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Great apprenticeships in small businesses



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**Best practices and recommendations
from the Chamber network**

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EUROCHAMBRES

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EUROCHAMBRES represents over 20 million businesses in Europe through 45 members (43 national associations of chambers of commerce and industry and two transnational chamber organisations) and a network of 1700 regional and local Chambers. More than 98% of these businesses are Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

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Foreword

Small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) are Europe's motor for growth and employment and the backbone of the European economy.

The availability of skilled labour is an important prerequisite to their prosperity. In countries such as Austria, Germany and Luxembourg, small businesses contribute strongly to the training of the future work force through their involvement in apprenticeship schemes. This shared ownership is a win-win situation for businesses, apprentices alike and the economy and society at large.

However, as the October 2013 Declaration of the European Council has reiterated, small companies need special support and incentives from policy makers to successfully host apprentices. The support of Chamber networks has proven to be an effective tool in motivating companies to take part in apprenticeships and helping those that already are involved. Indeed, Chambers across the EU manage nearly one million apprenticeships per year.

This collection of best practices will present different ways to facilitate the involvement of SMEs in apprenticeship schemes. It also identifies key success factors that can be adapted to fit the national circumstances of each country.

National policies, company culture and attitudes may vary in Europe, but there is a great amount to be learned from apprenticeship systems with strong SME involvement.



Richard Weber

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Apprenticeships: smoothing the transition between education and work

Why should apprenticeship schemes be promoted in SMEs?

Apprenticeships have the potential to bring many advantages to both the employer, and the apprentice. A well-functioning apprenticeship programme improves the school-to-work transition and raises employability. At the same time, apprenticeship schemes increase the availability of **medium level skills** which are particularly valuable for SMEs. In fact, when the share of the labour force with secondary and upper secondary qualifications in vocational and advanced technical knowledge grows, so does employment in the SME sector (Annual

Report on European SMEs 2013). The medium level skills are essential for the economy as a whole: by 2020, around 50% of labour demand will be for medium-level qualified people (Cedefop 2012).

What is an apprenticeship?

According to CEDEFOP apprenticeships are...

Systematic, long-term training alternating periods at the workplace and in an educational institution or training centre. The apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation.

European countries with a strong tradition of work-based learning tend to have lower levels of youth unemployment, and their **graduates find employment faster** (European Commission 2013a). In most European apprenticeship programmes, a majority of

students find employment immediately after the apprenticeship – in some countries the proportion is as high as 90% (European Commission 2013b). Apprenticeships have proved more convincing than other forms of VET. Vocational education with a significant share of work-based learning produces higher rates of employment for medium-level qualified young people than school-based education (Cedefop 2013).

Furthermore, apprenticeships are a cost-effective way for SMEs to handle recruitment processes. By providing initial vocational training, companies enable themselves to better select and train their future employees. This can have a significant effect on their skills. Small companies of less than 20 employees are in a particularly difficult situation in terms of skills. A recent study of eight European countries¹ showed that small companies are over-represented in the group that is the least satisfied with the skills in its organisation, but the least likely

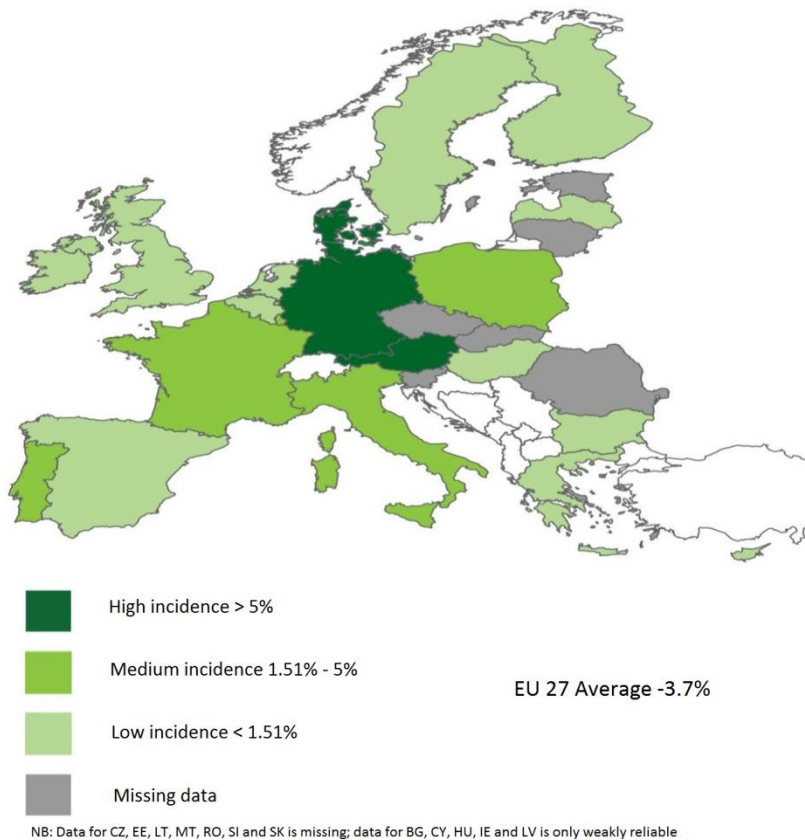
What is work-based learning?

According to CEDEFOP work-based learning is...

Acquisition of knowledge and skills through carrying out – and reflecting on – tasks in a vocational context, either at the workplace (such as training in alternation) or in a VET institution.

¹ France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the UK

to act to change the situation (McKinsey 2014). SMEs must nonetheless be considered key actors in increasing the amount of quality apprenticeships, given that they have been **the source of 85% of recent new jobs** (European Commission 2012).



However, the advantages that result from apprenticeship schemes are not felt throughout Europe. The map below shows that the level of young people pursuing an apprenticeship varies greatly across the EU (European Commission 2013b).

The situation varies also in the ratio of apprentices among staff. In Germany and Austria, one out of twenty staff is an apprentice, but for most European countries this figure is less than one out of hundred (European Commission 2013a).

Table 1 : Incidence (%) of Apprentices in the Youth Population (aged 15-29) in EU27 (2011) (Source: European Commission 2013b)

SMEs can gain from apprenticeship programmes, but barriers to host an apprentice remain high

When hosting an apprentice, SMEs have the potential to gain:

- Potential young employees with an awareness of the reality of the job.
- A better match of skills and jobs, as they are able to train young apprentices according to their needs.
- An efficient mechanism for recruitment

The potential impact of apprenticeship schemes on the mismatch of skills and jobs is particularly significant for SMEs. Overall, 33% of employers leave vacancies open because they cannot find the skills they need (McKinsey 2014). Finding employees with the right skills is hardest for SMEs since they are not able to invest as much in recruitment as large companies.

Although the EU's SMEs are the main source of employment, job creation and economic growth, they are not the main providers of apprenticeships as tables 2 and 3 illustrate.

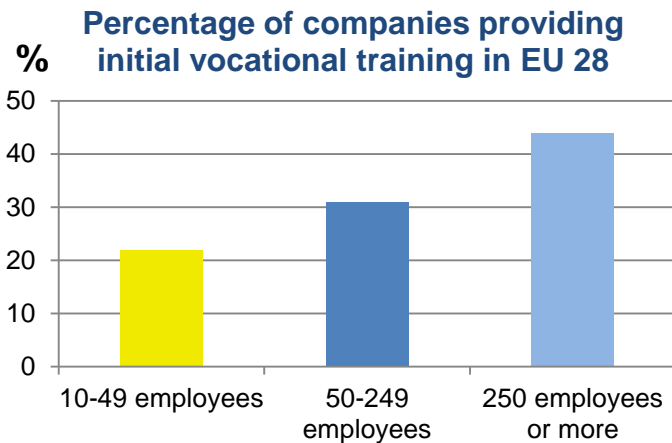


Table 2: Source: Eurostat, data from 2010

SMEs have a lower hosting level in most EU member states compared to larger businesses. It also appears that even in countries where apprenticeships are common, larger companies host an apprentice more often than SMEs. To increase the overall percentage of apprenticeships, SMEs need to play a more active role in apprenticeship schemes as well. The countries with the highest percentages of initial vocational training in their SMEs; Germany, Denmark, Austria and the

Netherlands, are also the countries with the highest percentage of apprenticeships overall.

The relatively low level of SMEs hosting apprentices is due mainly to the various barriers that a small company encounters when it wants to become involved in an apprenticeship programme. The main reasons that companies generally identify for not hosting apprentices are:

- **High costs of training activities** and financial risk of taking on an apprentice (i.e. wages, red tape procedures, etc).
- **Lack of time for training.** Particularly SMEs find it often difficult to invest the time of a trainer.
- **Lack of awareness** about apprenticeship programmes.
- **Lack of suitable in-house training facilities,** equipment or personnel.

Percentage of companies providing initial vocational training

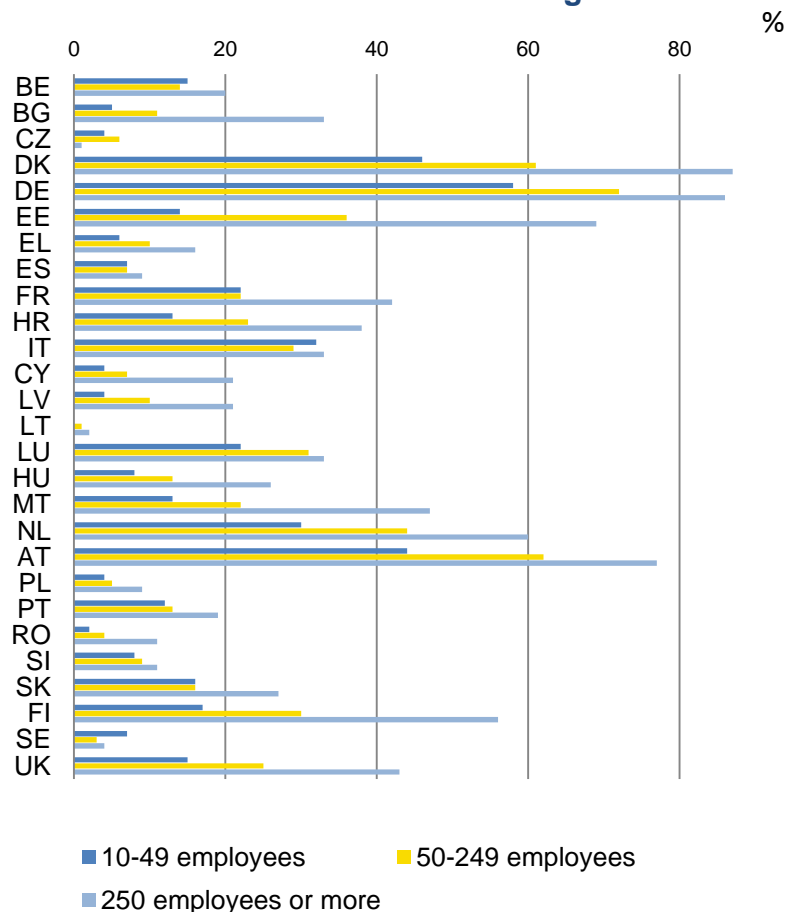


Table 3: Source: Eurostat, data from 2010

- A perceived **low quality of school leavers** by business in comparison to the growing skill requirements (i.e. lack of suitable applications, deficiencies in general skills, discipline).

Effective measures are required across the EU to minimise these barriers and to increase the participation of SMEs in apprenticeship schemes. The best practices in this publication provide some examples of such measures. They also illustrate the important role that Chambers of Commerce and Industry can play in facilitating the engagement of smaller businesses in apprenticeship schemes.

Recommendations to facilitate apprenticeships in SMEs



Based on the best practices gathered from the Chamber network, several recommendations can be drawn to increase SME participation in apprenticeship schemes.

1. Create financial incentives for small businesses to host apprentices

- Austria: The costs for apprenticeship training schemes are shared between the state and the companies. In order to co-fund the remuneration of the apprentices, the Austrian Chamber has put in place a training fund financed by employer levies. Apprentices in work-based learning are then partially paid with money from this fund.
- Luxembourg: The National Employment Fund allocates to companies employing apprentices a financial aid in an amount equal to 27% of the compensation paid to the apprentice. This amount is raised to 40% for the lowest level apprenticeships. An adult apprentice will be paid the social minimum wage for unskilled workers but the employer will be reimbursed the difference between this amount and the amount of the learning allowance.

2. Provide local VET contact points that deliver administrative and practical support to SMEs

- Hungary: Since 2001, the Hungarian Chamber has run a national network of around 150 VET advisors. Their responsibilities include administrative assistance and consulting services for businesses hosting apprentices, as well as assisting in general and specific issues. In 2014, the range of their assignments broadened: advisors now have to attract potential training companies and persuade them to host apprentices. The Chamber network has played a crucial role in widening the apprenticeship system in Hungary.
- Germany: All 80 Chambers of Industry and Commerce have vocational training advisers, around 450 all over Germany. They are the contact partners for around 204.000 companies providing initial vocational training and deal with more than 845.000 vocational training contracts. They administer apprentice contracts and examinations and advise businesses that host apprentices. The local Chambers also make sure that a suitable training place is offered to every young person and give advice to apprentices.

3. Increase quality through “train the trainer” schemes

- Germany: To ensure the quality of training within the company, any employer wishing to engage apprentices must fulfil certain conditions. It is a legal requirement that every trainer has to complete the so called instructor's competence examination (AEVO) of the "Instructors aptitude ordinance". In 2012, approximately 62,000 trainers passed the AEVO exams. Around 334,000 instructors working in companies are actively involved in training matters. The Chamber initiative "Getting strong for VET" also gives special support to instructors working with young people lacking basic literacy and maths skills.
- Spain: Together with the Spanish Ministry for Education, the Spanish Chamber of Commerce is currently elaborating a training course for business tutors for dual VET, especially designed for SMEs. The courses include offline and online didactic training material and are delivered at local Chambers of Commerce.

4. Provide measures to allow apprentices to acquire a complete practical training

- Austria: If a company cannot cover all positions of a specific occupational profile but still wants to train apprentices, this company will have to form a training alliance with one or more companies to be able to cover all skills and competences of the occupational profile. Complementary training measures can either be conducted in another company or in an educational institution suited for this purpose. Regional economic chambers, in cooperation with the provincial government or the chamber of labour, have set up special entities in order to facilitate the creation of training alliances by providing information on possible partner companies and educational institutions.

5. Develop communication tools targeted at future apprentices and smaller businesses

- France: The French Chambers of Commerce and Industry organise Orientation Nights (Nuits de l'Orientation) to inform young people and their parents about career opportunities, using a variety of media and tools, such as round tables, thematic workshops, spaces dedicated to individual counselling, interactive tests, and 'trade dating' with company managers. For the 2013 edition, 63 Guidance Nights were organised nationally, attracting 80.000 visitors and more than 2.300 entrepreneurs.
- Cyprus: Cyprus Chamber concentrates its communication offers on SMEs, as large companies are already largely involved in VET in Cyprus. The Chamber actively promotes the apprenticeship scheme to its member businesses and assists in the recruitment of host SMEs via offline and online communication tools, skills forecasting and match-making services.

Best practices of SME involvement in apprenticeship schemes

Austria

Governance: ensuring companies' co-ownership of the VET system

A governance structure that ensures companies' co-ownership of the VET system is a decisive factor in bringing companies to engage into dual VET. In the Austrian governance and administration system, this is provided by intermediary institutions, such as the Economic Chamber.

Companies are directly involved in VET and cooperate via their representative organisations in the development of job profiles and training regulations. This ensures that the content and scope of the training are practice-relevant and oriented towards the companies' needs.

Financial support for companies offering training

The Austrian apprenticeship training system is based on a co-funding financial structure. The state finances part-time vocational schools. However, the costs of company-based training and the apprentices' remuneration - the greater share of costs of apprenticeship training - are borne by companies.

The structures and measures in support of companies offering training reflect this funding structure. All measures to manage, strengthen and develop the apprenticeship training system as well as the services provided by the apprenticeship offices are funded by all companies via mandatory Chamber membership. There are also financial support instruments financed by the Austrian Insolvency Remuneration Fund, which is mainly funded by employer levies. The basic subsidy is equivalent to the amount of three gross apprenticeship remunerations in the first year of training, two in the second year of training, and one in the third year. This basic subsidy can be added to special subsidies, for example training alliance measures, job-specific additional qualification for apprentices or preparatory courses for the apprenticeship-leave examinations.

Apprenticeship office for tailored advice and support

The apprenticeship offices within the regional economic chambers are the competent authorities for administrating apprenticeship training. As such, they and other entities within the economic chambers provide wide-ranging support to training companies and apprentices in all matters concerning apprenticeships. In particular, they support companies in the organisation of training alliances, as well as in finding suitable apprentices and they inform about prevailing legal norms concerning training contracts, subsidies, conditions of employment and requirements for the training of a certain occupational profile. Moreover,

ibw, a VET research and development institute with links to the economic chambers, prepares “training guidelines”, which explain legal training regulations along suggestions, best practices and practical advice.

“IVET trainer colleges” or “trainer academies” (Ausbilderakademien)

The so-called “IVET trainer colleges” or “trainer academies” (Ausbilderakademien) are one example of successful support for the continuing training and professionalisation of apprenticeship trainers in companies. IVET trainer colleges are designed as regional institutions aiming to meet the respective needs of trainers and companies. Thus also the certification steps are designed differently in the regions, with the IVET trainer colleges’ common goal being the continuing training and professionalisation of IVET trainers and consequently quality assurance of dual training.

The IVET trainer college itself is not a physical training institution but must be seen as an initiative to structure and promote the continuing training of apprenticeship trainers. Attendance is voluntary. IVET trainer colleges have been set up in 5 Austrian provinces. IVET trainer colleges are mostly initiated by the regional economic chamber in cooperation with the Economic Promotion Institute (WIFI).

The majority of IVET trainer colleges provide specific qualification modules, others organise seminars tailored to the needs of apprenticeship trainers. The access prerequisite for these programmes is, in all cases, successful completion of the IVET trainer examination or the training for trainers followed by a vocation-specific interview.

Training alliances

A company that cannot cover all positions of a specific occupational profile but still wants to train apprentices will have to form a training alliance with one or more companies to be able to cover all skills and competences of the occupational profile. Complementary training measures can either be conducted in another company by 1) mutual exchange, 2) a one-way secondment, or 3) in an educational institution suited for this purpose. Regional economic chambers, in cooperation with the provincial government, or the chamber of labour have set up special entities in order to facilitate the creation of training alliances by providing information on possible partner companies and educational institutions. These entities also provide assistance in coordinating different training alliance measures.

Excellency awards for training companies: “Fit for future” & “State-honoured training company”

The state award “Best training companies – Fit for future” is awarded every two years by the Federal Ministry of Economy in the categories small, medium-sized and large enterprises. The aim of this award is to recognise Austrian training companies for their outstanding activities in the field of apprenticeship training and to send a clear signal for quality in apprenticeships. It is organised by ibw, which in turn uses the good practice examples gathered from the applications by companies to feed into its training guidelines on apprenticeship training.

Furthermore, the Federal Ministry of Economy awards the prize “State-honoured training company” to training companies for special achievements in apprenticeship training. Criteria for awarding the state prize include:

- success in apprenticeship-leave exams and in provincial and national competitions;
- dedicated involvement in the field of career guidance;
- cooperation activities of training companies;
- in-house and external CET programmes for apprentices and trainers.

Belgium

Q Placements

Q-PLACEMENTS NETWORK is the European host companies' network for the promotion of international workplace training for IVET students and apprentices. Organisations from all over Europe started a database of companies interested in European IVET students. The network gathers Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Chambers of Crafts, innovation centres, Educational Centres related to business, and organisations supporting businesses in a very balanced proportion including all points of view; thus ensuring a wide knowledge, good contacts and expertise of both the educational and the business world.

The network's members are coordinating organisations bringing a critical mass of high quality **host companies**. This is the best way to put IVET schools and host companies from different and distant countries in contact, to raise awareness, to facilitate mobility, to ensure quality and to follow up, acting as coordinating organisations for both sending trainees and for receiving ones to be hosted at local companies.

To test the network, **several IVET students** were sent amongst partners. Based upon the quality manual, the focus of these mobilities was quality, follow up of student and company and an excellent match between students and companies. The project, which is co-funded by the Lifelong learning programme, will end in September 2014.

<http://www.q-placements.eu/>

Cyprus

Promoting apprenticeships and recruiting SMEs

Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry is represented in the national Apprenticeship Council of Cyprus and contributes to its work. It actively promotes the apprenticeships to its member companies (91% of which are small and 99% are SMEs) and assists in the recruitment of SMEs for the placement of the apprentices. This is achieved by:

- Promoting the benefits of apprenticeships to member companies using inter alia relevant material from the web pages of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships and encouraging them to increase the number of apprenticeships on offer.

- Gathering the needs for the placement of apprentices from the operators of the apprenticeship schemes together with the type of apprentices they need to place, e.g. welders, car mechanics, plumbers, electricians, etc.
- Sending these needs to the companies and collecting their interest to offer places to the students of the apprenticeship scheme that come about as a result of the Chamber's promotion of activities.
- Sending the interests to the operators of the apprenticeship scheme so that matchings can be made.
- Working with national authorities, social partners, VET providers and others to identify ways of strengthening the quality, supply and image of apprenticeships in Cyprus.

In Cyprus, large companies already offer placement opportunities for apprentices. Therefore, the Cyprus Chamber concentrates its efforts on SMEs and in this direction uses more targeted telephone contact, personal contact, personal e-mails in addition to electronic circulars, publications and other mass promotion means.

Germany

Vocational training advisers

In today's economy, companies cannot rely on university-educated leaders alone but need a broad range of skilled manpower. As new occupations and skills profiles arise, companies often have difficulties in finding people with the skills they need. For this reason, many companies opt for training the labour force themselves, through vocational training schemes. Small companies with up to 49 employees offer training for approximately 46% of the apprentices within the German dual system. The vocational training schemes are organised by the companies directly and managed with the help of the Chamber "vocational training advisers".

All 80 Chambers of Industry and Commerce have vocational training advisers, around 450 all over Germany. They are the contact partners for around 204.000 companies providing initial vocational training and deal with more than 845.000 vocational training contracts.

As the companies' privileged partners in matters of vocational training, the vocational training advisers establish the link between companies and young people and help to match supply and demand effectively. They advise training firms on all problems connected with training, e.g. the training occupations to be considered, how training should be structured, the use of training aids, and educational, psychological and legal questions. As an important legal task the Chambers ensure that a suitable training place is offered to every young person. Chambers also give advice to apprentices.

Train the trainers

To ensure the quality of training within the company, any employer wishing to engage apprentices must fulfil certain conditions as regards the suitability for his task. It is a legal requirement that every trainer has to complete the so called instructor's competence examination (AEVO) of the "Instructors aptitude ordinance". In 2012, approximately 62,000 trainers passed the AEVO exams. Around 334,000 instructors working in companies were recently actively involved in training matters.

The Chamber initiative "Getting strong for VET" also gives special support to instructors working with young people lacking basic literacy and math skills. Due to demographic changes in Germany, taking on applicants that lack the minimum maturity and skills is becoming more and more important, especially for SMEs.

Hungary

Elaboration of new training documents: qualifications structure, vocational and examination requirements as well as curricula

Within the framework of Hungarian VET reform that took place from 2011 to 2013, new National Qualifications Register (NQR), Vocational and Examination Requirements (VER), as well as new curricula have been elaborated with coordination of the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The related tasks were accomplished in two phases: in 2011 and 2012. As a result, the guidelines strengthened the dual character of VET that thus became more work- and practice-oriented. This paves the way for increasing numbers of SMEs to host apprentices. The Chamber has involved – besides 7 ministries and 14 state secretaries – 250 organisations and 800 experts.

Special attention was paid to the fact that a great majority of businesses are SMEs. Indeed, SMEs account for 90% of companies involved in VET in Hungary. Albeit this rate being impressive, the fact that less than 2% of businesses pursue training indicates huge potential for broadening apprenticeship schemes.

Benefits of the new guidelines for SMEs:

- As the duration (number of hours) of the practical part of the training was increased by 50%, businesses have significantly more time to work with students,
- Up-to-date content of the training ensures a better match between students' skills, competencies and the requirements of companies,
- The qualifications structure has been rationalised, the number of qualifications has halved, the National Qualification Framework (NQR) has become easy-to-use

Running a national network of apprenticeship advisors of the territorial chambers

Since 2001, the Hungarian Chamber and the regional chambers have been running a national network of advisors consisting of nearly 150 people. Their responsibilities include providing consultancy for businesses hosting apprentices and assisting in general and specific issues. They have to act according to centrally defined rules and work flows, and

unified documentation. Their performance is monitored online, and evaluated every quarter of year. In 2013, they made more than 10 thousand visits at business sites, gave consultancy in person, by phone or via email above 120 thousand times. In 2014, the range of their assignments has broadened: advisors have to attract potential trainer companies and persuade them to host apprentices. The network has played a crucial role in widening of the apprenticeship system in Hungary.

A milestone towards employment based VET

Though the Hungarian VET reform in 2012-2013 resolved major problems, new challenges have emerged. Analyses show that – besides the demographic change and the economic crisis – the delivery role of vocational schools hinders the process of widening the initial training contract system. In many cases, schools retain students in their workshops, although the practical part of the training could be organised at companies.

As a solution, the Hungarian Chamber has submitted the following proposal to the government: all students potentially eligible for signing a training contract spend their practice in a company, except when the chamber issues a certificate that it has not found any appropriate place for them. Only in this case can the practical part of the training be organised within the school. This measure would boost apprenticeship numbers and serve as a milestone towards a VET system where young apprentices can benefit from both the employment and the student status, with an emphasis on the former. The proposal will be debated and the related decision will be made this year.

Italy

Apprenticeship schemes in Emilia Romagna Region

The IFOA (Istituto Formazione Operatori Aziendali), a training agency, develops local initiatives in order to encourage small businesses to give a real training value and certified competences to their young workers. The programme is a public project co-funded by the Emilia Romagna Region, and the European Social Fund. It is implemented and directly co-funded by companies. IFOA is fine-tuning a web platform for the sharing of profiles and qualifications with client companies, and is adjusting the platform to be in line with a European partnership in the New Deal project (LLP Leonardo).

The training profile developed is “service operator in food and beverage”. Young people will attend the training on transversal skills in classroom (120 hours) and will achieve technical-professional competences and safety regulations knowledge.

Through constant tutoring and the introduction of a personal portfolio, IFOA aims to change on the job training in acquisition and formalization of competences, which are afterwards certified together with the employer and the training centre.

Luxembourg

Training programmes “Culture of Service” and “Basic knowledge of products”

Within the framework of the reform of vocational training, the Chamber of Commerce has organised since 2010-2011 classes in "Culture of Service" and "Basic knowledge of products". Those classes, which are an inherent part of the official sales assistant training programme, are taught over three years and aim to provide quality assurance in initial vocational training, as well as comparability of the delivered diplomas.

The “Culture of Service” part is mainly focused on welcoming the client, on communication with internal and external customers, as well as different sales techniques. These classes focus on developing and optimising a lasting relationship with the customer, the latter being more and more demanding and better informed thanks to the internet. The course consists of a theoretical part which is complemented by role playing, exposing apprentices to everyday situations.

The “Basic knowledge of products” courses aim at strengthening apprentices’ product knowledge during their three year sales assistant training programme. These courses have been developed in close cooperation with the sectorial representatives and are taught by professional trainers with extensive product knowledge, as well as extensive experience in sales, marketing and communication.

The national employment fund aid for apprentices

Every apprentice in Luxembourg is entitled to a learning allowance, which is paid monthly by the company providing the training. In order to promote and encourage employers to engage in apprenticeships, the national Employment Fund allocates to companies employing apprentices a financial aid equal to 27% of the compensation paid to the apprentice. This amount rises to 40% for the CCP (lowest) level apprenticeship. An adult apprentice will be paid the social minimum wage for unskilled workers but the employer will be reimbursed the difference between this amount and the amount of the learning allowance.

The national Employment Fund also reimburses the employer's charges related to the learning compensation paid to the apprentice. In the case of an adult apprenticeship, the employer's charges related to the social minimum wage for unskilled workers will be reimbursed to the employer. Thus, the employer will always pay the same amount to the apprentice, regardless of whether it is an adult or initial apprenticeship.

Train the tutors

Referring to the Luxembourg national legislation regarding initial vocation education and training, each company engaged in apprenticeship has to designate, depending on the number of trained apprentices, one or more internal tutors who are in charge of the supervision and mentoring of the apprentices employed by this company. In a quality assurance approach, the Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce is the initiator and exclusive

provider of a compulsory training programme addressed to the tutors, called "Train the Tutors".

The programme aims to provide tutors with a high-level didactical and pedagogical skills set in order to ensure an appropriate supervision of the trainees. This especially refers to their integration in the team, the daily assistance as well as the definition and organisation of their respective practical training programme.

<http://tuteurs.lsc.lu/>

Norway

VET in Commerce and Service

The project is initiated and coordinated by Virke (The Federation of Norwegian Enterprises) as part of the Social Contract on VET (Samfunnskontrakten) that was signed by the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Government Affairs, the social partners and the regional authorities in April 2012. To meet the future needs for competences in the labour market, the Social Contract for VET is a major initiative aiming at three main objectives:

- A 20 % increase in the number of apprenticeship contracts by 2015
- Increase the number of adults formalising their competence by a craft or journeyman's certificate
- Increase the number of apprentices that completes an apprenticeship and pass the exam

Upper secondary VET in Norway normally includes two years at school followed by two years of formalised apprenticeship training and productive work in a company or public institution. The majority of the pupils who embark on upper secondary education choose a vocational programme, but only a minority achieve a trade or craftsman's certificate due to high drop-out rates and the significant numbers that switch from a vocational programme to a third year which prepares them for entrance to higher education.

Pupils in VET have to choose one of nine different types of programme. The project "VET in Commerce and Service" is targeting pupils in the "Service and Transport" programme. In 2012, there were in total about 35000 apprentices in upper secondary VET, among them 10% enrolled in the "Service and Transport" programme.

The "VET in Commerce and Service" project has three main activities:

- **Information**
- **Implementation and support**
- **Train the trainers**

The training offices are a key for involvement of SMEs in apprenticeships. Training companies must appoint a qualified training manager to supervise the instruction given. Several employees may provide the actual training. Along with employee representatives, the training manager makes sure that the training facilities are adequate, that the curriculum

requirements are met and, thus, that the apprentice receives the training he or she is entitled to. In order to reduce the administrative burden to the individual company and ensure that apprentices are given the correct training, groups of SMEs often establish umbrella organisations – training offices (opplæringskontor) – which assume responsibility for the training of apprentices and formally enter the contractual agreement with the VET office at the county authority. Training offices aim to recruit new training companies and establish more apprenticeship places and coach staff involved in the tutoring of apprentices.

A network of 27 local or regional training offices are currently involved in the project.

<http://lærlingløftet.no/> (only in Norwegian)

<http://www.virke.no/virkehjelperdeg/kompetanse/Sider/Gi-bedriften-et-løft---bli-med-på-Lærlingløftet!.aspx> (only in Norwegian)

Spain

Guide for Professional Vocational Education and Training

Together with the Spanish Ministry for Education, the Spanish Chamber of Commerce published in March 2014 a guide presenting in a simple way the implementation of an alternative training model focused on the improvement of dual VET in Spain. The guide is conceived as a starting reference point for those people interested in approaching and increasing their knowledge of dual VET.

The objective is to give an instructive approach, providing the necessary data for understanding the philosophy of this training system and its basic implementation tools: to show the means of access, the paths to follow and the advantages of its implementation.

The guide is a document of 52 pages, presenting dual VET in Spain step by step, the role of each stakeholder and the methodology of dual VET.

Training Course “Business’ Tutor of Dual VET”

Together with the Spanish Ministry for Education, the Spanish Chamber of Commerce is currently elaborating a training course for Business’ Tutors for Dual VET, specially designed for SMEs. Once the design of the offline and online didactic training material is finished, the courses for tutors will be given to SMEs at local Chambers of Commerce.

The training material includes information on for example the role of the tutor in the companies, methods and didactic techniques, methods for conflict resolution and the evaluation of learning outcomes. The guide is addressed to professionals who are to become tutors of apprentices, with a special focus on future tutors in SMEs.

Q- Mentor: Quality assurance in mobility, mentoring and learning outcomes

The Q-Mentor project, co-funded by the Lifelong learning programme, addresses the tutors in host companies and tries to understand their role in the quality assurance process. Q-Mentor is currently detecting the host company mentor training needs, is writing a handbook for host company mentors and training curricula for host company tutors and mentors. The project will end in September 2014.

<http://www.q-mentor.eu/>

Transfer of successful structures and guidance for implementing the dual VET system (DUALVET)

The DUALVET project, co-funded by the Lifelong learning programme, analysed how the dual training systems in Germany and Austria can be transferred to Spain and Portugal. The project addresses specific knowledge, competences and skills that are required by company tutors and trainers when implementing dual training in Spain and Portugal. The project has developed guides for SMEs on how to plan and manage dual training and analysed special requirements for company tutors and instructors. A pilot training action on key skills and competences for host company trainers and tutors was also developed. The project also aims to develop a network of SMEs and training organisations involved in dual training. Chambers from Zaragoza (Spain), Terrassa (Spain) and Ost Brandenburg are partners in this project that started in 2013.

<http://www.dualvet.eu/Default.asp?lang=en>

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