



Good for Youth Good for Business

European Alliance for
Apprenticeships



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European Alliance for
Apprenticeships

EARN & GAIN
TRAIN & LEARN

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Preface



Marianne Thyssen

European Commissioner for Employment,
Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility

Over half a million training and job opportunities for young people have been mobilised since the launch of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) in 2013. Four years on, our engagement with the world of business through the Alliance has given an enormous boost to the supply, quality, image and mobility of apprenticeships. It now embraces 35 countries and has inspired over 200 pledges from companies, social partners, chambers, education and training providers, youth organisations and research bodies.

Apprenticeships are proven to help young people from education and training into jobs. This Commission is committed to making vocational and educational training a first choice, not a second option. We will launch 'ErasmusPro', a new opportunity for longer-term apprenticeship mobility within the current Erasmus programme. A second edition of the European Vocational Skills Week will take place this year, following the huge success last year, to share and spread success stories that improve the image of apprenticeships.

Under our new Skills Agenda for Europe, we will continue to roll out measures that support quality apprenticeships in Europe. We are working with all the tools at our disposal to make sure that all paths are open for young people to find a job. With this in mind, the Commission is supporting the launch of the first ever European Network of Apprentices initiated by the European Youth Forum (EYF) and the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU).

In this brochure, you'll find some of the stories behind the numbers. Young people, who, because of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships have got their foot onto the jobs ladder and a good career which will allow them to follow their passion. Companies who are stepping up to the mark and acting as an inspiration to others in opening up new opportunities for young people and invigorating their business with the skills that will help them to thrive.

I hope you enjoy reading about the achievements and success stories of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships since we started in 2013 and our future plans. A lot has already happened, but this is just the beginning. With stakeholders' full commitment we will continue to achieve great things in the coming years.

Foreword



Evarist Bartolo

Minister for Education and Employment, Malta,
on behalf of the Maltese EU Presidency

Synergy between employment and education is necessary to ensure competitiveness and encourage economic growth. Malta recognises the importance of national agreements among education and training providers and collaborative partnerships between educators and employers to improve the skills base. Our policies are bringing about more meaningful employment and educational programmes that prepare young people for the labour market.

Young people need to be equipped for a radically changing world of employment. Their future needs to be secured through flexible access to education, based on the practical and technical experience needed in the workplace. Education is not only about securing a job, but also a way for individuals to shape their futures and their cultural and social lives.

Apprenticeships are vital in today's job market as they help solve critical problems such as youth unemployment, skills mismatches and inequality. The reality is that students are strong on theory, but this is no substitute for practical training. In recent years a gap has emerged between the skills and standards students have acquired and those needed in the workplace.

During the Maltese Presidency we will lead discussions to identify how Member States are being supported in providing quality apprenticeships according to their needs. Our aim is not only to celebrate the EAFA's achievements, but also to strengthen its main objective in bringing together governments and stakeholders to strengthen the quality, supply and image of apprenticeships in Europe. The May 2017 high-level meeting in Malta will be an excellent opportunity to focus on raising the quality of apprenticeships, through balancing theoretical and on-the-job training and improving long-term employment prospects.

Furthermore, the meeting will also involve all stakeholders and social partners to achieve broad participation to improve and make apprenticeship training credible, transparent and responsive to new developments, while identifying the support needed to help anyone offering information, advice and guidance to young people on apprenticeships.

The policy context

Since 2002, European countries and social partners have been cooperating in the field of vocational education and training through the Copenhagen Process. The 2010 Bruges Communiqué set out a vision for modern and attractive vocational education and training (VET) with an action plan running until 2014. Following a review of the results, five key priorities to further improve VET systems have been set for the period until 2020:

1 Work-based learning

Promote work-based learning in all its forms, with special attention to apprenticeships, by involving social partners, companies and VET providers, as well as by stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship.

2 Quality assurance

Further develop quality assurance mechanisms in VET in line with the EQAVET recommendation and, as part of quality assurance systems, establish continuous information and feedback loops to initial VET and continuous VET systems based on learning outcomes.

3 Accessibility

Enhance access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible and permeable systems, notably by offering efficient, integrated guidance services and by introducing tools to validate non-formal and informal learning.

4 Key competences

Further strengthen key competences in VET curricula and provide more effective opportunities to acquire or develop those skills through initial VET and continuous VET.

5 VET teachers and trainers

Introduce systematic approaches and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors in both school and work-based settings.



Apprenticeships in recent EU policy initiatives

A New Skills Agenda for Europe (June 2016) includes for example the following activities:

- ✓ Improving Vocational Education and Training's (VET) image through quality, flexible provision that supports learners' progression and fosters links to employers,
- ✓ Involving business and partners in VET design/delivery while increasing the work-based dimension coupled with international experience,
- ✓ Encouraging higher level VET provision,
- ✓ Developing support services to promote knowledge sharing, networking and cooperation,
- ✓ Helping social partners take forward the results of joint projects on apprenticeships,
- ✓ Improving support for learner mobility for apprentices, especially for long mobility periods,
- ✓ More work-based learning, apprenticeships and business-education partnerships,
- ✓ Supporting opportunities for learners to undertake a work-based learning experience as part of their studies.



For more details, see: ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=15621&langId=en



The Youth Guarantee (YG) and Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) three years on: (October 2016) highlights achievements since 2013, for example:

- ✔ 14 million young people have entered YG schemes,
- ✔ 9 million young people have taken up a job or training offer,
- ✔ The YEI has provided direct support to over 1.4 million young people,
- ✔ Since January 2014, 4 % (390 000) of the offers taken up by young people were apprenticeship offers.

Under the Youth Guarantee, all Member States have committed to ensuring that, within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed, young people under 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education or an apprenticeship or traineeship. The Youth Guarantee has facilitated structural reforms across Member States, including significant reforms to apprenticeships and work-based learning. The Youth Employment Initiative provides financial support to the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.



For more details, see: europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3216_en.htm

Investing in Europe's Youth

(December 2016) confirmed new policy initiatives, including:

- ✔ A European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships,
- ✔ A long-term mobility activity, 'ErasmusPro', within Erasmus+.
- ✔ A demand driven apprenticeships support service for Member States,



For more details, see: europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4165_en.htm

European Alliance for Apprenticeships: its roots and successes

The European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAFA) was launched in 2013 to help tackle youth unemployment. It is based on a Joint Declaration by the European Commission, the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU and the European Social Partners and was supported by a Council Declaration by EU Member States in October 2013. Its members are committed to taking action to strengthen the quality, supply and image of apprenticeships.



Apprenticeships are a priority because the combination of learning in school and training on the job gives young people the skills mix employers need. In fact, 2 in 3 apprentices land a job directly after their apprenticeship. This is highly valuable, knowing that 40 % of employers say they cannot find people with the right skills. Through apprenticeships young people can get a foothold in the labour market and businesses can recruit people with the skills they need.

Growing interest

Interest in apprenticeships is growing and new members are joining the EAFA regularly. By March 2017, 35 EU, EFTA and candidate countries had joined. Meanwhile companies and stakeholders had made over 200 pledges.



State of play

Supply

Most vocational students in Europe are in school and lack access to training in real world settings. The EAfA has secured 500 000 training and first job opportunities for young people. Member States have included apprenticeships in their Youth Guarantee schemes, leading to 390 000 offers by 2016, and are improving support for apprenticeships. With EU funding, employers' organisations undertook a study on the cost-effectiveness of apprenticeships, which is central to improving supply.



Quality

When developing apprenticeships, quality is crucial. Almost 3 in 4 EAfA pledges focus on quality issues. The ET 2020 Working Group on VET has developed a report with 20 guiding principles for high-performance apprenticeships. Furthermore, the European trade unions developed a study on a "European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships", with the Commission's support. The Commission will propose a quality framework to Member States in 2017.

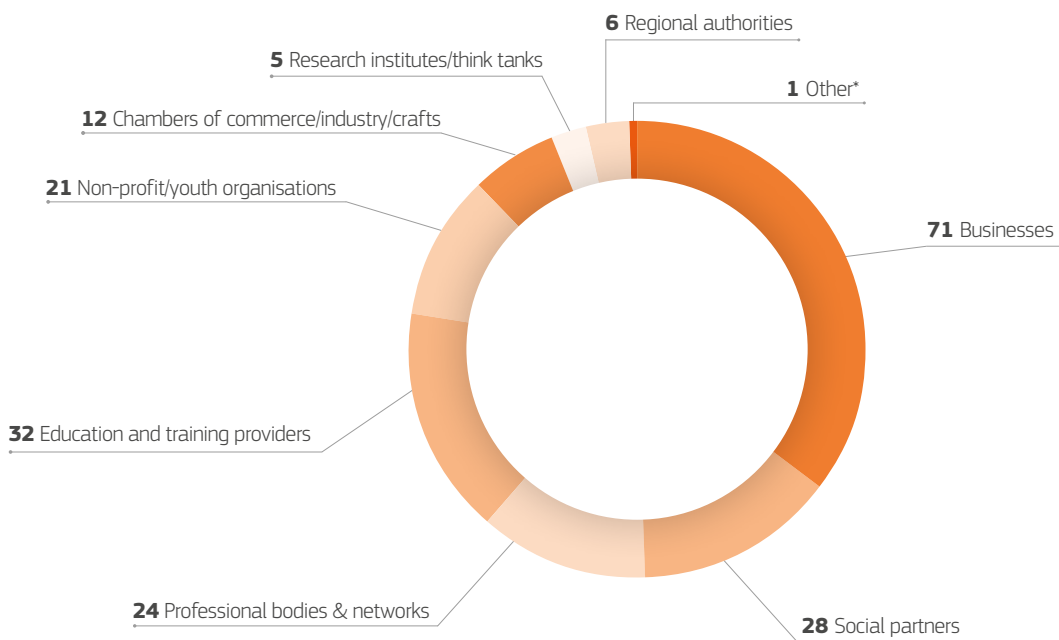
Image

Apprenticeships are too often seen as a second choice. To improve the image of vocational training, including apprenticeships, the Commission organised a European Vocational Skills Week and the first EAfA Awards in December 2016. The activities will be repeated in 2017. Similar events have been organised in Member States and a majority of EAfA pledges focus on image building.

Mobility

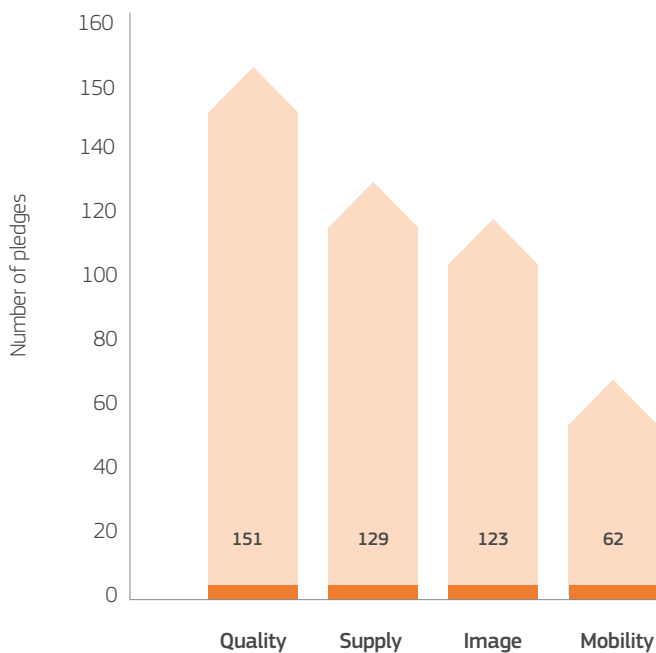
Some 50 EAfA pledges focus on cross-border mobility. While Erasmus+ finances apprentice mobility, stakeholders have called for stronger EU support for long duration mobility. The Commission has announced an 'Erasmus Pro' action on this. From 2018, apprenticeships with a work contract will also be included in EURES – the European job mobility portal.

Pledges by category of stakeholders



*Pledge by the Metropolitan City of Rome

Focus of pledges





EAFa – Evaluation results

A recent Commission study has evaluated the achievements of the EAFa during its first four years of activity, identified its successes and challenges and made recommendations for the future. The study was based mainly on a stakeholder survey and interviews, as well as an analysis of governments' commitments and other stakeholders' pledges. This section presents some key results. The full study is available on the EAFa web page.

How the stakeholders see the Alliance

Stakeholders appreciate the support with networking and information sharing and agree that the Alliance plays an important role in raising awareness on apprenticeships. Almost 40 % of respondents have cooperated with other pledging organisations. In addition, the EAFa is seen to mobilise stakeholders, provide expertise and to drive momentum for launching national initiatives.

Progress in implementing pledges

Pledge implementation has progressed well. At the time of the survey (summer 2016), over 40 % of respondents were half way through fulfilling their pledge. For example, of all the pledges focussing on apprenticeship supply, 26 % had already been fully implemented. 98 % of pledge holders reported having been actively working on at least one EAFa goal (71 % on image, 60 % on quality, 51 % on supply and 36 % on mobility of apprenticeships), and only 2 % had made no progress. 46 % of pledges addressed other apprenticeship-linked topics than the four main EAFa topics (supply, quality, image, mobility) (e.g. improving cooperation between the employers, training organisations and policy makers and providing careers advice).

Level of progress reported in the implementation of pledges:

	Just started	Half way through	Almost fully implemented	Fully implemented
We have contributed to the supply/ creation of apprenticeship places	11 %	41 %	22 %	26 %
We have worked to improve the quality of apprenticeships	16 %	44 %	31 %	9 %
We have worked to improve the image of apprenticeships	8 %	67 %	17 %	8 %
We have worked to promote the mobility of apprentices in Europe	20 %	50 %	15 %	15 %
We have worked on other topics or areas linked to apprenticeships	0 %	50 %	38 %	13 %

Supply of apprenticeship places

55 % of pledges focussing on the supply of new apprenticeship places reported increases in supply. However, stakeholders faced obstacles, such as the negative image of the sector, administrative difficulties and unfavourable economic trends. Even so, only one respondent reported fewer places than the previous year.

Improving the quality of apprenticeships

Stakeholders implement different types of activities to improve the quality of apprenticeships:

Promotion of apprenticeship schemes

70 %

Improving European cooperation on apprenticeships

64 %

Improving cooperation between teachers and in-company trainers

64 %

Responding to skills needs according to labour market requirements

61 %

Development of regulatory framework

42 %

Improving working conditions for apprentices

42 %

Updating existing and/or preparing new training programmes

42 %

Ensuring the quality of the qualifications gained through apprenticeships

39 %

Promoting employers' participation in funding apprenticeships

39 %

Ensuring conditions for equal participation

27 %

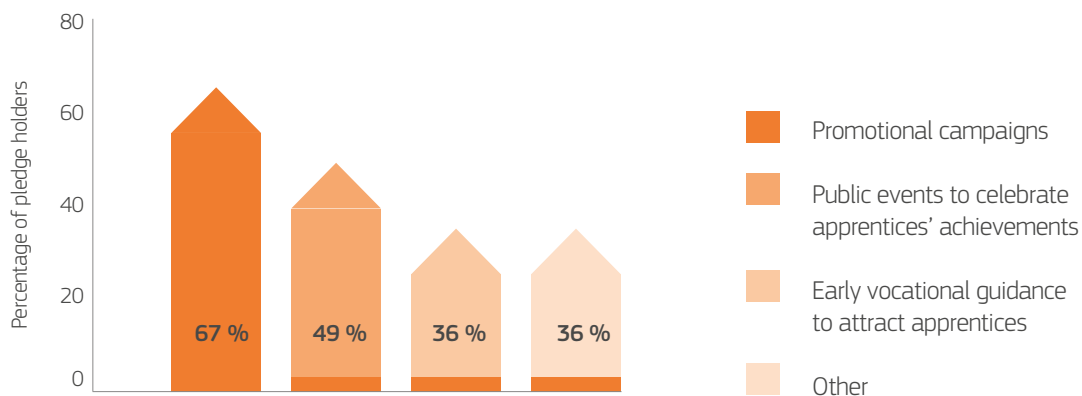
Inclusion of apprenticeships as one of the measures in Youth Guarantee schemes

9 %

Other

6 %

Types of activities implemented by stakeholders to improve the image of apprenticeships



Source: ICF: 2016 Survey of EAfA pledge holders

Results of efforts to improve the image included:

- increased awareness and knowledge about apprenticeships among students, families, teachers and companies,
- improved opinion of apprenticeships among students and families,
- increased appreciation of the benefits of employing apprentices among companies.

Promoting European mobility of apprentices

To promote the mobility of apprentices, pledge holders reported a variety of awareness raising work aimed at apprentices and companies (e.g. events, campaigns, newsletters and flyers). In general, stakeholders reported mobility to be an enriching experience for apprentices, trainers and tutors. However, the differences between national approaches to regulate apprenticeships were felt to hinder mobility and many called for EU guidelines or harmonisation initiatives to bring consistent quality. It was also noted that administrative burdens can dissuade training centres from participating in Erasmus+.

Implementing pledges: challenges and solutions

The main challenges and obstacles **reported by SMEs** while trying to fulfil pledges included:

- insufficient human resources and finance to hire apprentices,
- heavy administrative burden,
- changing legislative framework.

Other stakeholders reported further challenges including:

- negative image of apprenticeships with young people, their families and companies,
- out of date careers advice services,
- a lack of financial incentives,
- a lack of financial framework to support transnational mobility of low skilled people,
- language barriers to transnational mobility,
- difficulties in integrating migrant learners in apprenticeships,
- difficulties in getting the message across to political decision makers.

To overcome obstacles EAfA stakeholders suggested the following **solutions**:

- communicating results and success stories,
- communicating the benefits of taking on apprentices to SMEs and supporting SME involvement in apprenticeships,
- creating flexible curricula that are adaptable to market needs,
- greater involvement of social partners,
- improving continuing professional development and support for teachers, trainers and mentors.





Apprenticeships – A successful form of work-based learning

Work-based learning (WBL), a key aspect of VET, is directly linked to its goal of helping learners acquire the knowledge, skills and competences with direct relevance for the labour market. There are broadly three main forms of WBL:

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships formally combine substantial work-based learning in companies and other workplaces with learning based in education or training institutions, leading to nationally recognised qualifications. In most cases, these are characterised by a contractual relationship between the apprentice, the employer and/or the vocational education and training institution, with the apprentice being paid or compensated for her/his work.

The term apprenticeships is defined and understood differently in many countries and for research purposes. However, in a nutshell apprenticeships:

Are formal vocational education and training schemes

1

Combine company-based training with learning based in education or training institutions

2

Lead to a nationally recognised qualification

3

School-based VET with on-the-job training

This second form of WBL includes on-the-job training periods in companies. These periods vary in length and typically cover shorter internships, work placements or traineeships that are incorporated as a compulsory or optional element of VET programmes leading to formal qualifications.

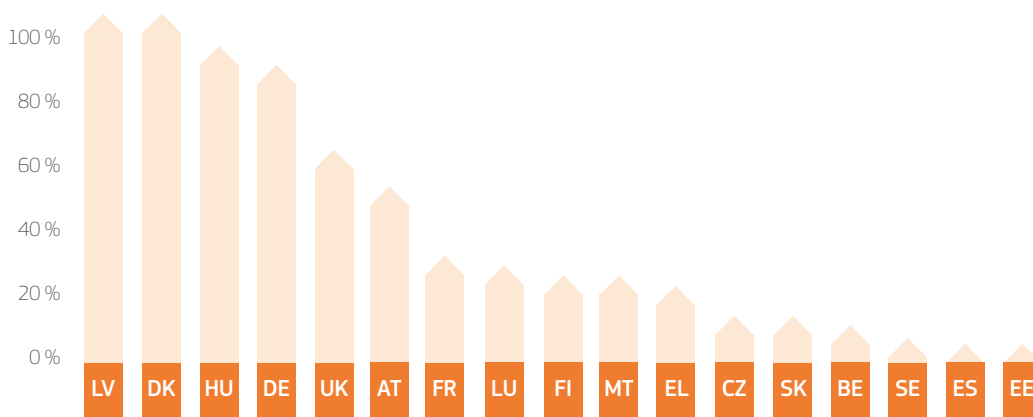
Work-based learning in school

WBL can also be integrated in a school-based programme through on-site labs, workshops, kitchens, restaurants, junior or practice firms, simulations or real business/industry project assignments. The aim is to create 'real life' work environments, establish contacts and/or cooperation with real companies or clients, and develop entrepreneurship competences.

Work-based learning across Member States

The combination of practical experience and theoretical learning is now well recognised as an effective approach to provide relevant skills, facilitate the application of theoretical knowledge and improve the transition of students into the labour market.

Based on available data, only a few countries in the EU provide such an opportunity to the majority of their VET students (Latvia, Denmark, Hungary, Germany and to a lesser extent the UK and Austria). No presence of combined work and school-based programmes was reported in Bulgaria, Ireland, Croatia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Portugal and Slovenia.



Source: Eurostat (UOE, 2014), online data code educ_uoe_enrs04. Combined school and work-based programmes are programmes in which less than 75% of the curriculum is presented in the school environment or through distance education. Definition differs in RO.



Comparing apprenticeships and traineeships

Apprenticeships are not to be confused with traineeships. Here is a comparison of the two different schemes.

	Apprenticeship	Traineeship
Scope	Full qualifying professional or vocational education and training profile	Complements an educational programme or individual CV
Goal	Professional profile/qualification	Documented practical experience
Educational level	Usually EQF levels 3-5	All EQF levels (pre-)vocational education, in higher education and after graduation
Content	Acquisition of the full set of knowledge, skills and competences of an occupation	Vocational, work or career orientation. Acquisition of some knowledge, skills and competences of an occupation/ profession
On-the-job learning	Equally important to coursework	Usually complementing coursework or optional extra
Length	Fixed, medium-long term Usually 1-4 years	Varying, short- to medium-term Usually less than one year
Employment status	Typically employee status	Student, trainee or volunteer
Compensation	Typically paid (amount negotiated or set by law) Apprenticeship allowance	Varying remuneration, often unpaid Unregulated financial compensation
Governance	Strongly regulated, often by both social partners and VET providers	Unregulated or partly regulated

Source: Building on overview in 'Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes In EU 27: Key Success Factors', European Commission (2013)

Who benefits from apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships benefit companies, learners and society as a whole. Good-quality schemes make young people more employable (60-70 % secure employment on completion). They help companies build productive workforces too and training firms normally recoup their investment by the end of or shortly after the training period. Good apprenticeships also boost employment, reducing the need for welfare and increasing social inclusion.

Companies	Learners	Society
Skills Mastering skills development	Skills Practical skills that employers look for	Skills Skills in line with labour market needs
Recruitment Targeted recruitment with lower costs	Work experience Valuable and practical experience to put on CV	Connecting education with work Worlds of education and work connect and align
Productivity Apprentices also work and produce	Quicker job Apprentices find jobs quicker than their peers	Youth employment Easier access to labour market for young people
Innovation Fresh perspectives from apprentices	Better paid Apprentices are better paid in their first job	Social inclusion Participation in education, working life and society
Reputation Enhanced standing and recognition	Longer contract Apprentices stay longer in their first job	

“ Apprenticeships yield benefits to employers through the productive work carried out by apprentices while on the programme, as well as through long-term recruitment benefits realised by employers after the end of the apprenticeship period. ”

High-performance apprenticeships & work-based learning

From 2014 to 2015, the Education and Training 2020 Working Group on Vocational Education and Training developed a set of '20 guiding principles for high-performance apprenticeships & work-based learning'. The working group was composed of experts from national administrations, social partners, VET providers and EU institutions.

Policy challenge 1

National governance and social partners' involvement

- Establish a clear and consistent legal framework
- Ensure a structured, continuous dialogue between partners
- Strengthen the role of social partners
- Ensure systematic cooperation between VET providers and companies
- Share costs and benefits (companies, VET providers, learners)

Policy challenge 2

Support for companies, in particular SMEs

- Support SMEs to make apprenticeships more attractive
- Balance the need for job specific skills vs. general skills
- Focus on companies without apprenticeship experience
- Support apprenticeships for disadvantaged learners
- Support for qualified trainers and tutors

Policy challenge 3

Attractiveness and improved career guidance

- Promote permeability between VET and other pathways
- Promote excellence to improve the image of VET
- Ensure good quality and unbiased career guidance
- Raise the quality of VET teachers
- Raise awareness to promote the attractiveness of VET

Policy challenge 4

Quality assurance in work-based learning

- Provide a clear framework for quality assurance with systematic feedback
- Ensure VET programmes are responsive to changing skills needs
- Foster mutual trust and respect through regular cooperation
- Ensure fair, valid and authentic assessment of learning outcomes
- Continue development of in-company trainers and improve their working conditions

Looking ahead

The European Commission has an ambitious programme to support the European apprenticeship community. By establishing an Apprenticeship Support Service in 2017, we will promote knowledge sharing and networking and establish 'benchlearning', inspired by the European Network of Public Employment Services. Furthermore a proposal for a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships will build on work by European social partners and the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT). The Commission is also launching Erasmus Pro to support long-duration apprenticeship mobility. Additional plans include a European Network of Apprentices, in cooperation with the European Youth Forum and Obsessu.

1

Support services

Knowledge hub

Bring together toolkits, guidelines, studies, best practices, etc. that can serve for knowledge sharing at the European level

Networking hub

Facilitate networking and develop communities of practice between stakeholders with similar interests, challenges and actions

Benchlearning

Demand driven support for structural reforms through expert advice and in-depth mutual learning

2

Quality

European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships

Propose a quality framework for apprenticeships

Follow-up of EU social partners' joint statement

Follow-up of ACVT opinion

3

Mobility

Apprenticeship mobility

2nd Call on pilot projects for long-term mobility
ErasmusPro on long-term mobility
Transparency of offers through EURES & Drop'pin

4

Address new challenges

Integration of migrants into VET
Digitalisation
Innovation
Entrepreneurship
Higher VET

5

Develop European qualifications

Erasmus+ call: joint qualifications in higher VET
Link to sector skills alliances, blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills and existing cross-border projects

6

Improve and review access to funding

VET-business partnerships
New Erasmus+ projects for regional approaches
New call on joint qualifications
Information on access to funding

7

Build attractiveness and mobilise pledges

European Vocational Skills Weeks
Build geographical spread, sectoral and regional outreach
Encourage concrete targets
Maltese Presidency event, 4 years of the EAFA, 30-31 May 2017

8

Improve data on work-based learning

Evidence-based approach
Collect evidence with Eurostat, OECD, JRC
Explore possibility of WBL benchmark

9

Engage with apprentices

Build EU-wide network for apprentices
Cooperation with Youth Forum & Obessu

10

Improve international cooperation

Strengthen UNESCO-led Inter-Agency Group
Continue cooperation with ILO, OECD, GAN
WorldSkills Abu Dhabi Conference, 16-17 October 2017



For more details, see:
ec.europa.eu/apprenticeships-alliance





Improving apprenticeship teaching in Malta

Malta's youth unemployment rate has always been relatively low, but the country has experienced problems in supplying workers with the right skills for its labour market. Skills shortages and skills mismatches occur due to ageing populations and strong economic growth, driven by tourism and trade, and the emergence of highly-skilled sectors such as i-gaming, financial and legal services and aircraft maintenance.

To address these issues, Malta's main national VET provider, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), handed in a national commitment under the EAfA in 2013 to improve the quality, supply and image of apprenticeships and encourage collaboration between national educational and economic stakeholders. In parallel, the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) made an EAfA pledge to prepare VET teachers and trainers for their role in apprenticeships. This entailed improving the quality of teaching and learning, strengthening the legal status of apprentices and ensuring a safe training environment.

Both the pledge and commitment were connected to a policy review of the apprenticeship system, initiated by the Maltese Ministry of Education and Employment, and led by Cedefop and a national steering group. This resulted in comprehensive changes to policies and programmes. Apprenticeships are now offered in up to 50 qualifications at MCAST and the number of apprenticeship places in companies has doubled each year since the review.

The role of teachers and trainers has been clarified and strengthened and new legal regulations regarding implementation and governance are being established, including an education act to integrate apprenticeships into the qualification system and regulate the share of WBL in apprenticeship qualifications. Another regulation will clarify contractual aspects and ensure that apprentices benefit from equal social security and work safety rights as other employees. Although it is still too early to assess the impact of the reform on the skills supply in Malta, there has already been a positive effect on youth unemployment: as of September 2016, the youth unemployment rate in Malta was the lowest in Europe.

For more details, see:



Apprenticeship review (Malta):

cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4139



Apprenticeships at MCAST: mcast.edu.mt



Getting small businesses on board

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including micro-enterprises, provide around two-thirds of private sector employment in Europe. Yet they sometimes struggle to provide apprenticeship placements. Reasons for this include a lack of training infrastructure and personnel to supervise apprentices, as well as insufficient expertise to manage complex rules and administrative requirements.

In times of uncertainty, companies are naturally less willing to take on apprentices, particularly if they have not trained apprentices before. Employers may worry about the potential costs of offering training placements. Such placements could involve substantial investment, which may never be recouped if an apprentice leaves.

Support measures for SMEs

The success of policy initiatives for apprenticeships and youth employability also depends largely on more SMEs being involved in providing placements. Moreover, if companies are to offer good-quality apprenticeships, they must make appropriate investments. To meet these challenges, governments are focusing on targeted support and enabling measures that boost SME provision of apprenticeships.

A number of good practices and support measures for companies and particular SMEs, both financial and non-financial, are identified in the 20 guiding principles for high-performance apprenticeships and work-based learning (see guidance of ET 2020 VET working group in 2015). Besides the company and SME dimension, the guidance identifies the main challenges for providers, which will be to improve governance, quality assurance, career guidance and the image of apprenticeships while engaging social partners and enhancing the image of apprenticeships.

“ Crafts and SMEs are not only the backbone of the economy in Europe, they are also the main providers of apprenticeship placements. In order to remain attractive for SMEs in all Member States, apprenticeship schemes should become more cost-effective and benefit from good governance involving SME representatives. ”

Liliane Volozinskis, Director Social Affairs and Training Policy

EU funded projects on engaging SMEs in apprenticeships

Since 2015, a specific Erasmus+ call under key action 3 – national support to policy reform – has been financing 16 projects on the engagement of SMEs in apprenticeships. The focus lies in particular on SMEs with no previous experience of apprenticeships. In total, the projects are worth € 8.8 million. Implementation of the projects started in 2016 and they will run for two years.

There are two types of partnerships under this call:

- Building up intermediary bodies, such as chambers of commerce and professional organisations, to develop SME support structures and establishing partnerships with bigger companies to assist SMEs in increasing the supply of apprenticeships.
- Targeted cooperation between the umbrella organisation of existing European networks and organisations and their national members or affiliates for developing and setting up support for SMEs.



For more details, see the thematic compendium on the SME projects:
ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=17203&langId=en

Improving the image of apprenticeships

In the context of Construction 2020, the European Commission launched a communication campaign targeted at the construction sector to attract young talent and improve the sector's image. It also aims to encourage the construction industry to offer more and better apprenticeships and many pledges on apprenticeships have been submitted in this field, in particular from construction SMEs.



For more details, see: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/construction/apprenticeships_en



WorldSkills
International

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Global
Apprenticeship
Network (GAN)

Riga objectives
20 guiding principles
ET 2020 Working Group
on teachers and
trainers

Opinion of the
Advisory Committee
on Vocational Training

National
commitments
under EAfA

UNESCO led
Inter-Agency
group on
Technical VET

Youth Guarantee
including
Apprenticeships

EAfA pledges from
companies, chambers,
social partners, VET
providers, NGOs, think
tanks

EU funds and
instruments ESF,
EASI, EIB, Erasmus+,
incl. ErasmusPro,
EURES

DG GROW
Apprenticeships
for the construction
industry of
tomorrow

International Labour
Organization (ILO)



Global Level



European Level



National, Regional
and Local Levels

A statement by EUROCHAMBRES



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The merits of apprenticeship schemes are clear, but it often remains challenging for smaller businesses (SMEs) to capitalise. Nonetheless, given SMEs make up most of the private sector and create the most jobs, it is important to address the challenge.

That is the premise that underpins involvement by chambers of commerce and industry in the provision of work-based learning in European countries. It is also the basis for EUROCHAMBRES' contribution to the EAfA.

During the first three years of the Alliance, EUROCHAMBRES and its members organised conferences, workshops, training sessions and chamber-to-chamber learning activities in various parts of the EU to identify and share best practices. These crystallised into an Erasmus+ project, launched in early 2017. The project, 'Apprenticeship Coaches for SMEs (AC4SME)', is coordinated by EUROCHAMBRES and implemented by chambers in 12 countries.

AC4SME builds on the expertise of chambers in Austria and Germany, which play a central role in facilitating SME involvement in the dual system of class-based and company-based vocational training. This approach cannot simply be copy/pasted, but provides a benchmark for assessing how to ensure more effective and SME-friendly apprenticeship schemes in other countries. Built around practical workshops and the development and implementation of country-specific tools, AC4SME helps increase the number of SMEs offering apprenticeships and stimulates policy and support measures to boost long-term SME involvement.

This evolution from discussion, awareness raising and training to hands-on delivery is consistent with EUROCHAMBRES' EAfA pledge and reflects the direct link between chambers and SMEs. It is time to move on from discussing the merits of apprenticeships to making them a reality for more of the EU's 20 million SMEs.

EUROCHAMBRES is the association of European Chambers of Commerce & Industry, representing 1 700 regional and local chambers and 20 million businesses in 43 countries. The 2014 publication 'Great Apprenticeships in Small Businesses' provides examples of how chambers help SMEs take on apprentices.



For more details, see: eurochambres.eu/custom/Great_apprenticeships_in_small_businesses_Final_brochure-2014-00340-01.pdf

Norway's public sector takes action on apprenticeships

The public sector can play a key role in increasing the supply of apprenticeships. Norway's new strategy focuses on:

- recruiting apprentices to the public sector, and
- using purchasing power to influence suppliers to employ apprentices.

In 2016, the government asked all bodies under its authority to recruit at least one apprentice. At that time, 14 ministries already had their own apprentices. From 2017, new rules on public procurement require that, for contracts worth a minimum of NOK 1.5 million, the government must buy goods and services from companies that are an approved apprenticeship provider. These regulations mainly apply to the building, construction and ICT sectors. Companies from the European Economic Area are treated equally.

According to a 2017 report by the OECD on the Costs and Benefits of Apprenticeships, studies show that linking apprenticeship requirements to public procurement can increase the provision of apprenticeships without negatively impacting the quality of training.

According to the European Expert Network on Economics of Education (EENEE Policy Brief 1/2015), preferential treatment in the awarding of public contracts to firms that provide training can be found in countries like Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.



Support by Cedefop

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) is the EU's agency in charge of supporting the development of European vocational education and training (VET) policies. It also contributes to their implementation.

Cedefop supports Member States, social partners and other stakeholders to develop work-based learning, particularly apprenticeships. This support is mainly channelled as follows:

- Supporting interested Member States to set up or reform their apprenticeships through in depth reviews i.e. Thematic Country Reviews (TCRs) and Flash Thematic Country Reviews (fTCRs) on Apprenticeships. During 2014-15 TCRs were undertaken in Lithuania and Malta. In 2017, TCRs will be completed in Greece, Italy and Slovenia. As of 2017 the reviews will be carried out in Croatia and Cyprus. The fTCRs will be piloted in Belgium and Sweden in 2017.
- Monitoring and analysing developments in work-based learning, including Member States' apprenticeship reforms, particularly for Bruges Communiqué deliverables and in relation to the commitments Member States have made under the Alliance.
- Providing strategic and expert input to the ET 2020 working group on VET (focus on teachers and trainers in work-based learning, and particularly in apprenticeships) working closely with DG Employment.
- Cooperating with the Commission and other international organisations, including participation in the inter-agency working group on work-based learning, to agree terminology and share approaches to analyse and evaluate the design and implementation of work-based learning and apprenticeship policies.
- Organising the EU's first apprenticeships policy learning forum in 2017. The forum is a platform for stakeholders from countries directly involved in the TCRs and fTCRs (review beneficiaries) to share their experiences and findings with other Member States.
- Carrying out an overview of apprenticeships across Europe, in order to map system level apprenticeship schemes in EU Member States, Iceland and Norway and carrying out a comparative analysis of schemes (results to be published in 2018).
- Carrying out research on apprenticeships for adults in 2017-2018. This will focus on apprenticeships as an effective way of re-training and up-skilling adults to re-enter the labour market or boost their careers.



For more details, see: cedefop.europa.eu

Support by the European Training Foundation (ETF)

The ETF helps partner countries harness human capital by reforming education, training and labour market systems. It also supports EU institutions to design, monitor and evaluate EU human capital assistance. The 29 ETF partner countries span the Western Balkans and Turkey, the EU Neighbourhood region and Central Asia.

VET and work-based learning in ETF partner countries

Many countries face similar challenges in transforming vocational education and training. Improving cooperation between vocational education and training and business is especially important and many countries have taken measures to align learning to workplace needs. Four candidate countries (Albania, Montenegro, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey) recently joined the EAfA, and Serbia intends to join in 2017.


What is the ETF doing in partner countries?

In candidate countries the ETF provides:

- ways to turn commitments into action, for example by securing pledges from businesses and learning from EAfA good practices and examples,
- knowledge sharing seminars with EAfA stakeholders,
- support in implementing Riga commitments on work-based learning (for example ETF runs assessments to determine effective policies and offers capacity building support),
- monitoring and analysis of progress in implementing Riga commitments (2015-2020).

In the Eastern Partnership region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) and Kazakhstan, the ETF provides support to analyse and shape national work-based learning policies. It also organises seminars, peer learning activities, capacity building and a thematic platform.

In the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region the ETF provides policy reviews on work-based learning in close cooperation with UNESCO. The ETF currently works with Maghreb countries.

 For more details, see: etf.europa.eu

A snapshot of an EAfA seminar

Kayseri, Turkey, September 2016

Candidate country representatives reflected on national apprenticeship challenges. In response, EAfA members and speakers from EU Member States suggested relevant good practice as possible solutions. Participants then developed national action plans based on lessons learned. The seminar included site visits to textile and furniture manufacturers, a VET High School and the Erciyes Teknopark Regional Innovation Centre.

The role of youth organisations

European Youth Forum

The European Youth Forum is the platform representing youth organisations in Europe. It strives to empower young people to actively participate in society and to improve their own lives by representing and advocating for their rights. In the current uncertain political and social context, young people can be powerful catalysts for positive change and can contribute to innovative solutions to Europe's problems.

OBESSU

OBESSU (the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions) is the cooperation platform for national school student unions active in general secondary and secondary vocational education in Europe. OBESSU represents school students as stakeholders in their educational systems, and in issues concerning their lives. It empowers students to contribute to the development of democratic educational systems that promote active citizenship. Through OBESSU, students also cooperate to develop school student representative structures. These efforts include attention to apprentices and the educational dimension of their experience.

European Network of Apprentices

The European Youth Forum and OBESSU are working to ensure the rights of young people in education and the workplace. They have jointly launched a network for apprentices at European level with the support of the European Commission to make sure that the voices of young apprentices are heard in discussions on VET and apprenticeships in Europe. This network promotes quality apprenticeships that put the learner at the centre and respect the rights of young people as students and as workers. Involving young people in decisions that affect them is crucial – the European Network of Apprentices works to ensure that apprentices are represented in the set-up, design and implementation of apprenticeship programmes.

A statement by European social partners

Given the central role social partners play in apprenticeship systems, our organisations and national members are committed to steering European and national initiatives towards developing and strengthening apprenticeships across Europe.

We value quality apprenticeships that enhance employment prospects, support personal development and lead to qualifications, while delivering the skills needed in the labour market. We should learn from the experience of countries with effective apprenticeship systems, which shows:

- apprenticeship systems need to be governed with involvement by social partners and stakeholders in a way that focuses on learning outcomes and employability,
- apprentices should be paid or compensated in line with national or sectoral minimum requirements or collective agreements,
- it is necessary to ensure commitment by apprentices, matched by clear benefits including qualifications and job opportunities.

Our activities have identified a number of policy challenges to be addressed, including:

- making apprenticeships more attractive to young people,
- ensuring employers' investments in schemes are encouraged and rewarded,
- promoting pathways between initial and higher vocational education and training opportunities,
- ensuring support at local, regional and national level for SMEs as Europe's main providers of apprenticeships.

The work done by European social partners during 2014-2016 was the basis for a common opinion on apprenticeships, shared by Member States and social partners in the context of the Commission's advisory committee on vocational training. We count on the Commission to build on this and bring forward a proposal for a European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships that matches our work and recommendations.

In partnership with all stakeholders, it is time to redouble efforts to establish and improve apprenticeships. As part of the next phase of the EAfA, we must better communicate the value of apprenticeships to society. The first Vocational Skills Week in 2016 was a positive step in this direction. We now need the Commission to resource a communication campaign to enhance the image of apprenticeships among businesses and individuals across Europe.

Our organisations will continue to contribute to discussions and we call on the Commission to take these points on board.



Luca Visentini
General Secretary
ETUC



Markus J. Beyrer
Director General
BusinessEurope



Valeria Ronzitti
General Secretary
CEEP



Véronique Willems
Secretary General
UEAPME

Social partners' activities

Over the past two years, the European social partners (ETUC, BusinessEurope, CEEP, UEAPME) have undertaken projects on the cost-effectiveness of apprenticeship schemes (employers) and a European quality framework for apprenticeships (trade unions). These projects drew on national social partners' knowledge and expertise and resulted in two comprehensive reports, which contributed to the policy debate. At the conclusion of these projects we presented a shared vision for apprenticeships and launched a discussion on future policy priorities with the Member States, in the framework of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT). This debate led to the adoption of a tripartite ACVT opinion of employer, trade union and Member State representatives on 'A shared vision for quality and effective apprenticeships and work-based learning'.

Engagement of European education and training providers

Groups of European VET provider associations (representing initial, continuing, and higher level VET) have gathered every year since 2010 for informal meetings with the Commission. In 2015 an expert group 'Platform for European Associations of VET providers' was created and now includes six European associations, including four VET bodies and two higher education bodies:

VET bodies

- European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (EFVET)
- EU Providers of Vocational Education and Training (EUproVET)
- European Associations of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB)
- European Vocational Training Association (EVTA) (as four VET centred organisations)

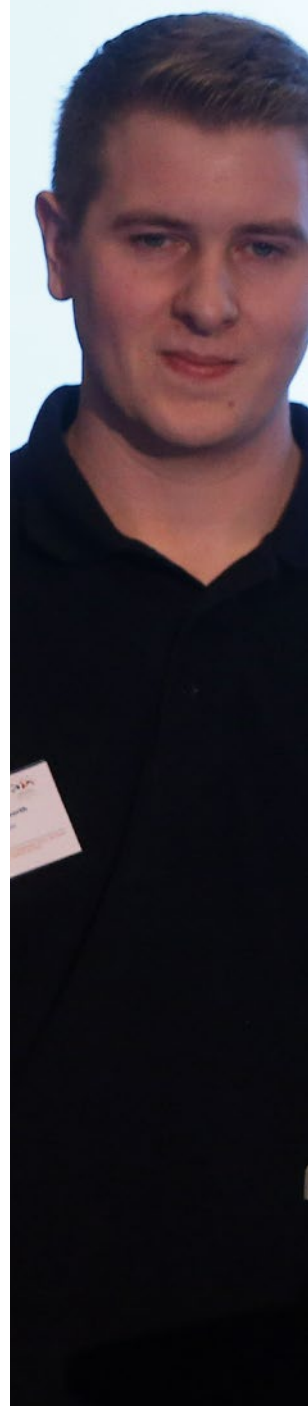
Higher education bodies

- European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)
- European University Continuing Education Network (EUCEN)

In 2013, the four VET bodies pledged to help increase apprenticeship take-up – both across Europe and through their national membership organisations. Members contribute to the EAFA independently and in partnership. The partners commit to ensuring stronger and better coordination between learning and business organisations.

EURASHE and EUCEN have also pledged to help to boost quality and increase the number of higher level apprenticeships.

Since 2014, all six bodies have set up the **VET4EU2** network. The organisations are working together and independently to improve quality in VET and improve the image of VET. Improving progression between VET and higher education is also a priority.





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Thomas Lees and Marcus Hawksworth, two Siemens apprentices, handing over their version of the Atomium, an iconic monument in Brussels, to Commissioner Marianne Thyssen during the closing ceremony of the first European Vocational Skills Week (December 2016).

The Atomium was a collaborative project produced by 30 apprentices in nine different vocational training centres across Europe.

Business initiatives

A business-driven movement to promote youth employability

The Alliance for YOUth is a business-driven initiative to promote youth employability in Europe. Started in 2014 by Nestlé, it has pledged a number of joint and individual initiatives to give young people meaningful work experience through apprenticeships, including Vocational Education & Training (VET), or internships. The Alliance for YOUth now unites 200+ large and small companies across Europe.

In two years, participating companies have provided apprenticeships, VET, internships and jobs for more than 115 000 young Europeans. The project has also pioneered new apprenticeship and VET schemes in countries such as Malta, Bulgaria, Spain, Portugal, Slovakia, Italy and Poland where such a tradition did not exist or had disappeared.

At the end of 2016, member companies renewed their pledge to the EAFA. By 2020, the Alliance for YOUth will deliver 230 000 new apprenticeships, internships and job opportunities for young Europeans.

Participating companies will also further develop apprenticeship and VET schemes across Europe, in close collaboration with schools, universities and governments.

The Alliance for YOUth's success in Europe has inspired Nestlé to roll out this programme worldwide. Like-minded businesses will be welcome to join.



The European Pact for Youth

The two-year, business-led European Pact for Youth was launched in November 2015, and exists to promote quality entry into employment for young people through apprenticeships, traineeships and entry-level jobs. It is chaired by Etienne Davignon, President of CSR Europe (leaders of the Pact) and Commissioner Marianne Thyssen. The Pact is steered by a Leaders group and backed by a group of Sherpas. The Pact has set itself ambitious targets of 100 000 apprenticeships, traineeships and entry-level jobs, as well as 10 000 education-business partnerships. By the end of 2016, the Pact had already resulted in 91 000 training opportunities and jobs and 15 000 partnerships. The Pact will conclude with an enterprise-education Summit in Brussels on 23 November 2017, as part of the Second European Vocational Skills Week.



BMW: Better job prospects for Spanish students participating in apprenticeship schemes in Germany

As an international company, BMW has branches, suppliers and customers around the world. Dealing with different markets requires an understanding of different cultures, languages, tastes and preferences. Driven by the need for a more international workforce and a willingness to help address youth unemployment, BMW Germany launched a learner mobility project in 2014 in collaboration with the Universidad de Alcalá, Spain.

The response to the project was overwhelming, as around 7 000 applications were received and 32 Spanish graduate students were selected to undertake a one-year traineeship with BMW in Germany as part of an online master's programme of the University of Alcalá.

The students completed a week-long induction at BMW's premises in Madrid before moving to Germany for a one-year traineeship. Following a skills assessment during the induction some students were placed on supervised internships at the BMW plant in Munich, while others were integrated into apprenticeship programmes in Leipzig. When the students returned to Spain, the work-based learning experience in Germany was recognised as part of their study programme (30 ECTS credits).

After the project, 26 of the 32 participants were hired by BMW to work at plants in Germany or Spain. The experience also facilitated a positive cultural exchange, not only for the apprentices but also for existing BMW employees.

BMW decided to replicate the project in 2015 with a German university. In parallel, the company joined the EAfA and pledged to share its experiences to encourage other international companies to undertake similar learner mobility projects.



For more details, see: Apprenticeships at BMW; Keen on learning?
(*Te gusta aprender?*).

www.bmw.es/home/topics/mundo-bmw/te-gusta-aprender.html





National alliances for apprenticeships

Many different stakeholders contribute to developing and implementing quality apprenticeship systems. In several countries, key stakeholders have joined forces for a coordinated approach that will lead to better results with increased impact:



Germany: an alliance to strengthen in-company training

In Germany, ministries, social partners, chambers and public employment services have formed the Alliance for Initial and Further Training 2015 – 2018, which aims at improving and strengthening the dual system. So far the Alliance has managed to substantially increase the offer of in-company training places at the Federal Employment Agency. A new assisted training instrument has been created to support disadvantaged young people to successfully complete company-based vocational training. In addition, special support is being provided to young refugees.



Spain: a national network committed to increasing employment

In Spain the Fundación Bertelsmann is coordinating cooperation under the 'Alianza para la FP Dual (the Spanish Alliance for Dual Training), a national network of more than 450 companies, education centres and institutions with the objective of implementing a high quality dual VET system in Spain. The basis for the cooperation is a joint commitment of the Fundación Bertelsmann, Fundación Princesa de Girona, the Spanish business association (CEOE), and the Spanish Chamber of Commerce (Cámara de Comercio de España) to decrease unemployment through an educational system that will allow young professionals easier access to employment.

- One of the main challenges for Alianza is to change the mentality of companies, in particular SMEs, towards apprenticeships, and to make them see the advantages of this kind of training. This is why the alliance partners are creating cooperation structures between SMEs and large companies that already participate in apprenticeships.
- Every year, Alianza organises a forum for professionals interested in dual VET. Alianza has also been able to set up a network of in-company trainers focusing on dual VET, and has recently published a guidebook for trainers. Furthermore, Alianza participates in education fairs to convey the benefits of dual VET to young people.



Norway: a better deal for VET students

In 2016, the Norwegian government and social partners signed a social contract on apprenticeships to ensure all qualified VET students seeking an apprenticeship can find one. In 2015, around 9 000 qualified students could not find an apprenticeship.

The Baltic Alliance for Apprenticeships

In the context of the two-year celebration of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships in Riga in 2015, the three Baltic States Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia signed a Declaration of Intent on the Baltic Alliance for Apprenticeships and work-based learning (BAfA). The declaration of intent was based on existing cooperation (initiated through an Erasmus+ project supporting national authorities in developing work-based learning and apprenticeships in the Baltic States). The project enhanced cooperation between Baltic States on reforming VET and focused on work-based learning.

Two years on, the cooperation has produced visible results. Many VET institutions and employers have started to offer work-based learning. Some of them are also joining the EAfA.

The Baltic partners have also agreed further steps within the framework of BAfA: more emphasis will be put on cooperation involving the VET institutions' associations and business sector associations. A commitment has been expressed to start working towards joint programmes and qualifications and promoting the region as the best place to study and work.

Basque Country: apprenticeships and internationalisation

The Basque Government is strengthening the apprenticeship system in order to accelerate the VET students' skills development, connected to strategic professional sectors in the region. During 2015/16 475 Basque companies participated in dual VET programmes. 739 companies are taking part in 2016/17.

By 2020, the Basque Government aims for 50 % of VET students to be in a dual VET programme and for over 5 000 companies to be in the apprenticeship system.

The Basque Government continues supporting cooperation between VET centres and companies, especially SMEs, to develop applied innovation projects that improve products and services. Currently VET centres in the Basque Country are working with 256 companies on applied innovation projects with a goal to increase this to 1 500 by 2020.

Active entrepreneurship is also a priority. During the last decade, VET students launched more than 600 start-ups (84 of which were established during 2015/16). Approximately 360 further such start-ups are foreseen by 2020. The aim is to promote companies with growth potential, especially in the industrial and technology sectors.

EARLALL: Promoting apprenticeships in the regions

The European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (Earlall) is an international non-profit association established in 2001 at the initiative of the Tuscany region and based in Brussels. The association is managed by its members and a board of directors, the president of which is the Basque country. In 2016, Earlall members and observers included 42 regional and local authorities and associations involved in education and lifelong learning, representing over 61 million people across Europe.

Earlall joined the EAfA through a pledge in 2015, aiming to utilise its large network to promote apprenticeships across the EU and stimulate apprenticeship mobility. The pledge focuses on increasing the number of high-quality apprenticeships (supply) and the degree to which these are cross-border apprenticeships (mobility). Earlall has encouraged its members to make pledges, participated in calls for proposals under Erasmus+ and actively participated in all EAfA activities.

As Earlall's members are regional and local educational authorities, it is active at national level. Therefore it is able to influence national priorities in the field of apprenticeships and encourage authorities to adopt the priorities outlined by the EAfA. The association is also active at policy level through its presence in Brussels and its interaction with the European institutions, helping the EAfA pledge to benefit from a trickle-down-effect. This has already been demonstrated by two new pledges, as the Catalan Chamber of Commerce and an Asturian VET school chose to become EAfA members after information was passed on to local bodies by the Catalan and Asturian governments (both members of Earlall).

The EAfA has also had a positive influence on the organisation itself. It has been beneficial to Earlall and its members to have a platform to engage other associations, enterprises and social partners, as this has enabled exchanges of ideas, approaches and best practices. This has occurred primarily through stakeholder meetings but also thanks to the establishment of independent relationships.



For more details, see: earlall.eu



Boosting mobility

Mobility of apprentices has emerged as an important topic, joining the EAFa's three original objectives to improve supply, quality and image. In particular, the issue of long-duration mobility has been receiving increasing attention.

Every year, around 120 000 VET learners benefit from Erasmus+ funding to train abroad. However, we remain a long way from the EU objective that, by 2020, at least 6 % of VET learners in upper secondary education should undertake mobility, and long-duration mobility is particularly challenging.

Long-duration mobility

The average duration of VET mobility has shortened in recent years. In the previous Leonardo da Vinci programme (2007-2013), half of all VET placements lasted more than 2 months and 7 % more than 6 months. Since Erasmus+ was launched in 2014, less than 1 % lasted longer than 6 months.

Recent reports by the European Parliament and Notre Europe-Jacques Delors Institute have therefore called to strengthen long duration mobility. This ambition has also received the support of the business-led 'European Pact for Youth'.

Erasmus Pro

Responding to these calls for action, the Commission is developing a proposal for an Erasmus Pro action under Erasmus+. It will focus on long-duration mobility of apprentices and aim to finance 50 000 opportunities by 2020, in addition to the initial Erasmus+ target of 650 000 periods of mobility for VET learners between 2014 and 2020.

Erasmus+

Duration of VET learner mobility
2014-2016:

Less than 1 month	72 %
1-3 months	21 %
3-6 months	6 %
More than 6 months	1 %

Pilot projects

The EU has launched two calls for proposals for pilot projects on long-duration mobility of apprentices.

The aim is to test the viability of setting up a 'European framework for (long-duration) mobility of apprentices', helping to enhance the skills and employability of young apprentices while strengthening their sense of European citizenship.

Overview of funding opportunities

In addition to support for apprenticeship schemes from Member States' national budgets, the EU offers significant funding through several major funds, institutes or schemes.

Erasmus+ provides funding for learning experiences abroad for VET learners, including apprentices, and for teachers and trainers. It also funds strategic partnerships involving education and training providers, social partners and companies, plus policy reform initiatives to strengthen apprenticeship schemes.

Upcoming call: Joint VET qualifications (including higher VET qualifications). A new call for proposals will be launched in autumn 2017.



ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus

The European Social Fund can be used to support apprenticeship reform at national level and initiatives to boost apprenticeship supply and quality.

Additionally, funding under the Youth Employment Initiative is used to support apprenticeships as direct support targeting young people not in employment, education or training. This funding stream supports regions experiencing youth (ages 15-24) unemployment rates of over 25 % in the period 2014-2020.



ec.europa.eu/esf

Moreover, under the EURES axis of the EU programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), there is funding available for the development of targeted mobility schemes such as 'Your first EURES Job'.



ec.europa.eu/social/yourfirsteuresjob

The European Investment Bank can provide support in the form of loans to the private and public sectors under the programme 'Skills and Jobs - Investing for Youth'.



www.eib.org

Erasmus+ projects

Apprenticeships and work-based learning

Erasmus+ helps improve apprenticeships systems as part of key action 3 (support for policy reform) by:

Supporting national authorities for apprenticeships (Call EACEA 13/2014)

9 projects have been completed in 2017

Total budget awarded: € 2.3 million

Supporting SMEs to engage in apprenticeships (Call EACEA 41/2015)

16 projects are being funded and started at the end of 2016 (two-year duration)

Total budget awarded: € 8.8 million

Fostering VET-business partnerships on work-based learning and apprenticeships (Call EACEA 40/2016)

The projects will be selected by early summer 2017 and should start in the autumn (two-year duration)

The programme also helps fund the international mobility of apprentices under key action 1 (mobility projects) and promotes partnerships between the VET sector, apprenticeships providers and other stakeholders under key action 2 (cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices). An example of a key action 2 project is presented overleaf.

Apprentice recruitment guidance for Europe's SMEs

K.O.S is a German consultancy that assists businesses, organisations and public institutions in the fields of initial professional and vocational education and training. They formed an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership involving four research, education and training organisations from Germany, Poland, Austria and Greece. The partners developed strategies and good practice examples to SMEs to recruit young apprentices. A handbook, good practice guide and manual for SMEs are freely available to download in English, German, Greek and Polish.

For more details, see:



Erasmus+ project results database:

ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects



Reference tools

Apprenticeship toolbox

Austria, Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland have worked together to develop a digital apprenticeship toolbox. The five countries are well known for their quality apprenticeship systems. However, even though they all have so-called dual systems, each country has its own model with specific features. They therefore joined forces to develop a resource base for policy learning, policy experimentation and practice development by collecting and combining the key building blocks from the five countries' apprenticeship systems. The project was implemented in support of the EFA and financed under the Erasmus+ programme.



apprenticeship-toolbox.eu

Work-based learning toolkit

29 national agencies from European countries formed the NetWBL – a European Thematic Network on Work-Based Learning – and developed an online toolkit. The toolkit provides easy access to valuable resources on issues such as governance and management, development and delivery, assessment and recognition, evaluation and quality assurance, partnerships, information and communication. It also includes a database of relevant projects and an overview of local contacts in each country. The NetWBL and its work on the toolkit were co-funded by the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme.



wbl-toolkit.eu

ILO Guide and Tools for Quality Apprenticeships

The first volume of the 'Guide and Tools for Quality Apprenticeships' is in development and is due to be published by the ILO in 2017. It will focus on quality apprenticeship systems at national level and its target audience includes government officials and social partners in charge of policy decisions on skills development. The second volume, to be published in 2018, will focus on quality apprenticeship programmes at sector and/or company level. It will enable practitioners to design, implement and monitor quality apprenticeship programmes by providing practical tools, templates and step-by-step guidance. The volumes are being developed with the financial support of the European Commission and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



ilo.org/skills

Apprenticeship programmes funded through the European Social Fund



Bulgaria: Reducing youth unemployment rates through new opportunities

Established in 2015, the 'New Opportunity for Youth Employment' project is helping to increase the competitiveness of unemployed young Bulgarians in the job market, improve their level of social inclusion, and facilitate a smoother and faster school-to-work transition.

The project, which is part of the EU's Youth Unemployment Initiative, funded by the ESF, helps unemployed young people aged 15-29 to undertake a tailored apprenticeship or on-the-job training with an employer in a field of their choice. So far, more than 11 000 young Bulgarians have benefited from the project.



Lithuania: Reducing levels of youth unemployment through apprenticeships

The 'Vocational Training in the Form of Apprenticeships in the Labour Market Training Centres' project, which was run from 2013-2015, supported young Lithuanians aged 18-29 who were not in education and did not have any qualifications, as well as working people who wanted to retrain.

The project established rules and procedures for the organisation of apprenticeships and helped over 1 000 young people to participate in apprenticeships in a range of sectors. It also developed innovative training methods and improved the overall range of VET opportunities in Lithuania.



Sweden: Helping to fill skills gaps in the Scania region through vocational apprenticeships

The 'Apprentice Academy Scania Northeast' project, which was run until 2014, provided apprenticeships for young, unemployed people aged 16-29 who had not completed secondary education.

The apprenticeships, which lasted anywhere between 20 weeks and two years, consisted of a combination of theoretical courses and work-based training, covering vocational industries with a high need for skilled employees, such as healthcare, catering and carpentry.

The Apprentice Academy collaborated with established vocational schools and a network of businesses, drawing on the experiences of the apprenticeship systems in Scotland and Germany. 90 % of participants found work within six months after the completion of their apprenticeships.

Mobility portals

EURES – The European job mobility portal

EURES is a cooperation network designed to facilitate the free movement of workers within the EU 28 countries plus Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Around 300 000 job vacancies and 300 000 CVs are registered in the database. It gives job seekers and employers the opportunity to find each other all across Europe. From 2018, apprenticeships and traineeships based on a work contract will be included in the portal, giving learners easy access to information on training opportunities in other countries. Drop'pin@EURES is a specific area on the portal dedicated to youth opportunities, including apprenticeships and traineeships.



ec.europa.eu/eures

MOMO: More mobility for Europe

MOMO is an online platform for sharing good practices. Among other topics, MOMO conducted research on the role of 'mobility counsellors': professionals working in VET who provide guidance for people during their period of mobility. In particular, the study developed a portfolio for mobility counsellors on skills, competences and resources, helping to deliver an effective service to people entering mobility programmes. The website provides information for counsellors and online tools to be used to support participants before, during and after their mobility.



moremobility.net

eTwinning

eTwinning is a free platform where teachers and students in Europe can meet and work together on projects by using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to provide support, tools and services for schools. eTwinning also offers opportunities for free and continuing online professional development for educators. Launched in 2005 as the main action of the European Commission's eLearning programme, eTwinning has since been integrated into Erasmus+. eTwinning applies the concept of 'internationalisation at home', referring to activities that enable students to gain international experience in the classroom and online without going abroad, not as a substitute for classic mobility but as part of the broader internationalisation of VET schools in Europe.



etwinning.net

Go&LearNET

The Go&LearNET initiative has developed an international catalogue of study visits to SMEs and organises thematic seminars and economic discovery visits at companies in six European countries.



goandlearn.net

Showcasing talent at the EAfA Awards, 2016



Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, presented the first ever EAfA Awards at the closing ceremony of European Vocational Skills Week on 9 December 2016. The awards recognised outstanding achievements in the area of apprenticeships by companies and their apprentices.

Meet the winners



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Lewis Churchill and Megan Niven receive their awards from Commissioner Marianne Thyssen (centre)

Apprentice category

Megan Niven of Nielsen UK joined the company on a business innovation and growth apprenticeship in 2014. She had a natural ability to coordinate and manage large training programmes. In addition, after noticing that inductions were not being run, she designed a formal training induction for Nielsen's Business in the UK and Ireland, including training plans for new starters. Megan also designed and built a 'Training Passport' for delegates. She now helps promote apprenticeships in the UK and is a coach for Nielsen's apprenticeship scheme. Megan is currently helping the company redevelop standards for business innovation and growth across the UK.

Judges liked Megan's pro-active attitude and her role in promoting apprenticeships. Her work in the field of training and apprenticeships goes far beyond what is expected of an apprentice.

Lewis Churchill of IBM Europe (UK) is in his final year of becoming an advanced level Technical Solution Specialist at IBM. Although Lewis had difficulties and a poor attendance record at school, he made outstanding progress on IBM's apprenticeship programme, which equipped him with a wide range of skills including data analysis, testing and technical service management. Lewis has thrived in a highly qualified team of senior professionals. He is a top performer and has received multiple IBM practice awards. Lewis supports the professional development of other apprentices and has been an ambassador for apprenticeships at events for school children.

Judges liked Lewis' engagement and performance in the company and his personal development from somebody with difficulties at school into a responsible co-worker contributing to the company's objectives.

Company category



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Mr. Jose Ignacio Zudaire, Director of Institutional Relations, and Mr. Sergio San Martin, Teacher at the Apprentice School, receive the award from Commissioner Thyssen

Petronor (Spain) is a Repsol group company with deep roots in a region with a well-established vocational training tradition. The company recognises that competitiveness depends on high quality personnel and therefore invests heavily in its people. During 2000-2016 Petronor trained 400 chemical plant operators on vocational training courses. The company is now developing its own training model leading to a professional certificate in environmental management. With support from Basque institutions, Petronor has designed a training programme, tailored to industrial companies.

Judges liked Petronor's cooperation with organisations in the region to develop apprenticeships. They also appreciated the company's work to develop training tailored to their needs.

Studies and reports

European Commission

[High-performance apprenticeships & work-based learning: 20 guiding principles](#), 2015

[Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes in EU 27: Key Success Factors](#), 2013

[Return on investment of apprenticeship systems for enterprises: Evidence from cost-benefit analyses](#), 2013

[Work-based learning in Europe: Practices and policy pointers](#), Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 2013

[Apprenticeship supply in the Member States of the European Union](#), Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 2012

Cedefop

[Briefing note - Shaping, valuing and informing vocational education and training policy](#) 2017

[Digitalisation and digital skill gaps in the EU workforce](#), 2017

[Technological skills obsolescence in the EU](#), 2017

[European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning](#), 2016 update

[Research paper n° 53 – Governance and financing of apprenticeships](#), 2016

[Briefing note – Making apprenticeships work for small and medium enterprises](#), 2015

[Information note – Work-based learning: apprenticeships, Italy, Slovenia, Luxembourg and Greece](#), 2015

[Reference series n° 98 – Stronger VET for better lives, Cedefop's monitoring report on vocational education and training policies 2010-14](#), 2015

[Research paper – Who trains in small and medium-sized enterprises](#), 2015

[Thematic country reviews – Apprenticeship review: Lithuania](#), 2015

[Thematic country reviews – Apprenticeship review: Malta](#), 2015

[Work-based learning in continuing vocational education and training: policies and practices in Europe](#), 2015

[Working document – Legal acts for VET regulating apprenticeships: Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland](#), 2015

[Research paper – Attractiveness of initial vocational education and training: identifying what matters](#), 2014

ETF

Work-based learning: A handbook for policy makers and social partners in ETF partner countries, 2014

Work-based learning: Benefits and obstacles. A literature review for policy makers and social partners in ETF partner countries, 2013

Work-based learning programmes for young people in the Mediterranean region. Comparative Analyses, 2009

European Parliament

Dual education: a bridge over troubled waters? Research Institutes, 2014

Mapping youth transitions in Europe, Report, European Parliament, 2014

Success factors for the Dual VET system: Possibilities for know-how-transfer, Institut für Bildungsfragen der Wirtschaft (ibw), 2014

Bertelsmann Stiftung

Germany's dual vocational training system: a model for other countries? 2013

OECD Publications

Striking the right balance: Costs and benefits of apprenticeship, OECD Education Working Papers, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2017

Work-based Learning for Youth at Risk: Getting Employers on Board, OECD Education Working Papers, OECD Publishing, Paris. 2016

Building Stronger Pathways to Work: the Role of Quality Apprenticeships, Issues paper prepared for the 2nd G20-OECD Conference on Promoting Quality Apprenticeships. Antalya, 2015

ETUC

A European Framework for Apprenticeships, 2016

Business Europe

A Shared Vision for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships and Work-based Learning, Opinion of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT) addressed to the European Commission, 2016

The cost-effectiveness of apprenticeship schemes – making the business case for apprenticeships, 2016

Glossary

C-VET

Continuing vocational education and training

Cedefop

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

EAfA (or 'Alliance')

European Alliance for Apprenticeships

ET 2020

Education and Training 2020 strategy

ETF

European Training Foundation

I-VET

Initial vocational education and training

SMEs

Small and medium-sized enterprises

VET

Vocational education and training

WBL

Work-based learning

Join the Alliance!

By joining the Alliance (EAfA), you can become part of a network of experts from all across Europe working on apprenticeships. This is a real benefit if you are looking to get started or strengthen your engagement in this area.

The Alliance is a platform for sharing experiences and learning from best practices. You can also find partners, develop new ideas and practices, and access the latest news and tools on apprenticeships.

Your commitment

When you join the Alliance, you commit to:

- helping improve the quality, supply and/or image of apprenticeships and mobility,
- providing information on activities and results linked to your pledge at least once a year,
- sharing learning and practices within the Alliance network and with the public,
- promoting the value of apprenticeships to your stakeholders and a wider public.

Benefits of the alliance

Learning Share experiences and best practices	Networking European network of apprenticeship experts	Information News, reports, workshops, events and funding
Tools Guidelines, practical tools and resources	Visibility Visibility and publicity around your initiatives	

How to join

All you need to do is make a short pledge describing your planned actions on apprenticeships. These could include up-scaling an existing programme or initiative, launching a new partnership or pilot scheme, starting apprenticeships in a new country, facilitating mobility, working on quality, building awareness and attractiveness, or something else.

Get in touch

To find out more or get in touch with the Alliance, visit the website, which includes an easy-to-complete template for pledges, or send an email.

✉ empl-eafa@ec.europa.eu 🌐 ec.europa.eu/apprenticeships-alliance #ApprenEU

Getting in touch with the EU

In person

All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct Information Centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at: <http://europa.eu/contact>

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EU law and related documents

For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1951 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>

Open data from the EU

The EU Open Data Portal (<http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data>) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, both for commercial and non-commercial purposes.

