



# EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPTIONS OF 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE GRADUATES

CONCEPT PAPER  
FOR CONSULTATION







## 1. CURRENT SITUATION

### 1.1 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE GRADUATES OPTIONS

Currently, gymnasium graduates have the following options to continue their studies:

- High school education;
- Vocational education.

**High school education** allows graduates to continue their compulsory education studies (grades 9 and 10) and the upper secondary education cycle (grades 11 and 12), and develop, deepen and adapt their competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) acquired in previous learning cycles.

High school education includes the following routes and profiles:

- a) Theoretical route, with two profiles: humanities and sciences;
- b) Technological route, comprising the following profiles: technical, services, natural resources and environmental protection;
- c) Vocational route comprising the following profiles: military, theological, sports, arts and pedagogical.

The high school programme duration, full-time mode, is currently 4 years, according to the framework plans approved by the Ministry of Education. For some full-time and part-time modes, the study duration is one year longer.

High school education is completed with the national baccalaureate exam and with the certification exam, for graduates of technological and vocational education routes.

High school graduates without a baccalaureate diploma may continue their studies with post-high school education and may further acquire qualifications level 5. Graduates with a baccalaureate diploma may continue their studies with post-high school education to acquire a qualification level 5 or with higher education, any study programme, and may acquire qualifications levels 6, 7 and 8.

High school graduates, technological and vocational education routes, who pass the certification exam, acquire a level 4 qualification certificate according to the National Qualifications Framework (technician) and the certificate supplement, according to Europass.

**Vocational education** is organised for qualifications selected according to the labour market needs, identified by local, county and regional training planning strategic documents, based on a training contract concluded between the school, the company and the student.

Vocational education is organised as follows:

- Vocational education of at least 3-year duration, organised after completion of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, as part of the upper secondary education, starting with the academic year 2014/ 2015<sup>1</sup>; various companies, together with schools, developed the first experiences of introducing elements of dual education in the vocational education;
- Traineeships of 720-hour duration, organised after completion of the 10<sup>th</sup> high school grade<sup>2</sup>, a type of provision currently specific to "Second Chance" programmes.

<sup>1</sup> Organised pursuant to Art. 23 (1) of the National Education Law. It replaces the 2-year vocational education organised after completion of 9<sup>th</sup> grade, introduced in the academic year 2012/2013, currently being eliminated.

<sup>2</sup> Type of education provision introduced after eliminating vocational route of the School of Art and organised pursuant to the provisions of OMERYS no. 5730/ 2010 approving the *Methodology for the organisation and functioning of traineeships for acquiring qualifications level 2* (currently, level 3).

Vocational education includes the subject matters for compulsory education and specialist training modules to acquire a professional qualification. The study programme is completed with a certification exam. Graduates who pass the qualification certification exam acquire a certificate of qualification level 3 according to the National Qualifications Framework (skilled worker) and the certificate supplement, according to Europass.

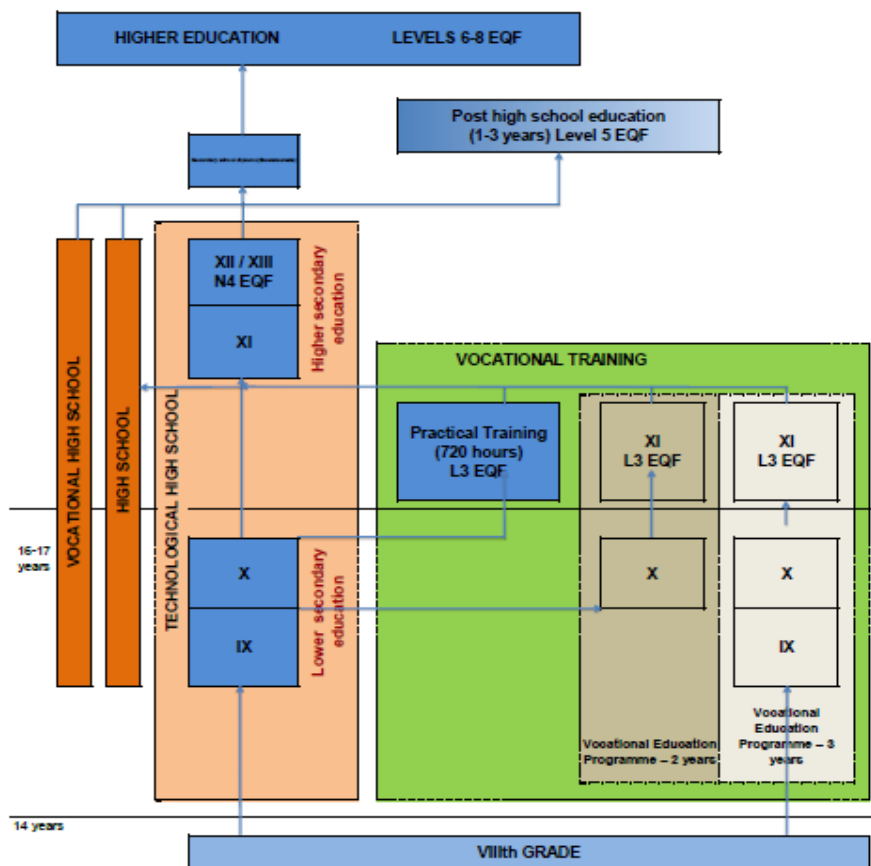
In 2014, GEO 94 introduced the option of dual vocational education<sup>3</sup>, after compulsory education (starting with age 16), based on an employment contract. Dual vocational training combines work-based learning in the company with school-based education and training, in order to acquire a professional qualification, and provide the opportunity of further study. In this case, unlike the school-based learning, work-based learning in the company is dominant, based on a contract concluded between the company and the trainee.

### Student mobility

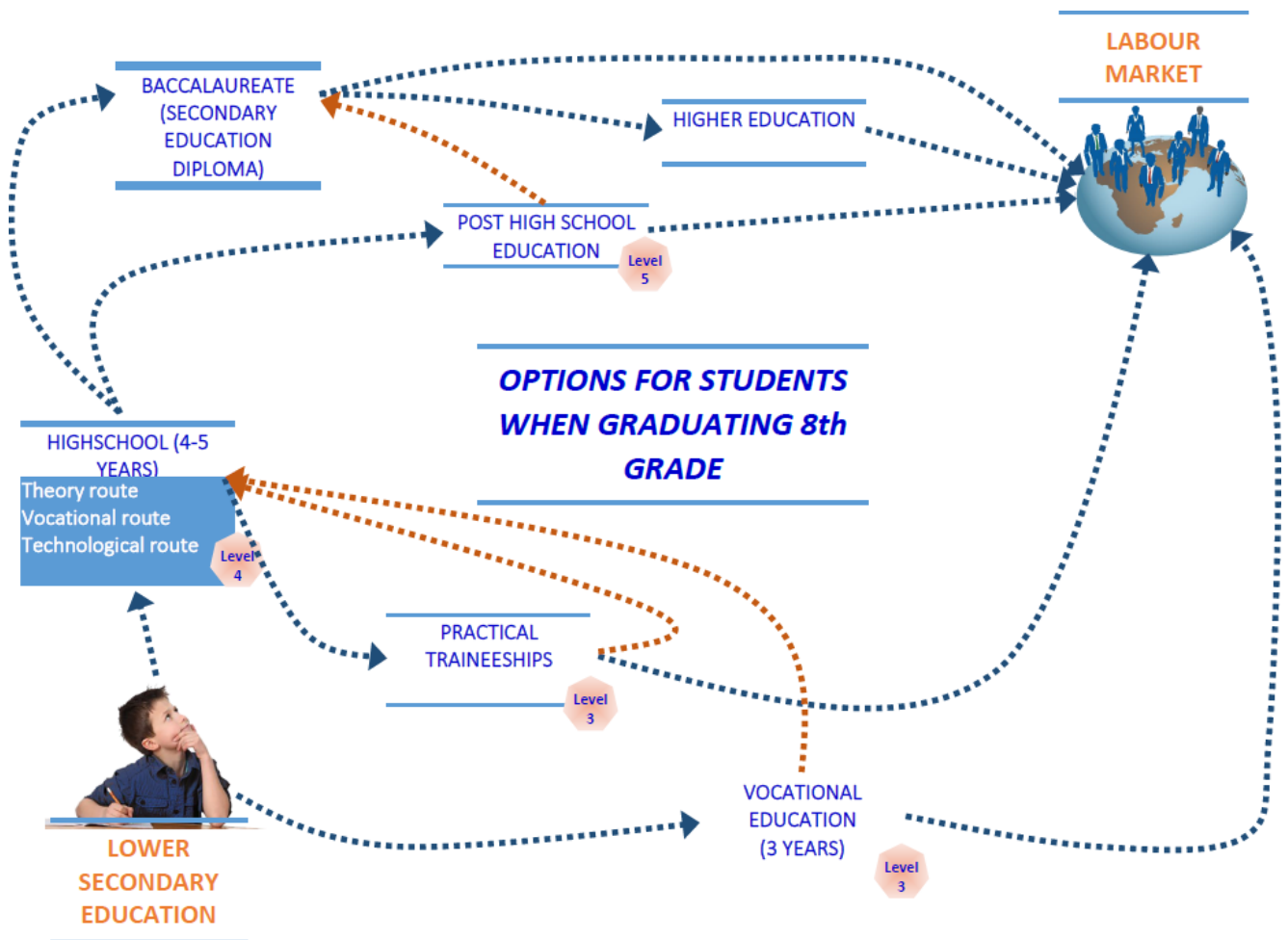
During high school education, a student may transfer to a 3-year vocational education programme, in the same grade.

Students who completed 9<sup>th</sup> grade vocational education may only transfer to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade of high school. Students from grades 10 and 11 of vocational education may transfer to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade of high school. Vocational education graduates may continue their studies with the upper high school cycle (11<sup>th</sup> grade). Students may transfer after having passed bridge tests and pursuant to the other general conditions stipulated by the Regulation on the organisation and functioning of pre-university education institutions.

### Current options of 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduates



<sup>3</sup> It has not been provided so far



## 1.2 INCENTIVES FOR STUDENTS AND COMPANIES

### A. Incentives for students in high school and vocational education

#### I. From the state budget:

- Vocational scholarship, in amount of 200 RON/month, for vocational education students;
- Financial support under the programme "Money for high school", in amount of 180 RON/month, for students whose families gross monthly income per family member in the past 3 months prior to submitting the application does not exceed 150 RON, and for students who benefit from a protection measure or are under guardianship, pursuant to the income condition;
- Partial reimbursement of transport costs<sup>4</sup>;
- Free school handbooks<sup>5</sup>.

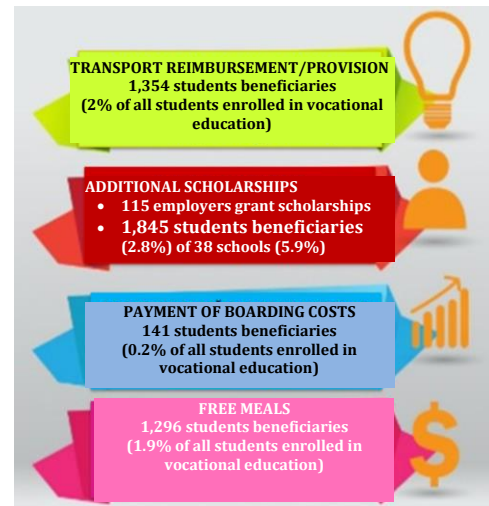
<sup>4</sup> Pursuant to Art.84 of the National Education Law

<sup>5</sup> Pursuant to Art. 69 of the National Education Law

## II. From companies, for vocational education students and for dual vocational education students<sup>6</sup>

- Additional scholarships granted by partner companies;
- Reimbursement/provision of transport;
- Payment of boarding costs;
- Free meals.

*Incentives provided by companies  
in dual vocational education  
programmes, in the academic year  
2015-2016*



### B. Incentives for companies:

#### a) Provided by the Tax Code<sup>7</sup>

Companies granting scholarships and covering boarding and transport costs for students deduce those amounts from the profit tax, provided that: the total amount granted shall not exceed the limit of 3% of the turnover and shall not exceed 20% of the due profit tax.

#### b) Provided by the Law on incentives for students' employment<sup>8</sup>

### Employers:

- Benefit from a **monthly financial incentive, amounting for 50% of the value of the reference social indicator (250 RON)**, for each student (aged 16 and older) or employed student, based on a fixed-term employment contract, equal or shorter than the holiday duration. The employment contract, concluded pursuant to law, may be full-time or, as appropriate, part-time or temporary contract, only if the duration of the temporary employment is equal or shorter than the holiday duration;
- The financial incentive may be granted for a period of maximum 60 working days within a calendar year during holidays.

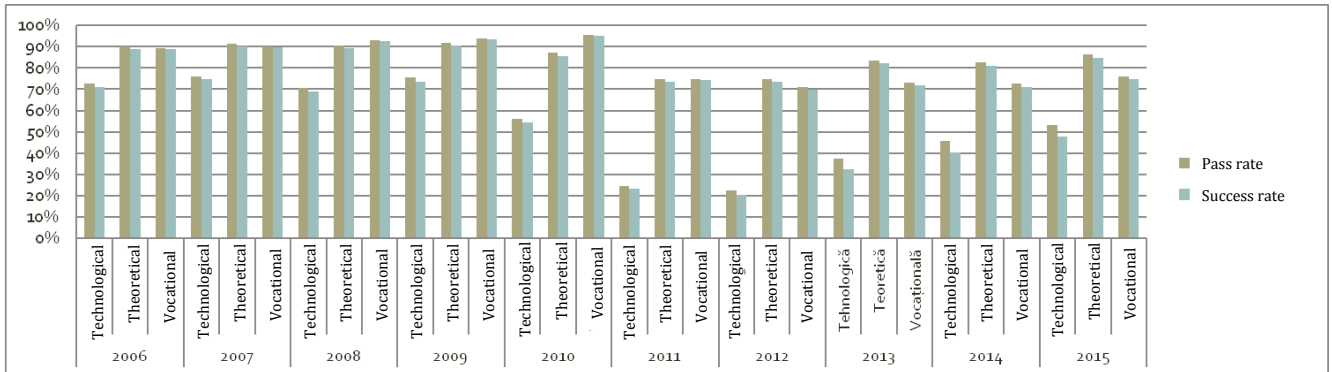
<sup>6</sup> Dual vocational education means the attempts to introduce dual education elements in vocational education, implemented by companies in partnership with schools.

<sup>7</sup>Law no. 227 of 2015 on the Tax Code, updated by Law no. 358 of 31.12.2015, including the Methodological Rules approved by G.D. 1/2016

<sup>8</sup>Law no. 72/2007, published in the Official Journal, Part I, no. 217 of 30.03.2007, as subsequently amended and supplemented, consolidated by GEO no. 126/2008

### 1.3 STATISTICAL DATA – HIGH SCHOOL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

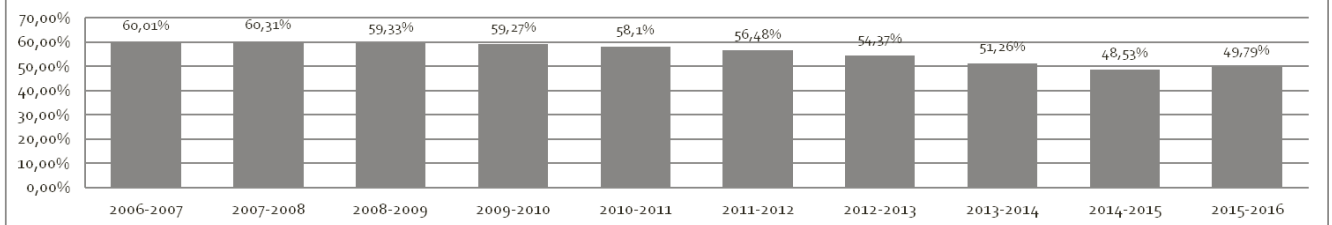
#### Evolution of baccalaureate results, by routes, high school education



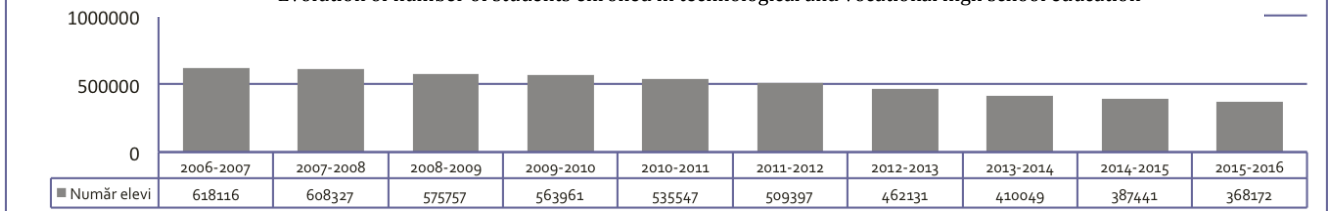
**Pass rate** – indicator calculated as the ratio between the number of candidates who passed the exam and the number of candidates who sat the exam

**Success rate** – indicator calculated as the ratio between the number of candidates who passed the exam and the number of candidates who enrolled for the exam

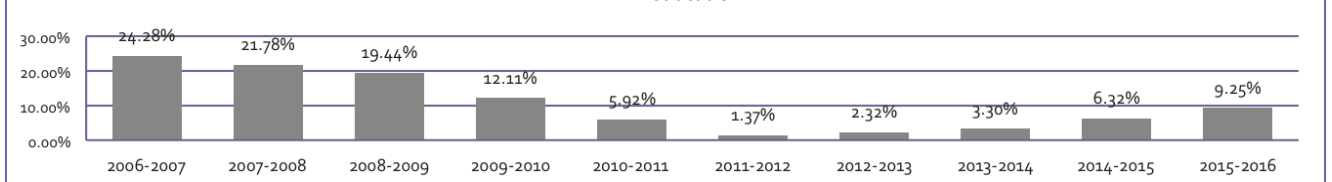
#### Evolution of percentage of technological and vocational high school education students in total students enrolled in high school and vocational education

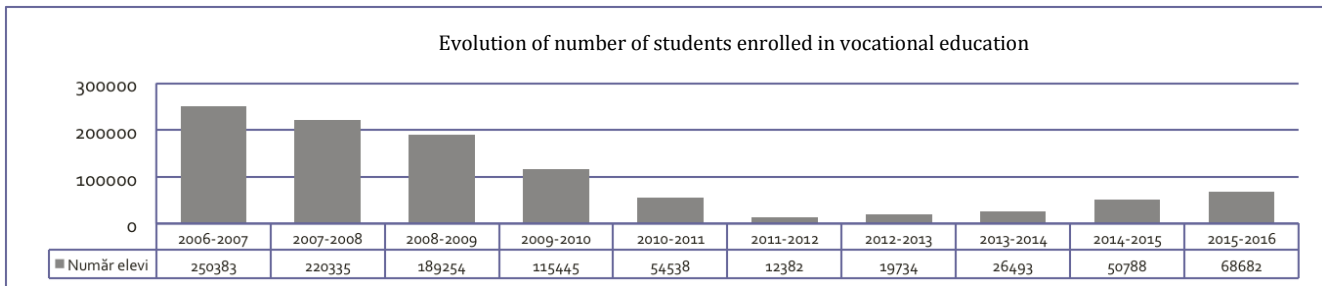


#### Evolution of number of students enrolled in technological and vocational high school education



#### Evolution of percentage of vocational education students in total students enrolled in high school and vocational education





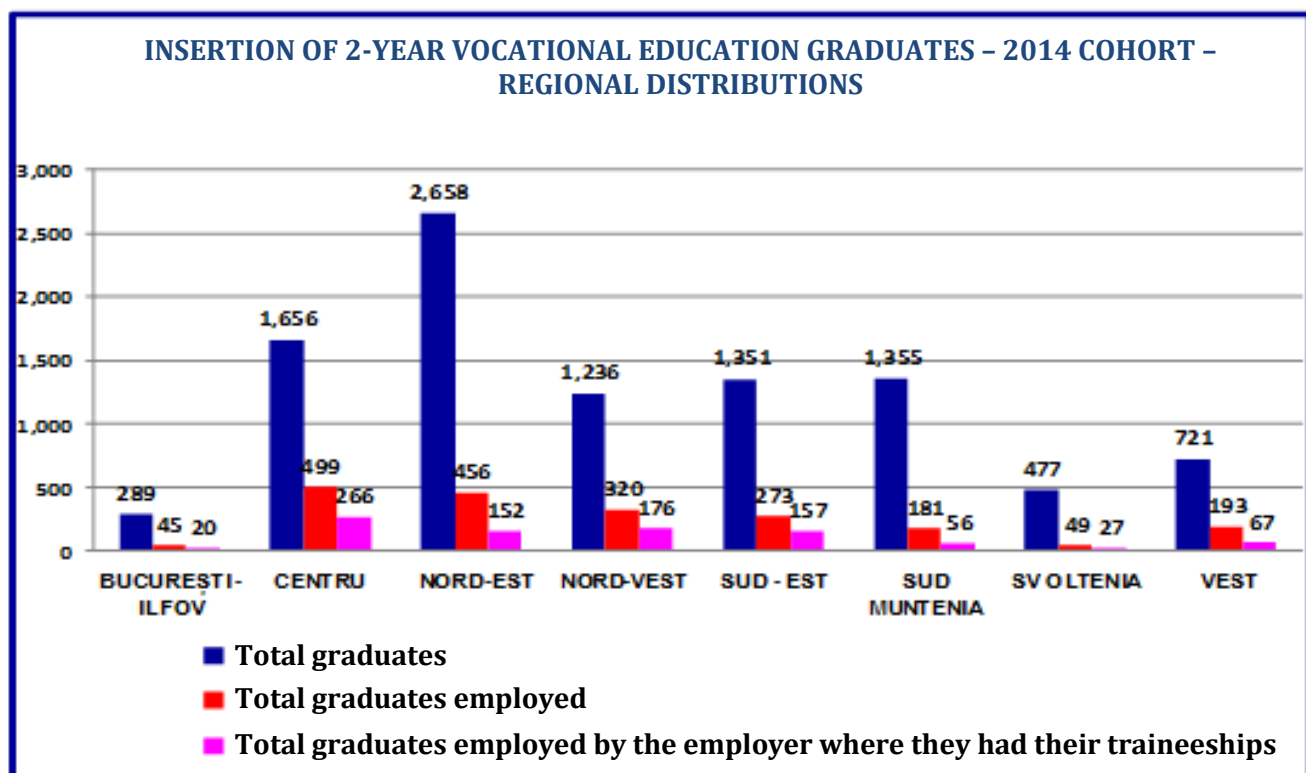
#### 1.4 PROFESSIONAL INSERTION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION GRADUATES

The analysis of the professional insertion of 2-year vocational education graduates, 2014 cohort, shows that, of the total of 12,153 students enrolled at the beginning of the cycle, 9,743 students (80.17%) completed vocational education. The number of students who completed the 2-year vocational education cycle and obtained a qualification certificate was 9,192 graduates, namely 94.34% of the total graduates.

The total number of graduates who found employment<sup>9</sup> until 30 October 2014 was 2,016 graduates, amounting for 20.69 % of the total graduates. Of them, 921 graduates were employed by the employer where they had their traineeships and 1,095 graduates were employed by other companies.

3,175 graduates from the 2014 cohort continued their studies, amounting for 32.19%.

The chart below presents the professional insertion of 2-year vocational education graduates, by development regions.



The analysis of the professional insertion for the first batch of 3-year vocational education graduates will be available in 2017.

<sup>9</sup> According to the data submitted by school inspectorates

## 2. THE CONCEPT SUBJECT TO PUBLIC DEBATE

### 2.1 THE PROPOSALS INCLUDED IN THE DOCUMENT FOCUS ON

- Clarification of the specificity of dual vocational training programmes up to qualifications level 5 (higher technician);
- Student mobility between the vocational route and high school education, both ways;
- Companies requirements on dual vocational training;
- Challenges for the implementation of dual vocational training in Romania;
- Short- and long-term actions.

These proposals respond to the priority actions aimed at improving work-based learning and increasing the attractiveness, quality and relevance of vocational and technical education, set by the strategies of the MNESR.<sup>10</sup>

### 2.2 PROPOSAL ON THE OPTIONS OF 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE GRADUATES

The proposal is to introduce the **"full" vocational route**, so as to provide 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduates professional qualifications up to level 5, a vocational route focused on immediate labour market needs.

The vocational route is built by:

- **Redefining the 3-year vocational education<sup>11</sup>**, organised after the 8<sup>th</sup> grade – as a dual vocational training programme providing qualifications level 3, **skilled workers** (e.g.. *car mechanic, cook, worker in horticulture*);
- **Introduction of dual vocational training programme providing qualifications level 4, technician** (e.g. *technician in gastronomy, technician in agriculture*);
- **Introduction of dual vocational training programme providing qualifications level 5, higher technician** (e.g. *technician in nutrition, technician in plant protection*).

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<sup>10</sup> The Annex includes the correlation with the measures included in the MNESR strategies

<sup>11</sup>This programme represents vocational education of minimum 3-year duration regulated by the National Education Law, redefined by the increase of the role of locally developed curriculum, developed in partnership between companies and schools

DUAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING		
Dual vocational training programme LEVEL 3	Dual vocational training programme LEVEL 4 (PROPOSAL)	Dual vocational training programme LEVEL 5 (PROPOSAL)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Duration: 3 years</li> <li>Qualification level: 3 NQF<sup>12</sup></li> <li>Programme education level: ISCED<sup>13</sup>-P 352</li> <li>Target group: 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduates of the current cohort and previous cohort</li> <li>Access requirements: 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduates</li> <li>Training programme: <i>theoretical/general and specialist education – 55%, practical training – 45%</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Duration: 1 – 3 years (depending on the qualification and on the previous training pathway)</li> <li>Qualification level: 4 NQF</li> <li>Programme education level: ISCED-P 353</li> <li>Target group: graduates of dual vocational education level 3; graduates of traineeships; graduates of 11<sup>th</sup> grade high school</li> <li>Access requirements: graduates of dual vocational education level 3, graduates of traineeships, graduates of 11<sup>th</sup> grade high school</li> <li>Training programme: <i>theoretical/general and specialist education between 20% and 30%, practical training between 80% and 70%</i><sup>14</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Duration: 1 – 3 years</li> <li>Qualification level: 5 NQF</li> <li>Programme education level ISCED-P 453</li> <li>Target group: graduates of dual vocational education programmes level 4; graduates of 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> grade high school</li> <li>Access requirements: graduates of dual vocational education programmes level 4 or graduates of 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> grade high school</li> <li>Training programme: <i>theoretical/general and specialist education – 25%, practical training – 75%</i></li> </ul>
OPTIONS AFTER GRADUATION		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible further education pathways: 11<sup>th</sup> grade high school</li> <li>Possible vocational pathways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dual vocational training, qualifications level 4 NQF;</li> <li>labour market</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible further education pathways: 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> grade high school</li> <li>Possible vocational pathways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dual vocational training, qualifications level 5 NQF</li> <li>labour market</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible further education pathways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> grade high school, for graduates who have not completed high school education</li> <li>higher education for graduates holding a baccalaureate diploma</li> </ul> </li> <li>labour market</li> </ul>

## Organisation of training programmes

<b>Initiation of training programme</b>
Schools in partnership with companies for levels 3 and 4
Companies for level 5
<b>Student recruitment and enrolment</b>
Schools in partnership with companies
<b>Organisation and provision of training programme</b>
Shared by schools and companies

<sup>12</sup>National Qualifications Framework

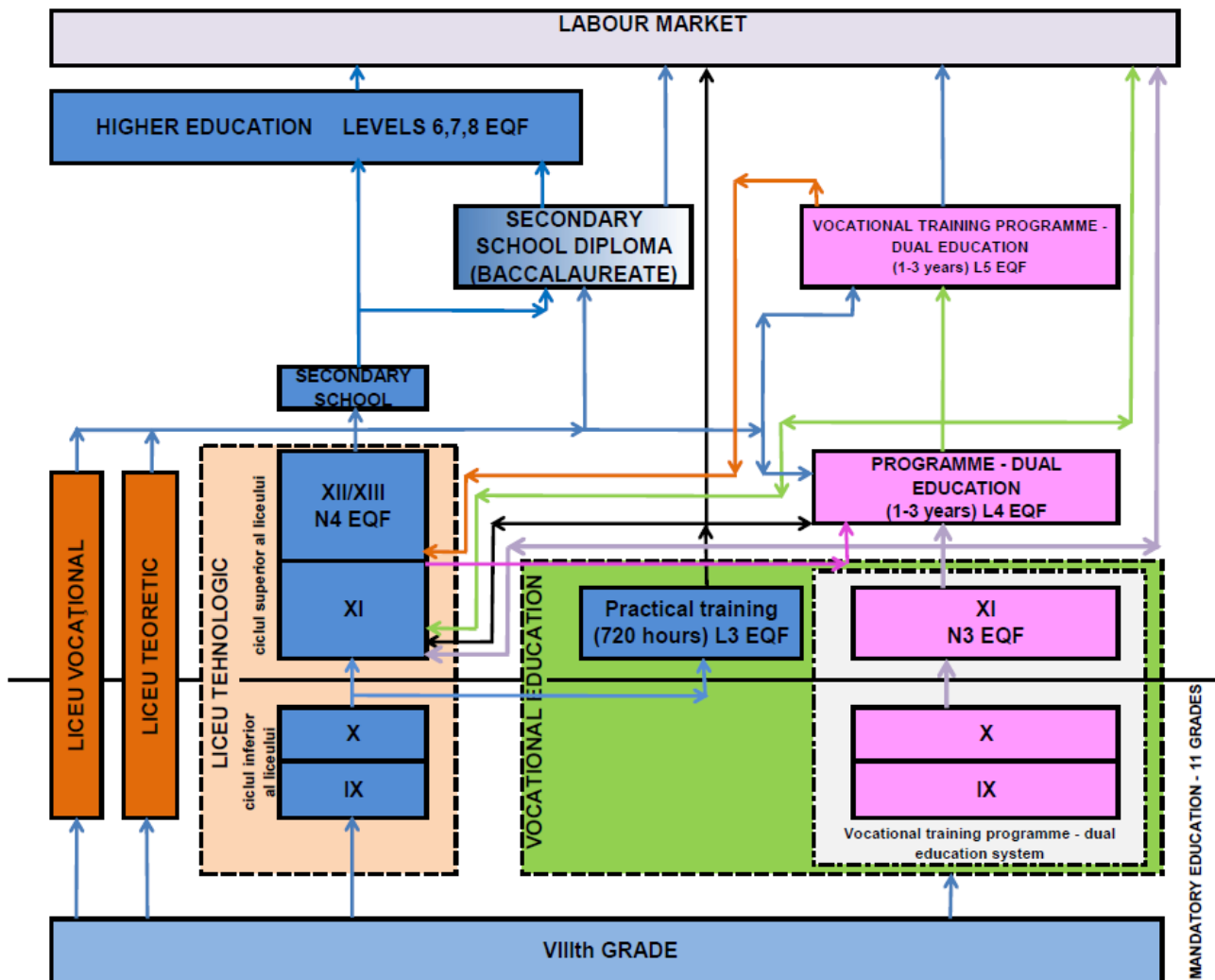
<sup>13</sup> ISCED 2011 classification

<sup>14</sup> Ratio that ensures the same level as 11<sup>th</sup> grade high school graduates so that, upon completion of dual vocational training, graduates may continue their studies with the 12<sup>th</sup> grade in high school to acquire ISCED level 4 and sit the baccalaureate exam

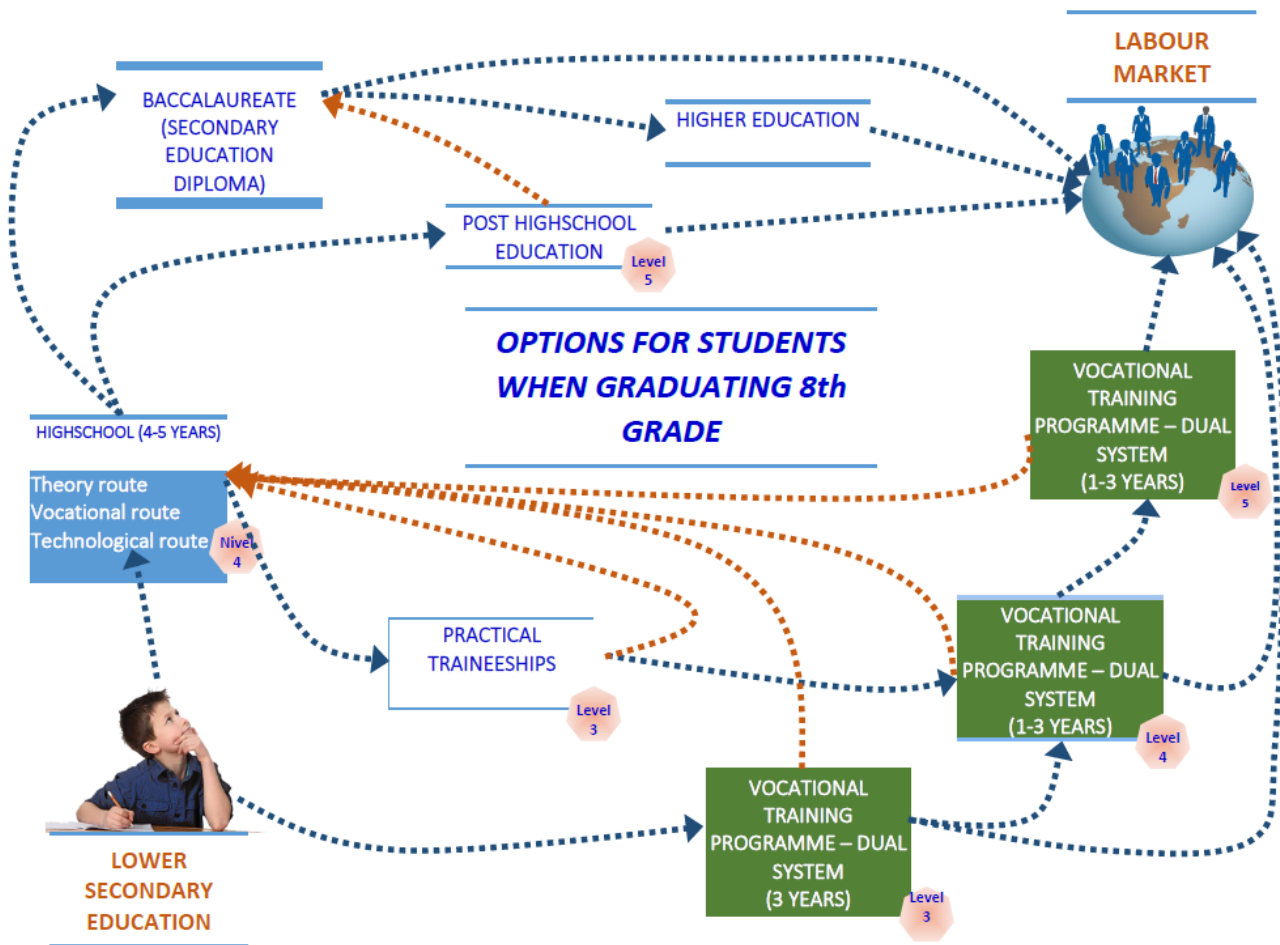
## 2.3 STUDENT MOBILITY

- Within the vocational route – direct access to the next qualification level;
- From the vocational route to the mixed route<sup>15</sup> – by recognition of learning outcomes acquired in technological high school and post-high school education;
- From the mixed route to the vocational route – direct access after completion of compulsory education.

### 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduates' options - proposal



<sup>15</sup> The mixed route consists of high school education – post-high school education, ensuring vocational and academic training for qualifications levels 3, 4 and 5



### 3. IMPLEMENTATION CONDITIONS FOR DUAL TRAINING

This section presents the main prerequisites for the implementation of dual training programmes, resulted from the experience of the educational sector and the requirements of the economic sector.

The dialogue with the economic sector highlighted the following challenges:

- The need to introduce a type of training similar to the dual system organised in other countries, as a training pathway after the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, based on an individual training contract;
- The need to grant additional tax incentives to employers involved in dual training;
- The need for regulations on the certification of practical training trainers in the company;
- Introducing the possibility for employers' associations, clusters, groups of companies to initiate dual vocational training and to organise traineeships in the companies they represent;
- Review of the institutional framework regulating the involvement of employers and the responsibilities of partners involved (e.g.: in decision-making mechanisms at all levels, in student selection and training processes, in the specialist curriculum development, in the certification of professional qualifications);
- To increase the role of work-based learning and to integrate a part of general learning in the specialist curriculum for vocational training;
- Outsourcing the certification exam for the professional qualification acquired by technical and vocational education;
- The use of credit transfer for more flexible vocational training pathways and further study;

- To increase the age limit from 18 years to 25 years, age limit by which compulsory education graduates who leave education may complete, free of charge, at least one dual vocational training programme;
- Additional incentives granted from the state budget to students to increase student territorial mobility (full subsidies for transport, subsidies for accommodation and meals costs in boarding schools);
- Lower/more flexible minimum number of students in a class.

### 3.1 TYPE OF CONTRACT CONCLUDED BETWEEN THE STUDENT AND THE EMPLOYER – POSSIBLE OPTIONS

We present below possible options for the type of contract regulating dual vocational training, concluded between the student and the employer:

- Professional qualification contract – type of contract regulated by the Labour Code**
  - Concluded as an annex to an employment contract
  - It may be used starting with the age of 16 years
- Individual dual vocational training contract – a new type of contract which needs to be regulated**
  - It may be defined as a special type of vocational training contract (Labour Code)
- Traineeship contract for dual vocational training – a new type of contract which needs to be regulated**
  - It may be defined starting from the current regulations on the traineeship contract and the methodology on the organisation and functioning of 3-year vocational education;
  - The dual traineeship contract could be different from the current traineeship contracts, by remunerating students through scholarships or other types of support and incentives granted by employers.

### 3.2 COST-SHARING BY THE STATE BUDGET AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

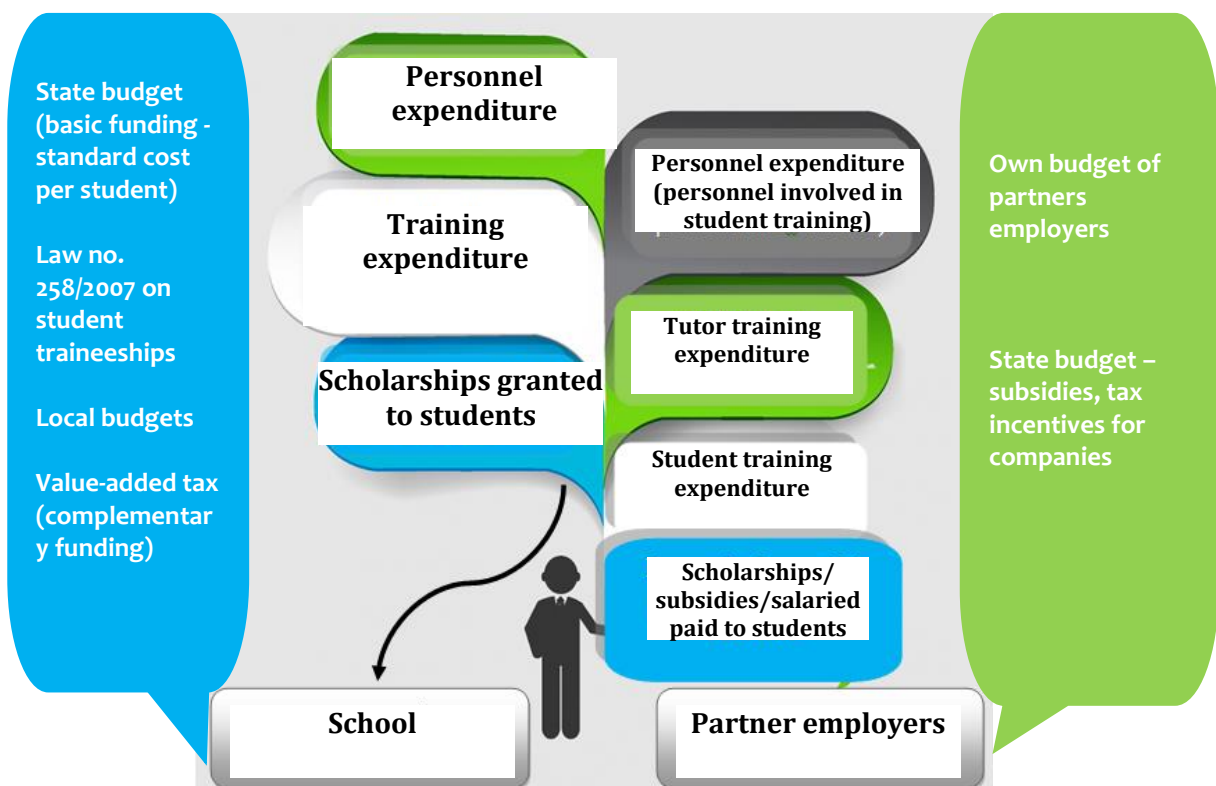
#### Proposals on incentives for students

- To grant the vocational scholarship from the state budget for students enrolled in a dual vocational training programme level 4, until the student turns 20 years;
- The amount of vocational scholarship for level 4;
- Subsidies fully covering transport, accommodation and meals costs in boarding schools for students enrolled in a dual vocational training programme levels 3 and 4;
- Scholarships and other incentives granted by companies.

## Proposals on incentives and tax exemptions for companies

- To extend the range of eligible deductible expenses to include:
  - Expenses related to the company-based training of students;
  - Expenses for school equipment purchased by employers and made available to schools for student training.
- Exemptions from payment of social contributions due by the employer and employee for the vocational training/professional qualification contracts regulated by the Labour Code (inspired by similar incentives from Austria).

### Cost-sharing in dual vocational training and funding sources



### 3.3 CERTIFICATION OF COMPETENCES – POSSIBLE OPTIONS

- To organise tests in companies – provided they are accredited/authorised;
- Exams – to extend the list of partners involved in examination commissions, e.g. by including chambers of commerce and/or employers' associations;
- Quality assurance - to extend the list of partners involved in county commissions, e.g. by including chambers of commerce and/or employers' associations;
- The state budget and the private sector should share the costs for the organisation and implementation of the practical test and the project test.

### 3.4 ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITY – PROPOSALS

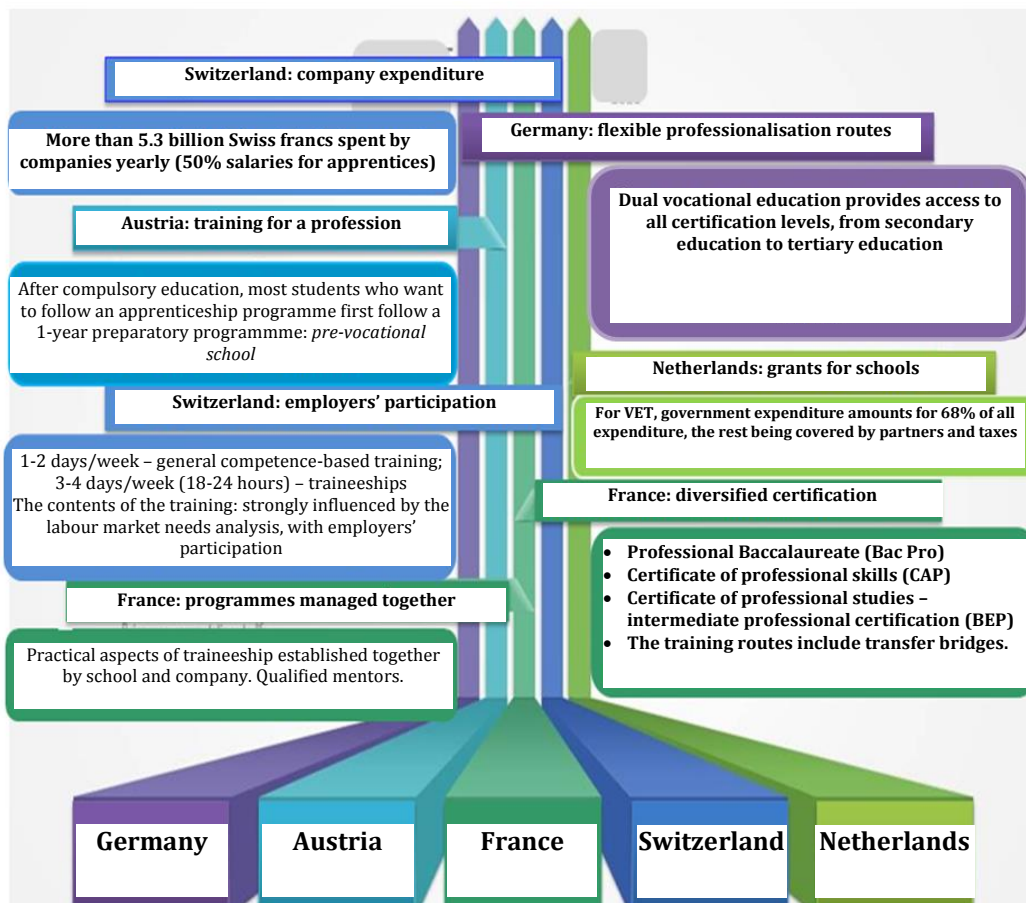
Proposals for optimal implementation of dual vocational training programmes:

- More flexible study groups for dual vocational training programmes:
  - Possibilities to organise study groups including fewer students, if companies provide funding;
  - Possibilities to organise additional study groups, fully funded by companies.
- A more flexible validation/approval of qualifications, vocational training standards and curriculum.

### 3.5 POSSIBLE LEGAL AMENDMENTS

- **National Education Law** – regulation of the dual vocational training system;
- **Labour Code** – in case the option is a training contract with labour law elements;
- **Tax Code** – tax incentives for expenditure related to student vocational training and equipment purchased for schools;
- **Regulation of the Romanian National Qualifications Framework.**

## 4. Aspects of dual vocational training programmes in Europe



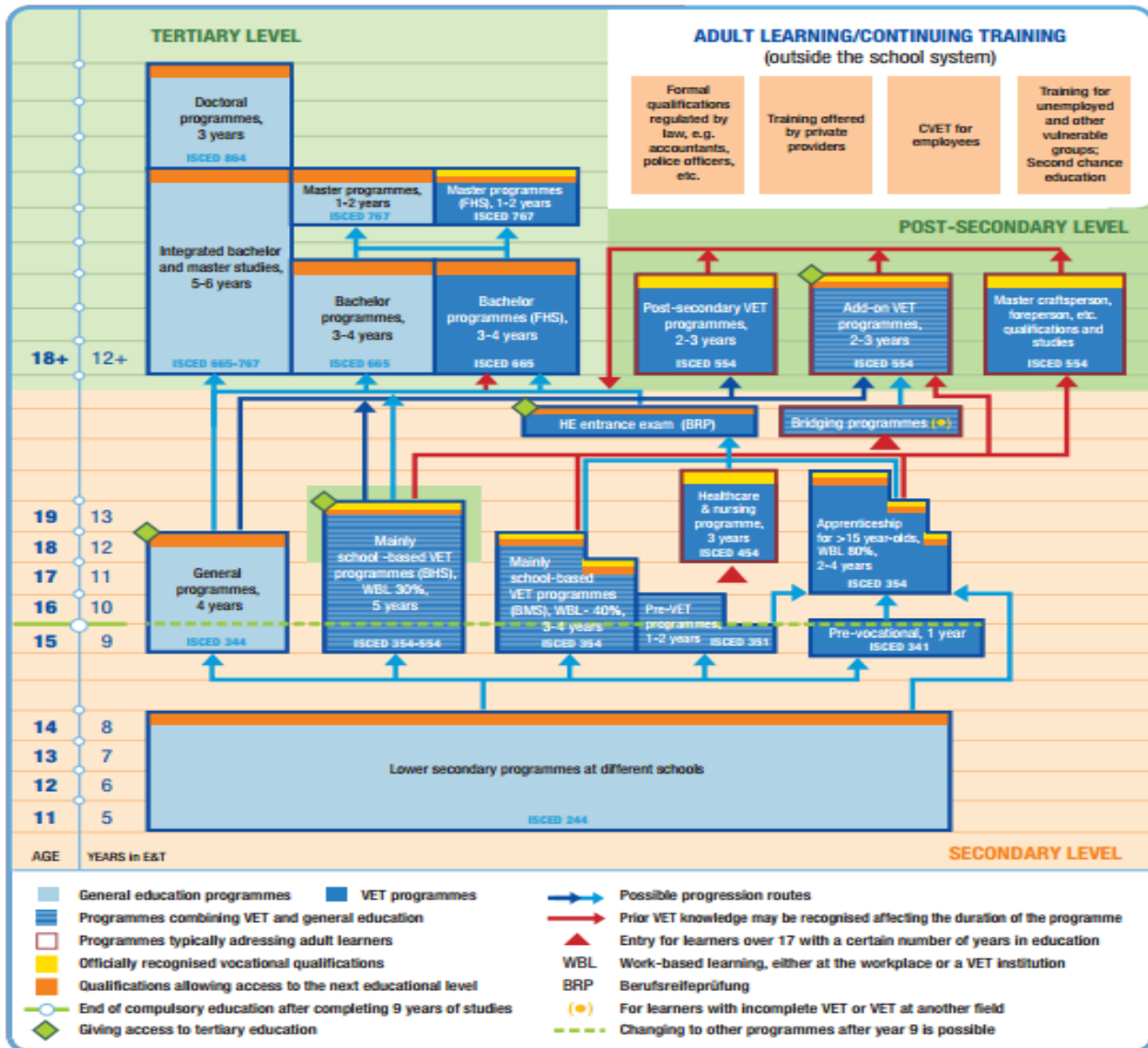
The proposals presented in this document were developed following an analysis on the organisation of the dual system in countries like Austria, Switzerland, France, Germany and the Netherlands. A synthesis of this analysis is included in the Annex.

### AUSTRIA

In order to encourage young people to choose apprenticeship as the basis for developing a future career, apprenticeship may be followed by:

- 2-3 year specialist training programmes to acquire a higher qualification;
- Vocational baccalaureate (Berufsreifeprüfung), enabling access to higher education. Vocational baccalaureate is facilitated by preparation courses, which students may follow in parallel with apprenticeship programmes or after completion of apprenticeship. The vocational baccalaureate for

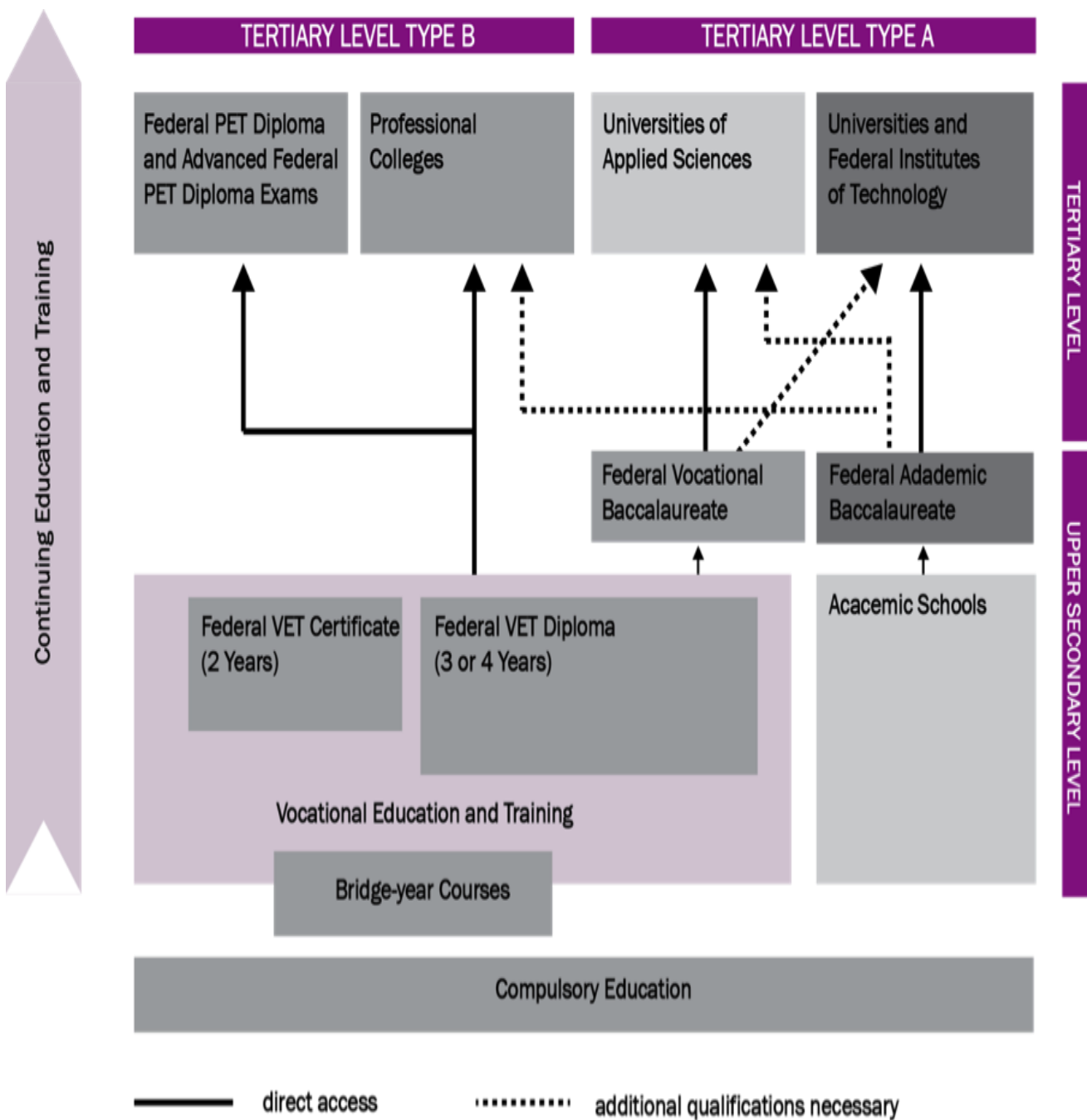
apprenticeship graduates consists, in principal, in exams in German, Mathematics, foreign language, specialist test, according to the training programme completed.



NB: This is a simplified chart based on a common format for all countries in EU-28+Norway and Iceland. ISCED-P2011. EQF levels are being discussed. Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Austria.

## SWITZERLAND

Most vocational education and training programmes (VET) are dual programmes (part-time school-based learning combined with part-time apprenticeship in a host company). There are about 250 such VET programmes available. VET programmes meet very well the labour market needs, both in terms of jobs, skills required and number of places available. As training programme development is flexible and follows the labour market developments, Switzerland is among the countries with the lowest youth unemployment rates.



After compulsory education, there are two educational routes in Switzerland:

- VET – secondary vocational education
- PET – tertiary vocational education.

There is a great variety of additional educational options open for students at each educational level (VET and PET).

14-year-old students who graduated lower secondary education may apply for dual training with a company (in some cases, they must pass an entry examination). In general, the selection criteria for VET include student performance in the lower secondary education, application documents and an interview. Some companies also require students to pass a skills test.

Between compulsory education and VET upper secondary education there are 1-year bridge courses including practical training and pre-apprenticeship activities, designed to prepare students for access to VET.

After the bridge course, students have available the following training programmes:

- **2-year VET programmes**, leading to a **VET Certificate** recognised at federal level. This certificate provides a qualification matching a certain occupational profile (occupational field).

Graduates of such 2-year programmes may enrol directly in the following training programme:

- **3-4-year VET programmes**, leading to a **VET Diploma** recognised at federal level. This programme provides students the necessary skills to carry out specific activities and to obtain access to tertiary training programmes (PET).

## FRANCE

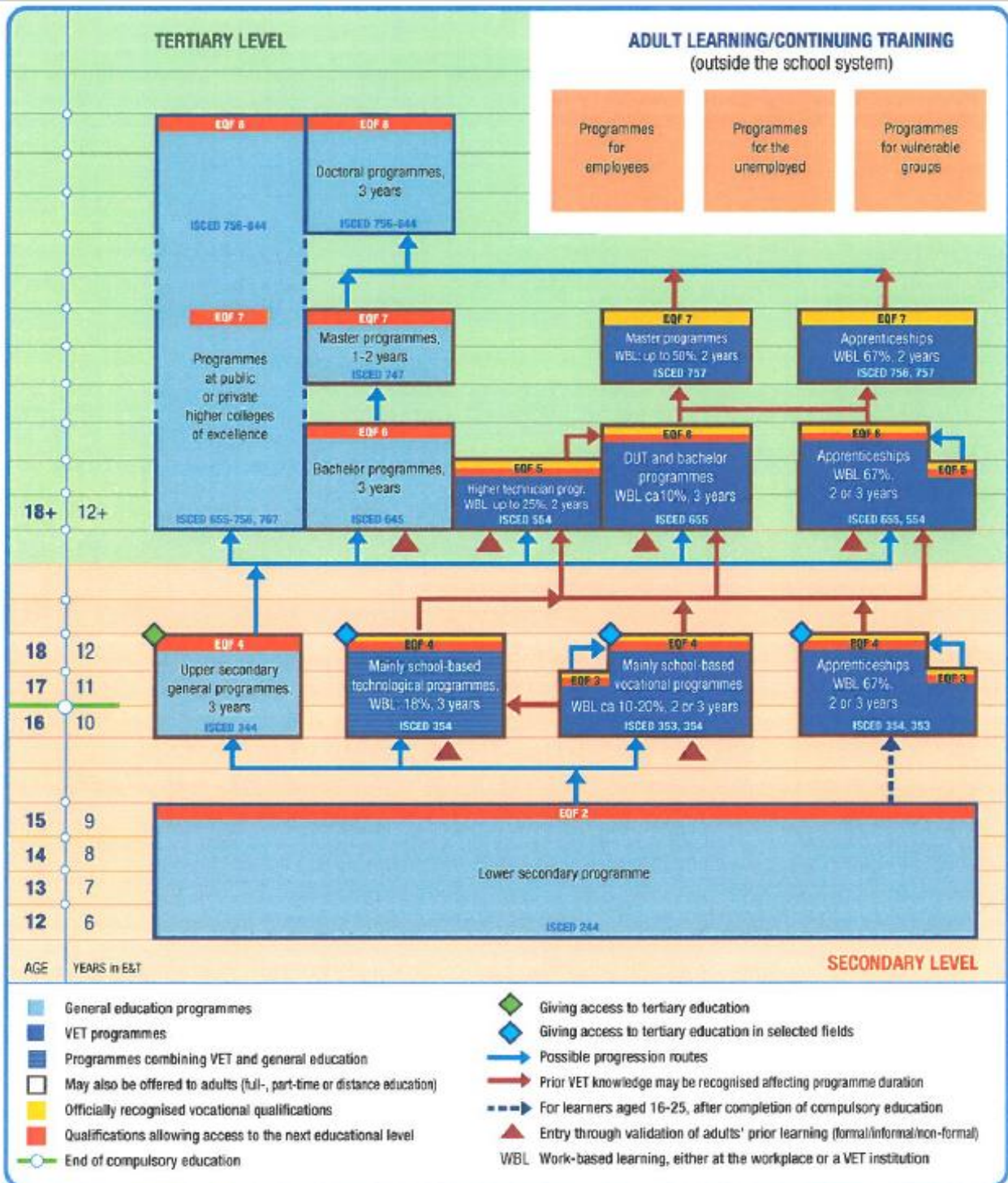
After having completed lower secondary education, students may choose to continue their studies in one of the following routes: general, technological or vocational. The vocational route provides the opportunity to learn a profession through dual courses.

Dual courses are organised either by vocational high schools, or as apprenticeship programmes in a training centre for apprentices (*Centre de Formation pour Apprentis - CFA*).

Upon completion of the lower secondary cycle, students who want to choose technical and vocational education may choose one of the two routes – the 3-year route finalised with the professional baccalaureate (Bac Pro) and the 2-year route, finalised with a Certificate of professional skills (CAP).

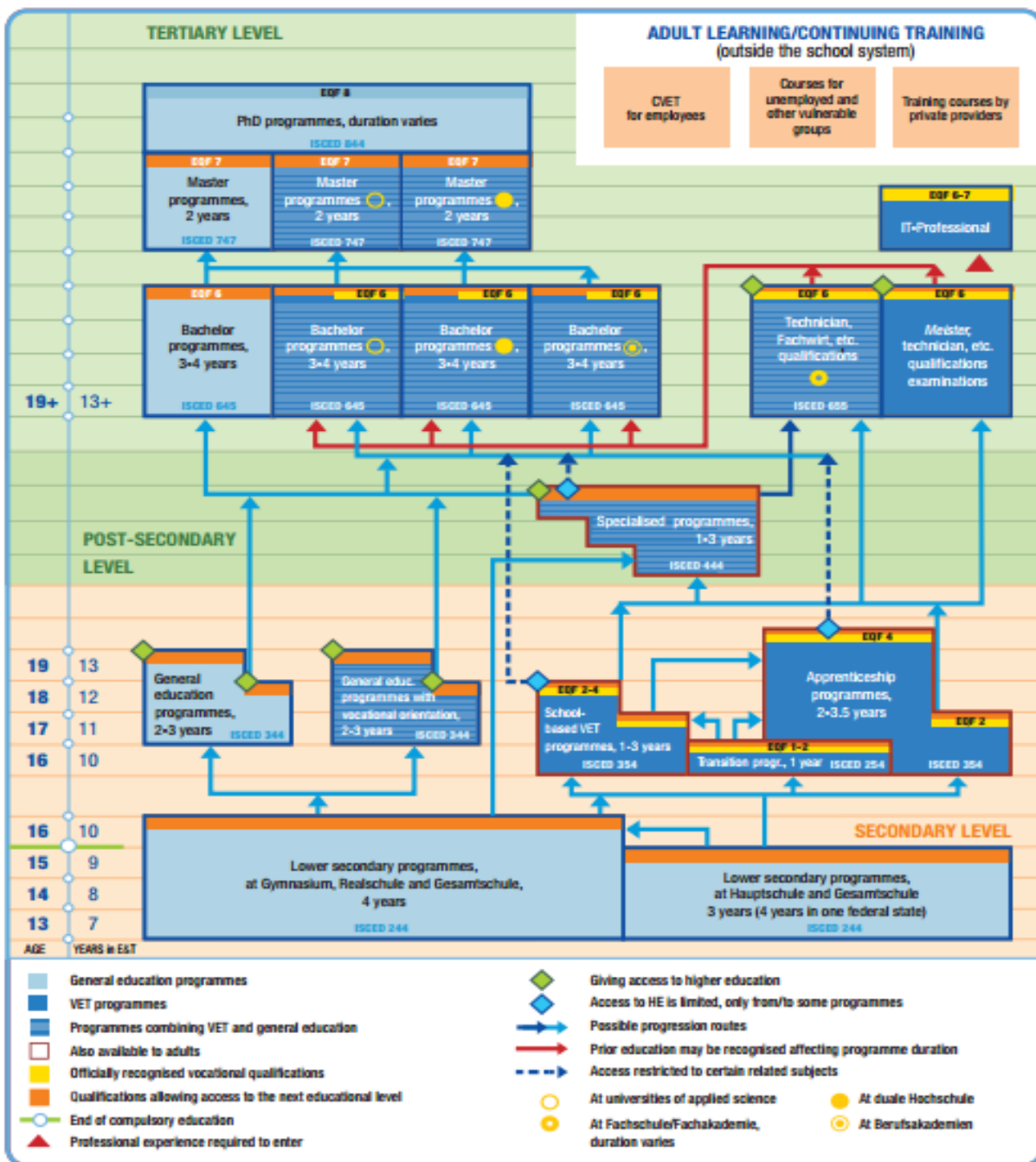
The two routes communicate, and students who start with the Bac Pro route may transfer to the CAP route in the second year, while students in the second year of studies in CAP may transfer to the Bac Pro route.

For the Bac Pro route, there is the possibility to request an intermediate professional certification, after two years of study, called Certificate of professional studies (BEP).



**GERMANY**

The dual system covers all economic sectors and provides vocational training for approximately 330 occupations/qualifications. Training positions are provided by public and private enterprises, liberal professional practitioners and, to some degree, by private households. Each graduate of compulsory education has access to the dual training system, with no additional requirements.



NB: This is a simplified chart, based on the unified approach used for the spotlights on VET in all EU-28 countries plus Iceland and Norway. ISCED-P 2011. EGF levels have not yet been defined for all qualifications. Source: Cedetop.

## THE NETHERLANDS

In the Netherlands, after primary education (8-year duration), at 12 years, students may choose one of the 4 pathways/types of **secondary education**:

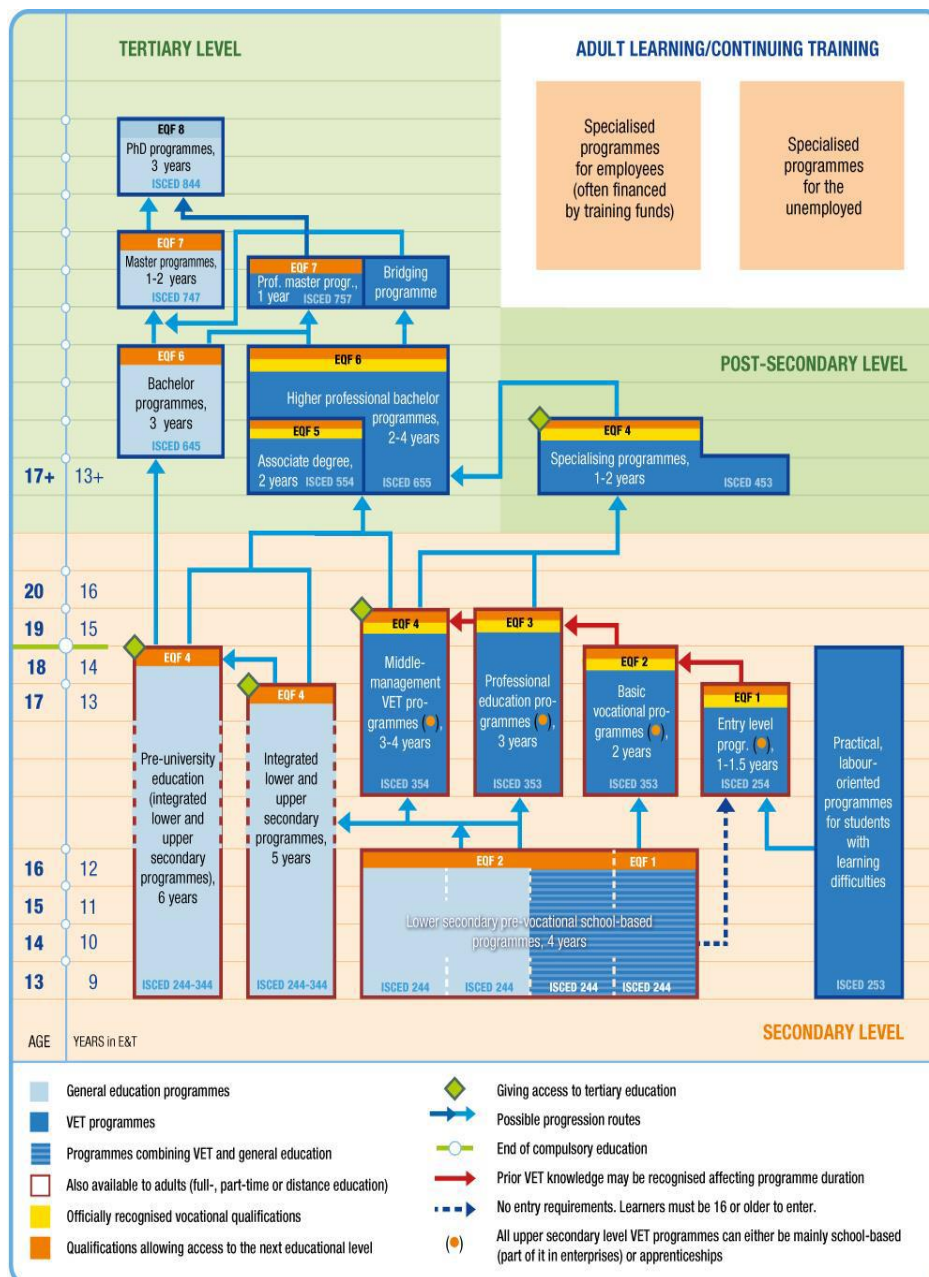
(1) *Lower secondary pre-vocational school-based programmes, VMBO* – 4-year duration (12 -16 years); it includes 4 learning pathways:

- (a) Basic vocational programme, BL,
- (b) Middle-management vocational programme, KL
- (c) Combined programme, GL
- (d) Theoretical programme, TL

(2) Senior general secondary education, *HAVO* – 5-year duration (12 -17 years)

(3) Pre-university education (*VWO*) – 6-year duration (12 – 18 years)

(4) Elementary vocational training, *PRO*.



## 5. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

This document is subject to public debate, so as all stakeholders in the educational and economic fields, civil society and partnership structures and local and regional levels (Regional Consortia and Local Social Partnership Development Committees) may express their views.

### 5.1 OBJECTIVE

To collect opinions and proposals from all stakeholders on the amendments proposed by the concept paper "*Education and training options for 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduates*" focused on:

- The structure and the content of the raining options proposed;
- The type of contract regulating the relationship between the student and the employer;
- Cost-sharing in the dual training system and funding sources;
  - o Incentives for students
  - o Incentives and exemptions for companies
- Certification of students' competences;
- Administrative flexibility.

### 5.2 CONSULTATION MEANS

In order to obtain relevant feedback for the objective proposed, the consultation of social partners involves wide participation of all stakeholders. For this purpose, the public dialogue will be organised as follows:

- On-line consultation by submission of proposals and comments to the e-mail address: [consultare-dual@tvvet.ro](mailto:consultare-dual@tvvet.ro). Proposals and comments may be submitted in the period of 19 May – 16 June 2016.
- Invitations submitted to teachers, students' and parents' representatives, social partners' representatives in order to participate in the consultation;
- Face-to-face meetings with representatives of social partners, organised at regional level;
- National debate with social partners.

### 5.3 SOCIAL PARTNERS CONSULTED

*The on-line consultation* targets wide participation of all groups of stakeholders: students, parents, employers, representatives of various institutions, trade unions, employers' associations, NGOs.

*The face-to-face meetings at regional level* target the following categories of social partners: local authorities, pre-university education institutions, higher education institutions, employers, employers' associations, trade unions, county employment agencies, chambers of commerce and industry, regional development agencies, NGOs.

*The national debate* targets the following categories of institutions and social partners: central public authorities and public institutions, embassies, chambers of commerce, employers' associations, trade unions, NGOs.

The public policy paper will be consolidated following the public consultation process implemented in the period of 19 May – 16 June 2016.

All other components related to the dual vocational training system will be developed in partnership with social actors, based on the version accepted and promoted following the public consultation process.