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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND
THE COUNCIL**

**on the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005 of the European Parliament
and of the Council on statistics relating to vocational training in enterprises**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is the first report that the Commission is required to submit under Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on statistics relating to vocational training in enterprises¹.

This report documents the progress made by the Member States and Norway (hereinafter referred to as Participating Countries²) with respect to the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005 and the implementing Commission Regulation (EC) No 198/2006 of 3 February 2006³. The report was endorsed by the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC).

The contents of the report are based upon quality reports, data and other information received from the countries concerned, in addition to analyses of the national questionnaires sent to enterprises, as harmonised statistics relating to vocational training in enterprises were made available through Continuing Vocational Training sample Surveys (CVTS) in all Participating Countries.

2. MAIN POINTS

Section 2.1 describes the reference data for this report and the periodicity of CVTS. It illustrates the implementation of Articles 10(2) and 10(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005. All other articles of the Regulation are reviewed in sections 2.2 to 2.6 as follows:

- Articles 3, 8 and 9(1) on the data to be collected and survey approach (section 2.2),
- Articles 2, 4, 5 and 6 on the scope of statistics and statistical unit (section 2.3),
- Articles 6, 7, 10(1) and 11(1) on the data sources and survey characteristics (section 2.4),
- Articles 9(2), 9(4) and 11 on the quality and transmission of data (section 2.5),
- Articles 15 on the financing of the data collection (section 2.6),
- Articles 9(3) and 12 on the main implementation issues encountered in the survey (section 2.7).

¹ OJ L 255, 30.9.2005, p. 1.

² Croatia, FYROM, Iceland and Switzerland did not conduct the survey. Turkey conducted a survey in 2008 (micro-data not available at Eurostat)

³ OJ L 32, 4.2.2006, p. 15.

2.1. Reference data for this report, intervals between CVTS: Articles 10(2) and 10(3)

Pursuant to Article 10(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005, the Commission shall determine the first reference year of the data to be collected. Regulation (EC) No 198/2006 specifies that the first reference year for which the data are to be collected shall be the calendar year 2005.

A new survey is in preparation for 2010, i.e. five years after the first survey as defined by Article 10(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005. Commission Regulation (EU) No 822/2010⁴ amends Regulation (EC) No 198/2006 to adapt certain characteristics of the 2005 survey. This amendment takes into account the information to be made available through Regulation (EC) No 452/2008⁵ and Commission Regulation (EU) No 823/2010⁶ as regards the Adult Education Survey and should enable an improvement in the quality of the results and a reduction in the statistical burden on enterprises for the 2010 survey.

It is worth mentioning that the implementation of the 2005 and 2010 surveys benefited from two previous surveys on continuing vocational training conducted under “gentlemen’s agreements” between a number of countries and Eurostat. The results of these surveys related to the calendar years 1993 and 1999 respectively.

2.2. Data to be collected and survey approach: Articles 3, 8 and 9(1)

Article 3 specifies the data that are to be collected in a list of 14 topics set out in the table below. The distribution of the 140 variables defined in Regulation (EC) No 198/2006 shows the appropriate implementation of Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005 at EU level.

Table 1 - Data collected in 2005

Topics listed in Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005	Number of variables in Commission Regulation (EC) No 198/2006
1(a) training policy and training strategies of enterprises in developing the skills of their workforce;	25
1(b) management, organisation and forms of continuing vocational training in enterprises;	17
1(c) the role of social partners in ensuring all aspects of continuing vocational training in the workplace;	9
1(d) access to continuing vocational training, its volume and content, especially in the context of economic activity and enterprise size;	10

⁴ OJ L 246, 18.9.2010 p. 18

⁵ Regulation (EC) No 452/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 concerning the production and development of statistics on education and lifelong learning (OJ L145, 4.6.2008, p. 227)

⁶ OJ L 246, 18.9.2010 p. 33

Table 1 - Data collected in 2005 (Cont.)

1(e) specific continuing vocational training measures of enterprises to improve the ICT skills of their workforce;	9
1(f) chances for employees in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to access continuing vocational training and to acquire new skills, and the particular needs of SMEs in the provision of training;	(*)
1(g) the effects of public measures on continuing vocational training in enterprises;	5
1(h) equal opportunities to access continuing vocational training in enterprises for all employees, with respect to gender and specific age groups in particular;	14
1(i) specific continuing vocational training measures for people at a disadvantage in the labour market;	8
1(j) continuing vocational training measures geared to different types of employment contract;	4
1(k) expenditure on continuing vocational training: funding levels and funding resources, incentives for continuing vocational training;	17
1(l) evaluation and monitoring procedures of enterprises as regards continuing vocational training;	8
2(a) participants in initial vocational training;	3
2(b) total expenditure on initial vocational training.	11

Note (*) All variables can be cross-tabulated by enterprise size, such as those of item 1(d)

The 140 variables defined in Regulation (EC) No 198/2006 targeted both training and non-training enterprises, as well as different forms of vocational training pursuant to Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005, as follows:

- (1) For training and non-training enterprises: 96 variables for all enterprises, 35 variables for training enterprises only and 9 variables for non-training enterprises only,
- (2) For different forms of vocational training: 12 variables.

All participating countries took the necessary steps to ensure the quality of the results as required by Article 9(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005. This was made possible via a standard questionnaire for enterprises which was proposed by the European Commission in the 'European Union Manual' pursuant to Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No 198/2006. Although there was no legal obligation for Member States to use this template, participating countries made widespread use of it when defining their national questionnaires.

All participating countries delivered the data in accordance with the 14 topics listed above. The delivery of quantitative and secondary information relating to items 1(b), 1(c), 1(d), 1(h), 1(i), 1(j) and 1(k) was difficult in some participating countries due to the complexity and length of the questionnaires sent to enterprises. Rather than impeding the production of national and EU results for the 14 topics listed above, this actually helped to reduce the

number of variables in the 2010 survey conducted under Regulation (EU) No 822/2010 (see section 2.7).

2.3. Scope of statistics, statistical unit: Articles 2, 4 and 5

Articles 2, 4 and 5(1) define the statistical units, economic activities and size of enterprises to be covered. As requested, all Member States provided data for sections C to K and O of the NACE Rev. 1.1 classification for enterprises having 10 or more employees.

While Article 5(2) suggests extending the coverage to include other sections of the economy, it is not possible to reach agreement at the present stage due to major problems of technical implementation. This is especially an issue for the public sectors whose establishments provide significant vocational training (see section 2.7).

2.4. Data sources and survey characteristics: Articles 6, 7, 10(1) and 11(1)

As specified in Articles 6 and 7(1), the data sources used by the participating countries combined a sample survey of enterprises and administrative data, by applying the principle of reduced burden on respondents. However, the use of administrative sources was confined to background information on the number and characteristics of employees, which did not allow any substantial reduction of the burden on enterprises.

As specified in Article 6(2) on the procedures for enterprises to reply to the survey, most participating countries chose postal questionnaires combined with telephone calls, and face-to-face and web-based interviews. Data were also collected electronically in six participating countries as promoted by Article 11(1). All participating countries conducted the survey with reference to the twelve months of 2005 (one calendar year) as required under Article 10(1).

Participating countries designed their survey in accordance with Article 7(2) and (3) and the provisions of Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 198/2006. This article specifies the sampling and precision requirements as well as the 60 strata by economic sector and enterprise size to reflect the structure of the population of the statistical units. Most of the coefficients of variation in the proportion of training enterprises complied with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 198/2006 for the 60 strata defined in Article 4 of that Regulation. Some exceptions to this rule were encountered for technical reasons, but they had no impact on national and EU results as the publication focuses on more aggregated classes owing to the small sample size. Examples of such technical issues are the gaps between the expected number of enterprises in the sampling frame before the launch of the survey and the actual number of enterprises still involved when the survey was conducted (e.g. bankruptcies, merging of enterprises, etc.).

2.5. Quality and transmission of data: Articles 9(2) (4) and 11

Articles 9(2) and 11(4) lay down the deadlines for the transmission of data and quality reports to the Commission (Eurostat). As the survey was conducted in 2006 in relation to vocational training delivered in 2005, the data were due to be sent to the Commission (Eurostat) by June 2007 and the quality reports by September 2007.

In six countries, clean and validated micro-data were transmitted within the deadlines. In 17 countries, data were transmitted within the following three months due to encoding issues. In four countries the validation of the micro-data was delayed by up to 8 months. One Member

State transmitted clean and validated micro-data with a delay of 17 months due to major problems with the trans-coding of data into the EU format.

As regards quality reports, 18 participant countries forwarded these within the deadlines. The provision of complete files took longer in six countries, which delivered the files with delays of between 4 and 10 months. Four countries transmitted complete quality reports with a delay of around 24 months due to missing information (e.g. calculation of variances for all strata). All the reports enabled checking of the compliance criteria set out in Articles 5 and 7 of Regulation (EC) No 198/2006.

All data were transmitted via electronic data transfer protocols (Edamis/Stadium) as required by Article 6 of Regulation (EC) No 198/2006. The files contained individual data on enterprises, without direct identifiers of the statistical units as defined in Article 11(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005.

Under Articles 6 and 8 of Regulation (EC) No 198/2006, the Commission (Eurostat) provided participating countries with software to support the implementation of the automatic data processing tool.

Although the tool was used by all participating countries and ensured good quality of the micro-data, the time lag between the reference year of the results (2005) and when all of the results were actually published (2008-2009) significantly limits the widespread use of the results (see section 2.7).

2.6. Financing of the data collection: Article 15

Article 15(1) and (2) states that, for the first reference year, the Commission shall make a financial contribution to the Member States to help them cover the costs incurred in collecting, processing and transmitting the data. A call for grant proposals was therefore launched under the 2005 EU budget with the participation of 13 of the EU15 Member States, plus Norway. The 2004 Phare Multi-Beneficiary Programme for statistical co-operation and the 2004 Transition Facility Multi-Beneficiary Programme for statistical integration made provision for co-financing the implementation of the survey in all of the other EU-27 Member States. The total amount awarded to beneficiaries through these actions was 815 558 €

The survey was prepared with the aid of several technical meetings with participating countries (e.g. task forces for the drafting of the 'European Union Manual' by the Commission (Eurostat)) as provided for in Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No 198/2006. These meetings were supported from the EU budget as indicated in Article 15(3)).

2.7. Report on implementation: Articles 9(3) and 12

Article 9(3) states that the Commission (Eurostat) shall assess the quality of the data transmitted with particular regard to ensuring the comparability of the data between Member States.

Under the terms of Article 12(1) the Commission shall transmit a report to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of this Regulation in order to:

- assess the benefits accruing to the Community, the Member States and the users of the statistics produced in relation to the burden on the respondents; and

- identify areas for potential improvement and amendments considered necessary in the light of the results obtained.

The CVTS results were published in the context of the European Commission's annual reports on progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. These progress reports provide strategic guidance on policy cooperation at EU level and assess progress in attaining overall objectives in the education and training fields. The findings of these reports are used by the biannual joint reports from the Council of Education Ministers and the Commission. Two indicators have also been constructed on CVTS data for the monitoring of the Lisbon strategy in the employment field (employment guidelines).

In addition, since 2002, national authorities and social partners from 32 European countries have been taking part in the Copenhagen Process⁷ to help develop vocational education and training systems. The overall aim is to encourage more individuals to make wider use of vocational learning opportunities, whether at school, in higher education, in the workplace or through private courses. The CVTS data were used in particular to analyse the progress made as regards vocational training at the workplace. The most recent Council Conclusions under the Copenhagen process of November 2010, as well as the Bruges Communiqué from December 2010, underline the need to improve understanding and data about Vocational Education and Training systems in the context of the important contribution it has to make to the Europe 2020 strategy.

CVTS data are also used by specialists of vocational training policies in Member States and at EU level by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP).

All in all, the political context implies an increasing demand for, and importance of, the data on continuing vocational training.

Nevertheless, the high burden and cost of the CVTS require a deeper assessment, since there are many technical issues preventing the wider use of the data:

- (1) Burden on enterprises: the length and complexity of the questionnaire have meant low response rates from enterprises in some participating countries, as a number of local departments need to be contacted in order to cover all the topics of the questionnaire.
- (2) Reliability of the quantitative data collected: many enterprises do not have precise records of the content and characteristics of the training provided in a given year. Possibilities to collect quantitative data on continuing vocational training through other existing surveys shall be examined.
- (3) Coverage of the survey: the cost and burden of enlarging the CVTS to include small enterprises and public sectors is regarded as far too large by participating countries.
- (4) Timeliness: the transmission of complete micro-data delays the publication of EU results because of the large number of checks that have to be performed before dissemination.

⁷ OJ C 13, 18.1.2003, p.3 and Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, and the European Commission, convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training - http://ec.europa.eu/education/pdf/doc125_en.pdf

Regulation (EU) No 822/2010 allows for the adaptation of the 2010 survey and for an improvement of the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005. Despite the efforts of the Commission and participating countries to streamline the survey, a number of difficulties will still persist. This might require an adaptation of the technical requirements laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005 on the basis of the 2010 survey results.

3. CONCLUSION

The implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005 is satisfactory as regards the type of data collected. The level of compliance with Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005 by the participating countries is largely appropriate.

In the light of the Europe 2020 strategy and its flagship initiative entitled 'an agenda for new skills and jobs', the Commission will assess the outcomes of Regulation (EU) No 822/2010 (implementation of the 2010 CVTS) before proposing any further actions to streamline statistics relating to vocational training in enterprises. Reflection on the future development of the CVTS should include a review of potential complementarities with other instruments, notably the Adult Education Survey (AES).