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BRIDGING THE TRANSITION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND THE LABOUR MARKET

**Report of the conference of the European Network of Education
Councils,**

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**BRIDGING THE TRANSITION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND THE LABOUR
MARKET**

INTRODUCTION

EUNEC is the **European Network of Education Councils**. Its members advise the governments of their countries on education and training. EUNEC aims to discuss the findings and recommendations of all European projects in education and training, to determine standpoints and to formulate statements on these issues. EUNEC wants to disseminate these statements pro-actively towards the European Commission, relevant DGs and other actors at European level, and to promote action by EUNEC's members and participants at national level. EUNEC also has the objective that the councils should put internationalization and mobility high on the national agenda, that they should recommend and support a European policy in education and training towards all relevant stakeholders.

CENTRAL QUESTION

Previous work of EUNEC

Vocational education and training (VET) is already many years high on the agenda of EUNEC and of the member education councils. The Copenhagen declaration of 2002 was a starting point for reflection and policy advice aiming at raising the profile of vocational education and training from the perspective of lifelong learning and integration of different learning pathways.

- In 2006 the concept of key competences for vulnerable groups was discussed and developed.
- In 2007 EUNEC discussed the first drafts for transparency instruments for VET: the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the feasibility of a European Credit System for VET.
- In 2008 the central question of the conference was the paradigm shift towards learning outcomes. Learning outcomes were seen as a common and underlying concept for renewal of both general and vocational educational strands. This was the case in compulsory education as well as in adult learning because competences acquired in non-formal learning strengthen the concept of lifelong learning.
- In Budapest, in 2009, EUNEC debated the concept and structures for guidance.
- In Lisbon, in 2011, the focus of the conference was on the relationship between the attractiveness of VET and of adult learning on the one hand and between VET and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) on the other hand.

Relevance of the theme

This theme is relevant for different reasons:

- Young citizens paid a high price for the current economic crisis. From the second quarter of 2008, the youth unemployment rate has taken an upward trend peaking in 23,6 % in the first quarter 2013, before receding to 23.1 % at the end of the year (Eurostat). Another worrying phenomenon is the ongoing skills mismatch between the competences and competence levels of those leaving the school and the competences and competence levels needed in a 'learning economy'.
- The transitions between education and labour market are therefore a main strategic line in the working programmes of all education councils as it is also a common red line in the national education policies.
- The theme is also high on the EU-agenda, in the Europe 2020-strategy in general and in the Communication on apprenticeships in particular (DG Employment). The theme is also part of the ongoing work in the development of common instruments for transparency in the slipstream of the Copenhagen Declaration.

Central question for the conference

This conference is adding a different angle and a new perspective to the EUNEC work already done. Based on discussions of the executive committee and the preparatory working group, EUNEC decided to explore in depth the strategies to facilitate the transitions between VET and the (re)integration of youngsters on the labour market. How can society and the education and training systems organize broader and better established bridges between both worlds and this in two directions?

More specifically, this conference will consider alternative training pathways in the transition between learning and working, in partnership between education and employment. The focus will be on apprenticeships and work based learning in a broad sense.

We would also like to offer a 'panorama' of programmes that try to ease the transition. We found inspiration in an interesting inventory published by Cedefop. Those programmes exist in different EUNEC member countries (Ireland, Lithuania, Cyprus, Belgium (French Community), ..). EUNEC invited its members to make an active contribution to this conference and to give a presentation of their programme, which is then discussed in smaller interactive working groups.

The conference explores this central question from different angles and perspectives.

The first perspective is the one of the **skills needed beyond the school** and the competences required in a quickly evolving and highly competitive labour market, in a perspective of a sustainable development in professional and personal life and as citizen. This includes reflection on labour market needed competences, lifelong participation and inclusion, career management.

A **second perspective** is on **transitions** from both **vocational education at secondary level and higher education** to the workplaces.

- A way of bridging the gap between labour market and the world of education and training is to give pupils a real labour market experience, on the work floor, in or outside the school, during the training pathway or afterwards. The European Commission is promoting both apprenticeship and work based learning. Both concepts are rather confuse and can be organized under different shapes. These concepts offer space for debate to EUNEC members. A specific feature of learning in the workplace is the German dual learning. Dual learning is being strongly promoted in recent documents by the European Commission. EUNEC invited the Bertelsmann Stiftung from Germany to present the materials that they have developed.
- The focus will also be on short cycle professional higher education (SCHE). Short cycle higher education is a new trajectory for learners aiming at a professional qualification at an 'intermediate' level between level 4 and 5 of the European qualification structure. Labour market is in need for this medium qualified skilled workers in specialized sectors of the economy (e.g. technicians, health care workers). This 'new' education level allows to train pupils for the labour market without aiming a bachelor or a master in higher education, whilst the transition to higher education remains possible. Several European countries are building such learning pathways under different shapes.

SOURCES TO PREPARE THE DISCUSSION

EUNEC conference on 'New skills for new jobs', Lisbon, October 2011

The European Commission initiative 'New skills for new jobs'

Skills beyond School

The new OECD policy review of postsecondary vocational education and training looks at the preparation of younger people and adults for technical and professional jobs. Key policy challenges include responsiveness to labour market needs, alongside inclusion, access, career guidance, finance, governance, teaching quality, integration with workplace learning, articulation with other sectors of education, and qualifications and assessment. It builds on

the success of Learning for Jobs – which examined vocational education and training policy through 17 country reviews and a comparative report - and forms part of the horizontal OECD Skills Strategy linked to PIAAC and other initiatives across the OECD. It also draws on the OECD review of tertiary education.

[EU Skills Panorama \(2014\) Apprenticeships Analytical Highlight](#)

This paper is prepared by ICF GHK and by Cedefop for the European Commission. The paper describes policy developments at national level, provides a checklist of key success factors for apprenticeships and insists on the benefits.

PROGRAMME

Monday 20 October 2014

Chair of the day: Adrie van der Rest, EUNEC president

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|-------------------|--|
| 09.00 h – 09.30 h | Welcome by EUNEC president, Adrie van der Rest, and by Jindřich Fryč, Director General, Section for Policy Coordination and International Affairs, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports |
| 09.30 h – 10.30 h | 'From education to working life: learning for employability', key note by Lore Schmid, senior expert at Cedefop, with questions and answers |
| 10.30 h – 11.00 h | Coffee break |
| 11.00 h – 11.30 h | Panorama of good practices: Czech Republic (1). 'Educational sector and labour market cooperation in the Czech Republic' by Petr Bannert and Pavel Hradecký, Ministry of Education |
| 11.30 h – 12.00 h | Panorama of good practices: Czech Republic (2). Presentation by Miloš Rathouský, Confederation of Industry |
| 12.00 h – 13.00 h | Debate in parallel workshops |
| 13.00 h – 14.00 h | Lunch |
| 14.00 h - 17.00 h | School visit: presentation, visit and laboratory workshop |
| 17.00 h | Free evening |

Tuesday 21 October

Chair of the day: Mia Douterlungne, EUNEC secretary general

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|-------------------|--|
| 09.00 h – 10.00 h | 'Vocational education and training: the OECD experience', key note by Jose-Luis Alvarez-Galvan, OECD, including a presentation of the 'Skills beyond School' project, with questions and answers |
| 10.00 h – 10.30 h | Panorama of good practices: 'Implementation of ECVET, a challenge for all the stakeholders', by Alain Bultot, EQF and ECVET National Contact Point for Belgium (Be-Fr) |
| 10.30 h – 11.00 h | Panorama of good practices: 'Good practices in Career counselling in Romania', by Marcela Calineci, CMBRA/ISE |
| 11.00 h – 11.30 h | Coffee break |
| 11.30 h – 12.30 h | Debate in parallel workshops |
| 12.30 h – 13.30 h | Lunch |
| 13.30 h – 14.00 h | Panorama of good practices: Germany. Presentation of the study 'Germany's dual vocational training system: a model for other countries?' by Lars Thies, Bertelsmann Stiftung. |
| 14.00 h – 14.30 h | Panorama of good practices: Ireland. Presentation of the Review of apprenticeship training in Ireland by Fergal McCarthy, Chair of Education, Irish Teaching Council |
| 14.30 h – 15.00 h | Coffee break |
| 15.00 h – 16.00 h | Debate in parallel workshops |
| 16.00 h | Closing address by the president |
| 18.30 h | Conference dinner |

Wednesday 22 October

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 09.00 h – 11.30 h | Meeting of the executive committee (for EUNEC members only) |
| 11.30 h – 12.30 h | Meeting of the general assembly (for EUNEC members only) |
| 12.30 h – 13.30 h | Closing lunch |

Opening Session

Adrie van der Rest

Adrie van der Rest is president of EUNEC and secretary director of the Dutch Education Council



The theme of this conference is bridging the transition between education and the labour market. Why are we discussing this issue? And why now? This question can be answered, looking in particular at three aspects of the theme: first, the supposed mismatch between the work available in the EU and the available skills of potential employees. Next, the new skills we desire and, finally, how to bridge the gap between education and the labour market.

First, the mismatch.

Since the economic crisis of recent years, unemployment in the EU has increased from 7% in 2008 to 10.8% in 2013. Yet despite the 27 million unemployed, we didn't managed to fill 2 million vacancies in 2013. Four out of ten employers say that they are having difficulties in finding employees with the right knowledge and skills. What's more, we need to understand that other factors are also at play here, such as working conditions, pay, etc. Of the people who had a job in 2010, only 57% thought that they were in a job that matched their skills and experience. It would therefore appear that there is a mismatch between the work available in the EU and the available skills of potential employees.

What kind of skills are we talking about?

Compared to the past, the business community is placing a stronger emphasis on social and communication skills. In almost all professions, people are having to discuss things and reach a common position. Being able to work together with many parties and people from different cultural backgrounds.

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The ability to handle ICT tools is essential for almost every profession, varying from your local car repair garage (computer-controlled technology in the engine compartment) to care work (computer-based care plans) to jobs in education and teaching. Technology has also opened up access to knowledge. Knowing how and where you can find reliable information, and the ability to then select and validate it is expected from every member of society. The same is true for safe and respectful communication via social media.

Today's youngster can expect a career that encompasses various types of work. The generation that grew up in the 1960s changed jobs maybe only once or twice. Today's young people will change jobs much more frequently. Career skills will be needed to ensure a successful first, second and third career: networking, reflection on motivation and qualities, research into opportunities, undertaking activities, and making choices that match the career prospects. These skills will have to be learned.

Without exception, these competencies and skills are nothing new. But learning and living in the modern age makes an increasing demand on them.

A variety of names have been used to label the skills needed to function in the twenty-first century: key competencies, soft skills, 21st century skills. What is remarkable about the various terms is that they often describe a combination of knowledge, attitudes, skills and reflection (collaboration, communication, ICT literacy, social and cultural skills, citizenship, creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills).

What are the routes to bridge the transition from education to the labour market?

The purpose of education is to support young people in forming their personality and to prepare them for the future as a citizen and for the world of work. To do this, education needs to be relevant to its time. The demands that modern society places on individuals also place demands on education. Besides a contemporary curriculum, hands-on experience in the workplace is extremely important for the match between education and the labour market. How this experience can be achieved can vary from workplace internships during full-time study to on-the-job training. One of the variants is the system of apprenticeships. Apprenticeships combine and alternate company-based training (periods of practical work experience in a workplace) with school-based education. In 2009, around 3.7 million people in the EU were on an apprenticeship, and this number has grown since then. This is not surprising. Studies have shown that apprentices achieve better job matches and experience shorter periods of unemployment before finding a first job.

An entirely different route to bridge the transition from education to the labour market is short-cycle higher education. This is a new pathway for learners aiming at a professional qualification at an 'intermediate' level, between levels 4 and 5 of the European qualification structure. The labour market needs mid-

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qualified skilled workers in specialised sectors of the economy, such as technicians and health care workers. This 'new' educational level makes it possible to train students for the labour market without aiming for a bachelor's or a master's degree, but still allowing a progression to higher education. Several European countries are creating such learning pathways in different forms.

Unemployment in the EU increased to 10.8% of the working population in 2013, and the percentage is much higher among young people, where it stands at 32.1%. Young people pay a higher price for the current economic crisis. This theme is therefore high on the agenda not just of the EU, but also of the individual member states. Various education councils have been asked for their recommendations. As a network of cooperating education councils, EUNEC offers its members a knowledge sharing platform through this conference.

The programme of the conference

A number of keynote presentations will ensure that we are informed by academics from Cedefop and the OECD about the state of post-secondary vocational education and training in the EU and about the match between vocational education and the labour market. We will zoom in extensively on informative examples in the Czech Republic, Belgium, Germany, Romania and Ireland. In workshops, we will reflect on practices in these countries, and participants may also contribute their own experiences.

This set-up will help the thought process on the relationship between education and the labour market, and offer to EUNEC members meaningful insights which can help feed the debate on this topic within their own organisations.

Jindřich Fryč

Jindřich Fryč is Director General, Section for Policy Coordination and International Affairs, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic

The welcome speech of Mr Fryč:

'Dear Mr. President, distinguished guests, allow me to welcome you on behalf of Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic.

Being responsible for Czech Republic's involvement in the European cooperation in education and training, let me contribute to your conference with a few remarks on our perspective on bridging the worlds of education and labour market.

The Czech Republic has been continually pursuing this issue since its Presidency of the EU Council in 2009, when we chose 'partnership' as one of our top Presidency priorities and held a ministerial flagship conference on this topic.

Since then, a lot has, of course, changed with the global economic crisis and with overcoming its effects – however, we still see the building of true, sustainable and trustful partnerships between education institutions (and vocational schools in particular) on one hand and employers on the other as a cornerstone of any true bridge between education and labour market.

As you are probably aware, the economic situation in Europe, marked by the unacceptable level of young people without jobs in some countries, has triggered a new coordinated action at EU level – most recently, the Italian presidency has held European Jobs and Growth Summit in Milan two weeks ago, that has gathered top leaders of EU countries and the Union itself to discuss this situation and strengthen the common effort to create jobs and growth, and problems in the labour market, particularly youth unemployment.

EU leaders have agreed that enhancing the quality and quantity of work-based learning across the EU is crucial to tackling youth unemployment and crucial to our ability to grow, innovate and prosper in a global economy – it might be also interesting for you, that some key European players also suggested that a flagship initiative on apprenticeships should be a key element of the revised Europe 2020 Strategy, the EU strategy for growth and jobs.

Before actually touching this important momentum, let me also draw your attention to activities the European Commission is being, in the cooperation with EU member states, putting forward.

Besides the specifically targeted measures as Alliance for Apprenticeships and Youth Guarantee, that you are well aware of and will discuss during your meeting, a more widely oriented initiative has been carried forward for some

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two years now, aiming to change the overall mind set of the education / labour market linking: Rethinking Education.

With the youth unemployment rate close to 23% across the EU and yet, at the same time, with more than 2 million vacancies that cannot be filled, Europe needs a rethink on how education and training systems can deliver the skills needed by the labour market and how to fill this gap.

That is why the European Commission has launched a chain of activities (in which Youth Guarantee and Alliance for Apprenticeships are actually incorporated) to encourage Member States to take immediate action to ensure that young people develop the skills and competences needed by the labour market and to achieve their targets for growth and jobs.

This, of course, is something where EU Member States are not always in complete agreement and views very much vary – Czech Republic being no exception here. On one hand we see this recommendation as very valuable, on the other hand as our long-term policy position, recently confirmed in our new Education Policy Strategy for 2020, in favour of a more transversal approach based on equipping young people with a right mix of key competences and approaches and profession-specific skills.

It is however very sure that these discussions and initiatives will feed into the process, where we are now and where your discussion here is actually very timely itself: the revision of Europe 2020 Strategy for growth and jobs; the outcome of this revision will without any doubts effect the way the EU cooperation will approach the bridging of education and labour worlds as well.

Let me say here that the Czech Republic certainly is aware of the responsibility that individual EU policies have for achieving the common objectives of Europe 2020 strategy and strengthening the cooperation amongst them; education and training policy is no exception, although it has some specifics and falls in areas other than economic policies where the Europe 2020 strategy, as a strategy for growth and jobs, is primarily operating.

The Europe 2020 strategy of course, through two main objectives, still gives education (including vocational education and training) a prominent place in European cooperation and, maybe even more than before, recognizes it as one of the key tools to restart Europe's economic and human capital growth.

Therefore, what we should wish for, is the education policy contributing to the recovery of the European economy and restoration of confidence in European integration through modernizing education systems and opening them to new challenges and ways of learning.

Education policies certainly do have to reflect the economic context and development and do not avoid the responsibility of our young generation and its future destiny, especially when facing such youth unemployment rate in Europe.

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But still, we are convinced that European education systems, while certainly opening up to the new challenges and ways, should not abandon their firm ground, should not feel they have completely failed and must now seek refuge with some of our international competitors (esp. in Asia) who rank amongst the best in popular international surveys and seem to succeed better in preparing tailor-made graduates fit for the labour market.

Therefore, let me conclude with myself believing that we are not in any major dispute when striving for Europeans to acquire, update and develop over a lifetime both job-specific skills and transversal competences needed for their employability and to foster further learning and active citizenship.

Let me wish a fruitful and interesting discussion and I will be very much looking forward to learn more about its outcomes later.'

From education to working life: learning for employability

Eleonora Schmid

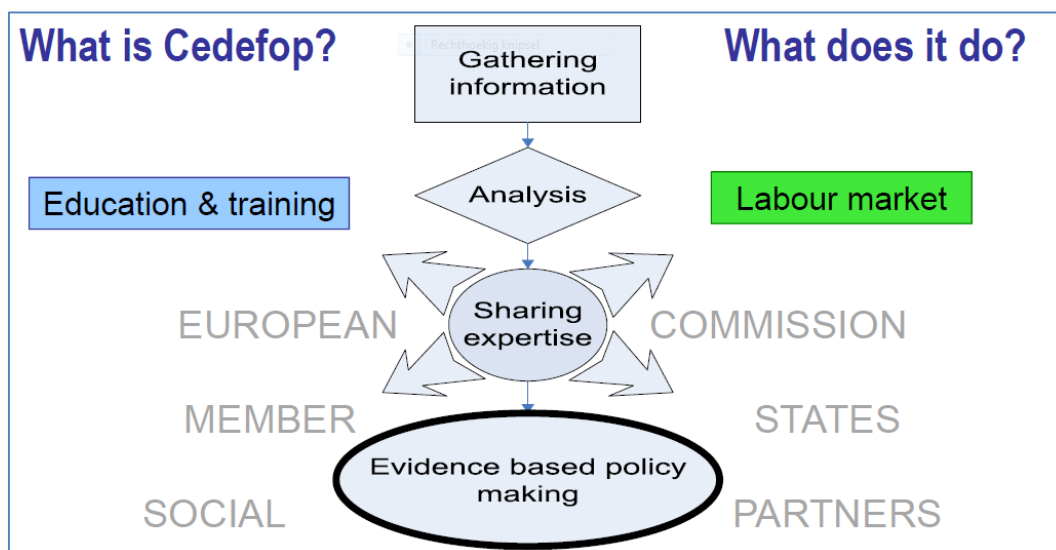
After her studies at Vienna University, Eleonora worked as a teacher in vocational education and training (VET). In 1989, after a year in the UK, she moved to the Austrian Ministry of Education where she worked with in-service teacher training and international cooperation in VET (incl. Council of Europe, OECD, UNEVOC, Cedefop study visits, ETF). Seconded to Cedefop from 2000 to 2004, she reported on VET systems and developments. After a year back at the Austrian Ministry, where her subunit focused on EU VET policy issues, she returned to Cedefop. She is involved in reviewing VET policy (Copenhagen process) and supports the director on general VET-related issues.



What is Cedefop? What does it do?

Cedefop is one of the oldest agencies set up by the European Union. The context of the setup, in 1975, is quite similar to the context of today: the skills mismatch.

Cedefop gathers and analyses information related to education and labour market. The expertise is then disseminated and shared with the European Commission, the Member States and the social partners.



Apprenticeships

In March 2014, Cedefop published a 'analytical highlight' on the theme of apprenticeships: 'Apprenticeship: an effective route to employment and an area of increased policy interest'¹

It has always to be underlined that context matters. Also using the same term across countries does not mean we are talking about the same thing. This has only recently become apparent again at the meeting of the Directors General for Vocational Education and Training.

There are also several activities that look more in-depth into different aspects:

- There is a VET group organised by the European Commission in the context of the open method of coordination that focuses on apprenticeships;
- There are bi- and multilateral activities in the context of the European Alliance for Apprenticeship;
- Countries are working on their youth guarantees that include programmes with different types of work-based learning more generally and learning in companies more specifically (for the latter e.g. internships, traineeships, the company-based component of apprenticeships);
- There is the work on apprenticeship that was launched by DG Employment to help countries tap ESF support for this type of training;

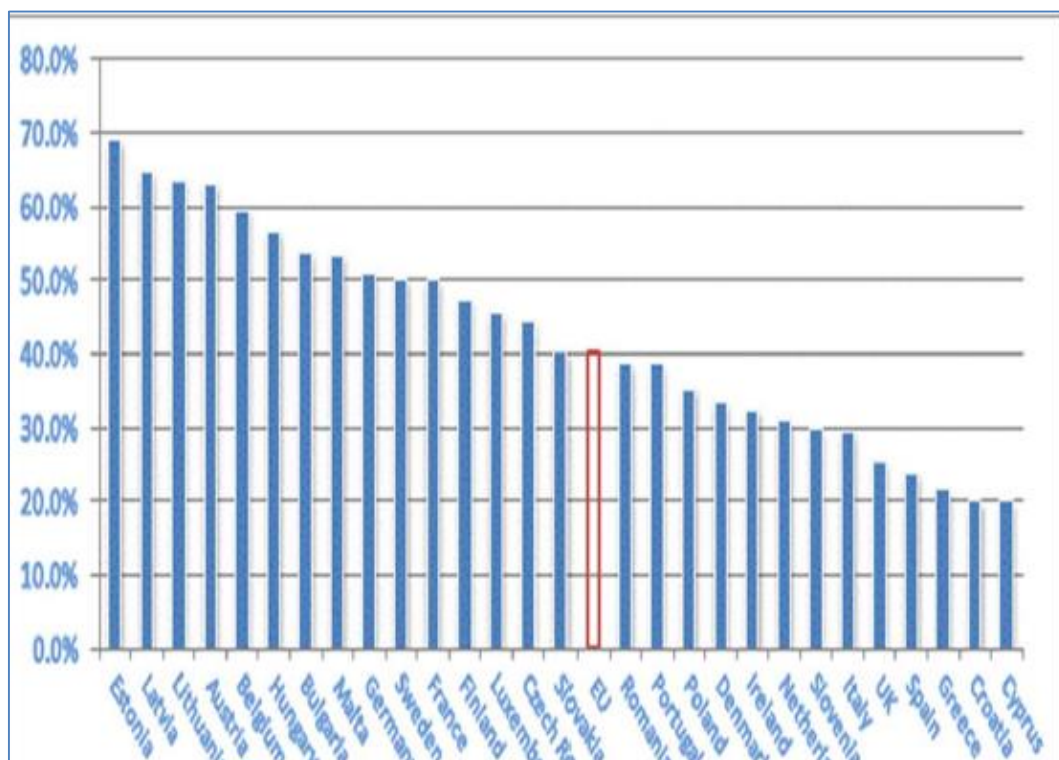
¹ <http://euskills panorama.cedefop.europa.eu/AnalyticalHighlights/>

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- Several countries received country specific recommendations in the context of the European semester on Vocational Education and Training, but also specifically on work-based learning or, even more specifically, on apprenticeships.

From education to working life

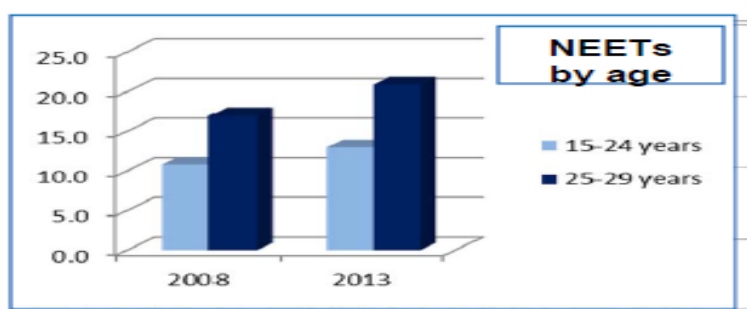
Despite high youth unemployment 4 out of 10 EU-firms have difficulty finding staff with the right skills.



(source: European Company Survey 2013)

Youth unemployment is very high, with a percentage of 23.4 on average in the EU, and percentages of over 50 in Spain and Greece.

The number of NEETs is increasing:

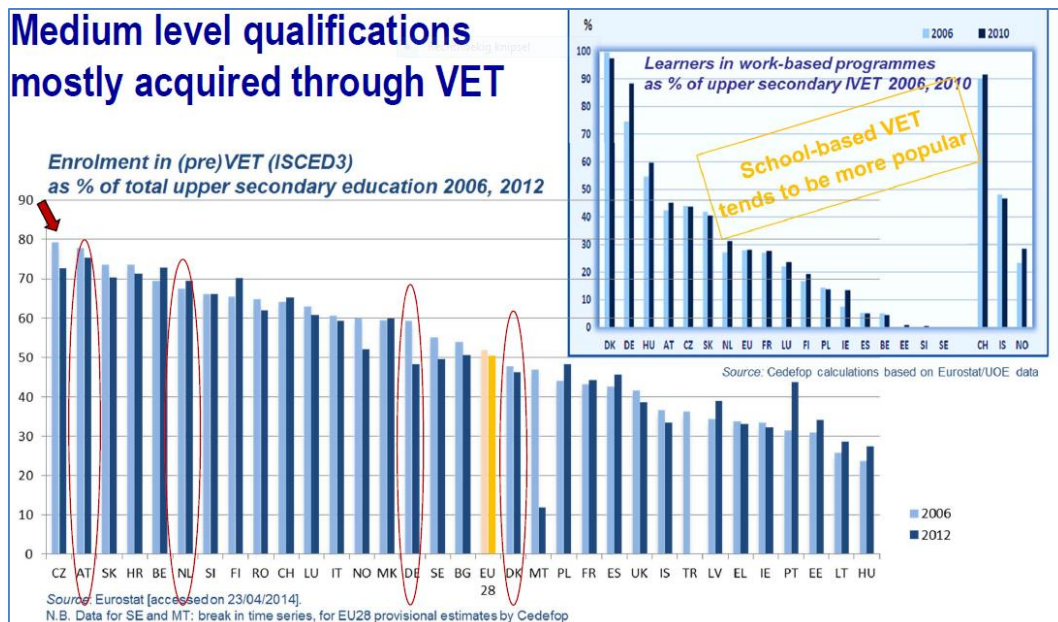


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About 29 % of the high-qualified workers in the EU are in jobs for the medium- and low-qualified.

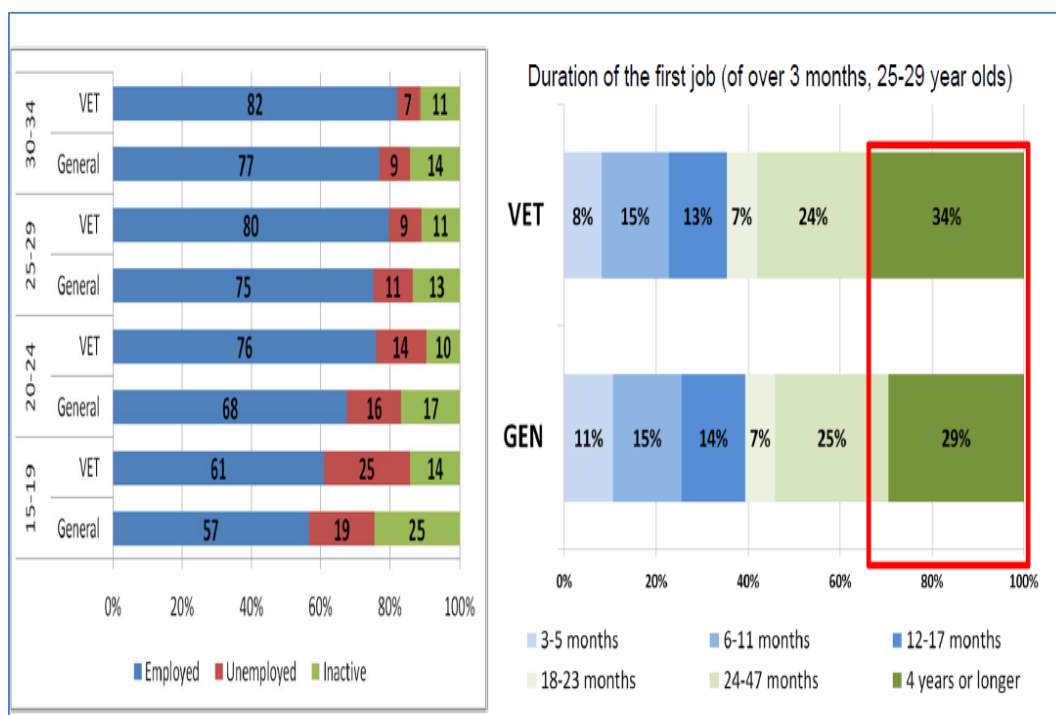
According to the Manpower Talent Surveys (European Commission, 2014), there is a **recurrent shortage of VET in Europe**. The most common reason for the difficulties to fill vacancies is the fact that the candidates lack technical competences. The most difficult jobs to fill are for instance skilled trade workers, engineers, technicians, personal care workers. There is a high demand for professionals in ICT, health, engineering and education sectors.

Medium-level qualifications are mostly acquired through VET. The graphs below show the enrolment in (pre)VET (ISCED3) as a percentage of the total upper secondary education. In the EU, about 50 % of all pupils are in VET, with big discrepancies between the countries. The graph also shows the percentage of learners in work-based programmes in upper secondary IVET. Denmark and Germany are countries with good employment: it seems that in those countries, the numbers of pupils in upper secondary VET are in apprenticeship. The picture is different in Austria, where there are many pupils in VET, but only about 40 % of them in apprenticeship. It has to be taken into account that there are very different cultures behind the choices. Moreover, there are tremendous problems with the data: apprenticeship is understood very differently in the different countries.



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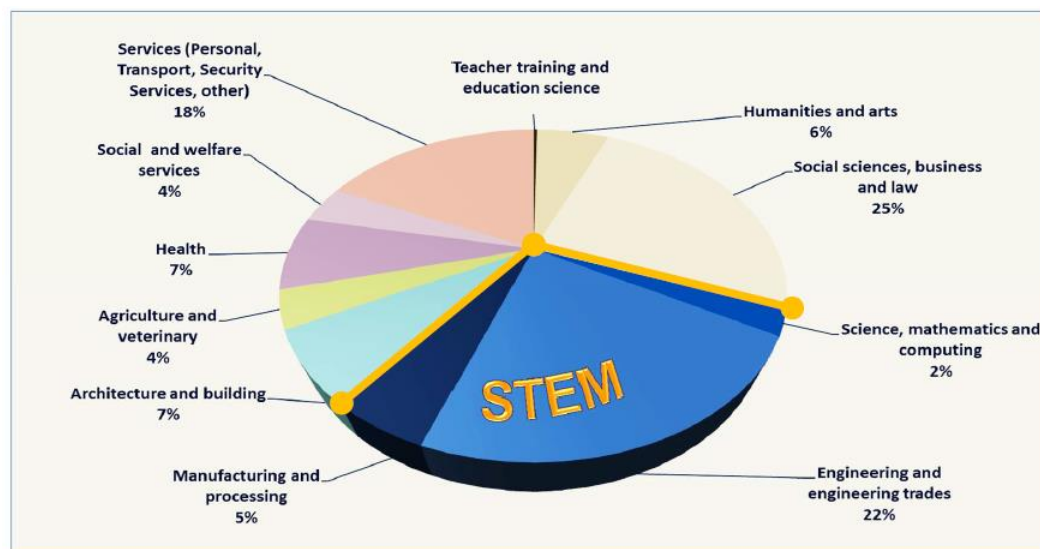
According to Cedefop calculations in 2009 (based on Eurostat, EULFS 2009 Ad Hoc Module; data for EU 27 excluding Germany), young VET graduates are more likely to find a suitable job match: on average pupils coming from VET have an advantage in terms of access to the labour market, wages, regulations, duration of the first job, ..). However, continuing and re-training will be necessary over time.



Why then, if VET offers these advantages, pupils don't go to VET? Young people are influenced by their parents. The parents still think in terms of what was appreciated when they were young. This might explain why **VET is often seen as a second rate**: 38 % think that VET leads to low status jobs (Source: Eurobarometer 369, 2011). On the other hand VET does support different talents and leads to different levels at upper secondary, post-secondary and tertiary level, in learning for continuing development, within active labour market measures, for young people and for adults. There is a clear increase of VET offer at higher, specialized levels. This phenomenon, together with an increased knowledge about the reality of occupations, might lead to more appreciation for VET as a good option: a master craftsman considered to be at the same level as an academic.

Upper secondary VET prepares for a wide range of occupational fields. The picture below (Source: Eurostat. Not included IE, EL, HR, IT, MT, AT, PT, UK) shows the percentage of upper secondary vocational graduates by field of study in 2011:

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Which skills are considered important for the development of the enterprise in the next few years? (Source: Eurostat CVTS4, EU28, 2010)

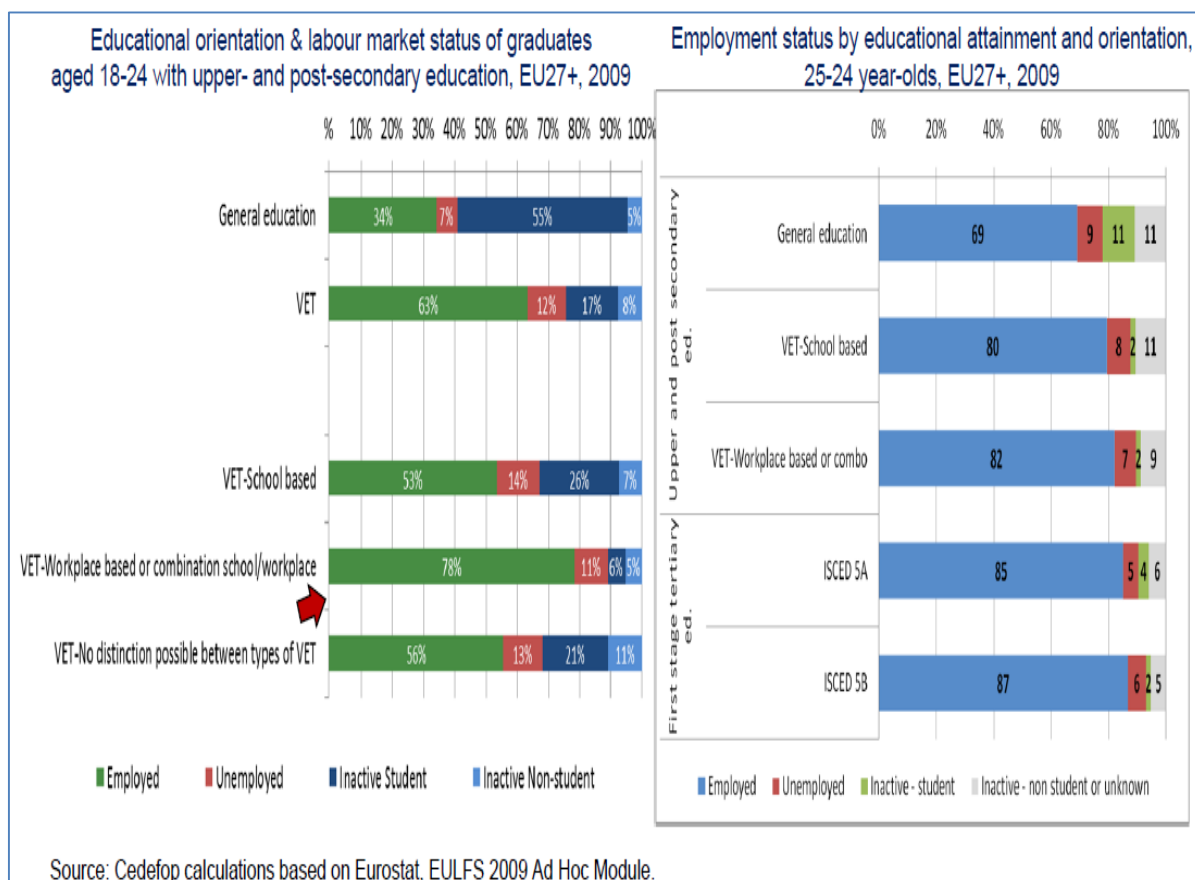
- Basic skills (Recent discussions in Cedefop reveal that one of the challenges of pupils when they enter VET is the lack of basic skills they bring along);
- Transversal skills, with an increasing importance of ICT;
- Specific technical knowledge;
- Adaptability, flexibility, career management skills;
- Work experience: substantial shares of work-based learning in schools (projects with business and industry, workshops, labs, simulations, ..).

Definitions of VET and of work-based learning vary widely.

VET at upper secondary level deals with occupational and generic skills, provides qualifications at different levels, gives access to specific (fields of) occupations, and includes school-based learning or learning at school and in a company. Work-based learning is an umbrella term that can include projects with or for companies, training and junior firms, simulations, 'school' workshops, labs, internships, traineeships, company-based part of apprenticeships.

It is clear (see graph below) that **work-experience makes a difference** for those who want to find a job, the work-based learning component is crucial.

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Apprenticeships: What learners and firms gain

OECD and Cedefop tried to define the main ingredients of an 'apprenticeship'. An apprenticeship is a formal agreement between an employer and an apprentice, and between an employer and a training centre or a school. Learning alternates between the workplace and the school or training centre. The employee is paid. Attention is given to specific and transferable skills. An apprenticeship is formal and leads to an officially recognized qualification, links to the National Qualifications Framework (this is not the case in all countries) and gives access to a specific (group of) qualifications. Social partners are involved in the design, delivery, assessment and supervision.

Companies mainly engage in apprenticeships for the following reasons: to qualify future employees, to choose the best for future employment, to benefit from the productive capacity of the employee, to avoid mismatch when recruiting. For the pupils, apprenticeship leads to a better awareness of the job reality, gives meaning to learning.

Common features for success

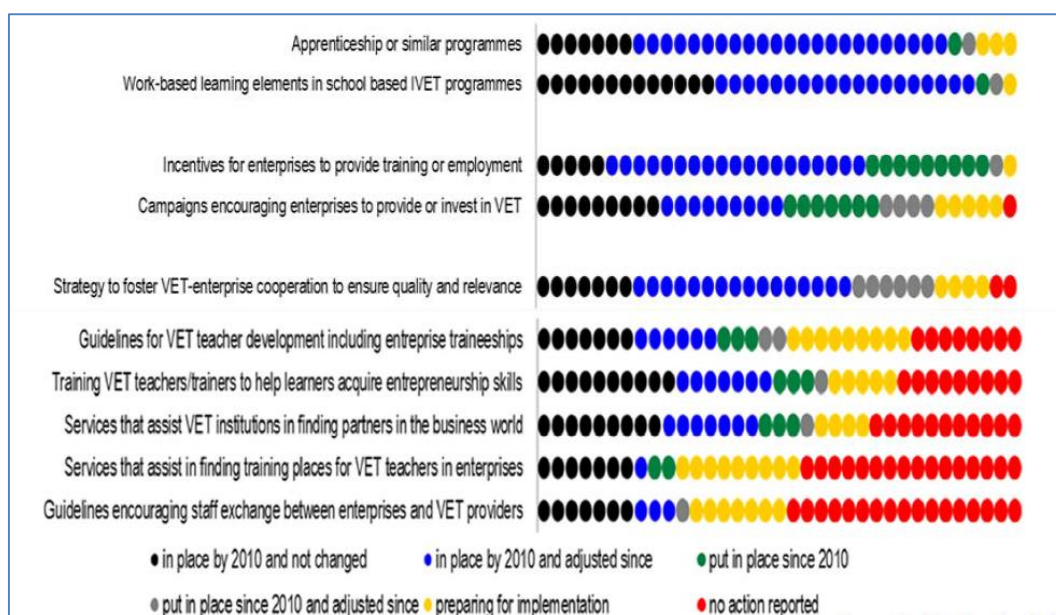
There are different types of apprenticeships across Europe, but the following features are crucial:

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- The right mix of generic and occupation-specific competences;
- Close partnership between employers and educational institutions;
- Ensured quality of learning, at the school/training centre, and at the workplace (development of EQAVET);
- Strong cooperation between public authorities and social partners;
- Guidance before and throughout the programme, for pupils and for trainers, mentoring and monitoring;
- Safeguarding young people from exploitation; this is a main concern of the trade unions: if we give incentives, will enterprises not rather attract apprentices instead of hiring people? A regulatory framework is needed;
- Collective funding approaches to mitigate the 'poaching' problem;
- Minimum duration. In order to be well trained, time is needed.

Developments in work-based learning require closer school-enterprise cooperation

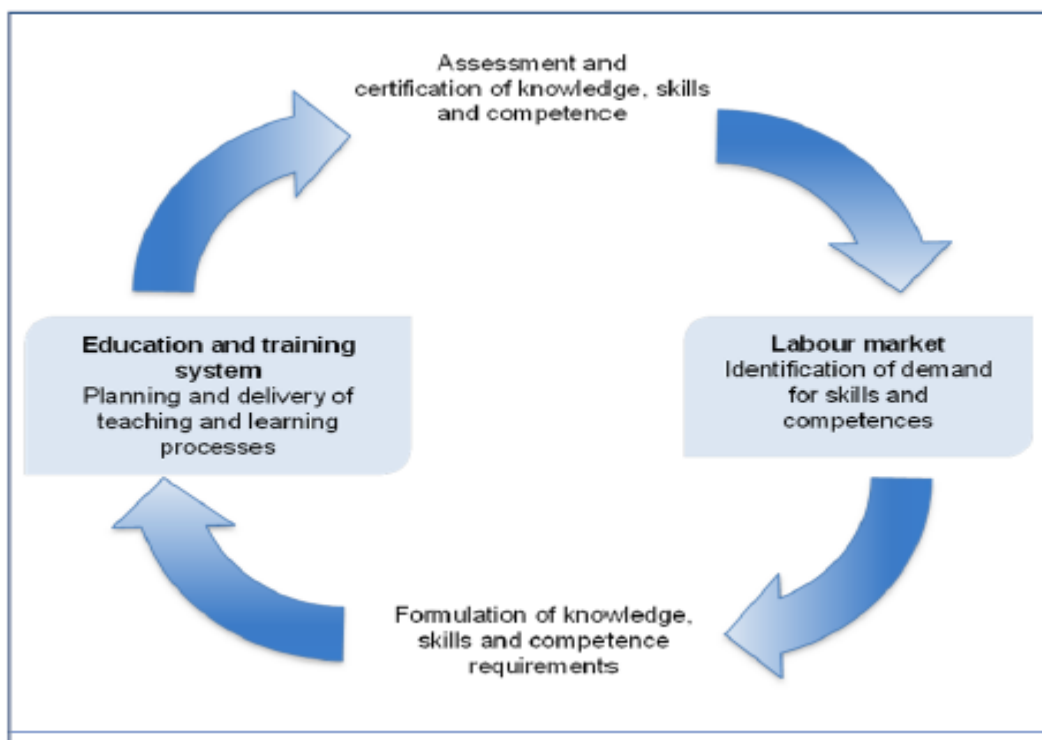
Cedefop made an overview of recent dynamic developments in work-based learning, based on data by ReferNet. It shows that, since the Bruges Communiqué a lot has been going on.



Apprenticeships exist in almost all countries, a lot of exchanges between countries are going on. There are a lot of incentives for work-based learning, but this is not sufficient. Enterprises need more specific support to find suitable candidates, to train the teachers in the enterprise. The red bullets indicate that a lot has to be done in the field of cooperation between enterprises and VET-providers. The red bullets also indicate that a lot has to be done in the field of training and guidance for teachers and for trainers. Although every development cannot be captured, when it is for instance only happening at local level, or at school level, it is clear that training of teachers and trainers is not done in a systematic and sustainable way.

Need for cooperation and feedback

If we want to have an up to date curriculum and relevant IVET, feedback is important, as well as continuous cooperation between the education and training system and the labour market. It is a problem that the issue of data protection sometimes makes it impossible to use information related to indicators from social welfare for instance.



The revival and renewal of the dual principle

In the European Alliance for Apprenticeships and in the youth Guarantee, apprenticeships and work-based learning (the dual principle) are recommended to countries. More work-based learning is a 'deliverable' within European cooperation on VET. This trend already existed before 2010, but is becoming more present.

But in spite of this enhanced attention, only 24 % of the enterprises (with more than 10 FTE) train apprentices. There is thus a need to communicate the benefits, and to show to SME's how cooperation with education and training can work. Pupils, schools and enterprises can learn from each other's good practices, and from each other's failures. Context matters!

It is important not to 'parachute' apprenticeships in the countries; incentives for dual learning have to go hand in hand with job creation, have to be integrated in wider job and growth strategies. It is no use creating opportunities for dual learning, if young people and enterprises are not willing to take them.

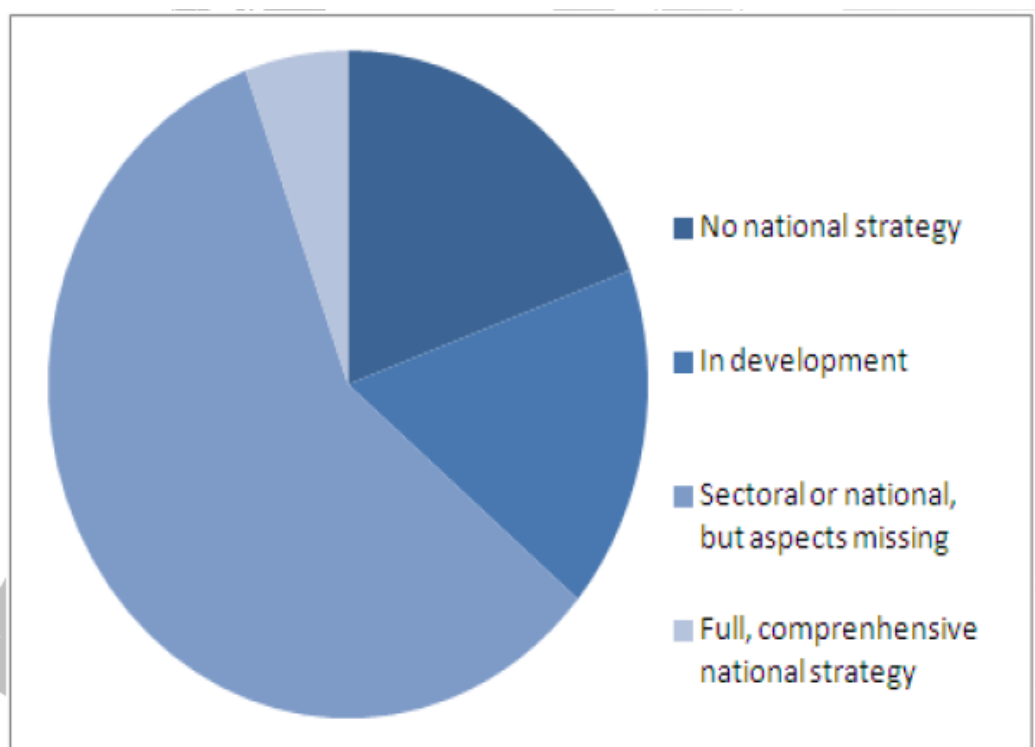
VET qualifications at EQF level 5

EQF level 5 is a mix of learning outcomes from programmes in higher education institutions and from VET. VET qualifications at level 5 are the result of a demand for advanced technical and/or management skills, often to upskill people. It is intended for learners with a VET background, young people and adults, and non-traditional learners. The purpose is double: to enter in the labour market or to enter in higher education; some are solely leading on to further studies, in some cases a credit transfer is possible. At this level, validation of work experience and non-formal learning is used.

Validation of work experience

The slide below shows that in some countries there are some possibilities to have this work experience validated, but that most of the time a full, comprehensive national strategy is missing.

Validation is important for access to higher education, for access to other types of education and training programmes, or for obtaining a qualification (this is less the case).



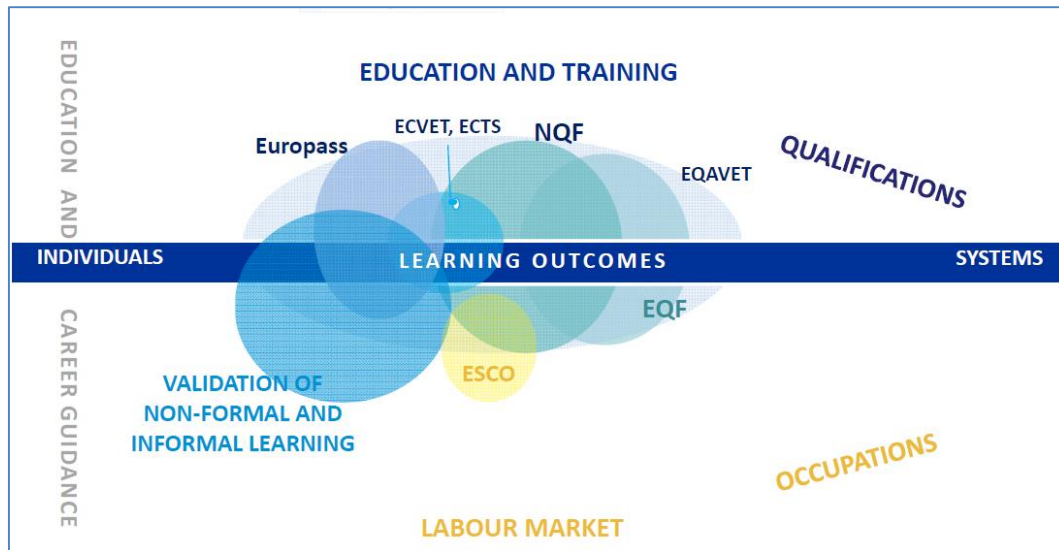
Source: 2014 European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning

Focus on learning outcomes for flexible paths and transitions

In recent years, a number of tools have been created and implemented: Europass, Qualification Frameworks, ESCO, EQAVET, ECVET, ECTS. In the discussions on the future priorities of education and training, it is often said

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that these tools are not an end in itself, but that they are more a means to put the focus more on the outcomes of learning. The paradigm shift to learning outcomes will be helpful in bridging the gap between the world of education and training and the world of work by offering flexible paths and transitions.



More information on ongoing Cedefop work in the field of the transition between education and labour market can be found at www.cedefop.europa.eu.

Panorama of good practices: Educational sector and labour market cooperation in the Czech Republic

CURRENT VET TOPICS DISCUSSED IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Petr Bannert

Petr Bannert is Director of the Education Department at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic



Overview of the elements of the dual system that can be introduced in the Czech Republic

The education system itself in the neighbouring German-speaking countries is fundamentally different in many aspects. It is based on distinct traditions and parameters, which are characteristic for the German and Austrian educational system and economy.

In the so-called dual system

- The student is also an employee of the company;
- A student's training is financed mainly by the company;
- Quality is supervised by the chamber of commerce; membership in the chamber is compulsory for all companies.

The Czech Republic is not ready for either of these three cornerstones. Therefore, **complete transfer of the dual system is not possible**. However, in the Czech Republic, **elements of the dual system** can be substituted in the three following fields:

- Company and student relation
- Funding
- Cooperation

Company and student relation

In the dual system, the student is employed in the company, where the training is taking place.

In the Czech Republic, the VET system includes polytechnic and science education. A lot of attention is paid to career guidance. Capacity adjustments of education fields are based on predictions of the labour market. This is an area that reaches a wide range of partners: employers, unions, chambers, relevant ministries.

Funding

In the dual system, the student's training is financed mainly by the company.

In the Czech Republic, there is a tax relief for employers, and company resources. Money also comes from the European Social fund:

- The Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme, e.g. promoting science and technology education (2013), further education for Kindergarten teachers (2014), POSPOLU (2012);
- The Research, Development and Education Operational Programme: the objective focuses on improving the quality of VET, including strengthening its relevance for the labour market (e.g. extension polytechnic education in Kindergartens and elementary schools, increasing cooperation between schools and companies in VET, supporting teachers training in a corporate environment, increasing capacity and quality of career guidance).

In the third quarter of 2014, 200 mil CZK are dedicated to a development programme for VET support; in the fourth quarter of 2014, 5 mil CZK are dedicated to a development programme for further education for teachers in a practical environment. This money comes from the government of the Czech Republic.

Other funding comes from the financing of regional education reform.

Another way of motivating companies is, since last year, an increased tax deduction for VET. Amendment to Act no. 586/1992 (Income Tax) is included because of the need for deepening cooperation between schools and employers (hereinafter referred to as 'taxpayer'), especially in the area of sharing production/teaching expense, sharing experience and gaining work habits of students at the taxpayer's workplace. The following measures are taken:

- Increasing the limit for the tax deductibility of corporate scholarships from CZK 2.000 to CZK 5.000 per month for high school students and from CZK 5.000 to CZK 10.000 for university students;
- Deductibles in the amount of CZK 200 per pupil/student per one hour of training at the taxpayer's workplace;

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- An additional deduction of 50 % or 110 % of the cost of assets acquired and a least partially used for the purposes of vocational education, depending on the extent of its use for this purpose.

Cooperation

In the dual system, quality is supervised by the chamber of commerce, membership in those is compulsory for all companies.

In the Czech Republic, there are different kinds of cooperation platforms:

- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, other relevant ministries, Confederation of Industry, Chamber of Commerce, Agrarian Chamber, Czech Confederation of Commerce and Tourism, round tables;
- Councils for Development of Human Resources, sector agreements.

In the field of motivation, an important role is accorded to career guidance, and support of networking of secondary and primary schools and employers.

In the field of the curriculum, more freedom is given to schools: they can adjust their programmes (school educational programmes) taking into account the needs of the labour market.

As far as completion of education is concerned, there will be different types of exams: apprenticeship exams, high school leaving exams and also foreman exams.

Human resources will try to bring people from the companies into the school; this is possible now thanks to the changes in the Education Act. There will be attention for training of instructors and practitioners and for further education for teachers in a practical environment.

POSPOLU. ENHANCING COOPERATION BETWEEN VET PROVIDERS AND EMPLOYERS

Pavel Hradechy

*Pavel Hradechy is Head of Unit at the
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of
the Czech Republic*



In the Czech Republic, employers tend to say: 'Your pupils are not well prepared for the labour market needs.' However, education in the Czech Republic not only has the objective to prepare pupils for the labour market, the objective is to prepare pupils for life. Finding the balance between these objectives is a challenge; the POSPOLU project has been started up in the context of trying to tackle this challenge. The name of the project means: TOGETHER, promoting cooperation between schools and companies, focusing on vocational training in the practice.

The objectives of the POSPOLU project

POSPOLU is a project funded from the resources of the European Social Fund and the State budget of the Czech Republic. It has been prepared by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in cooperation with the employers' associations and lasts from December 2012 to the end of June 2015.

Objectives of the project:

- Mapping the current state of cooperation. Employers and schools have been asked about cooperation, and only one third responded; this is a worrying result.
- Create models of collaboration for all groups of fields of study (29 fields). At the moment, all the models are being described, with pilots for 5 sectors;
- Pilot testing of the selected models;
- Applying the principles of learning outcomes and their verification (ECVET)
- Assuring quality, for instance by inviting employers to participate also at school activities;
- Proposing draft legislative measures for strengthening the cooperation (in the field of legislation, funding, teaching methods).

Pilot testing and monitoring of the cooperation

28 partnerships are now being implemented:

- 16 partnerships in piloting
- 10 partnerships in monitoring
- 2 partnerships without financial support

114 subjects are involved, 38 schools, 99 companies and four other bodies. In total, 1225 pupils are involved.

The project deals with 25 fields of study, that can be grouped in 3 categories:

- Upper secondary education with an apprenticeship certificate;
- Upper secondary education with a matura exam;
- Supplementary study leading to a matura exam.

A new model of vocational education

The outcomes of a survey among secondary schools and companies have been published. The publication includes examples of good practice as well as examples of barriers to mutual cooperation. The comprehensive report contains 6 sub-reports.

A working group is preparing a study for a new model of vocational education including proposals for necessary changes in three key areas:

- Legislation
- Funding
- Teaching methods and organization

These are some examples of draft measures:

- Accepting pupils to the joint preparatory first year, that is common for several study programmes in one field;
- Move towards a 'stepped' form of vocational education: provide, for instance, the possibility for pupils at the end of the second (for 3-year programmes) or the third (for 4-year programmes) year to graduate without obtaining a vocational qualification;
- Extend the stay of students in training, practice expansion in the second half of the third year in fields of education with an apprenticeship certificate;
- Add a supplement to the school educational programmes related to cooperation between schools and companies.

CONFEDERATION OF INDUSTRY AS A STRONG DRIVER FOR EDUCATION AND LABOUR MARKET MATCHING

Miloš Rathouský

Former teacher of technical subjects on secondary technical school (1992 – 2005), educational specialist at National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education (2005 – 2009), director of Department of secondary schools at national Ministry of schools, youth and sports (2009 – 2010), since 2011 an expert for field of education and EU funds at Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic. His main focus is on cooperation schools and enterprises, relations between education and labour market needs, tertiary professional education and connections between EQF/NQF systems and initial education.



The Confederation of Industry as a strong driver for education and labour market matching

What is the Confederation of Industry?

At the national level, the Confederation is a strong business organization, a well-functioning employers' organization (since 1990) and a recognized social partner.

At the European and international level, the Confederation is member of the IOE (International Organization of Employers), Businesseurope (the Confederation of European Business), BIAC (Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD), and has two representatives in the European Economic and Social Committee.

The Confederation counts 1423 member organizations representing industry, transport and other services, 30 branch and profession associations, 111 direct members, and deals with about 600.000 employees.

The main mission of the Confederation is to

- Promote and defend common interests of the members, while respecting ethical principles of business leading to long term prosperity;

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- Influence political, economic and social decision making, in the Council for Economic and Social Agreement (Tripartite): assessment of governmental measures and drafts of the new legislation from the view of their impact on employers;
- Represent and promote interests of its members in international organizations of employers and entrepreneurs;
- Provide services for members: consultancy and information service, collective bargaining, legislations, trade delegations, incoming workshops, seminars, conferences, trade fairs, networking, education and training.

The current Czech education system

Positive characteristics of the system

The Czech education system is based on a good tradition, has quality roots. It has a well-established system of initial education, and a decentralized curriculum that is open for the needs of the labour market. The sector of further education is rising (National Qualifications Framework based on European Qualifications Framework).

Negative aspects

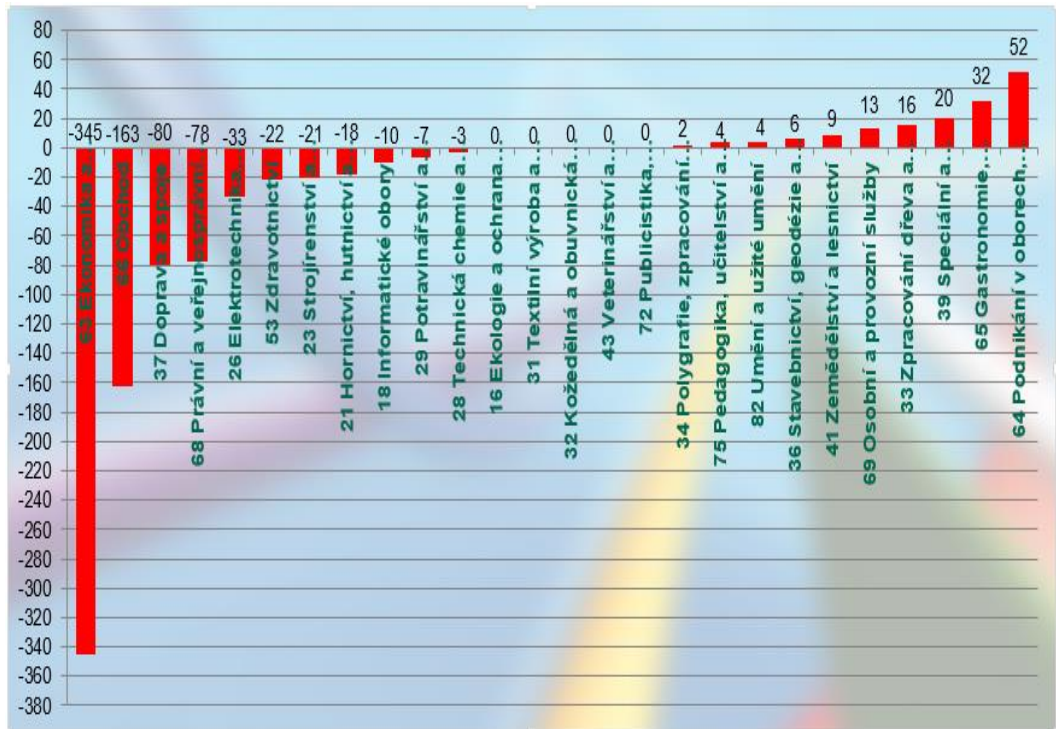
However, there is room for improvement. There is a strong difference between the qualifications and competences of the school leavers and the needs of the employers. And the reaction time of the school system is slow: between 4 and 7 years.

School leavers versus available places

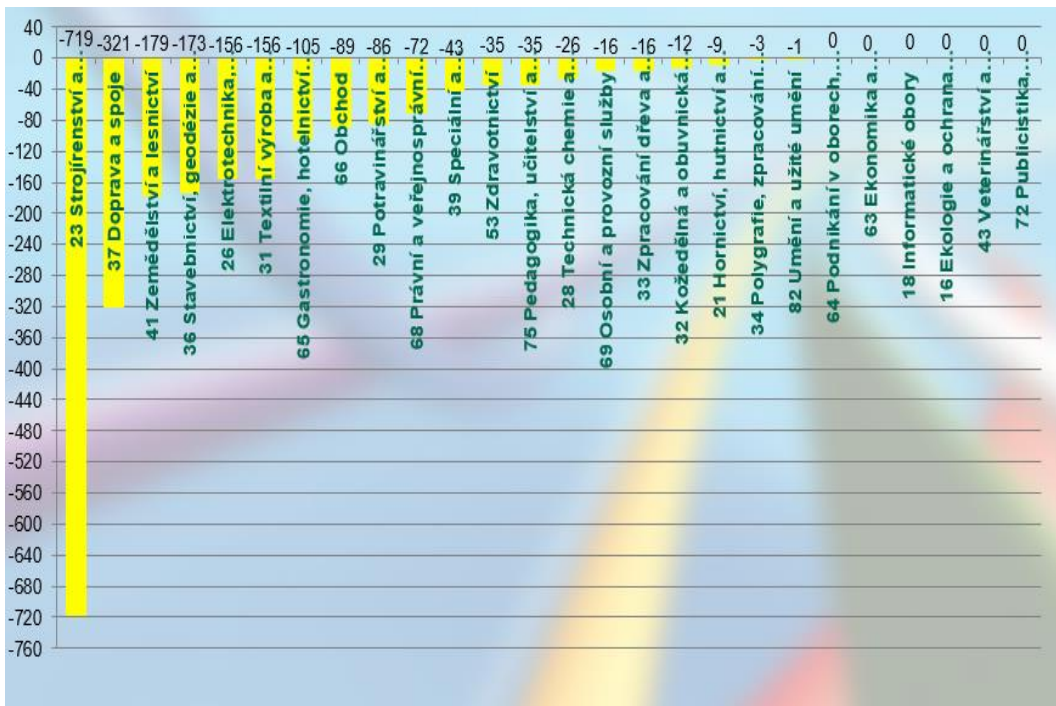
The following graphs are part of the results of an analysis conducted by the Confederation, based on information provided by employers, not by the Ministry of Labour. The data are from 2012, but the situation has not changed much since then.

The analysis tried to look at the regional labour market for school leavers, and shows the numbers of school leavers versus the available places per field. In the graph below (higher secondary (ISCED 3A) in the Moravio-Silesian Region), the branches at the left are those branches missing graduates on the labour market, mainly economy, trade and transportation. The branches at the right side are those branches where there are more school leavers than available places, mainly entrepreneurs, gastronomy, forestry, wood industry.

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The next graph (for the Central Bohemia Region, apprenticeships ISCED 3C) shows that there are people missing on the labour market for almost all fields analysed.



***Change of the education system for better matching
to the labour market needs***

The fact that there is a mismatch between the profiles of the school leavers and the needs of the labour market is a problem for the whole system. The Confederation thinks that introducing some principles of the dual system might be a solution. The following changes are necessary for the Czech education system.

- **Restoring the balance between the structure of secondary schools and regional labour market needs.** This will have to be based on short-term predictions of the labour market needs;
- **Supporting higher involvement of employers in professional training.** The principles of the dual system will have to be introduced;
- **Improving the quality of schools.** Organize entering tests for secondary education, centralized secondary school-leaving exams ('maturita');
- **Changing the system of tertiary education:** more professional orientation, reducing of the disproportion between bachelor and master degrees, change the system of accreditation;
- **Creating of a functional system of further education,** based on recognition of informal and non-formal learning (LLL).

The Czech system will not simply take over the dual system from other countries, it will go its own way. These are the main principles of the 'Czech dual system':

- The capacity of secondary schools will be adjusted, based on short term labour market predictions;
- Practical education is mainly provided in the real work environment, with an influence of the employers on the content of the school curricula;
- Employers will benefit from tax advantages for their investments in vocational education: since first January 2014, there are tax advantages for secondary and tertiary schools, with the objective to improve the motivation of employers to invest in the vocational education. There are accelerated depreciations for new machines and devices used for education; there is 220 CZK (= about 7.50 euro) tax-reduction for every student/hour at the employers' workplace, there is a higher tax-free limit for scholarship provided by the employer;
- There will be a contract or an agreement between the student and the employer; the Ministry of Education is currently working on this; in the first months of next year models will be available for the public;
- Instructors will be present in the enterprises and, vice versa, experts from the practice will be present in the schools.

School visit

Participants visited the Masaryk Secondary School of Chemistry. They have been warmly welcomed by the staff, the pupils and the director, Mr Jiri Zajicek.

Masaryk Secondary School of Chemistry (MSSCH) offers its students three possible specializations:

- Forensic Chemistry
- Clinical and toxicological analysis
- Synthesis and preparation of pharmaceuticals.



Regardless the specialization, all the students of MSSCH are provided with a balanced combination of both general education and specialized vocational education. MSSCH students receive an education with a strong career focus.

General education includes compulsory subjects such as Czech language, mathematics, physics, biology and English, where great emphasis is placed on teaching chemical terminology and vocational language. The rest of the subjects are in the graph below, with the number of lessons (school hours) per week for each subject. German and French languages and seminary in mathematics are optional.

Compulsory subjects	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Czech language	2	2	2	2	8
Literature	2	1	1	2	6
English language	4	4	4	5	17
Civics	-	1	1	1	3
History	2	2	-	-	4
Biology	2	2	-	-	4
Ecology	-	-	1	-	1
Physics	3	3	-	-	6
Mathematics	4	3	3	3	13
PE	2	2	2	2	8
ICT	2	2	2	-	6
Economics	-	-	1	2	3
Σ	23	22	17	17	79

Vocational education common for all three specializations includes general and inorganic chemistry, organic chemistry, physical chemistry, biochemistry,

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chemical engineering, technical preparation and practical laboratory training. Chemical analysis and seminary in physics are optional subject.

Compulsory subjects	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
General and inorganic chemistry	4	-	-	-	4
Organic chemistry	-	5	-	-	5
Physical chemistry	-	-	4	-	4
Biochemistry	-	-	-	2	2
Laboratory work	3	2	-	2	7
Technical preparation	3	-	-	-	3
Electrical engineering	-	-	2	-	2
Chemical engineering	-	-	3	3	6
Σ	10	7	9	7	33
Optional subjects: Chemical analysis and Seminary in physics					

There are four up to date chemistry laboratories in the school, used for practical lab trainings. They are equipped with standard lab tables with worktops with



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electricity, gas and water supplies, with modern analytical devices and instruments and with computers for processing the data obtained during the experiments.

The school cooperates with universities, colleges and institutes of the Academy of Sciences on a long-term basis. The school has close connections with the Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Microbiology ASCR, the Institute of Chemical Process Fundamentals ASCR and the Institute of Physics ASCR, with the Institute of Chemical Technology in Prague and the Faculty of Science of the Charles University. This Faculty sends its under-graduates to the school to gain first practical experience in teaching. They enable MSSCH students to complete their practical training there.

As a part of their vocational education, all the students have to participate in practical trainings at the end of year 3 and at the beginning of year 4. They gain additional insight in the realistic work situations and have a chance to apply their knowledge and skills in practice. The



above-mentioned institutes and some state and private chemical companies enable the students to complete this practical training, the aim of which is to deepen the students' vocational education and training and to provide the students with more practical experience out of school. MMSCH also participates in the project POSPOLU (read more pages 28-29), which supports the cooperation between high schools and their students (future employees) and companies (future employers).

The most talented and promising students are encouraged to become involved in competitions. 'Soč' is a national competition of professional work of talented students of Czech secondary schools. It requires a lot of practical laboratory work, extensive measuring and data processing out of school. This extra work is usually supervised by experts from the cooperating Institutes of Chemical Technology, Charles University or the Academy of Sciences. The students present their results and compete at school, regional and national levels.

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Vocational classroom studies are supplemented by a variety of field trips, which are one-day excursions to various chemical institutes and companies where the students can see and are explained by the experts working there the basics of the processes in the companies.



The school is member of the Association of the Chemical Industry of the Czech Republic and of the Czech Chemical Society. Thanks to this membership, the school can cooperate with a wide range of chemical companies and participate in various projects, such as the project 'Chemistry and Industry for Teachers in European Schools'.

In March 2009 the school joined the Responsible Care initiative and the school managed to become entitled to use the logo. Since 2006 MSSCH has been participating in the international project Eco-school whose aim is to interconnect theoretical environmental education with some practical measurements and activities that make the school more eco-friendly.



MSSCH organizes extracurricular activities to promote chemistry and vocational education. It organizes, for example, open days for the public or it prepares the days of practical laboratory work for primary school pupils. The school participates in science festivals and exhibitions where the students demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

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Vocational Education and Training: the OECD experience

José-Luis Álvarez-Galván

José-Luis Álvarez-Galván works on the OECD Reviews of Postsecondary Vocational Education and Training: Skills beyond School. Before joining the Skills beyond School team he worked in the Regional Development Policy Division at OECD. José-Luis has researched and published on topics such as work and employment in the service economy; employment and organisational relations; foreign direct investment and development; and international trade and industrial competitiveness. José-Luis has also spent a few years working in the private consulting sector, including contributions to business publications. Before joining the OECD, he worked in the academic sector. He holds a PhD from the London School of Economics; a Master's from the University of Massachusetts; and a Bachelor's degree from the National University of Mexico. He is a Mexican national.



Plan of the presentation:

- **VET: definition and purpose**
- **The OECD mission**
- **The OECD experience: 'Learning for jobs' and 'Skills beyond school': What we have learnt**
- **Conclusions**

VET: definition and purpose

OECD emphasizes the importance of a clear and practical definition.

Vocational education and training (VET) is defined as **education that offers participants the opportunity to acquire the practical skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for employment in a particular occupation or trade or class of occupations or trades.**

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Successful completion of such programmes leads to a labour market-relevant vocational qualification recognized by the competent authorities in the country in which it is obtained (e.g. Ministry of Education, employers' associations, etc.). This aspect of official recognition is crucial in the definition.

It requires both practical and theoretical learning. This is essential and might seem evident, but can be a problem, especially in some non-European countries.

It can be found at secondary and at tertiary levels. The proportion of VET at post-secondary and tertiary level is growing.

It targets different groups: youth, adults, unemployed. The last group, the unemployed, is becoming extremely important, as VET is seen more and more as one of the most important mechanisms in helping people to find a job.

The big challenge for VET is to bridge two separate worlds, to have a strong connection between the world of education and training, and the world of work.



The OECD mission

The mission of the OECD is to support countries in the task of provide the skills needed in many of the fastest growing and technical professional jobs in the economy. In particular, the OECD reviews try to address the range of policy questions arising, including funding and governance, matching supply and demand, quality assurance and equity and access, among others.

In this sense, OECD work of VET is not different from OECD work in other educational areas, it is closely linked to the mandate of the organization.

The OECD experience

'Learning for Jobs' and 'Skills beyond School' are two recent OECD reviews in the field of VET.

'Learning for Jobs' focuses on upper secondary education in 17 countries; The review started in 2003 and was concluded in 2010. A synthesis report has been published. It was presented to the EUNEC conference on 'New skills for new jobs' (Lisbon, 2011).

'Skills beyond School' focuses on the postsecondary level in 22 countries; preliminary results and some country reports are already available.

The strength of the methodology is its simplicity. The methodology consists in a background report questionnaire that is filled in by the countries. Countries provide OECD with their background report six months before the country visit. During the country visits, interviews and meetings with local stakeholders are organized (involving more than 5000 people to date). This information leads to a draft OECD report, and a final report. The report contains two parts. A first part is descriptive, and focuses on the strengths of the systems. A second part identifies the challenges and issues policy recommendations.

OECD has learnt that there are **nine characteristics of high quality VET systems:**

1. Vocational provision developed in a partnership between government, employers and unions.
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It is easy to say that partnerships are needed, but in practice there is a large variation of different options according to the countries with their different cultural and political background. Partnerships refer to centralized, regional, sectoral organizations.

2. High quality apprenticeship systems, covering a wide range of professional domains and including higher level apprenticeships.

High quality apprenticeship systems at post secondary level can improve the status of VET. It is also important to expand apprenticeships to non-traditional sectors, and to increase the visibility of the system.

It remains a challenge that upper secondary VET is not well institutionalized: there multiple providers, recognition criteria are not always clear.

3. Work-based learning systematically integrated into all vocational programmes.
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Work-based learning is not evident in many OECD countries. It is still possible to obtain a vocational certificate or a degree without one minute of practice.

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Employers often complain about the students. But when we look more into detail, employers do not complain so much about the technical skills, but rather about the soft skills of the students. Work based learning can be an essential tool to tackle this challenge.

For the employers, the financial aspect is often a barrier. However, there is evidence that the cost of equipment can be diminished, as well as the cost for recruiting and training employees.

It is important that also the teachers spend a minimum period per year at the work place, more efforts are needed in this field.

4. A range of programmes that provide inclusive opportunities for all and minimise drop-out.

It has to be kept in mind that VET is part of the educational system, and that pupils in VET need the same support as other pupils. We need to be responsive to the needs of the pupils in VET, for instance in the field of career guidance, one of the biggest challenges in VET. In order to have robust career guidance, you need decent information on labour market outcomes for the students, as well as information about career development options. It is crucial that students have the right job expectations. Students need to know what their chances are to find a first job, and what their career opportunities are. These questions can only be answered in close partnership with the social partners.

VET is more expensive than the academic strand; that is why it is needed to design alternative funding mechanisms.

5. Qualifications reflecting labour market needs that are nationally consistent but allow for a locally negotiated element.

It is important that the qualifications are consistent from one country to another, from one region to another. And at the same time, flexibility is needed to adapt at the national/regional situation. School leaders need support in order to be able to exercise this autonomy in a meaningful way.

6. Avenues of progression from initial vocational programmes to both higher level vocational and academic programmes.

In many cases, families don't want to send their children to VET because it is considered to be a dead end. There is thus need for avenues of progression; VET is not some system out of the education system.

7. A vocational teaching workforce containing a balance of teaching skills and up-to-date industry knowledge and experience.

Teachers need to be better supported. Work based learning is essential, also for the teachers. They need to spend time in the industry. Teachers are prepared to do this, but there are too much contractual and legal barriers at

the moment. Efforts are needed here, because work based learning for teachers offers benefits for all: for the teachers (their skills are updated, they are in contact with the real world of work); for the students (they are taught by teachers with updated knowledge and skills); and for the employers (the teachers will be prepared to more flexibility to adapt the programme to the needs of the industry).

OECD suggests to design an occupational profile for VET teachers, and to include work based learning in this profile. For VET teachers, a career development plan is especially essential.

Doors have to be open all the time, both ways: doors of social partners need to be open; doors of VET institutions have to be open for social partners.

8. Provision suitable to adults with working and home commitments.
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In many countries, VET provision for adults faces two main challenges:

- The high drop-out
- The quality of the outcomes

Pedagogies have to be adapted, because adults have different needs and different cognitive capacities.

9. Better data on vocational programmes in international categorisations, and labour market outcomes.

In facta, data are not lacking, there are sufficient data. The real challenge is that 5 or 6 different bodies collect data, but don't communicate with each other. Data is often available, but countries don't find efficient ways to communicate and share the data.

Conclusions

Three key areas are of vital importance for VET:

- What is taught has to be of labour market relevance;
- How it is taught: by good teachers with a balance of pedagogical quality and experience in industry;
- Where it is taught: if VET does not have a part of work based learning it is not VET!

Questions and answers session

Having people from the industry as teachers is a challenge.

It is not correct to presume that anybody can teach. It is not because someone is a good craftsman, for instance, that he is also able to transfer his skills and knowledge to pupils. Schools have to cooperate and open their doors, but they cannot accept everybody: in order to be a teacher, a certain degree of qualification is needed.

What is taught has to be of labour market relevance. Which skills are we talking about?

We are talking about different kinds of skills:

- Sector-specific skills. These skills are difficult to define at central level. Labour market needs change quickly, it is best to be flexible and to be able to adapt quickly case by case. There is a growing demand for those good technical skills at post-secondary level.
- There is certainly need for soft skills in VET; these skills are all related to the interaction with other human beings. These soft skills can be taught in the classroom, but also in the working place.
- Basic skills, such as reading and writing, remain important. Employers complain about the lack of basic skills of their employees.

It is important that people know what are the skills needed on the labour market. There is an enormous gap between the efforts of human beings to gain qualifications, and then not being able to find job satisfaction at the expected level. This gap needs public policy attention. In many countries, there is a huge proportion of people with a degree in human and social sciences, whilst these countries need more scientists, engineers, technicians.

Panorama of good practices: Belgium

Implementation of ECVET, a challenge for all the stakeholders

Alain Bultot

Alain Bultot works at the 'Agence francophone pour l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie (AEF-Europe)'. He is responsible for the National Contact Point for ECVET, EQF and Europass. He is responsible for international cooperation in higher education. He is coordinator of the Belgian Team of ECVET experts (Be-Fr).

Primary school teacher at the beginning then psychopedagogue, Alain has been teacher trainer during 10 years. He worked since 2001 for the council of education and training (BE-French speaking part). He prepared some statements for the government about news policies in the VET system. Between 2009 and 2011, Alain was responsible for the implementation of ECVET in the Cabinet of the Minister for Education.



Goals and challenges of the ECVET system

The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is

- a **decentralized** system relying on **volunteer** participation of Member States and stakeholders of VET, respecting national legislations and regulations;
- a methodological **framework for describing qualifications in terms of learning outcomes using units**, allowing to allocate **transferable** points for Member States with different education and qualification frameworks;
- founded on granted **partner agreements** regarding qualification transparency and mutual stakeholder trust.



The goals of ECVET:

- To improve the transparency of qualifications;
- To improve mobility;
- To improve mutual trust and cooperation.

EVET is a voluntary system designed to promote all mobility. It should enable

- To move from formal VET system to another system, to move from a situation of non-formal learning to formal VET;
- To accumulate and recognize learning outcomes throughout each learners' individual training pathway.

The challenge of the ECVET implementation in the French speaking part of Belgium (BE-Fr) is

- To increase the graduation rate and to reduce dropout (which is extremely high in Brussels);
- To increase the permeability between the different VET sub-systems (mobility for learners and for workers);
- To develop lifelong learning and to implement the new European tools;
- To increase employability.

Before the lifelong learning perspective, people tended to have a job for their whole life. The main challenge then was to get all the information on the needs of the labour market to build qualifications. A strong bridge between the IVET (Initial VET) system and the working life was sufficient to achieve the goals.

BRIDGING THE TRANSITION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND THE LABOUR MARKET

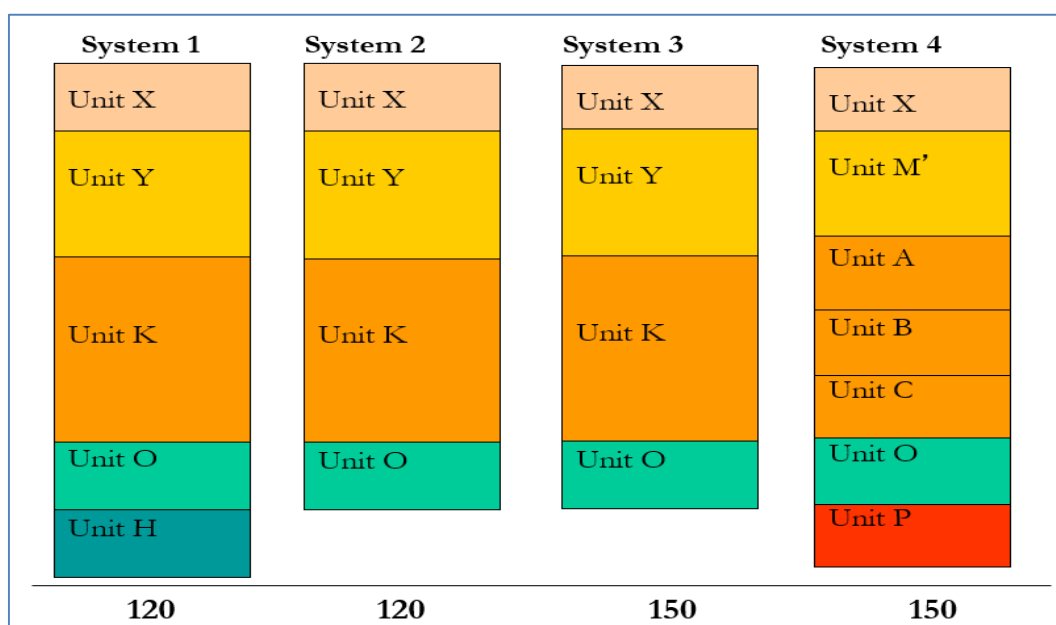


In recent years, the lifelong learning perspective has a lot of impact on the challenge of employability: people will have several jobs during their life. One single strong bridge between the IVET system and the working life will not be sufficient anymore. The aim is now to develop close relations between IVET, CVET (Continuous VET) and the labour market. After having left the IVET system, learners will need to get additional qualifications, to validate acquired skills on the jobs, to provide new skills, to facilitate job retraining.

ECVET is a system for the whole life, related to IVET as well as to CVET, to formal, non-formal and informal learning, all leading to qualifications. The distinction between IVET and CVET will disappear.

Certifications per unit

Implementing ECVET implies that each competent authority organizes its qualifications in units. This makes it possible to accumulate and transfer units.

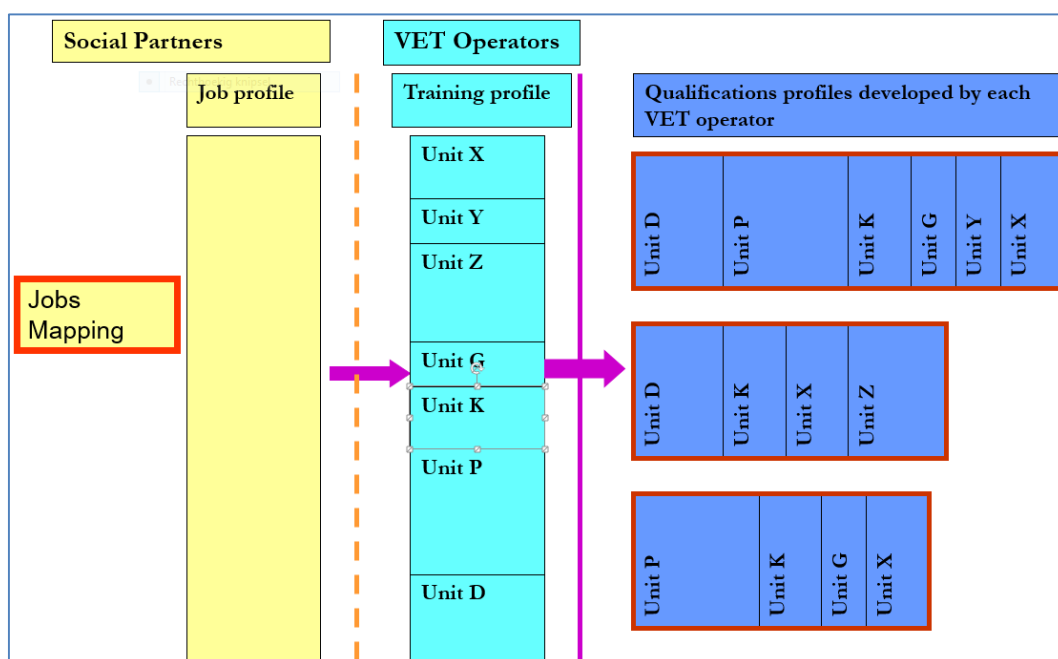


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In 2009, the French-Belgian **Service of Jobs and Qualifications** has been created. The Service consists of two chambers:

- A chamber with the social partners
- A chamber with the VET operators

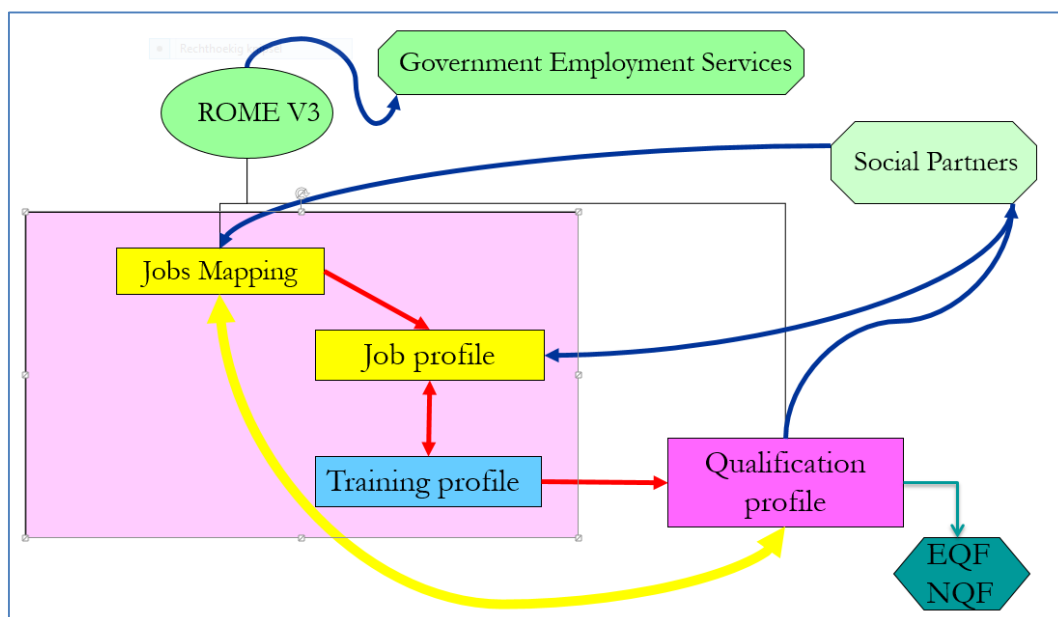
Each chamber has its own task. The social partners are in charge of the job mapping and of the production of job profiles, in terms of competences. The VET-providers translate the job profiles in learning outcomes and write the training profiles. Then the qualification profiles are developed by each VET-operator. Each of the units responds to well defined criteria, and can be assessed separately.



It is important to assure the coherence between education, training and employment.

In each sector there are different jobs; all the qualifications are in a map corresponding to the ROME V3 database (Répertoire Opérationnel des Métiers et des Emplois). BE-Fr has decided to use this database for all employment services. This means that every qualification profile has a reference to ROME V3, and can be easily recognized by the labour market services.

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Certification per unit: calendar of the reform in the VET secondary schools

- 2010: Preparation and writing of the frameworks. Production of the profiles for 4 professions.
- 2011: First testing in schools. This testing was optional for schools. Although there was no money foreseen for the implementation, more than 50 % of all schools decided to implement the new profiles.
- 2012: Testing in all schools concerned.
- 2013: Official start of the CPU.



CPU is the implementation of ECVET in a specific context. The pedagogical perspective is to value the students' achievements and to combat failure at school; to combat early school leaving and repetition of a year, and to bring closer the school to the labour market. It serves political purposes: to increase the graduation rate and to reduce the drop out, to increase employability and to develop lifelong learning.

The slide below is an example of how the qualification of hairdresser is organized in six units. The total number of ECVET points is 120. Each unit corresponds to a number of ECVET points, which is not necessarily identical, it varies from 12 to 25 points. The advantage of the CPU is that, when a pupil leaves school without the full qualification, these pupils does not leave school with empty hands: he/she has in the 'CPU passport' the collection of units

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obtained during the learning pathway. The objective is to integrate the CPU passport in Europass.

Points ECVET alloués à l'ensemble de l'option de base groupée ou de la formation considérée : 120 pts ECVET					
En 5 ^{ème} année			En 6 ^{ème} année		
	Nbr sem	ECVET		Nbr sem	ECVET
UAA1 <i>Réaliser un shampoing, des soins capillaires, une coupe de base et un brushing adaptés pour Dame</i>	14	20	UAA4 <i>Réaliser un shampoing, des soins capillaires, une coupe combinée, un brushing adaptés pour Dame et pour Homme ; réaliser un soin de barbe, de moustache et/ou de favoris pour Homme.</i>	16	25
	Activités-clés du métier 1. Réaliser des coupes 2. Réaliser des mises en forme temporaires			Activités-clés du métier 1. Réaliser des coupes pour hommes et pour dames 2. Réaliser des mises en forme temporaires pour hommes et dames 6. Réaliser les soins barbe, moustache et favoris	
UAA2 <i>Réaliser un shampoing, des soins spécifiques, une permanente, un défrisage (lissage durable) et un touching adaptés pour Dame et pour Homme.</i>	12	18	UAA5 <i>Réaliser un shampoing, des soins spécifiques, une coloration ou une décoloration (mèches) d'oxydation adaptés pour Dame et pour Homme.</i>	12	25
	Activités-clés du métier 3. Réaliser des mises en forme de longue durée pour hommes et pour dames 2. Réaliser des mises en forme temporaires pour hommes et dames			Activités-clés du métier 4. Réaliser des colorations complètes ou de mèches pour hommes et pour dames 5. Réaliser des décolorations complètes ou de mèches pour hommes et pour dames	
UAA3 <i>Réaliser un shampoing, des soins spécifiques, une coloration (semi-permanente ou ton sur ton) et une mise en plis (pincés et rouleaux) adaptés pour Dame et pour Homme.</i>	10	12	UAA6 <i>Réaliser une coiffure de circonstances adaptée pour Dame et pour Homme.</i>	8	20
	Activités-clés du métier 4. Réaliser des colorations complètes ou de mèches pour hommes et pour dames 2. Réaliser des mises en forme temporaires pour hommes et dames			Activités-clés du métier 7. Réaliser des coiffures de circonstances pour hommes et pour dames	
Remarque : En 5 ^{ème} année, les UAA 2 et 3 peuvent être interverties En 6 ^{ème} année, les UAA 4, 5 et 6 peuvent être interverties					

As a first concrete result, this system offers **new opportunities** for the citizens (learners and workers). School based or workplace based secondary VET will offer more opportunities to enter the labour market, because the units in the CPU passport are described based on information that is coming from the labour market, and because the criteria for assessment are decided together with the labour market partners. The CPU passport facilitates the recognition of the vocational competences. School based or workplace based secondary VET will also offer more opportunities to go to adult education. The CPU passport facilitates the integration in the specific learning pathway organized for adults. These enhanced opportunities are not only the case for those who leave VET with a full qualification, but also for those who leave school without qualification, but with a CPU passport.

For tomorrow, the CPU promises concrete results for the lifelong learning perspective: transfer of units will be possible for education and training organized by different providers, different authorities. The CPU passport will be completed with units gained in IVET, in CVET, in adult education, at the labour market, and in non-formal or informal learning.

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A qualification recognized at the labour market is a question of confidence with the professional sectors. Often, the professional sectors have little confidence in the quality of the certifications: the level of schools can be very different. In order to reduce this gap, the government decided in 2011 to conduct experiences with the automotive sector, during the first implementation of the CPU device. Each student can get a double qualification, with double assessment. The aim is to increase the quality assurance in the assessment process, to increase the relationship between the schools and the professional sector, and to be able to provide tailored training to teachers.

Confidence is based also on good communication. From November 2013 until January 2014, a study² was carried out at the request of the French-speaking Belgian ECVET national contact point. The aim of this study was to determine the optimal conditions for conducting an ECVET awareness-raising campaign targeting the social partners, in particular employers.

² Exploratory study for development of communication media on ECVET for the business world (http://www.aef-europe.be/documents/ECVET_Business_Studies.pdf)

Panorama of good practices: Good practices in career counselling in Romania

Marcela Claudia Călineci

Marcela Claudia Călineci is an expert in guidance and counselling with over 10 years of experience in working with children and adults. Her initial training in educational sciences and psychology (as a graduate of 2 faculties) is further deepened within a MA in School counselling and another one in Information and Career Counselling and Human Resources. Under her PhD thesis (September 2012) she approaches the Quality assurance models in guidance and counselling. Her professional experience includes consultancy and training sessions in education/human resources (Centre Education 2000+, Soros Open Network), as well as in guidance and career counselling or other specialized topics (personal development, communication and conflicts negotiation, stress and class management, creativity, teambuilding, emotional intelligence, learning styles, motivation, personal marketing). She has been involved in developing learning resources and methodological frameworks at national level (the national Guidance and counselling curricula, Personal Development curricula for compulsory education) as well as in European projects, in partnership with the Institute of Educational Sciences and Euroguidance Romania. She was 7 years Director of the Municipal Centre of Psychopedagogical Assistance Bucharest (MCPA) which is the district authority for the Bucharest school guidance network.



School Counsellor PhD. Institute of Education Sciences (ISE), Municipal Centre of Assistance and Educational Resources (CMBRAE)

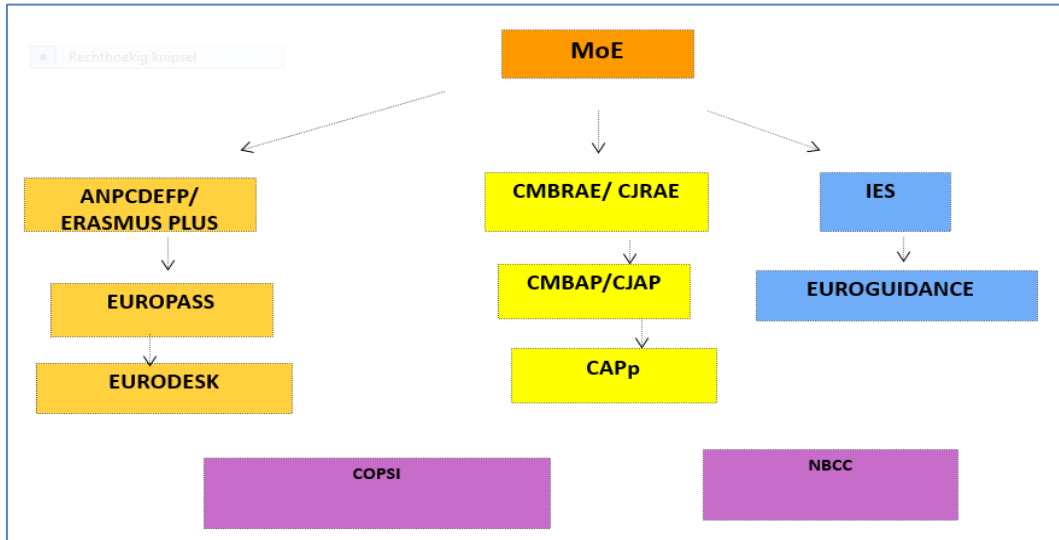
The Romanian guidance and counselling system

The guidance and counselling system in Romania started up in 1991 in 42 county centres. At the national level, there are in 2011-2012 2171 school counsellors. 186 work in the centres, 1985 in school offices.

The graph below is the organigram of the guidance and counselling system, supervised by the Ministry of Education. Both the IES (Institute of Education

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Sciences) and the CMBRAE (Municipal Centre of Assistance and Educational Resources) have their place in this organigram.



To create change, five cornerstones are needed:

- Vision
- Abilities
- Initiative
- Resources
- Action plan

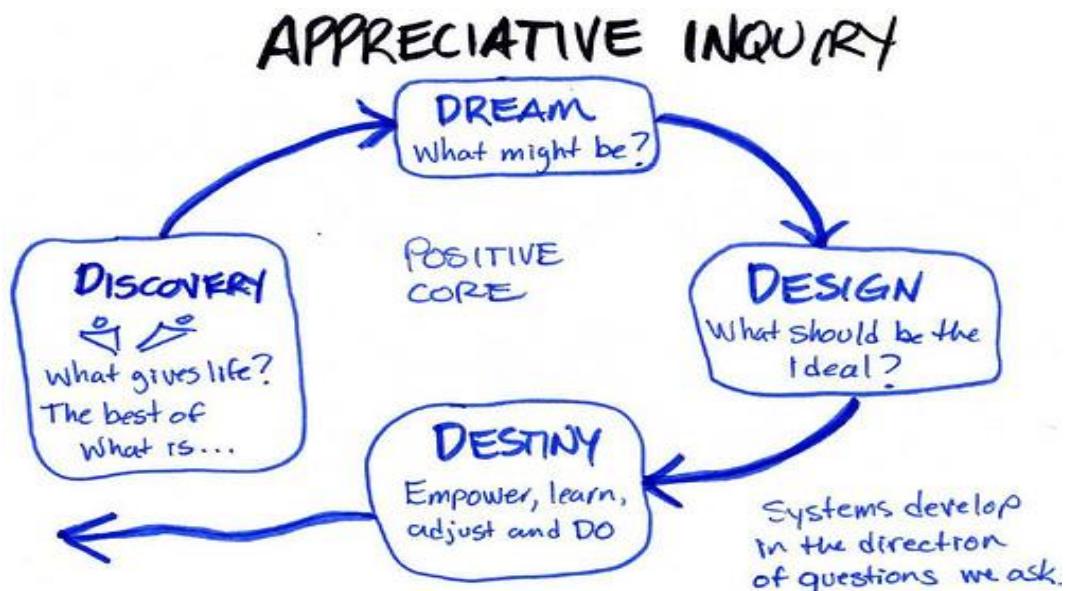
If one of these core elements is missing, change management will not succeed. Without vision, there is confusion; without abilities, there is anxiety. If there is no initiative, change will be gradual. Lack of resources will lead to frustration.



Sources of inspiration

What is guidance and career counselling? It is about helping individuals to acquire the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to identify options, explore alternatives and succeed in society. It is about preparing better individuals for the changing workplace of the 21st century. It's about helping and supporting individuals to balance the personal needs and the requirements of society.

The '**Appreciative Inquiry**' model of David Cooperrider is inspiring for guidance and career counselling. Appreciative Inquiry is creating a positive revolution in the leadership of change, with strength-based approaches to multi-stakeholder innovation. Appreciative Inquiry enables positive change, innovation and sustainable design in systems of complex scale.



Source: Cooperrider et.al

It is thus crucial to ask VET-students about their dream; it is crucial that they are aware of what their dreams are. One of the major tasks of the counsellor, of the teacher, is to make pupils aware of their dreams.

Another source of inspiration is the book by Kerr Inkson, '**Understanding Careers: The Metaphors of Working Lives**'. It uses a unique framework of nine archetypal metaphors to encapsulate the field of career studies.

- The legacy metaphor: career as inheritance
- The craft metaphor: career as construction
- The seasons metaphor: career as a cycle
- The matching metaphor: career as fit
- The path metaphor: career as journey

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- The network metaphor: career as encounters and relationships
- The theatre metaphor: career as a role
- The economic metaphor: career as a resource
- The narrative metaphor: career as a story

CMS or **Career Management Skills** (Ronald F. Sultana, 2009) are another source of inspiration. 'Career Management Skills refer to a whole range of competences which provide structured ways for individuals and groups to gather, analyze, synthesize and organize self, educational and occupational information, as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions.'

The **Australian Blueprint for Career Development** (www.blueprint.edu.au) is a framework for creating, strengthening and evaluating career development programmes and products for young people and adults. The Blueprint identifies 11 career management competences that help people to manage life, learning and work from childhood to old age.

PERSONAL MANAGEMENT	1	Build and maintain a positive self concept
	2	Interact positively and effectively with others
	3	Change and grow throughout life
LEARNING AND WORK EXPLORATION	4	Participate in lifelong learning supportive of career goals
	5	Locate and effectively use career information
	6	Understand the relationship between work, society and the economy
CAREER BUILDING	7	Secure/create and maintain work
	8	Make career enhancing decisions
	9	Maintain balanced life and work roles
	10	Understand the changing nature of life and work roles
	11	Understand, engage in and manage the career building process

Challenges for guidance and career counselling

How to adapt school to the permanent changes on the labour market? There is need for matching opportunities and personal resources, goals and action plans.

How to involve the students in career development? There is need for investigating personal features, likes and preferences, relationships, self-confidence, decision making etc.

How can society create systems for developing opportunities? There is need for more effective systems: education, ICT, employment, NGO's, communities.

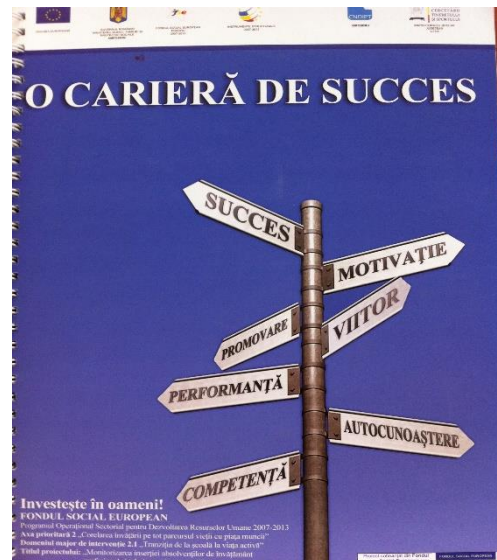
Success story: MIA

MIA (POSDRU/90/2.1/S/63840) is a project for monitoring the VET graduates insertion on the labour market. The survey about the insertion of VET graduates in the labour market is followed by a needs analysis and the setup of a database.

Sessions for guidance and career counselling are organized for over 12000 VET students.

A guide was published: 'A successful career', as a resource for career counselling activities.

The project also led to an action plan for the improvement of career counselling activities for VET students, and to a board for monitoring the insertion of VET students on the labour market in the VET schools.



What are the needs of guidance and career counselling?

- Training orientation and career development;
- Curriculum adaptation to the labour market;

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- Involvement in career counselling programmes (individual, group counselling, workshops, job fairs, seminars, firms, meetings with specialists etc.);
- Including the soft skills in the curriculum: self-awareness, communication, personal marketing, entrepreneurship, teamwork, decision making, success, occupational and labour market analysis;
- Increasing the applicability of the practical training VET;
- Developing positive attitudes towards career.

The survey showed that, on the one hand, only a low percentage of the students

- have analyzed the career options;
- intended to follow the school specialization;
- are on the desired career path;
- prepare for exams;
- have diverse professional interests.

On the other hand, the students show curiosity, are interested in how to apply the information and competences acquired to their own situation. They are enthusiastic when they become aware of the efficiency of their learning results and when they come to a better understanding of the employment situations.

It is thus very important to motivate the students, and it is very rewarding to see the light in their eyes.

The career motto in order to practice a job with pleasure is to **get out from the cage**. That is exactly the task of the counsellor, the teacher, parents: to help the pupils to come out of the cage, and to see the opportunities.

A project such as MIA can **change the chances for the future**. VET students learn to know and value their personal resources. They receive training in guidance and career development. They become aware of the criteria for choosing the right job. They are able to identify ways to develop the necessary skills for the job. They can obtain relevant information about careers. They are familiarized with various professional areas and can prospect the future of the career. They have knowledge and practice of useful behaviors for successful job interviews. They exchange relevant information with those who already have a job. VET students have better chances

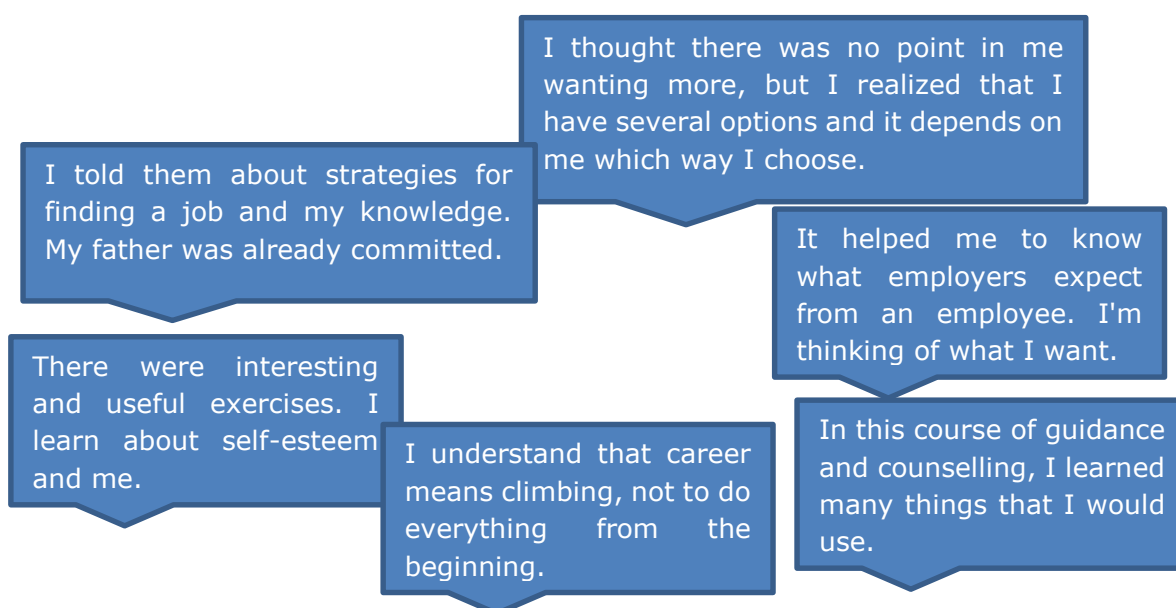
- To explore their own career;
- To become aware of their personal profile;
- To be responsible for personal career decisions;
- To develop positive and realistic attitudes towards the employment process;
- To share learning experiences and knowledge;
- To analyze the labour market;
- To understand the correlation between interests, competencies, attitudes and opportunities.

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Nevertheless, there are many remaining **challenges**:

- Lack of motivation for the education and training provided by school;
- Unrealistic attitudes towards the labour market, misconceptions;
- Negative role models of 'professional success';
- Students with very low cognitive profile and learning motivation;
- Rejecting attitudes towards work and sustained effort;
- Adapting the guide 'A successful career' to their level of understanding.

Some **comments** of students:



As a conclusion, it appears that the MIA project is highly 'profitable' for students and school organization on the guidance and counselling perspective. It helps developing a culture for career development. It leads to a positive attitude to work, up to local/regional/national/European level. It motivates participants to career success. It develops and maintains a competitive level of transferable skills.

Guidance and career counselling: the bridge between education and the labour market

The most important factor for career success is the attitude towards the career: to learn with joy, to trust yourself, to prepare for success and not to give up your dream. People who take initiative, who are proactive and who make things happen, are successful in their careers.

Some guidelines for successful guidance and career counselling:

- Guidance and counselling systems should be further supported through the ESF and Erasmus+ programmes in order to allow practitioners to participate in international projects for exchanging ideas and good practices;
- Career education should be embedded in the curriculum as early as primary school and expanded on with age in an effort to prevent young people from becoming NEET later in life (B. Balaram, L. Crowley, 2012);
- Research and international networks should further be active in offering evidences and expertise for decision makers;
- Huge and rapid changes reconfigure the nature of work, jobs, careers and education;
- Creativity is a gold mine, the most important force in business, education, whole life.

Other good practices:

- www.cedu.ro
- www.amn.nl
- <http://www.cascaid.co.uk/paws/>
- www.wideningthefuture.eu
- <http://www.jobsproject.ro/en/>
- http://programe.ise.ro/Portals/1/2013_CP_I_II/55_Dezvoltare%20personala_CP_II_OMEN.pdf
- www.roct.ro
- <http://portal.mvp-educational.ro>
- <http://training.ise.ro>


Panorama of good practices: Germany's dual vocational training system: a model for other countries?

Lars Thies

Lars Thies has studied political science and philosophy at the University of Hamburg and joined the Bertelsmann Foundation in 2010. In the project 'Vocational training: opportunities for everyone', he works on a report to measure equal opportunity and efficiency of vocational education in Germany, on youth unemployment, and on the relationship between vocational training and higher education.

BertelsmannStiftung

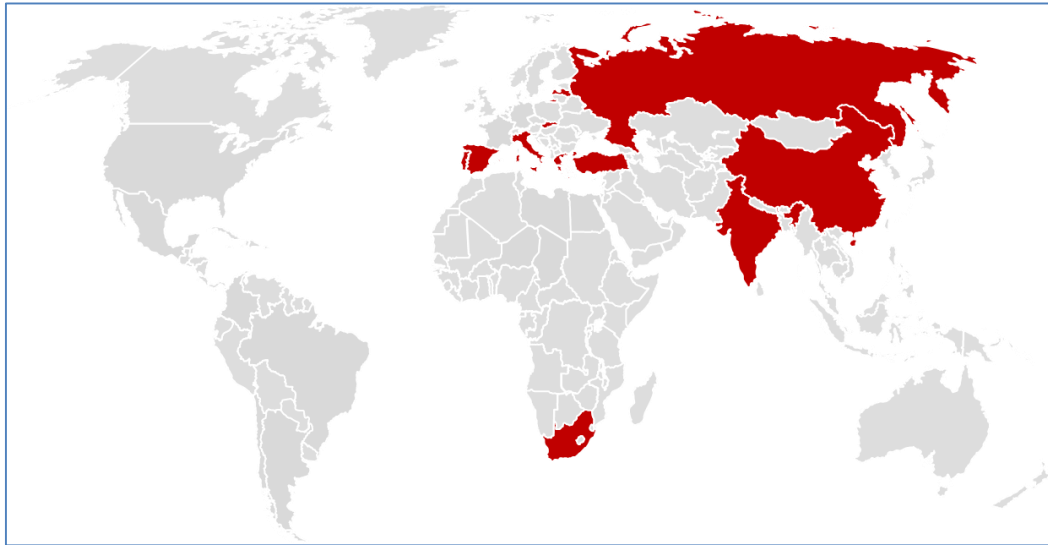
Menschen bewegen. Zukunft gestalten.



Dual vocational training has proven to be successful in bringing young people into employment. According to Eurostat (Data for Q4/2103) unemployment percentages are low in countries with dual vocational training, compared to the EU 28-average:

- Germany: 7.9%
- Austria: 9.9%
- The Netherlands: 11.4%
- Denmark: 12.8%
- EU 28: 23.1%

As a result, the dual apprenticeship system is in high demand. 11 countries have bilateral agreements with Germany on cooperation in VET (see map).



Why has the dual apprenticeship system been successful in bringing young people into jobs?

One of the key features of the dual system in Germany is that the curricula of the 350 professions are developed in dialogue with employers. The curricula are also constantly redesigned to accommodate technological development and changing demands of the labour market. This ensures that there is a close connection between the education system and the labour market. **Apprentices learn the skills that are truly in demand by companies.**

Apprentices in Germany sign a contract with an employer for their apprenticeship and more than half of the time of the apprenticeship they spend at the employer. In this time apprentices learn a lot of company-specific skills. As a result of **this close contact with the employer** in Germany around 60% of apprentices take on regular employment with the same company immediately after the apprenticeship has ended.

The dual VET system has proven to be successful – but should other countries try to copy it?

Because of the success of the apprenticeship system and the low youth unemployment rate in Germany many countries think about transferring it. But how should countries go about such a transfer? Is it really an option to replicate the German system or the Dutch or the Austrian?

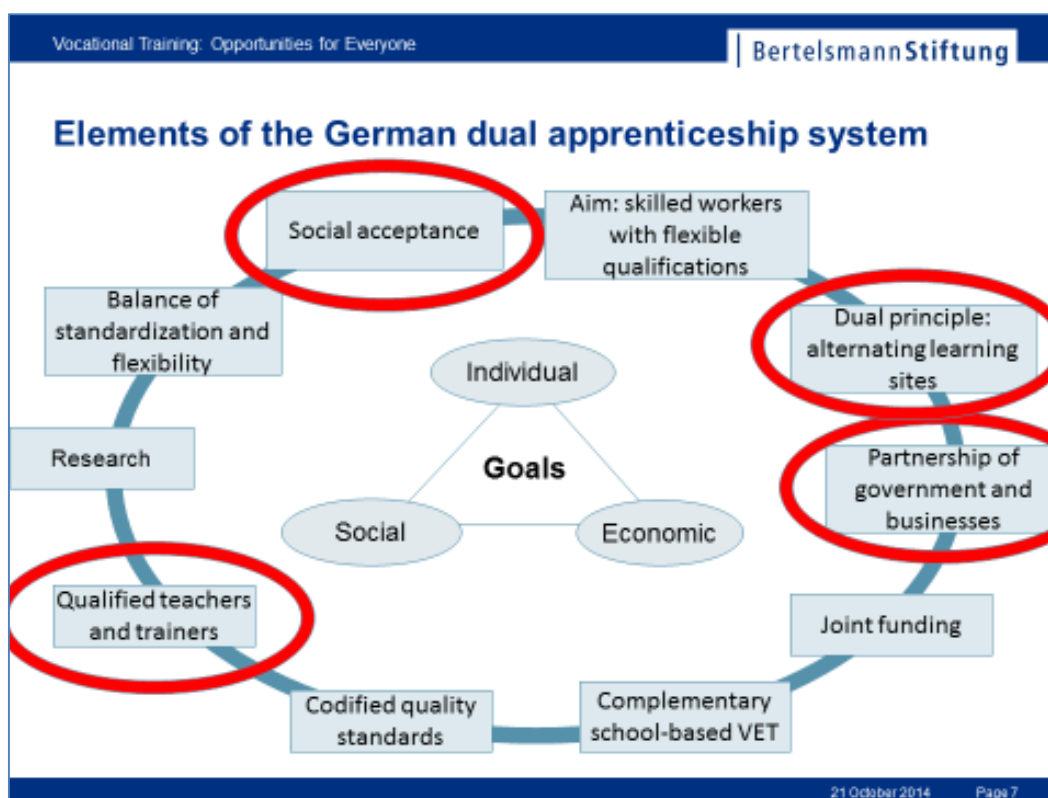
The answer is no. Because the dual system has developed over a long period of time and rests on very specific societal conditions. For example on a tradition

of social partnership between employers and trade unions. **Requirements, traditions and demands differ – one system does not fit all.**

Transferring or copying the system in its entirety is therefore neither feasible nor useful.

Key elements of the dual system

The Bertelsmann Stiftung commissioned a study on the possibilities of transferring the dual system to other countries and asked Prof. Dr. Dieter Euler to break down the dual system into 11 key elements that can be implemented, adapted and transferred separately.



Lars Thies picks four elements that are important to implement in countries with high youth unemployment. These elements can be implemented in various forms and are adaptable to existing systems of vocational education.

The dual principle: alternating learning sites

The first element is the so-called dual principle: the alternation of learning sites between vocational schools and the workplace. In Germany there are different models of the dual principle. Some apprentices go to vocational schools 2 days per week and spend the rest of the days in a company, some apprentices have their time in school in blocks of four weeks at a time.

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In the vocational schools apprentices learn general knowledge that is relevant for their profession. For example an apprentice for event technician learns about optics, acoustics, electrics etc. A welder will learn about the qualities of different kinds of metals.

In the workplace, the apprentices learn practical skills and are often directly involved in the production process of the company.

As a result, graduates of the apprenticeship system not only know the theoretical foundations for their professions. They also have the necessary practical skills and are used to interact with customers. In countries with mainly school based vocational education systems these are the skills companies often miss, when they think about hiring young people.

The next slide describes the curriculum of someone who wants to become an event technician, in the vocational school and at the workplace. As a result, the learner, after having accomplished the dual system, is ready for work.

Vocational Training: Opportunities for Everyone | BertelsmannStiftung

An event technician learns about the theory behind his profession and about how to put it to use

Curriculum in the vocational school

- Safety regulations
- Energy supply
- Optics
- Acoustics
- ...

Curriculum at the workplace

- Lighting a person on stage
- Working with actors, directors
- Complying with safety regulations
- ...

Source: Sharayanan, CC BY-SA 3.0

➔ Ready for work!

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Partnership of government, businesses and unions

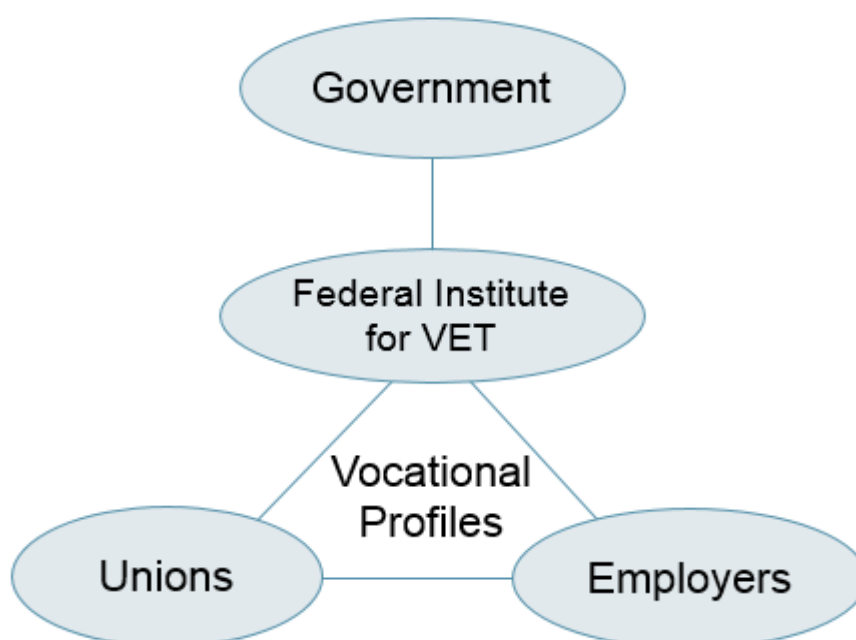
The government is responsible for the vocational schools; businesses are responsible for training at the workplace. Both cooperate on a lot of things: the design of the vocational profiles, the administration of VET, funding, and finding training places.

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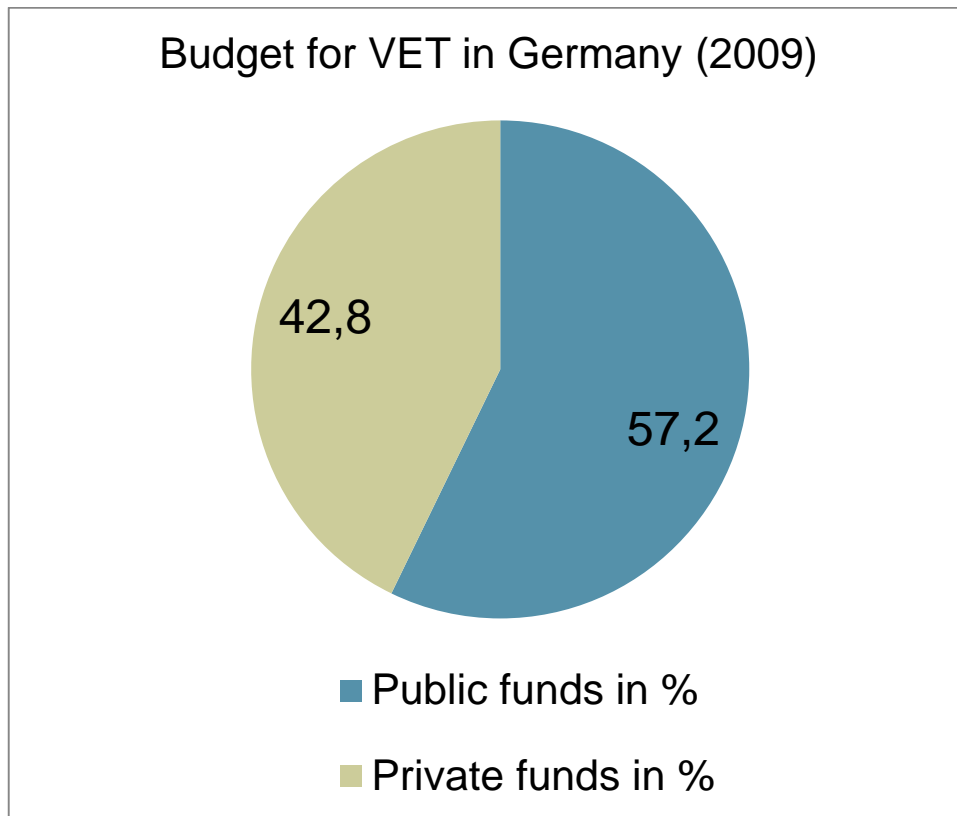


For VET, cooperation between the government, businesses and the unions is crucial. If done right, all sides benefit from close cooperation.

In the dual apprenticeship system government and businesses co-operate in the formulation of the curriculum to ensure that the taught knowledge and skills follows the demand of the companies. They cooperate in the examination of the apprentices. This is the task of the chambers of commerce and crafts. **VET profiles** are set up by the Federal Institute for VET, in dialogue with the employers and the unions. Then the profiles are enacted by the Ministry as a law.



Maybe the most striking area of co-operation is **funding**. The private sector contributes almost half of the funds for vocational education in Germany.



Social acceptance of VET

The dual apprenticeship system offers Vocational education in traditional blue-collar professions such as: auto-mechanics, electrician, welder etc. But it also offers training in more prestigious white-collar professions. Apprentices in banks and insurance companies have formally the same status as someone training to be a hairdresser, or a plumber.

From the perspective of the youngsters themselves, vocational education is a real alternative to going to university. There are still more young people who start an apprenticeship in a given year than freshman students at the universities.

- New apprentices in 2012: 512,773
- New Students in University in 2012: 496,083

About 20% of apprentices have the formal qualification to enter a university but choose an apprenticeship instead or before going to university.

Why is social acceptance important? You can have the best VET system in the world, it is useless, if young people don't see it as an attractive option and choose other educational path.

Qualified teachers and trainers

Teachers in vocational schools

- Need a relevant university degree;
- Don't teach an occupation but rather a subject.

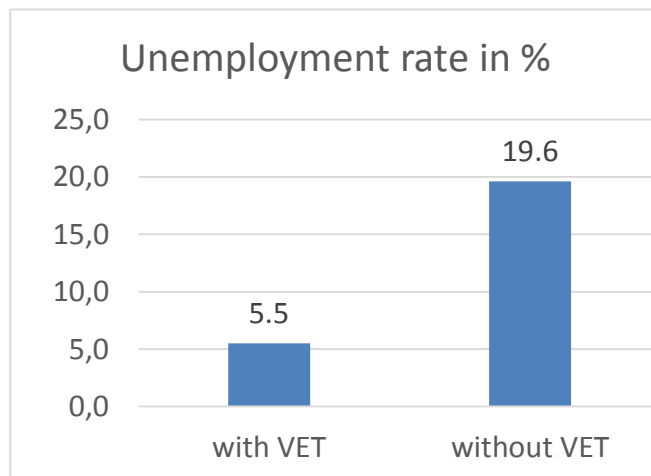
Trainers at the workplace

- Are usually regular employees of the company;
- They need to fulfil the 'personal and professional requirements';
- In many cases new trainers take preparation courses.

Downsides of the dual system in Germany

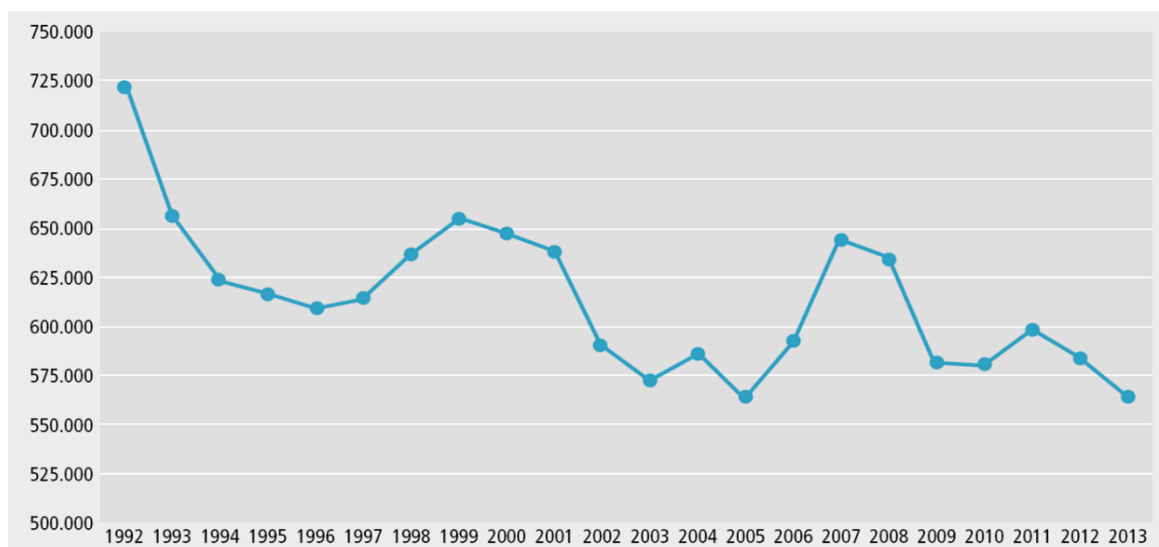
The dual system is a market based system: companies are free to provide places, there is no obligation. Students who don't find an apprenticeship, go to the so-called 'transition courses' for one year. These courses are in fact a kind of 'pre-apprenticeship'; in reality those students are waiting for a 'real' apprenticeship. Even in a period of strong economy, there are now about 250.000 young people in the transition system every year.

Secondly, People without VET face high unemployment risks. Students who find an apprenticeships are fine, and have really good chances to find a job. Those who don't find an apprenticeship, have 4x more chances to be unemployed (Source: Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung (IAB), data for 2011).



Thirdly, the supply of apprenticeships declined significantly in the last two decades (Source: Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, Datenreport zum Berufsbildungsbericht 2014).

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Challenges of transferring the dual system

There are two big challenges that need to be overcome when dual apprenticeships are introduced in a country.

Change the corporate environment: from stealing talent to invest in talent.

The first of these challenges is to change the mind-set in the business community. Although many companies have difficulties in finding skilled employees, they do not want to invest in vocational training. They rather 'steal' skilled workers from their competitors.

Improving the image

The second challenge is to improve the public image of vocational education. Even when there are possibilities for vocational training with good employment prospects, young people often choose to go to university instead. Because VET has a bad image in many countries. It is associated with low paying 'dirty' blue collar jobs. This perception needs to change in order for young people to embrace the opportunity that apprenticeships have to offer.

Panorama of good practices: Review of apprenticeship training in Ireland

Fergal McCarthy

Fergal McCarthy is the Chairperson of the Education Committee of the Teaching Council of Ireland. He is also the principal of the Kinsale Community School. This school received the accolade of the Best Science School in Ireland at the BT Young Scientist Competition in 2014. He is the former Director of the Kinsale College of Further Education. He is passionate about lifelong learning and second chance education and has a deep interest in curricular reform and curricular design.

Fergal McCarthy provides the conference with a presentation of the review of apprenticeship education in Ireland and sets out the implementation plan that has developed following this review.

At the outset, he advises that the Teaching Council is the professional standards body for teachers at primary, second level, and further education. The Teaching Council operates with legislative authority as the regulatory body for teachers and all teachers working in recognized schools must be registered with the Teaching Council. As most apprenticeship education has in the past been provided outside of these settings, the Teaching Council has had a limited influence on the standards involved in apprenticeship education with the exception of two further education settings, Mallow in Cork and Dun Laoighre near Dublin. It should be noted within the structural changes in Further Education that the Teaching Council's remit in this sector may in time be expanded in the area of apprenticeship education. The Council is currently engaged in a strategic conversation with many of the stakeholders in this sector so as to inform its thinking about these developments. The Council's remit focuses on the quality of teaching and learning in all sectors. There is much therefore to recommend an expansion of its remit. But the sector, like all others, has its own dynamic and particular challenges and issues. The last thing the Council wants to do is to rush into this space, however well intentioned such a move might be. In this context, the Teaching Council very much welcomes the opportunity to be part of this discussion in relation to VET initiatives.

In May 2013, The Minister for Education and Skills announced a review of apprenticeship education in Ireland to determine whether or not the current model should be 'retained, adapted, or replaced by an alternative model of vocational education and training'.

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This review has been part of a wide ranging reform programme in the Further Education and Training sector, which has included major structural changes and the establishment of a new body to oversee the VET sector in Ireland now known as SOLAS.

The review characterized apprenticeship as being substantial in depth and duration so as to allow the qualified apprentice to work autonomously and competently in a specific area of work. The review envisaged apprenticeship education as being employer led, of at least 2 years in duration and should have a minimum of 50% on the job training. The review identified the need for a more flexible model of apprenticeship, potentially leading to qualifications at any level from level 5 upwards on the National Framework of Qualifications.

A key recommendation of the review, with the aim of underpinning and establishing a new apprenticeship system is the establishment of an Apprenticeship Council. There are two principal areas to be addressed by the Apprenticeship Council. Firstly, it must review existing apprenticeship curricula as a matter of urgency with a move away from generic placement at level 6 and to programme durations based on the time needed to achieve the learning outcomes necessary for the occupation and secondly, it is to scope the development of new apprenticeships. Prior to the Apprenticeship Council being established, FAS, the previous Apprenticeship authority had already commenced a review of five trades Electrical, Plumbing, Carpentry and Joinery, Metal Fabrication, and Heavy Vehicle Mechanics. New standards have been developed and new draft curricula have been drawn up and they are currently being considered by the Apprenticeship Council prior to their submission to the QQI for public consultation and validation. This process will ultimately allow the QQI to place these qualifications on the appropriate level of the Qualification Framework. This process has been thorough but it has also been extremely time consuming and slow. The process involved:

- Establishment of individual standards development groups
- Drafting of standards
- Establishment of project steering groups
- Development of curricula by the National Apprenticeship Advisory Committee (NAAC)
- Review of standards by an external review group
- Submission of standards to QQI for public consultation and adoption
- Submission of draft programmes (including curricula) to QQI for validation

All of this material and work will be completed and submitted to QQI by the end of 2014.

The remaining trades will also be reviewed. Currently however discussions are underway to ascertain if the system described above could be streamlined and accelerated based on the experience garnered over the review of the initial 5 trades.

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In the context of the second objective the Department of Education and Skills is currently engaged in discussions with representatives of enterprise sectors in Ireland to promote the development of apprenticeships in new occupational areas and to seek their support. While countries like Germany have a strong culture of this type of work place supported education with over 300 apprenticeship awards, Ireland is starting from a low base. While Ireland places a high value on apprenticeship education, and has a very strong track record at World Skills Olympic level, there are merely 22 areas of validated apprenticeship courses. Outside of the traditional apprenticeship sectors very few companies are formally engaged in work based learning. There are however examples of some innovative practices such as the Retail Management Degree offered through a collaboration between retail companies and third level providers such as Lidl and the Dublin Business School.

It is envisaged that the Apprenticeship Council will identify new areas where apprenticeships will provide a valuable route for skills development and skills acquisition. In terms of context however it should be noted that Irish society places a very high value on third level education. In fact Ireland has the highest level of third level attainment among 30 to 34 year olds in the EU – 53% compared to the EU average of 37%. Many companies and indeed many professions provide additional on the job training to university graduates. This of itself is helping to create a culture of industry and education providers collaborating with the education and training of the future employee.

Given then that Ireland does not have the culture or tradition in the provision of apprenticeship education beyond the existing settings the Department of Education and Skills has developed a collaboration with the German Irish Chamber of Commerce. It is envisaged that international companies from countries with a strong apprenticeship tradition sited in Ireland would promote apprenticeship education within their Irish operations.

It is the stated objective of the DES to seek the support of representatives of the enterprise sectors in Ireland to develop proposals for new apprenticeships. The DES is committed to provide dedicated funding to develop this initiative.

The Apprenticeship Council will invite proposals for new areas for apprenticeship education from enterprise and providers of education and training. The proposals received will require these proposers to set out the labour market needs justifying the establishment of the apprenticeship scheme, as well as the willingness of employers to recruit and meet the relevant costs associated with the employment of apprentices. These proposals will also have to comprehend the format and structure of the programme being proposed as well as an outline of the main occupational needs to be addressed. The proposal will have to indicate the entry level of the learner as well as the transferability of the skills and avenues for the progression of the learner to the next level of learning. It is anticipated that this invitation will issue towards the end of 2014 with submissions to be received in the first quarter of 2015.

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The Apprenticeship Council will examine the viability of the proposals. If it determines a proposal to be viable it will issue an interim report to the Minister in the second quarter of 2015.

Within this report to the Minister, the Apprenticeship Council will identify the measures that may be necessary from the DES to facilitate the development of the proposal.

This will involve the identification of the resource implications of the proposal and provide an assessment of the overall interest in apprenticeship or other forms of work- based learning in this particular area of enterprise.

It is envisaged that this work will be completed in the second quarter of 2015.

If the Minister accepts the benefits of this identified area of education and training as being best served by apprenticeship education then the standards and validation will be of particular concern.

The awards development process normally involves the universities, institutes of technology and large further education providers. For occupationally focused awards this normally entails the awarding body and the education provider with a representative group of employers and experts to develop the detailed award standard.

A detailed curriculum will need to be developed to achieve the learning outcomes detailed in the standards specification. This curriculum will set out the content, resources, duration, the on and off the job elements, entry requirements, assessment procedures and the position of the award on the framework.

There will also have to be clarity in relation to recruitment processes and of allocation of places to registered employers. This will include the provision of an apprenticeship contract to avoid the exploitation of apprentices or the apprenticeship scheme.

When the Apprenticeship Council is satisfied that a new apprenticeship is ready to commence it shall seek the Ministers approval for its commencement. The target date for the completion of this work is the end of 2015 into the second quarter of 2016.

The overall intention is for the outcome of this process to be underpinned by legislation. The overall governance arrangements for existing apprenticeship scheme will be harmonized to manage the expanded and diversified apprenticeship sector. This new structure will have the capacity to develop and research occupational forecasting capability. It will also develop arrangements to secure alternative provision for apprentice training in cases of redundancy. Other areas of competence that this process should provide would be the strengthening of arrangements to recognize prior learning,, create pathways towards Master craftsman programmes and the consideration of pre

apprenticeship programmes. Actions in this regard will commence in the first quarter of 2016.

There are models of work experience as part of the delivery of a number of existing programmes most notably in the further education sector. These courses will continue to ensure that the qualifications are relevant to the industry.

In conclusion, the Irish government has identified that there is a mismatch between the skills required by employers and the skills of potential employees. The CEDFOP research demonstrates that those that are educated through apprenticeship education spend a shorter term unemployed and that there is a mismatch between the skills that are currently being taught and the skills demanded by industry. In the context of the crisis around youth unemployment it behoves us to develop and widen our apprenticeship schemes.

Statements

EUNEC formulated critical remarks and statements on the issue of bridging the transition between education and the labour market. EUNEC wants to disseminate these statements pro-actively to the European Commission, the European Parliament and relevant DG's. EUNEC also wants to promote action by its members at national/regional level. These statements can contribute to the national advisory opinions of education councils. They should lead to reflection and action by relevant stakeholders in the field of education and training, such as providers of education, teacher trade unions, social partners, students, parents and experts in the field of education and training.

Relevance of the theme

This theme is relevant for different reasons:

- Young citizens pay a high price for the current economic crisis. From the second quarter of 2008, the youth unemployment rate has taken an upward trend peaking to 23,6 % in the first quarter 2013, before receding to 23.1 % at the end of the year (Eurostat). According to the OECD Education at a Glance interim report (January 2015), more than 30 % of the employed 15-29 years-old who are not in education are not working full time.
- Another worrying phenomenon is the ongoing skills mismatch between the competences and competence levels of those leaving the school and the competences and competence levels needed in a 'learning economy'.

The transitions between education and labour market are therefore a main strategic line in the working programmes of all education councils as it is also a common red line in the national education policies.

The theme is also high on the EU-agenda, in the Europe 2020-strategy in general and in the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (jointly coordinated by DG Education and Culture and DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) in particular. The theme is also part of the ongoing work in the development of common instruments for transparency in the slipstream of the Copenhagen Declaration.

Central questions

These statements focus on the strategies to facilitate the transitions between vocational education and training (VET) and the (re)integration of youngsters in the labour market. How can education and training systems organize broader and better established bridges between the education and training system on the one hand and the labour market on the other hand?

We focus on

- the nature of skills needed for a sustainable integration in the labour market;
- how to keep the pace of developments in society from the perspective of VET-schools and training centres.

The nature of skills needed to enhance the quality of transitions from school to the labour market

EUNEC reflected on the skills needed beyond the school and the competences required in a quickly evolving and highly competitive labour market, in a perspective of sustainable development in professional and personal life and as a citizen.

In order to guarantee lifelong participation and inclusion and a sustainable career management, specific professional competences are needed, but also key competences, personal development and transversal skills. Within curriculum development it is important to **find the right balance between general skills, 'soft skills' and the specific professional skills**. In this debate we should be aware that 'mismatch' may not be defined too narrowly. VET strands prepare for a wide range of occupations, not only for one job here and now. From this respect, it is worrying that pupils entering VET lack basic skills. This is a threat for sustainable integration on the labour market and for lifelong learning. One of the reasons for the lack of attractiveness of VET is that it does not offer perspectives for further learning at different levels at upper secondary, post-secondary and tertiary level. Integrating **learning to learn competences** and **career competences** offering a basis for further learning are essential in a 21st century curriculum for VET.

The debate is not only on defining the needed competences as such. It is as important to guarantee that youngsters develop specific professional competences and general skills in **an integrated way**, so that they are able to act in real life and that they are not stuck in theory or cognition only. They need to be able to transfer competences into new and unforeseen contexts and circumstances. Therefore **work oriented experience** during the school trajectory is a must.

Another issue is the fact that labour market requires workers with a higher level of competences both in abstract and conceptual thinking. People that are able to act efficiently in an adequate and flexible context. They can **adapt standardized routine behaviour to new challenges**. Labour market is in need for this **medium qualified skilled workers** in specialized sectors of the economy (e.g. technicians, health care workers). It becomes obvious that certain specialised technicians need an education at level 5 of the qualification structure, situated in post-secondary education. There is a clear need for increase of VET offer at higher, specialized levels.

Enhancing the quality of transitions from school to the labour market requires a **continuous and structured feedback between the education and training system and the labour market**, completed with information from social welfare services and services for (un)employment.

How to keep the pace of developments in society from the perspective of VET-schools and training centres? Seven main recommendations to raise the relevance and attractiveness of VET.

1. Raise public awareness of the nature and value of labour

Too often VET is seen as less valuable than the general track. Pupils in VET are too often children with a negative self-concept and with a history of failure in the education system. Parents perceive VET as a dead end in the education trajectory of their child. Employers hesitate to hire youngsters leaving the VET system even with a qualification and they choose overqualified more generally educated employees. This **misconception is partially due to the social disdain** for manual work although in reality the work floor of the 21st century is no longer purely manual or industrial labour. The impact of ICT has changed drastically the working conditions and the nature of labour.

2. Enlarge the mission of VET: leading to direct integration in the labour market AND offering access to a broad range of post-secondary, higher and lifelong learning VET tracks

The attractiveness of VET is influenced by tensions between education as a process towards personal development and critical citizenship on the one hand and the responsiveness towards labour market innovation on the other hand. Modernisation of VET should try to find the balance between functional employability and sustainable integration in society.

An underestimated factor in raising the attractiveness of VET is putting the secondary VET strand **not only as qualification oriented** but also to focus on the opportunities for further learning and developing competences at the levels 5 and 6 of the qualification structure. These provisions could be organized either in lifelong learning or in higher education institutions. Modern vocational education and training offers a valid access to post-secondary and tertiary education (vocational and academic programmes).

3. Re-inforce the counselling and guidance system for learners and potential learners

Supporting individuals to acquire the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to identify options, explore alternatives and succeed in society, is an essential part of any high quality vocational education system. The career motto in order to practice a job with pleasure is to get out from the cage. Youngsters or adult learners should develop positive attitudes towards career and feel responsible and adequate to manage it through different phases of life. Dealing with uncertainty and new challenges is part of

this process. It is thus very important to motivate the students. That is exactly the task of the counsellor, the teacher, the parents: to help the pupils to come out of the cage, and to see the opportunities. It is about preparing better individuals for the changing workplace of the 21st century. It's about helping and supporting individuals to balance the personal needs and the requirements of society.³

This supposes involvement and commitment of the students: they play an active role investigating personal features, likes and preferences, relationships, self-confidence, decision making etc. Crucial competences are to explore their own career, become aware of their personal profile, be responsible for personal career decisions, develop positive and realistic attitudes towards the employment process, share learning experiences and knowledge, analyse the labour market and to understand the correlation between interests, competencies, attitudes and opportunities.

The local community plays an active role in support of the counselling and guidance system.⁴

4. Integrate work-based learning systematically into all vocational programmes, both for learners and for teachers

Work-based learning is an umbrella term that can include projects with or for companies, training and junior firms, simulations, school workshops, labs, internships, traineeships, company-based part of apprenticeships and on-the-job training. It includes school-based learning or learning at school and learning in a company (work floor). This type of learning can be achieved in a wide variety of learning provisions, both formal and informal.

Work based learning is extremely **important for the match between education and the labour market**. It is an instrument of stimulating the integration in the labour market and smoothening the shock of the first working experience. For the pupils, apprenticeship leads to a better awareness of the job reality, gives meaning to learning. For them it is a strong instrument for motivation and for engaging them in learning and personal development.

It should be a prerequisite of all vocational education and training to offer this opportunity to acquire the practical skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for employment. Therefore this strand within the education system should make a priority to provide pupils with a real labour market experience, on the work floor, in or outside the school, during the training pathway or afterwards. This **work based learning needs to be integrated at all levels of VET**: at secondary, post-secondary and at tertiary levels and for different target groups: youth, adults, unemployed.

³ [EUNEC statements on 'Guidance through transition moments in the learning pathway', Budapest, 2009.](#)

⁴ [EUNEC statements on 'Community Schools', Brussels, 2013.](#)

There is **no 'one fits all' model** to structure work based learning in the different vocational strands. It might have different features and structures, related to the relationship between employers and employees on the regional/national labour market and the traditional involvement of the social partners in the organisation of workplace based learning in VET. It is clear that different countries organise the work based component in education and training differently taking into account the characteristics, the needs and the culture of the regional/national labour market. Work based learning is differently understood and structured in the different countries. EUNEC recognises and welcomes this differentiation in features but underlines **the necessity of reality based learning in different learning contexts.**

A crucial element for successful work based learning is **the engagement of the employers and companies who believe in the added value to invest in youngsters.** Companies benefit from this involvement in education because they have a say in the qualification process of future employees, they choose the best for future employment, they benefit from the productive capacity of the employee. Whatever the structure of work based learning might be, it offers an added value in terms of relevance of competences, in terms of prospection of talented employees, in terms of innovation from the education system into the labour market. The policy level may give incentives to companies to stimulate work based learning (tax incentives, a social framework for pupils, quality criteria).

Safeguarding young people from exploitation is a precondition for further development of work based learning. A regulatory social framework is needed in order to avoid that apprentices are used instead of statutory personnel.

5. Invest in a smooth and warm transition between school and labour market

Guidance is not only relevant before and throughout the VET programme, as demonstrated supra. This is not sufficient. If youngsters enter the labour market, more provisions are needed at the border area between training and work in order to prevent a practice shock, not only in the first weeks of employment, but during a longer period of induction. **Further learning and coaching on the work floor are needed.** One of the ways to implement this, is to work with coaches, mentors.

6. Invest in the professionalization and the quality of teachers and trainers at the school/training centre, and at the workplace.

Teachers but also the coach, trainer or mentor in the company or at the work floor are important for explaining, showing how to do and to turn the experience by doing into a deep learning. Therefore it is necessary to give **incentives for a professional development and training of these coaches/mentors/trainers.** There is a need for mobility between schools and companies for each teacher and each instructor/coach, in both directions.

There is a need for a more intense exchange of knowledge and skills, of cultures and values. Within the contracts made with social partners this need should be considered.

7. Validate work experience by focusing on learning outcomes.

In recent years, a number of tools have been created and implemented: Europass, Qualification Frameworks⁵, ESCO, EQAVET, ECVET, ECTS.⁶ In the discussions on the future priorities of education and training, it is often said that these tools are not an end in itself, but that they are more a means to put the **focus more on the outcomes of learning**. The paradigm shift to learning outcomes and the recognition of previously acquired competences will be helpful in bridging the gap between the world of education and training and the world of work by offering flexible paths and transitions.⁷

⁵ [EUNEC reflections on EQF, Brussels, 2005.](#)

⁶ [EUNEC reflections on ECVET, Brussels, 2007.](#)

⁷ [EUNEC statements on 'Learning outcomes', Madrid, 2008.](#)

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BRIDGING THE TRANSITION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND THE LABOUR MARKET

The image of the Charles Bridge in Prague as a metaphor for bridging the transitions between education and the labour market.



The bridge rests on strong pillars: in order to bridge the transition between education and the labour market, we need both a well-functioning education system and well-functioning enterprises. The impressive statues on the bridge symbolize the fact that VET needs more status: there is no reason to see VET as a second choice. Amongst all the statues, one particular statute is in the picture, the one all the tourists want to touch: it symbolizes the fact that it is crucial to find the best partners to facilitate the transition between education/training and the labour market.

Unfortunately, there still are beggars on Charles' Bridge, people who maybe lacked the opportunities to find their way in life. They remember us of the fact that, in bridging the transition between education and the labour market, we should pay attention to the disadvantaged groups, those who have trouble in crossing the bridge.

