

BUSINESSEUROPE



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

HOW TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND IMAGE OF APPRENTICESHIPS

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Who ARE WE?



BUSINESSEUROPE's members are 41 central industrial and employers' federations from 35 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe.

BUSINESSEUROPE represents small, medium and large companies.

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In September 2011, BUSINESSEUROPE published a report on “putting Europe to work”, which included a section entitled the “youth paradox”. Young people of today are more educated than ever. At the same time, current levels of youth unemployment present a systemic risk and a great loss for European economies and societies.

Europe must act to ease young peoples’ transitions between school and work. This should be done by reducing labour market rigidities and by stimulating job creation. At the same time, the mismatches between skills supply and demand must be reduced.

The starting point for business is that an efficient education system is needed for a well functioning labour market. Therefore, greater synergies between the world of education and the world of business should be promoted at all levels. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of governments to ensure that pupils finish primary and secondary education with the adequate competences for further education.

We have chosen to focus on how to improve the quality and image of apprenticeships in order to make them a more attractive option for young people. The reason is that there is evidence that well-functioning apprenticeship systems contribute to companies’ competitiveness. And at the same time they seem to be correlated with low youth unemployment.

There is a broad diversity of apprenticeship systems and cultures in EU Member States. In some countries, well-functioning dual systems already exist. These systems attract young talents because they provide attractive job prospects and earning potential. Two key aspects of their success are the permeability of educational systems and effective institutionalised cooperation between the relevant actors.

In many countries, however, existing systems need improvements. Either because apprenticeships are not an attractive option for companies. Or because the image of apprentices in some public perceptions is negative. Or because the educational system does not give young people the basic competences for companies to build on.

Taking into account this diversity of systems, the question is how to expand the number of apprenticeships in vocational education. Setting a European quantitative target with no indication of the means to achieve it would not be the right approach. Rather, what is needed is a comprehensive European strategy on apprenticeships to help all EU countries that so wish to develop well-functioning dual learning apprenticeship systems. We have identified twelve main recommendations on how to secure this.

OUR 12 MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS



TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

- 1 Allocate a share of the European Social Fund and of the Erasmus for All programme to **provide seed funding for Member States** that wish to establish or reform their dual learning systems;
- 2 Ensure funding for **cross-border training activities of employers' organisations** to become involved in the establishment of a dual system;
- 3 Support **European and national campaigns for changing the perception of vocational education**, including in the context of the Copenhagen process;
- 4 Organise a **regular forum for discussions on monitoring of the European apprenticeship strategy** with the relevant European and national stakeholders in this area.

TO THE MEMBER STATES

- 5 **Provide a well-functioning general school system** - both primary and secondary - that prepares pupils properly so that they are able to enter an apprenticeship system;
- 6 **Set up the framework conditions for dual learning apprenticeship systems** in accordance with their respective industrial relations systems and through cooperation between labour market and educational institutions;
- 7 **Integrate work-based learning in educational systems.** A significant part of the education, to be defined at national level, is to be conducted in a company with clear curricula also for the training in companies.

TO EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS

- 8 Take part in the governance of dual learning apprenticeship systems and **contribute to the design of curricula and their adaptation over time.** This is an important factor to ensure their responsiveness to labour market needs and to avoid unnecessary red tape for companies;
- 9 **Inform and motivate companies** to become involved in the dual system, give them advice and organise cooperation between companies.

TO COMPANIES

- 10 **Ensure a high level of quality of training** which provide good earning potential and career opportunities, notably by ensuring that company instructors/tutors are well equipped to transfer knowledge to apprentices;
- 11 Sign a contract with the apprentice that includes **clear task description and working conditions** for the apprentice;
- 12 **Encourage employees to share their experience as former apprentices** wherever and whenever possible to promote the take-up of apprenticeships by the young generation.

Access to qualified labour is at the core of companies' competitive strategies. It is an important condition for companies' decision to produce in a given country. A labour force with the appropriate and increasingly high qualifications is therefore very important for attracting investments, securing growth and jobs and thus securing society's prosperity.

In comparison with other regions in the world, European companies have enjoyed a sufficient and skilled workforce in the past decades.

A number of emerging economies such as China and India are investing more heavily in education. At the same time, European internal factors threaten companies' access to a sufficient and skilled workforce. If no action is taken, this trend could lead to a further deterioration in Europe's competitiveness position in the world and to a declining attractiveness for foreign investments in Europe which are both key to achieve sustainable growth and secure jobs in Europe.

1 DEMOGRAPHIC AGEING

With ongoing demographic trends Europe is facing major challenges, if growth and living standards are to be maintained. The changing demographic structures in the coming years will lead to a significant ageing of European populations.

By 2014 the working age population 20-64 will start to shrink. In 2020, it will have declined by around 3 million persons. The decline will be increasingly steady after that. By 2050, 40 million less people will be of working age and the number of persons over 65 will increase by approximately 60 million.

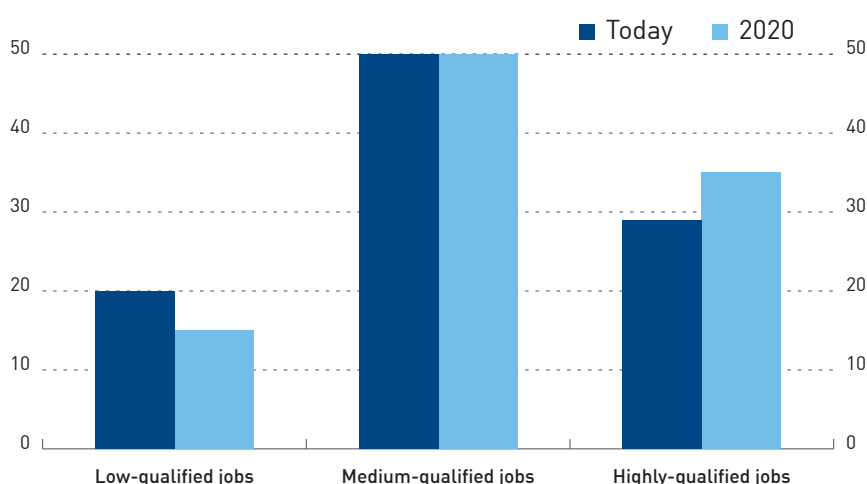
In this context, it will be more important than ever to tap the full potential of the smaller EU working age population, both male and female, to ensure that companies find the skilled personnel they need to be innovative and competitive.

2 FUTURE SKILL NEEDS

Looking into the future, the demand for labour with high and medium qualifications is projected to rise.

The share of jobs employing those with high-level qualifications will increase from 29% in 2010 to about 35% in 2020. The share of jobs employing those with medium-level qualifications will remain very significant (around 50%).

Chart 1



Source: Skills Needs and Supply, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) 2010

In the same period, the share of jobs employing those with low qualifications will decrease from 20% to less than 15%.

In other words, the demand for labour with a further education will rise and the demand for unskilled labour will decrease. As is the case today, the demand for vocationally trained workers will remain high and constitute a core workforce in Europe.

Observatories and/or skills councils, including at European level, can be useful to detect future labour market opportunities.

3 SKILLS MISMATCH

The unemployment rate of the EU now stands at 10.1%. This corresponds to more than 24 million men and women without jobs.

At the same time, there were 2.2 million unfilled vacancies in the EU in the first quarter of 2011. More than a million in Germany and more than 450,000 in the UK.

The explanation for these conflicting figures is a clear mismatch between the supply and demand of skills. The fact that educational systems' outputs often do not correspond to labour market needs contributes to unemployment, in particular among the young. Moreover, European workers' limited propensity to move and work across borders is an aggravating factor.

4 YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Also before the crisis many countries had very high levels of youth unemployment, which gives evidence of a structural problem.

The crisis has hit young people particularly hard, especially in those countries. Transition of young people from education to the labour market has become increasingly difficult.

5.5 million young people under 25 years of age are unemployed in Europe. The youth unemployment rate at 22.4% is twice as high as for the whole working population and nearly three times as high as the rate for the adult active population. In Spain and Greece, youth unemployment has reached almost 50%.

To make matters even worse, if we add those who are not in education to the high number of young unemployed, there are a total number of 7.5 million people who are neither in employment nor in education or training. This share increased from 10.8% in 2008 to 12.8% in 2010 for the EU as a whole. In Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia and Spain over 14% of the young generation is not in education (any longer) and not (yet) in employment.

This is an unacceptable situation.

Youth unemployment is one of Europe's most pressing problems. We risk losing a generation to social exclusion. If this risk materialises, European economies would be scarred durably, because the effects of a lost generation will undermine Europe's innovation potential and competitiveness for the next decades.

Therefore with both the debt crisis and with an ageing population, the integration of young people into the labour market is one of Europe's most urgent concerns if Europe wants to be a prosperous region in the future.

1 EU AGENDA ON YOUTH

The Europe 2020 strategy targets two categories of young people:

- ⇒ **The young who face the most serious difficulties:** The objective is to reduce the number of early school leavers to 10% by 2020.
- ⇒ **Highly educated young people:** The objective is to increase the number of higher education graduates to 40% by 2020.

In addition, the European Council has agreed on 30 January 2012 to step up efforts to promote first work experience and participation in the labour market by ensuring that young people receive a quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship within a few months of leaving school.

One objective shared by business is to increase the number of apprenticeships and traineeships where possible and in cooperation with educational systems.

Interestingly, the Europe 2020 strategy is less explicit on actions for the 50% of young people who have completed secondary education but do not obtain a higher education diploma. Therefore, there is room for the EU to steer action to encourage access of the majority of young people to an education which leads to labour market opportunities.

European businesses call for a new European effort to ensure that companies' needs in terms of medium/qualified jobs in the next ten years are met. Vocational education and training and apprenticeships should be put at the centre of this new European effort.

2 THE BUSINESS CASE FOR QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY IN INITIAL EDUCATION

Initial education is perceived by companies either as the main responsibility of governments or as a joint responsibility of businesses and governments.

In all EU countries, access to a sufficient and skilled workforce is one of the main challenges facing European businesses and countries for the next years.

Because a skilled workforce matters for competitiveness, companies in some countries pay for a significant share of the costs of education, especially in vocational education and training. For example, in Germany, companies invest heavily in their part of the dual training system, about 24 billion euros a year.

In return, companies expect a reliable system. They must be able to count on the skills that are acquired by young people, in the general school system as well as in the apprenticeship system. This requires putting in place adequate framework conditions for the development of vocational education and training. In many European countries, however, these framework conditions are lacking.

Apprenticeships cannot resolve problems arising from failure to achieve basic skills or choose the right direction at school. Companies compete for talent and will always look for the best candidates. Education providers and businesses need to work together to develop effective programmes that will allow those with poor skills to take up training opportunities. In order to support the efforts of business, the basic skills provided by educational systems should be sufficient.

It has to be clear that the apprenticeship agenda is not a social agenda for school dropouts. Vocational skills and competences are just as important as academic skills and competences. And both are necessary for a well-functioning labour market. Moreover, the principle of acquiring company experience is also relevant for higher education.



The initial VET dilemma starts in primary school. Young people have a negative perception of VET and are not familiar with the real opportunities that various education paths may lead to.

Therefore – in many countries – the majority of young people who choose a VET are often the ones who do not have the skills to carry through a higher secondary education. This is problematic because companies need vocational trained labour – not least at a high level.

In other words the dilemma consists in the fact that the initial VET system must embrace both young with weak hard and/or soft skills and gifted young people.

1 INITIAL VET SUFFERS FROM A NEGATIVE PUBLIC IMAGE

An important challenge is the negative image of initial vocational training, in particular in some countries.

The Copenhagen process, launched in 2002, aims at improving the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training (VET). Most recently with the Bruges communiqué, the following priority actions have been identified:

- ⇒ Raise the quality and competences of teachers;
- ⇒ Encourage practical activities and the provision of high-quality information and guidance which enable young pupil and their parents to become acquainted with different vocational career possibilities;
- ⇒ Ensure that key competences are integrated into curricula and develop appropriate means of assessment;
- ⇒ Organise teaching and learning activities which foster the development of career management skills;
- ⇒ Give learners access to appropriate up-to-date technical equipment, teaching materials and infrastructures;
- ⇒ Monitor the transition of graduates into the labour market or further education.

Despite these efforts, the image of vocational education and training, in particular in some public perceptions, remains negative.

2 ADDRESSING THE NEGATIVE IMAGE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

In order to attract apprentices, the quality of learning in vocational schools and in companies must meet the highest standards. Moreover, well functioning apprenticeship systems are those which provide good earning potential and career opportunities.

Simultaneously it is necessary to ensure a more positive perception of vocational education in the EU. This should be done by addressing public opinion.

A good example is Germany where the dual system is very well respected and where a very broad range of pupils enter that system: Pupils with a lower secondary school leaving certificate – Hauptschulabschluss, those with an intermediate school leaving certificate – Realschulabschluss – or upper secondary school leaving certificate – Abitur.

Another example is the setting up of clubs of former apprentices – e.g. “club de l’apprentissage” in France – which can help raise awareness of the career perspectives to which apprenticeship may contribute.

Moreover, as long as initial VET systems do not address the needs of different young people, the negative perception of VET will be difficult to change.

There is a prerequisite which applies to all young people. Primary education should be organised in a way which ensures that pupils acquire the necessary skills for completing further education. This is the exclusive responsibility of governments and a precondition for companies’ supply of apprenticeships.

A crucial element is that educational institutions and business cooperate in order to allow the permeability of curricula. Pathways from initial VET to higher education should be open to ensure that young people do not see VET as a dead end. Moreover, the development of post-secondary VET and VET at higher levels is crucial to attract the best in class into VET systems.

Lastly, encouraging young people to set up their own business is also an important vehicle to achieve growth and jobs. Designing VET systems in a way which allows young entrepreneurs to acquire a real company life experience could be useful to ensure that a higher proportion of business plans lead to the setting-up of sustainable companies. The initiative “Erasmus for young entrepreneurs” is a European good practice on which European countries could build as part of their respective VET systems.

1 WHAT IS A DUAL LEARNING SYSTEM?

In a dual learning system, a significant part of the education takes place in a company. The principle is to alternate between learning in school and learning and working in a company.

In successful dual systems, learning in schools and learning in companies are linked and tuned closely thanks to the strong involvement of companies/employers in the system.

Nevertheless, most EU countries have systems where young people spend insufficient time in a company, and sometimes no time at all. A young person is not able to gain the benefits of a dual learning system when she or he spends less than half a school year in a company.

The dual system is practiced in several countries, notably Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark and the Netherlands (for more information see table in annex).

2 DUAL LEARNING – A CAREER PATH BENEFITING THE YOUNG, SOCIETY AND BUSINESS

The advantages of dual learning system are numerous:

In general

- ⇒ Demand-driven;
- ⇒ Smooth transition into the labour market;
- ⇒ High employment rate;
- ⇒ Mobility in the labour market;
- ⇒ Dual learning combines a young person's education and the needs of the labour market;
- ⇒ It fosters cooperation between educational institutions and the world of labour market;
- ⇒ Qualify for further education;
- ⇒ It gives more value for public money spent on education;
- ⇒ Many educational institutes are based close to urban centres. Work-based learning will spread young people geographically, thus supporting regional development.

Young people

- ⇒ It makes education more attractive for the many young people who learn better by combining theory and practical learning;
- ⇒ Apprenticeship is a chance to earn while you learn;
- ⇒ Young people acquire both theoretical and practical skills as well as social skills and learn to “stand on their own feet”. Many become innovators and entrepreneurs;

- ⇒ It gives young people a working experience which is very valuable when they are looking for their first job either in the company where they were trained or in a different company;
- ⇒ Young people attain the skills they need to achieve well paid and satisfying careers.

Companies

- ⇒ Companies have their staff trained according to practical requirements;
- ⇒ Companies and their employees get used to training and integrating “newcomers” and they see the importance of learning;
- ⇒ Provided that vocational schools are well-equipped, young people can bring to the company the newest know-how from the training institute;
- ⇒ Employing apprentices is a unique source of recruitment for companies; former apprentices constitute a “pool” of competences for companies or even for a sector;
- ⇒ Apprentices contribute to production;
- ⇒ Apprentices contribute to the company with new impetus.

3 DUAL LEARNING AS AN INSTRUMENT OF CROSS-FERTILISATION

There are four main ways in which dual learning plays a role of cross-fertilisation:

- ⇒ **Dual training systems respond to labour market needs:** Apprentices bring their academic knowledge to the company and their practical learning in a company to the school. By doing so, young people’s employability and educational institutions’ responsiveness to labour market needs are optimised. The quality of trainers both in companies and in schools is essential to ensure a fluid transfer of knowledge between companies and schools through apprentices.
- ⇒ **Dual training systems contribute to the competitiveness of industries:** After an apprenticeship, apprentices enjoy a high level of employability. Whether they stay in the same firm or go to another one, apprentices are likely to find a first job more easily than other young people, including many who have a higher education degree in areas where there is excessive supply of labour on the labour markets. Ex-apprentices of large companies are very attractive to SMEs in the same sector or vice versa. As a result, the mobility of ex-apprentices between companies of the same sector strengthens industry networks all over the supply chain, thereby contributing to competitive industries. But ex-apprentices also change sectors.
- ⇒ **Dual training systems bring teachers and trainers closer to the reality of companies:** Indeed, teachers and trainers have to work in relation with the instructor (tutor) of the company in order for the practical training to be adapted to the educational goals. Furthermore, they have to follow regularly the work performed by the apprentice in the company.
- ⇒ **Dual training systems produce also very good results in tertiary education:** It should not be reserved only for the training leading to the first levels of qualification. Those apprentices who enter university afterwards very often succeed there because they already have a touch of practical sense.

4 DIVERSITY OF SYSTEMS

Despite its many advantages dual learning has not reached its full potential in most Member States. Though practiced in several European countries the amount of time spent in a company and the content of the education differs very much from country to country.

In this section we have tried to divide different vocational approaches into three categories. But even within them there are wide variants.

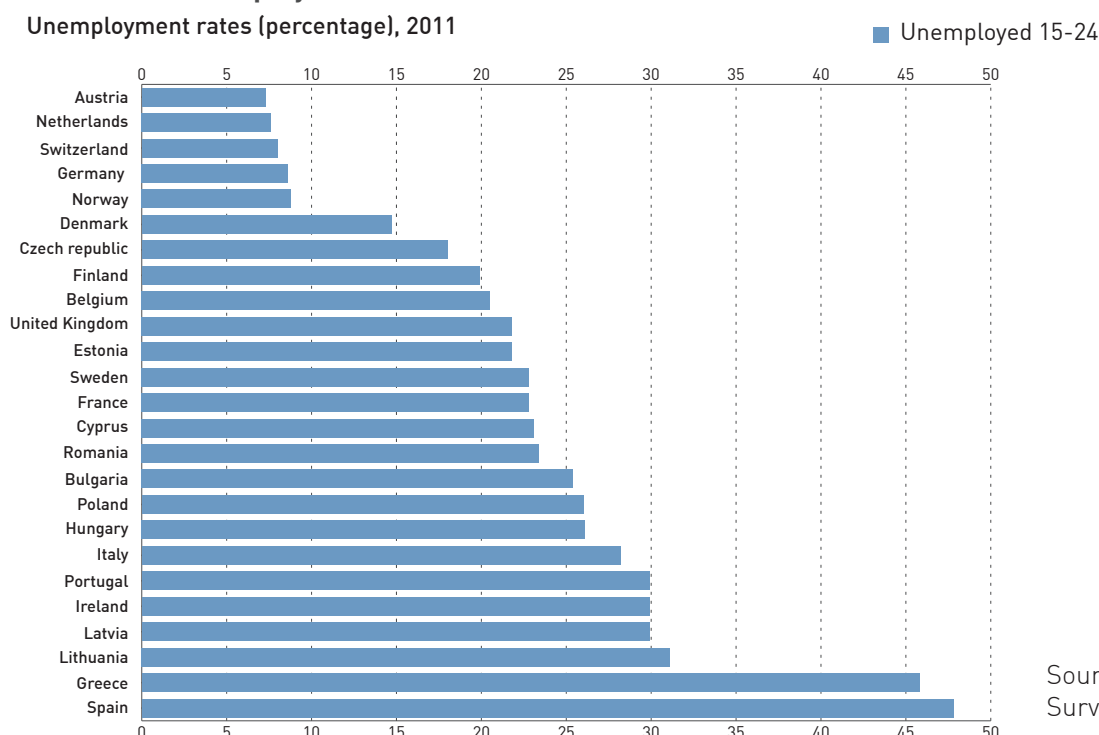
Countries with well established dual systems: e.g. Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands Norway and Switzerland

Driven by a fruitful social dialogue these countries have established efficient dual learning systems over a long period of time. This has certainly contributed to their good performance in terms of youth employment.

All these countries have in common the practice of work-based vocational education, where apprentices alternate between being at school and being in a company. A large share of the education takes place working and learning in a company. There is a contract between company and apprentice as well as a strong involvement of employers in the system in general (e.g. participating in establishing curricula, taking on strong financial and organisational responsibility). Inspired by these successful examples, some countries like France have reinforced their priorities concerning apprenticeship.

In other words there is an indication of a correlation between practicing a dual system (where apprentices spend a large share of their education in a company) and low youth unemployment.

Chart 2 Youth employment



Source: Labor Force Survey, Eurostat 2011



One explanation for this might be that the dual approach is a safe career path for young people. For example in Denmark young people who have carried through an apprenticeship are typically the first to be hired. That is before graduates who have not gained practical experience of the labour market.

The reason is that companies prefer to recruit young people with professional experience and trained according to labour market needs.

Other countries with dual systems; e.g. Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Ireland, Poland and United Kingdom

In these countries young people also have the opportunity to work as an apprentice in a company. But apprenticeships are not as widespread as among countries with well established dual systems. Moreover, the amount of time spent in a company throughout the training period is often shorter and the links between schools and companies are less developed.

Challenges and obstacles for countries without or with underdeveloped dual systems: e.g. Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Portugal and Romania

Many member states have adopted the European Union recommendation on spreading the apprenticeship approach. But it is complicated to set up a dual system because, among other reasons, there are a number of initial costs.

For example, a business fabric mainly based on micro, small and medium companies may require financial and organisational support to conceive and put in place appropriate structures.

These countries predominantly have school-based vocational systems and little contact with companies.





In order to contribute to the success of the Youth Opportunities Initiative published by the European Commission on 20 December 2011, BUSINESSEUROPE aims to inform the European Commission about companies' perspectives on what can be done to emphasise and expand apprenticeships in the EU.

In particular, we want to advise the European Commission on how EU funding opportunities can be better used, in the interest of young people, to set up effective dual learning systems in all EU Member States.

Furthermore, companies, and their organisations, are ready to become more involved in the development of apprenticeship, in close liaison with social partners and governments.

In this section, we identify common features that characterise effective apprenticeship systems. Building upon existing good practices the objective is to help all Member States to find cost-effective ways to set up well-functioning and self-sufficient apprenticeship systems. In this context, the role of companies and employers' organisations has been considered.

Finally, in order to make vocational education and training more attractive to young people, efforts must be stepped up to improve the quality of dual learning in order to improve the image of apprenticeships in public opinion.

1 TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

The Commission has proposed that structural and cohesion funds should be used to support essential reforms to deliver on the Europe 2020 targets.

In parallel, a number of Member States have included improvements of the educational systems, including setting up a dual system, in their reform programme put forward under the Europe 2020 strategy.

In June 2011, the European Commission has addressed country-specific recommendations on youth employment to 11 Member States. In almost all of these countries, improving access to and the quality of vocational education and training, including of apprenticeship systems, was among the recommendations made.

More recently, on 30 January 2012, the European Council and Commission agreed to organise country visits in the eight countries that have a youth unemployment rate superior to 30%. A dialogue will also be started with the seven other countries where youth unemployment is at least 20%.

Some of these countries will have to find finance to cover initial costs related to the establishment of dual learning apprenticeship systems. Moreover, other Member States may also consider introducing reforms if they know that the EU budget opens the possibility to partly finance initial costs.

The Commission has proposed to increase the budget for education, training and youth and of the European Social Fund (ESF) for 2014-2020. BUSINESSEUROPE welcomes this if the money is used in an effective way.



A good way of ensuring high return on investment would be to allocate a share of EU resources from the European Social Fund and 'Erasmus for all' (EU programme for education, training, youth and sport) to progressively expand dual training in vocational education. In the context of the ESF Committee, BUSINESSEUROPE will propose to adapt the ESF draft regulation with a view to allocating a share of ESF funding to promote the expansion of dual learning apprenticeship systems in the EU. We will make a similar proposal to allocate a share of the 17% of the funds made available to vocational education and training in the Commission's draft proposal on the 'Erasmus for all' programme to the same end.

EU funding should finance part of the initial costs in setting up or reforming a dual system at national, regional or branch level as part of Member States' EU 2020 reform programmes. The aim would be to establish a self-sufficient system, so that EU funds should be used only as seed funding and not as long-term funding. Lastly, to demonstrate in a given country the feasibility of setting up a dual learning system, pilot projects could be given preferential financing as part of ESF operational programmes.

To ensure the necessary incentives for Member States' willingness to expand dual training the EU seed funding should aim to:

- ⇒ Set up, reform and/or expand dual learning systems to make them more attractive to companies;
- ⇒ Encourage the exchange of best practices or ensure funding for cross-border training activities of employers' organisations on national, sector or regional level;
- ⇒ Support social partner/employer organisations to become involved in the establishment of a dual system;
- ⇒ Promote youth entrepreneurship in dual systems;
- ⇒ Invest in the equipment of vocational schools;
- ⇒ Ensure high quality training for teachers in vocational schools and instructors in companies;
- ⇒ Support company investments in infrastructure dedicated to training of apprentices;
- ⇒ Facilitate logistical aspects for apprentices, e.g. housing, or transport between home, school and company;
- ⇒ Support European and national campaigns for changing the perception of vocational education, including in the context of the Copenhagen process;
- ⇒ Set up an apprenticeship scheme in the EU institutions;
- ⇒ Promote the knowledge of different languages and improve foreign language proficiency.



2 TO THE MEMBER STATES

Member states, regional and local governments play an important role when apprenticeship systems are established. Especially, they have to set the right framework conditions, including the legislative framework and an institutionalised cooperation between relevant stakeholders. Companies need a system on which they can rely to assess the qualifications of workers while adapting curricula to changing market needs.

Moreover, public employment services should deliver more effective active labour market policies for young people. We broadly support the EU objective of providing to young people a quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship within a few months of leaving school. To achieve that, more efficient labour market services are needed. An important element is to foster cooperation with private and non-for-profit actors in order to deliver more personalised and targeted services to young people.

Once the framework conditions for a well-functioning dual training system are put in place, companies need a stable framework on which they can rely durably.

In order to receive EU funding to set up, reform and/or expand their dual learning systems, Member States must meet most of the following requirements:

- ⇒ Provide a well-functioning general school system (both primary and secondary) that prepares pupils properly so that they are able to enter an apprenticeship system. Important is to ensure the core skills and to give career guidance (the latter in cooperation with companies);
- ⇒ Integrate work-based learning in educational systems. A significant part of the education, to be defined at national level, is to be conducted in a company with clear curricula also for the training in companies. In this respect, the breakdown between the time spent on training in vocational schools and in the company has proven to be efficient in Germany where apprentices spend three days per week in the company and two days at school;
- ⇒ Support the role played by employers' organisations to address the needs of companies, particularly concerning micro, small and medium enterprises;
- ⇒ Cooperate closely with employers/social partners when establishing the system (e.g. when writing national curricula) to ensure that the system meets the needs of the labour market;
- ⇒ Encourage companies that are willing to train young people and make sure that they are able and willing to provide them with the right training;
- ⇒ Review regulatory and administrative rules to remove unnecessary burdens in consultation with relevant stakeholders;
- ⇒ Develop partnerships between large and small companies belonging to the same sector: small companies can train apprentices with the support of larger companies and the apprentice can then find a job more easily in a company in the sector;
- ⇒ Manage a system where young people make the link between workplaces and educational institutions, thereby ensuring close cooperation and synergies between both places;



- ⇒ Develop in cooperation with relevant stakeholders national curricula for professions/occupations and processes for the certification of modules and for an examination at the end of the apprenticeship taking into account current practice;
- ⇒ Introduce flexible and reliable contractual arrangements, combining theoretical and practical training within the company;
- ⇒ Educate teachers/trainers in training centres and support the training of instructors in companies;
- ⇒ Promote the knowledge of different languages and improve foreign language proficiency;
- ⇒ Investments in technology and equipment in the vocational schools;
- ⇒ Support company investments in infrastructure dedicated to training of apprentices;
- ⇒ Facilitate logistical aspects for apprentices, e.g. housing, or transport between home, school and company;
- ⇒ Adopt adequate measures to reinforce the attractiveness of VET systems for women, in particular in countries facing shortages of apprentices.

3 TO EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS AND COMPANIES

Achieving a well-functioning dual learning system requires employers' organisation and companies to take responsibility for educating young people, as follows:

Employers' organisations

- ⇒ Become involved in the establishment and functioning of the system, e.g. when national curricula are written or adapted;
- ⇒ Inform and motivate companies to become involved into the dual system, give them advice and organise cooperation between companies;
- ⇒ Set up information about training/apprenticeship opportunities, career paths, etc.
- ⇒ Cooperate with schools to inform pupils.

Companies

- ⇒ Respect the agreed conditions for apprentices;
- ⇒ Assure quality through signing a contract with the apprentice. A contract that includes clear task description and working conditions for the apprentice;
- ⇒ Quality assurance also supposes that the companies have time to dedicate to the apprentice;
- ⇒ Be recognised as companies capable of training an apprentice;
- ⇒ Educate instructors/tutors (Lehrmeister, Maître d'apprentissage);
- ⇒ Encourage employees to share their experience as former apprentices wherever and whenever possible to promote the take-up of apprenticeships by the young generation.



In order to allow employers' organisations in countries where dual training is weak or non-existent to learn from other well-functioning systems in the EU, a training programme could be set up to allow a mutual exchange of experiences by national employer federations or coordinated by them as regards the good functioning of a dual system and in particular the role of employers in the governance of dual systems including apprenticeships.

Business is a willing partner for governments on apprenticeships. But governments should in turn provide the framework conditions for apprenticeships to be attractive for companies. The involvement of employers is crucial to ensure the adequacy of the training provided to apprentices and to serve companies' skills needs. It is a key for efficiency.

In particular, there is an urgent need to make further progress on stripping back levels of bureaucracy and complexity within some systems. Apprenticeship bureaucracy can be a significant barrier to employer involvement. The issue is not simply levels of paperwork, but the complexity of processes firms have to put in place to satisfy the requirements of the programme.

Businesses need:

- ⇒ Flexibility in developing apprenticeship programmes;
- ⇒ No complicated rules for seed funding;
- ⇒ Low levels of paperwork;
- ⇒ No overlapping and unnecessary audits;
- ⇒ No constant changes within the system;
- ⇒ To be involved in the definition of the training curricula to ensure a good match with the needs of the companies.

Trust needs to be placed in employers. Whatever checks the apprenticeship programme puts in place, ultimately the most powerful check on employer performance is the need to maintain the company's brand image. A business knows that if it delivers poor training its reputation will suffer, talented individuals will leave/not want to join the organisation, and organisational performance will be adversely affected.



CONCLUSION



Dual systems are an important way to give young people easier access to the labour market and interesting career opportunities over a working life. At the same time, it contributes to lower youth unemployment, higher employment participation rates and economic growth in Europe.

With this report, BUSINESSEUROPE has outlined what it sees as the constitutive elements of a European strategy on apprenticeships.

With the new European Social Fund and 'Erasmus for All' programme, the European Commission has the means to help Member States find cost-effective ways to set up, reform or expand their dual learning systems. This opportunity should not be missed.

Moreover, fostering the apprenticeship approach in all Member States means that the EU institutions, national governments, employers, trade unions, educational institutions and the young should work in partnership.

To achieve that, we recommend that the European Commission organises a yearly forum to monitor the progress made in the delivery of the European strategy on apprenticeships. We also recommend that progress is monitored as part of the European semester.



Annex: APPRENTICESHIP IN THE EU

EU 27	DESCRIPTION	SCHOOL BASED	COMPANY BASED
AUSTRIA	The Austrian system is similar to the German and Danish training system. Around 80% of each cohort enters a VET pathway after finishing compulsory education. 40% take up an apprenticeship (dual system), about 40% start an intermediate (1-4 years) or higher school-based VET (5 years).		X
BELGIUM	In Belgium, there is no distinction between upper secondary and vocational education. The dual training can be chosen as a part of the youth education after completing the first two years. The training takes place in technical schools and very few do an internship in a company.	X	
BULGARIA	In Bulgaria young people can choose between 3-year and 4-year combined vocational and upper secondary education at technical schools. The training is carried through in technical schools.	X	
CYPRUS	In Cyprus young people can either carry through a 3-year upper secondary education, or a 3-year vocational education. The training is takes place in technical schools.	X	
CZECH REPUBLIC	In the Czech Republic, 31% of pupils (15 years old) currently enter apprenticeship programmes from secondary school. 49% enter secondary vocational schools (with maturita certificate) and rest of them (about 20%) study on in secondary general schools (called "gymnasium")	X	X
DENMARK	In Denmark young people can either carry through a 3-year upper secondary education, or a 4-year vocational education. In the vocational educations the majority of the young people are employed in an internship at a company. It is a mainly a company-based model, generally 2/3 in company and 1/3 at school. With the economic crisis, the number of students searching for training agreements increased from 3,601 students in 2008 to 8,200 in 2011.		X
ESTONIA	In Estonia a vocational education can be begun after primary and secondary education. Vocational training begun after primary education lasts a minimum of 3 years including internship in a company. Vocational training begun after secondary education is more theoretical. Mainly work-based training (66%).	X	X

EU 27	EXPLANATIONS	SCHOOL BASED	COMPANY BASED
FINLAND	Young people can choose between school-based training, which gives access to higher education - and apprenticeship-based training in a company. The apprenticeship-based training offers the same qualifications/skills as a school-based, i.e. in principle, access to universities. But very few choose this route.	X	
FRANCE	In France young people can acquire a vocational education at a vocational high school. Just over 40% of all young people who complete a secondary education complete a vocational course of which 32% in apprenticeship. The figure falls to 4% in tertiary education. There are two types of contracts, the apprenticeship contract (50% at work) and a professionalising contract (up to 5/6 at work) more focused on upper secondary education. The system in France is mainly company-based.	X	X
GERMANY	The German vocational training system on upper secondary level is called dual system. Learning takes place in a company (about 3/5 of the time) and at vocational school (about 2/5). The company signs a contract with the apprentice and pays him/her a training allowance. The duration of a vocational education is 2-3 (sometimes 3,5) years. Holders of this vocational qualification have access to higher education/university after three years of relevant occupational experience. Currently there are about 1.5 million apprentices in the dual system.		X
GREECE	Vocational training in Greece can be started after primary or secondary education. About 35% of all young people complete a vocational education. Just 5% as an apprentice.	X	
HUNGARY	In Hungary around 12% of all young people who complete youth training complete a vocational upper secondary education. Vocational education is largely complemented by an internship in a company.	X	X
IRELAND	In Ireland Vocational training typically ends with an apprenticeship course, but only 2% complete a vocational education.	X	X
ITALY	In Italy vocational training is school-based. About 25% of all young people who complete a youth education complete a vocational education.	X	

EU 27	EXPLANATIONS	SCHOOL BASED	COMPANY BASED
LATVIA	In Latvia the programmes provide access to either skilled labour or higher education. Vocational training is predominantly school-based.	X	
LITHUANIA	There are different kinds of vocational training programmes. The programmes are predominantly school-based.	X	
LUXEMBOURG	In Luxembourg some 62% of all young people who complete a secondary education complete a vocational course. Of these 12% percent in an apprenticeship programme.	X	X
MALTA	A vocational education last 1-4 years, depending on the direction chosen. The programmes are offered at secondary level. Vocational training is school-based.	X	
NETHERLANDS	Vocational training combines general and vocational education and provide access to higher education which is both professional looking. A vocational education last 1-4 years, depending on the direction chosen. There are two parallel systems - a school-based and a dual. Mainly work-based training (60%).		X
NORWAY	In Norway there is no distinction between secondary education and vocational training. Both directions are collectively known as youth education and include all education between primary and higher education. Vocational education can be put together to prepare for higher education. It may also be designed an internship in a company. Approximately 60% complete a vocational education. Of these, 15% in an apprenticeship course in a company.	(X)	X
POLAND	In Poland a vocational education lasts 2-3 years and qualifies for jobs in a company at skilled level or access to higher education in Poland. About 42% of all young people who complete a secondary education complete a vocational course. 5% in an apprenticeship in a company.	X	X
PORTUGAL	After 9 years of schooling young people can begin on a 3-year vocational training in Portugal. The vocational courses are mainly targeted at the labour market but also provide access to higher education. About 11% exit is vocational education. The programmes are predominantly school-based.	X	

EU 27	EXPLANATIONS	SCHOOL BASED	COMPANY BASED
ROMANIA	In Romania the programmes are predominantly school-based.	X	
SLOVAKIA	In Slovakia around 72% percent of all young people who complete a secondary education, complete a vocational education. Of these, approx. 30% as an apprentice in a company. Mainly work-based training (60%).	X	X
SLOVENIA	In Slovenia the programmes are predominantly school-based.	X	
SPAIN	In Spain about 46% of all young people who complete a secondary education, attend a vocational education. The programmes are school-based.	X	
SWEDEN	Vocational secondary schools provide a combination of practical and theoretical instruction. Everyone must participate in at least 15 weeks of workplace teaching - the equivalent of at least 15% of education - either in a workplace or as a bridge to higher education. Around 52% of all young complete a vocational education.	X	
SWITZERLAND	In Switzerland there are different forms of vocational education which is based on the 9-year-old elementary school. Most of the vocational training programmes are based on an internship in a company.		X
UNITED KINGDOM	In Britain about 41% of all young people who complete a secondary education complete a vocational upper secondary education. The majority in a school-based system. If apprenticeships are available from age of 16, to adults of all ages, only 6% of 16-18 do it. As in France, there is a perception gap between academic and vocational routes, despite the fact that 75% of apprentices are offered a job by their apprenticeship employer. Nevertheless, it is too much focused on intermediate level when higher skills are in demand in the economy, and qualifications are not recognised by universities. Mainly work-based training (70%).	X	X

BUSINESSEUROPE



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Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Croatia	Cyprus	Czech Republic
Denmark	Denmark	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany
Germany	Greece	Hungary	Iceland	Iceland	Ireland
Italy	Latvia	Lithuania	Luxembourg	Malta	Montenegro
Norway	Poland	Portugal	Portugal	Rep. of San Marino	Romania
Serbia	Slovak Republic	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland
Switzerland	The Netherlands	Turkey	Turkey	United Kingdom	