementing periodic training differently. Further more general assessment and validation criteria is still missing in Austria.

Standard 6: Recognition of non-/informal learning

In- and non-formal learning is equally accepted and recognised as form of learning within initial and continuous/ periodic training for professional drivers that lead to the same certificates/ proofs as those acquired within formal learning environments.

"The topic of assessment and recognition of non-formal learning has not received very much attention in Austria and few practical initiatives can be identified [...]. So far, the role of prior and non-formal learning has for the most part been touched upon in debates linked to the question of modularisation of education and training. While basically non-existent in initial education and training, modularisation has, to a limited degree, been introduced in continuing vocational training [...]. To conclude, Austria can be described as one of the EU Member States where we find the most clearly expressed scepticism towards introducing methodologies and systems in this area (Bjørnåvold 2001, S. 221-225). Although awareness for the importance of the recognition of non-/informal acquired skills has increased in the last years there is still no elaborated system in place for the recognition of non-/informal acquired knowledge, skills and competence and thus is also not yet realized for professional drivers. On legislative level in recent years some steps were taken in order to validate non-/informal acquired skills and competence. The Vocational Training Act, for example, provides under certain conditions the possibility to participate in final apprenticeship exams, for those who have worked in a specific area for several years, also for those people, who did not or just partially participated in the dual system. According to the amendment Industrial Code 2002 it is possible to receive the right to carry out an industry, also without formal certificates, but a certificate of professional competence. Further for the "Berufsaufreifeprüfung" practical knowledge in professional life is equally valid to knowledge acquired in school. In the economy there are hardly any methods for identifying and recognising informally acquired skills in use, also companies are just marginally dealing with methodologies to recognise such skills.

However, it is asserted by those experts interviewed, that if there would be a method for accrediting non/informal acquired knowledge and skills this would be a big advantage for the sector. This procedure could improve the situation greatly and increase acceptance of professional drivers. However, there is not yet any measure in place that could be adapted to the field of professional driving.

For the transport sector the recognition process would be relatively easy to establish, according to an expert: First of all the employment relationship needs to be taken into account; this information can be found in the Social Insurance System, where all employment relevant information is recorded. So it would be easy to find out what and where the respective person has worked so far and which tasks have been conducted. According to this expert an implementation solution could look as follows: If a person is working in the profession, then it could be assumed that he/she has good experience. If someone has worked for more than 20 years he/she has all the required skills. If a person was employed during a period of 5 years at least for 4 years, he/she does not need to do the full measure. When he/she was 3 years out of work, then he/she needs to brush up.

This is a rather simple approach and the time spent in a specific profession / competence must not necessarily be a proof that the necessary knowledge, skills and competence have been acquired. Thus, for a more structured procedure a combination of formal validation (equivalent to professions acquired in the formal system), summative validation (certificates outside the formal education system) as well as formative validation (description and evaluation of individual skills without standardised certificates) methods should be combined. Although this would also need a commitment from the side of the government, economy and especially companies, this is so far not the case in Austria.

Standard 7: Adapting content and training approaches to changing skills needs

Vocational education and training for professional drivers is responsive to changing skill needs and can be adapted without losing relevance, transparency and comparability of the driver CPC in Europe.

According to the interviewed experts the learning system is in general very much alive. If demands of the market or in the traffic situation are changing, appropriate responds are developed. Especially, what regards safety electronics the learning content is constantly adjusted. Since training for CPC just regards periodic training in Austria and this is not yet very often conducted it is hard to perceive whether changing skills needs can be adapted and how fast periodic training providers can respond to them. The modules to be conducted in the course of periodic training are following the suggestions made in directive 2003/59, so if changes are not considered in the directive they also won't be considered in the Bundesgesetzblatt II Nr. 139/2008 ruling the implementation of directive 2003/59, it is questionable if training providers will change their contents without legal basis. So for continuously adaption of trainings to changing work requirements in order to ensure that VET for professional drivers meets the needs of the industry and the workers it would be necessary to anchor this in the Bundesgesetzblatt regulating implementation of directive 2003/59 that regular up-dates, for example on the basis of labour market demand analysis and a accordingly adaption of training content is required and monitored.

Standard 8: Quality assurance (in periodic and initial training)

Quality assurance systems and measures are put in place for the implementation of professional driver training in the framework of directive 2003/59/EC. Quality assurance is primarily based on pedagogical considerations in order to ensure a high pedagogical quality within professional driver training.

Quality assurance systems are in place, although quality assurance is the obligation of the training provider and because of this reason might differ. In the ÖAMTC, one of the training providers for periodic training, specific

quality experts are in charge for different areas (e.g. brake and safety technology, Eco Driving, cargo safety, health and ergonomics and application of rules). The ÖAMTC also every three months tests, if the teaching contents are carried out accordingly to the state of the art technologies. Further it is secured that in different classes the same issues with the same state of the art technologies are taught. Further every three months it is discussed how to proceed, so the quality assurance system of ÖAMTC can be seen as good-practice model.

As long as quality assurance is not treated more detailed in directive 2003/59 it is unlikely that Austria will invent specific measures as defined in the Quality Standards, since the implementation approach in Austria follows very much what is prescribed in the directive. A suggestion for enhancing the assurance of quality would be that the Austrian government defines specific quality standards that should be met by the training providers when conducting periodic training courses, including regular monitoring, to determine if the quality assurance criteria is met. So far, it is just mentioned in the Bundesgesetzblatt that a quality assurance systems have to be in place, but no specifications are made how these should look like, so this should be changed in the Bundesgesetzblatt in order to guarantee that training providers and periodic training courses have a similar quality level.

List of references:

- Bjørnåvold, Jens (2001): The changing institutional and political role of non-formal learning: European trends. In: Zürcher, Reinhard (2007): Informelles Lernen und der Erwerb von Kompetenzen. Theoretische, didaktische und politische Aspekte. Online: http://erwachsenenbildung.at/downloads/service/nr2_2007_informelles_lernen.pdf (23.10.2012).
- Interviews with experts from the ÖAMTC, the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology

Annexes:

- ProfDRV (2012). *Quality Standards in Professional Driver Training in Europe - Recommendations in the Framework of Directive 2003/59/EC and the EQF*. available at: http://www.project-profdrv.eu/fileadmin/Dateien/Downloads_front/ProfDRV_WP4_del15_standards_finale_EN.pdf

For further information on the project please consult:

www.project-profdrv.eu

For further information on the paper please contact:

tanja.bacher@3s.co.at