

## abstract

Currently, we are living in a time period that is full of changes in regards to our educational needs. These changes have caused increased societal demands on individuals, yet they hold out the possibility of success through continual learning and development.

Globalization, the transition from an industrial economy to a knowledge economy, the exponential growth of information technology to bring together different social groups across society, and other factors are behind the important changes happening in our contemporary society.

In so called knowledge society it is important to put individual at the center of the lifelong learning process and meet the individuals' need for further education in relation to individual demand. All this does not only put pressure on the education system but also on society and the business world. Business must create conditions and frameworks to accommodate their employees' 'growing skills and competence, and they must exploit the potential their employees bring with them. All this is reason why we don't talk about lifelong education but about lifelong learning.

**Key words:** lifelong learning, lifelong education, curricular reform, EU strategic document, competency, key competence, competence model, human resources management.